

# 2011 KUCRL AWARDS

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SIM Leadership Award | SIM Impact Award

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## SIM Leadership Award • SIM Impact Award

The **SIM Leadership Award** recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and excellent service to the Strategic Instruction Model by helping educators become strategic teachers and, as a result, students become strategic learners.

The **SIM Impact Award** recognizes schools or school systems that have widely adopted many components of the Strategic Instruction Model and that have carefully gathered data related to their efforts.

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**Julie Tollefson, Director of Communications**  
writer and editor

**David Gnojek, Art Director**  
design and graphics

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## INTRODUCTION

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Since 1978, the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning has worked with schools, communities, classroom teachers, students, and service organizations to tackle the serious challenges of improving literacy and learning among the nation's adolescents.

We are indebted to the many individuals who have accompanied us on our journey. The teachers and administrators who take risks—both personal and professional—to promote the widespread use of the Strategic Instruction Model in their schools or school systems bring our work to life. The members of the International Professional Development Network who share their expertise in the Strategic Instruction Model help educators become strategic teachers and, as a result, students become strategic learners.

Each year, we recognize outstanding teachers, administrators, and professional developers whose energy and knowledge inspire their colleagues and students to greater achievements. We offer this tribute and our sincerest congratulations to this year's recipients of the SIM Leadership Award and the SIM Impact Award, with profound appreciation for all of your efforts on behalf of adolescents and literacy.



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# IRMA BRASSEUR-HOCK

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2011 SIM Leadership Award



“Leaders bring out the best in those around them. Irma doesn’t try to take center stage. She is collaborative and giving.”

– Sue Woodruff

When Irma Brasseur-Hock enters a room, her vivacious style and passion for her work are unmistakable. Her personality invites teachers, administrators, and other professional developers to join her on an educational adventure. Her knowledge of the Strategic Instruction Model ensures that their journey is fruitful.

“She is a transformer, sharing her deep knowledge about SIM and literacy,” says Patty Graner, director of professional development for the Center for Research on Learning. “Her energy and passion to improve outcomes for students who struggle are contagious.”

Brasseur-Hock’s first SIM transformation was personal: In her first year out of college, she was assigned to teach a self-contained behavior disorder class of high school students just four years her junior. The real world of teaching was vastly different from expectations built on college coursework.

“I had no idea how to teach,” she says. “SIM is what shaped me as a teacher and truly taught me what it means to earn the badge of ‘teacher.’”

Now after nearly two decades as a SIM Professional Developer—and several years as a SIM teacher before that—Brasseur-Hock has influenced the work of hundreds of other teachers and countless students across the country.

Her leadership style brings people together in a way that optimizes chances for the success of new projects. In just one illustration of her leadership skills, Brasseur-Hock met with Michigan teachers, representatives from the state, and researchers from SRI International last fall to introduce Fusion Reading as part of the Michigan Striving Readers Project. Months later, participants were still talking about her skill as a listener and supporter.

“Irma’s style and grace pulled everyone in,” says SIM Professional Developer Sue Woodruff, who has known Brasseur-Hock for 15 years and works with her on the Striving Readers project. “She made a deep impression on those present.”

Brasseur-Hock has a knack for recognizing and capitalizing on the strengths of her colleagues as they work in partnership to achieve outstanding results for students, teachers, and schools.

“Leaders bring out the best in those around them,” Woodruff says.

“Irma doesn’t try to take center stage. She is collaborative and giving.”

As a research associate at the Center, Brasseur-Hock shines in the management and leadership of projects focused on systems change, instructional delivery, professional development, and adolescent literacy. Many of these projects allow her to work directly with teachers in schools, a role she says keeps her “real” when it comes to understanding school culture and needs.

That quality—“realness”—is one of the characteristics that make Brasseur-Hock so valuable to the Center.

“Irma represents the best of practice and the best of science,” says Don Deshler, director of the Center.

Not only can Brasseur-Hock bring a teacher’s perspective to the Center as it designs solutions for issues of implementation and instructional materials, but her grounding in research allows her to see challenges in education through a scientist’s eyes as well.

“She thinks in terms of questions that we need to be asking to push the envelope and to shed light on the problems that we’re encountering,” Deshler says.

Brasseur-Hock helped develop some of the Center’s early online learning modules, contributed to the Content Literacy Continuum work, and was co-author of the Rubric for Educating Adolescents with Disabilities (READ). She now focuses on providing professional development and coaching for the Fusion Reading program she co-developed.

At the same time, she is a dynamic ambassador for SIM. Brasseur-Hock has influenced the work of hundreds of teachers in Michigan, Florida, Virginia, Arkansas, and beyond, and she’s mentored new SIM Professional Developers, both formally and informally.

“Irma taught me confidence in my abilities to become a stronger, more positive professional developer,” says Linda Watt, a SIM Professional Developer from Arkansas who



works closely with Brasseur-Hock. “I value her friendship, dedication, leadership, and partnership.”

For several years, Brasseur-Hock and Watt have traveled together to numerous rural school districts in Arkansas as part of the Arkansas Adolescent Literacy Intervention Initiative. Brasseur-Hock’s poise under pressure eased the pair through some difficult times with the project. They braved floods, tornadoes, Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath, snow, hail the size of golf balls, sleet, and ice storms to work with teachers and students. When they weren’t busy with the worst Mother Nature could throw at them, they faced challenges of an educational nature. Once, Brasseur-Hock brought all of her understanding of SIM and the educational needs of adolescents, and all her communication skills, to bear in convincing a reluctant new principal to allow SIM Learn-

ing Strategies to continue to meet the needs of students and teachers in her building.

“Irma is my ideal professional developer and my heroine, teacher, and mentor as well as an outstanding SIM professional role model,” Watt says. “She has an understanding and passion for SIM that is awesome. She willingly shares her knowledge with those she meets.”

Brasseur-Hock, who long ago earned her badge as “teacher” and “leader,” gives much of the credit for her success to SIM.

“The SIM Network and KUCRL have given me the platform to dream, create, partner, learn, develop, and test out SIM interventions,” she says. “Truly, I have been living my dream and am so honored to be a part of the wonderful SIM family.”





# KIMBERLY TOEBE

2011 SIM Leadership Award



“Kim’s greatest strength as a leader is maintaining the integrity of SIM while collaborating to capitalize on the strengths of group members.”

– Mary Ellen O’Hare

Behind her cool, quiet exterior, Kimberly Toebe is a powerhouse of SIM leadership.

For more than 20 years, she has been a vocal proponent of the Strategic Instruction Model, facilitating countless discussions about using research-validated strategies, the importance of critical teaching behaviors, the benefits of SIM, and ensuring high-quality professional development. She has worked with special and general education teachers, administrators, curriculum coordinators, directors, and assistant superintendents.

“Kim is able to help staff, schools, and districts make connections and blend SIM into the many initiatives that are part of the complex work of classrooms, schools, and districts,” says Mary Ellen O’Hare, who has known Toebe since they attended college together in the late 1970s and has worked with her in the Special School District of St. Louis County, Mo., for nearly 15 years.

O’Hare says Toebe’s collaborative, team-based leadership style and her attention to detail allow her to lead groups in a productive manner and guide them to successfully use new instructional methods for the benefit of the 24,000 students with disabilities who receive services from the Special School District of St. Louis County. About 97 percent of those students attend schools in one of the 22 other public school districts in the county. The design is unique and leads to unique challenges for the educators employed by the Special School District. Toebe is more than equal to the challenge.

“She’s really done a thorough job of advocating for best practices in teaching and professional development in that district,” says Patty Granger, director of professional development for the Center for Research on Learning. “When she moved to St. Louis, I think she was just what they needed.”

Though Toebe’s professional skills contribute to her well-deserved reputation as an outstanding leader, her personal qualities are just as essential to her ability to inspire others. Don Deshler, director of the Center, recalls an occasion a few years ago when another professional developer faced a personal crisis and Toebe stepped up in support.

“In a situation like that, when you’re acting on instinct, one’s true colors really come through,” he says. “Her goodness and her compassion

came through, as did her ability to really be cool under fire.”

For the past two years, Toebe has worked primarily with just one of the 22 general education districts in St. Louis County. Two impressive, ambitious goals guide her work with the 18 elementary, five middle, and four high schools in that district. The first is to develop a comprehensive scope and sequence of research-based interventions to replace the uncoordinated assortment of interventions in use by special education teachers assigned to the district.



“What intervention the student received was based more on what program the teacher had been trained in or had on the shelf,” Toebe says.

Toebe and Gail Wulff, another SIM Professional Developer and an administrator in the district, have begun to rectify the situation, focusing initially on reading and writing strategies. As a first step, administrators from all of the

schools in the district agreed to adopt six data-based reading interventions, one being the SIM reading strategies.

Toebe’s second big goal for the district is to create one districtwide pyramid of interventions for all students, a goal shared by the Special School District and the general education district. A joint committee consisting of representatives from both districts has convened to work toward this goal.

“Communication between key players from both districts is on a level that we have not had in the past,” says Toebe. Alluding to the four SIM Professional Developers serving on the committee, she adds, “We are determined to lead the district to the Content Literacy Continuum. We are just starting on this goal, but all have high hopes for success.”

Toebe has every reason to be optimistic. Even before she moved to St. Louis, SIM enjoyed a solid footing in St. Louis County, thanks to work conducted by O’Hare, Rosemary Tralli, and others. Among other achievements, they had embedded Learning Strategies professional development in the district’s program for new teachers.

“With Kim’s leadership and collaboration skills, we were able to expand the reach of SIM and add Content Enhancement to this work,” says O’Hare.

Expanding the district’s SIM capacity is at the heart of Toebe’s third professional goal. The district employs six active SIM Professional Developers and contracts with two retired professional developers for additional work.

“We need more SIM Professional Developers to meet the needs of the 22 partner districts we serve,” Toebe says.

For two years running, she has proposed establishing a study group to help some of the Special School District’s many excellent SIM teachers meet the requirements to become potential professional developers. To date, limited time and resources have stood in the way of administration approval for the study group, but Toebe is determined to try again next year.

Even without the green light to launch the study group, Toebe has nurtured the growth of the SIM Network in noteworthy ways. Along with colleagues O'Hare and Bev Colombo, Toebe has mentored 24 participants in Potential Professional Developer Institutes since 2004. In 2006, she helped Graner conduct the Potential Professional Developers Institute in Learning Strategies in Lawrence.

"She had a solid, deep understanding of SIM. She had hours of practice under her belt," Graner says. "She brought all of that together beautifully in a package for participants."

In her work as a SIM Professional Developer, Toebe estimates she's worked with 500 teachers, who in turn have used SIM with, conservatively, 2,500 students. Add in the work she's done with other professional developers and the growth of SIM in St. Louis County, and Toebe has had tre-

mendous reach and tremendous results in her work. Toebe's favorite success stories illustrate the extent of the influence she's had:

- The fourth-grade student who made a two-year gain in reading during one semester after learning the *Word Identification* and *Paraphrasing* strategies.
- The teacher who saw standardized test scores for her students rise from 7.2 percent of students nearing proficiency to 52.9 percent nearing proficiency after two years of instruction in the *Sentence Writing* and *Paragraph Writing* strategies.
- The veteran teacher, initially resistant to using SIM writing strategies, reporting back during a coaching visit: "This stuff really works."

And the list goes on.





# SIM IMPACT AWARD

Central Academy Middle School • James River High School  
Liberty Middle School • Patrick Henry High School



“They have taught all of us so much about what it takes for CLC to truly make an impact. Their commitment is inspiring, and their efforts will be reflected in the successes experienced by teachers and students well beyond their schools and into the future.”

– Ann Hoffman

The 2011 SIM Impact Award honors four Virginia schools that are pioneers in their use of the Content Literacy Continuum to promote school-wide improvements in literacy for all students. James River High School and Central Academy Middle School in Botetourt County and Patrick Henry High School and Liberty Middle School in Hanover County are this year’s recipients of the award, given by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning to recognize schools or school systems that have widely adopted many components of the Strategic Instruction Model and that have collected and analyzed data related to their efforts to improve instruction and learning with SIM.

Though other schools across the country have adopted CLC, the extent to which the Virginia schools have embraced it is groundbreaking. The CLC framework they have put in place includes features not found in other CLC projects: They make extensive use of speech-language pathologists at all five CLC levels (see our feature on this innovative approach beginning on page 21), and they have transformed relationships made possible by middle school-high school feeder patterns to create meaningful, deep collaboration across schools.

“I often refer to these schools as the bellwether schools,” says Diane Gillam, project manager. “They are the leaders not just in their state but also on a national level. They find that hard to believe.”

Supported by a series of grants, beginning in 2005, the four Virginia schools have built self-sustaining CLC programs that establish a comprehensive, consistent educational experience for students from the time they enter sixth grade until they graduate from high school. At the heart of every discussion and every decision lies the question of what is best for students.

“There is nothing more gratifying than working with enthusiastic teachers and administrators who continue to promote student success,” says Jerri Neduchal, CLC site leader in Botetourt County. “Hanover and Botetourt counties deserve this award because of their untiring commitment to improving student achievement by enhancing instruction for all students. They have embraced CLC as a way of conducting business daily.”

“Education today is in large measure a bottom-line enterprise, and what has transpired in each of these settings has led to an outstanding bottom line. When you look at the toughest measures—state assessments—there are remarkable gains.”

—Don Deshler

From the beginning, the project was ambitious, with its long-term vision of establishing feeder-pattern demonstration sites in all eight regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Department of Education in partnership with the Center for Research on Learning chose the Botetourt and Hanover schools from a pool of applicants as the initial sites for the project.

The approach the partners took in the beginning was akin to dropping in the Green Berets, says Patty Graner, director of professional development at the Center. Barbara Ehren led the original work, supported by Rosemary Tralli and Joan Fletcher. SIM Professional Developers with years of experience, vast knowledge, and exceptional skills were deployed to build the understanding and knowledge of those schools to quickly establish use of SIM Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines.

“The whole idea was to bring together people with a deep knowledge of SIM and embed those two levels of the CLC into the schools to get them started on their way to becoming CLC demonstration sites,” Graner says.

Even as the SIM special forces began their work, the schools set about building internal capacity by establishing Literacy Leadership Teams. These teams consist of teachers, who represent the diverse interests of the faculty, and the principal or a representative of the principal, who sits on the team not only to be supportive but also to become more knowledgeable about literacy issues at the secondary level. The teams serve as liaisons to faculty, soliciting opinions and suggestions from staff members, collaborating with SIM Professional Developers, and collecting and analyzing data

to identify literacy needs throughout the school. In some cases, Literacy Leadership Teams are the guiding force for a school’s literacy-centered improvement efforts and have become synonymous with school improvement team.

“There has clearly been extraordinary leadership that has demonstrated a willingness to be in this for the long haul,” says Don Deshler, director of the Center for Research on Learning. “They’ve endured dead ends. They endured when the results went flat. They endured a host of things. But unlike so many others involved in school improvement efforts, they kept their eyes focused on the agenda.”

The schools’ endurance has paid off in the form of increasing scores on state assessments and notable improvements in students’ literacy skills across the board, as illustrated in our features on the schools beginning on page 13.

“It shows that when you challenge educators, they really do rise to the occasion if you give them something that is good for kids,” says Tom Manthey, project director, Virginia Department of Education.

For the Center, the higher test scores, open collaboration, routine reliance on data to guide decisions, and broad acceptance of new instructional techniques are exciting developments. Of equal value to our future work is a look at what factors contributed to the success in the four schools.

“They have taught all of us so much about what it takes for CLC to truly make an impact,” says Ann Hoffman, CLC site leader in Hanover County. “Their commitment is inspiring, and their efforts will be reflected in the successes experienced by teachers and students well beyond their schools and into the future.”

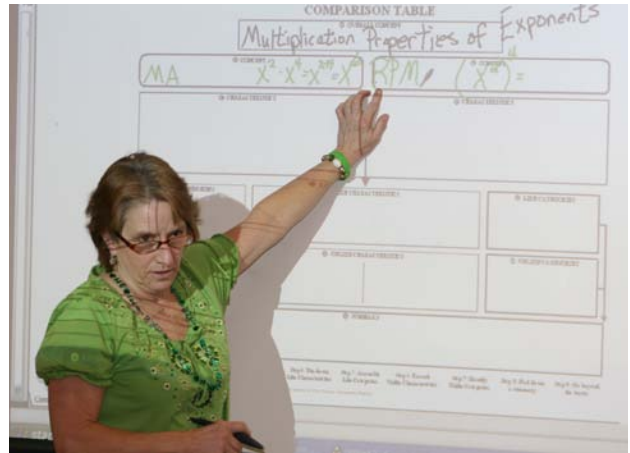
## CENTRAL ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL JAMES RIVER HIGH SCHOOL BOTETOURT COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Students at James River High School and Central Academy Middle School in Botetourt County, Virginia, are the clear winners in an intense, six-year (and counting) process to develop a comprehensive, unified program to improve literacy skills and academic achievement. The schools were selected to participate in a State Personnel Development Grant in which they adopted the Content Literacy Continuum, developed by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, as a framework for schoolwide literacy improvement.

Before 2005—the year the initial grant was awarded—30 percent of the students at Central Academy Middle School scored below proficient on the Virginia Standards of Learning state assessment for reading and writing. A closer look showed that 70 percent of students with disabilities scored below proficient, as did more than 55 percent of economically disadvantaged students.

The situation at James River High School was better—86 percent of the high school's students passed the reading assessment—but the school did not have a systematic approach to improving literacy of secondary students.

“One of the chief reasons that Botetourt County Public Schools applied for the CLC grant was the recognition of a problem area related to adolescent literacy, which was apparently not being adequately addressed by the school division,” says Superintendent Anthony Brads. “Although not misguided in the least, the division literacy focus was mainly placed on early intervention. When applying for the grant, we were looking for a vehicle to assist us with developing a comprehensive Pre-K through 12 approach to literacy. CLC has become a significant part of that process.”



Through support received from the grant, the two schools adopted CLC as their framework for an extensive school improvement effort focused on improving literacy skills of all students. In the years that followed, teachers received professional development tailored to their roles and classroom needs as well as follow-up support in Strategic Instruction Model Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines. The schools developed new classes to meet students' literacy needs, and a speech-language pathologist joined the team to collaborate with all teachers at both schools and provide therapeutic intervention for students with the most severe language deficits. Literacy Leadership Teams formed to guide the schools' efforts, and collaboration across content areas, grade levels, and schools became the norm. In addition to the CLC and SIM focus on literacy, the schools also introduced block scheduling and encouraged integrating effective use of technology into instruction, resulting in many significant changes to school structure and culture in a short time. That the schools were able to juggle the changes and at the same time see dramatic increases in test scores and student achievement is a credit to the dedication of teachers and administrators alike.

“Our experience tells us that the schools and districts achieving the largest literacy gains are those with strong administrative leadership,” says Don Deshler, director of the Center for Research on Learning. “Clearly, one of the keys to the success in Botetourt County has been the cadre of committed leaders at the division and school levels.”

All five levels of the Content Literacy Continuum are in place in the Botetourt County schools. The collaboration between schools, including regularly scheduled leadership meetings focused on shared literacy issues, creates a unified experience for all students from sixth-grade through graduation.

Though CLC is firmly established, the schools continually evaluate results at all five levels as leadership teams consider how to sustain improvements to instruction and student achievement. An annual planning document specifies the interventions to be used at each level (whether SIM strategies and routines or other programs, such as *LANGUAGE!*), classes in which teachers will be expected to implement interventions, evidence of implementation, resources to support instruction or indicators that more intense instruction is necessary, and speech-language pathologist support for each level.

The thoughtfulness of the planning and persistence in pursuing improvement have resulted in exciting advances in literacy levels at the two schools.

“In the short amount of time I have been here, the impact SIM has had on CAMS is astronomical,” says Timothy McClung, who is in his second year as principal of Central Academy Middle School. “We have students who have gained over two grade levels in reading in one year. Our state accountability scores were higher in 2010 than they have ever been.”

Figures 1 and 2 show Central Academy Middle School students’ pass rates for the state assessments in reading and

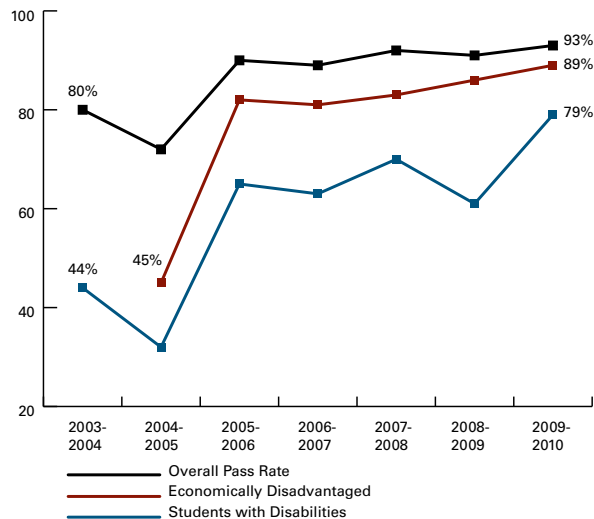


Figure 1: Central Academy Middle School Reading Pass Rates

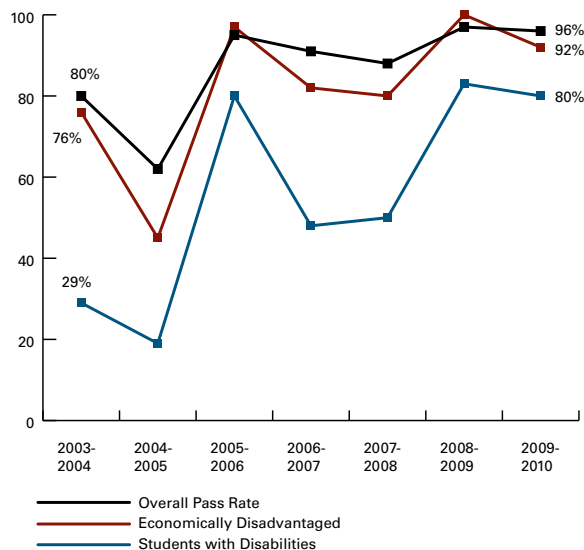


Figure 2: Central Academy Middle School Writing Pass Rates

“The transformation from a middle school student to a high school student was much easier with the help of these strategies and routines because you know what to expect from the teachers. You know that they are going to teach you much like you were taught in the years before.”

—Matthew Flint, senior, James River High School

writing. Pass rates in both reading (Figure 1) and writing (Figure 2) have improved for all students and for the subgroups of students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students.

“As a school, the biggest success has been the improvement of our eighth-grade writing scores,” says Denise Sprinkle, science teacher and building leader for the CLC project at the middle school. “We feel the incorporation of the writing strategies into our curriculum has been critical to the student gains in writing.”

James River High School has realized similar improvements on state assessments for its students. Figure 3 shows improvements in pass rates for all students in the areas of reading, math, science, and history from the 2005-2006 school year to 2009-2010. Writing pass rates remained about the same. More students are passing their reading and writing state assessments with a rating of “advanced proficiency,” as seen in Figure 4.

“We now have a common goal—to improve literacy for all students—and we are reaching that goal. The Con-

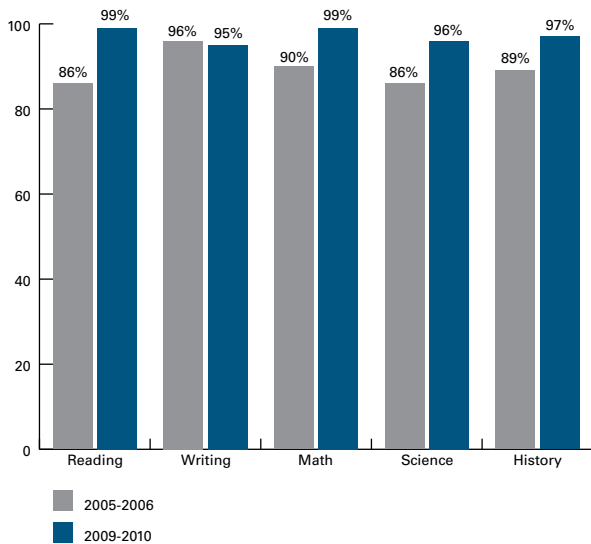


Figure 3: James River High School Pass Rates by Content Area

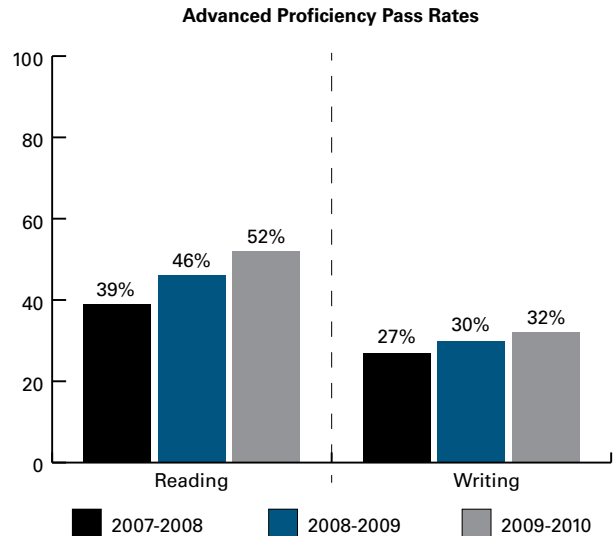


Figure 4: James River High School Advanced Proficiency Pass Rates

tent Enhancement Routines and Learning Strategies have been the foundation for the schoolwide change,” says Dana McCaleb, special education teacher, building leader for the project, and SIM Professional Developer at James River High School.

Teachers and administrators are justifiably proud of the improvements they are seeing in their students’ literacy skills. They also note personal benefits in professional and collegial growth, including more open communication and more opportunities to collaborate

not just within schools but across schools. At James River High School, principal Jamie Talbott credits CLC with improving communication across departments and creating positive collaboration among teachers, both of which he says have led to improved classroom instruction and student achievement. Sprinkle, at the middle school, believes communication is one of her biggest responsibilities. “As the building lead, communication with all levels of administration is crucial. Communication with fellow teachers and listening to their concerns is part of what I do,” she says.

Extending collaboration between schools means the educators have regular opportunities to discuss student progress—including students’ transition from middle school to

high school—and the effectiveness of instructional methods across all grade levels.

“The collaboration has allowed us to better meet the needs of our incoming students, providing services for them to meet their literacy levels and improve literacy across the board,” says McCaleb.

Central Academy Middle School and James River High School have met the thorny challenge of improving student literacy with an admirable tenaciousness and a determined

focus on the needs of their students, realizing exceptional gains in student achievement in the process. They also have created a literacy-centric culture, owned by all teachers and administrators, that will continue to serve the best interests of the schools and their students well into the future.

“I have witnessed the growth of principals and teachers into such strong instructional leaders,” says Joni Poff, the division’s

supervisor of secondary instruction and gifted education. “To sit back and watch a CLC team meeting take place in a school is fascinating. The level of the conversation, the knowledge of the members, and the focus of the team are incredible.”



## **LIBERTY MIDDLE SCHOOL PATRICK HENRY HIGH SCHOOL HANOVER COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

In six years, Liberty Middle School and Patrick Henry High School have crafted a new culture of literacy “connectedness” that forges strong bonds between professional development and instruction, between high school demands and middle school preparation, between student needs and student services.

The two schools in Hanover County, Virginia, were selected to participate in a State Personnel Development Grant in which they adopted the Content Literacy Continuum, developed by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, as a framework for schoolwide literacy improvement.

“When we started, we just knew we had schoolwide literacy issues. Over the past six years, we’ve made strong gains,” says Donald Latham, principal of Liberty Middle School. “You have art teachers thinking about literacy, com-

puter science teachers thinking about literacy. It’s all of the small contributions that equal a schoolwide effort.”

Jeffrey Crook, principal of Patrick Henry High School, sees evidence of the CLC culture change reflected throughout the school in new attitudes about literacy and new approaches to the daily business of teaching and learning. “All faculty, staff, and students are focused on literacy and the importance of understanding and synthesizing information in the classroom,” he says. “All faculty members realize that the use of integrated Content Enhancement Routines and strategies leads to improved overall student achievement.”

Both schools collect data from multiple sources—walk-throughs, formal observations, state assessment results—to guide instructional decisions. In addition, the desire to improve literacy across the board has brought teachers and in-house professional developers together in a way that allows for collaborative feedback and instructional growth.

Beyond the schools’ individual achievements, the Patrick Henry and Liberty Middle Literacy Leadership Teams



work in partnership to develop and support a comprehensive secondary literacy plan. That collaboration, identified by school leaders as one of the most important outgrowths of the initiative, has intensified staff members' feelings of responsibility for all students' long-term success. High school staff prepare for the needs of their future students based on conversations with and data shared by the middle school, and middle school staff regularly check on the progress of students who have moved on.

"We ask the high school how they're doing, what they're doing, and what we can do to send them better prepared," says Latham. This year, high school teachers proctored a writing exercise for middle school students, creating a win-win situation in which middle school faculty will use results to determine whether changes are needed to prepare students better for high school and high school faculty will become acquainted with the literacy levels and skills of incoming ninth-graders.

A small—but growing—team of in-house professional developers is integral to the success of the CLC initiative in Hanover County. The team endeavors to ensure clear, strong connections between workshops, instructional goals, data collection, and follow-up coaching in the Hanover County schools.

"It's that constant follow through and it's the consistency that makes it so good," Latham says. "We go through the cycle of data collection and evaluation on a monthly basis with teacher leaders. Having that cadre of expertise added to the leadership team is just invaluable."

The six years of intense work toward full adoption of CLC has not been without hiccups. "At first, the biggest challenge was getting 'buy in,'" says Cathy Guillena, special education teacher and lead SIM Professional Developer at the high school. Guillena recalls the initial resistance of her collaborative teacher at Patrick Henry High School,

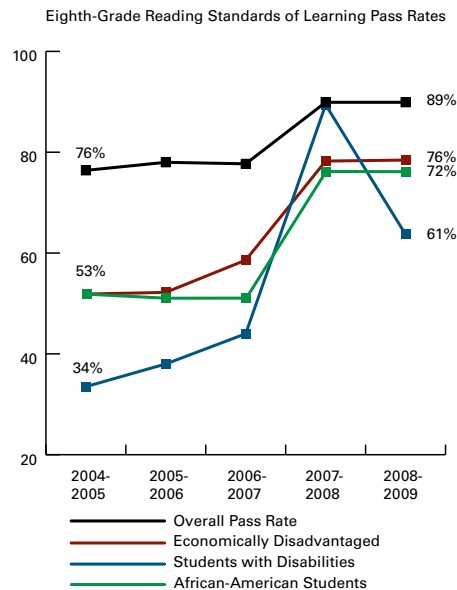


Figure 1: Liberty Middle School Reading Pass Rates

who thought the CLC initiative might be “just the latest craze” destined to disappear in a few years like so many other changes she had seen in more than 20 years of teaching. “She ended up being one of our biggest cheerleaders,” Guillena says.

Administrators led the way toward acceptance by establishing the expectation for teachers to learn about and use Strategic Instruction Model interventions. Teachers identified as leaders among their peers became, like Guillena's colleague, cheerleaders for the project. Now, use of strategies and routines in classrooms is the norm, and the schools have devised new approaches to reaching students who need extra literacy assistance. Patrick Henry cleared one big hurdle when, after several years of urging, the school board approved a new Learning Strategies course to be taught by the speech-language pathologist to address the most severe learning difficulties of students in content classes.

Since beginning the project, the schools have seen rising scores on the state's Standards of Learning assessments. Figure 1 shows increases in eighth-grade reading pass rates from the 2004-2005 school year to 2008-2009. Not only do the scores show improvements for eighth-graders as a whole, but they also show significant gains when subgroups (African-American students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students) are considered separately. Eighth-grade writing pass rates also improved for all groups during the same period.

"We've seen our overall reading scores go up," says Latham (Figure 2). "Our math scores have gone up. Science is the highest it's ever been."

The percentage of special education students at the middle school who spend most of their school day in general education classrooms has increased substantially since 2006, while the percentage of special education students who spend most of the day in other settings has decreased just as dramatically (Figure 3).

High school pass rates for reading and math have increased (see Figure 4). The percentage of students reading below grade level has decreased, and the percentage of students reading above grade level has increased. Strikingly, the percentage of students who graduate with advanced diplomas has risen from below 10 percent to nearing 20 percent (see Figure 5).

Behind the numbers and statistics are powerful student and teacher stories, stories such as teacher Stacy Stanford's determination to help a student master the content in her Spanish class despite struggling with reading comprehension in English. Stanford designed a multi-intervention approach using the *Framing Routine* and *Paraphrasing Strategy* to attack readings for the Spanish class and the *Vocabulary LINC-ing Routine* to master new Spanish words. By the end of the

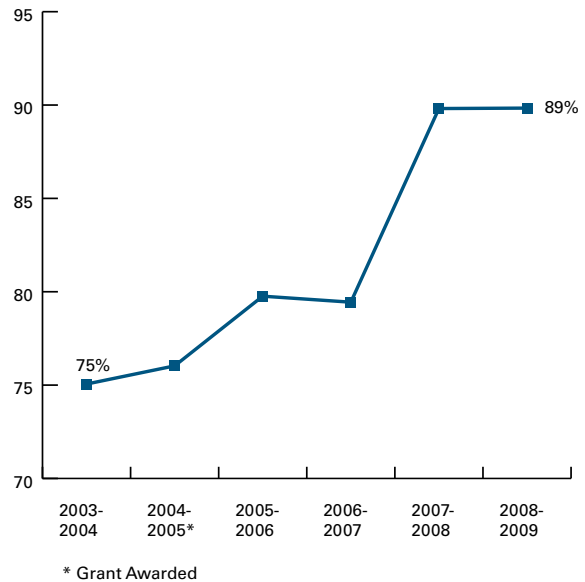


Figure 2: Liberty Middle School Reading Pass Rates: All Students

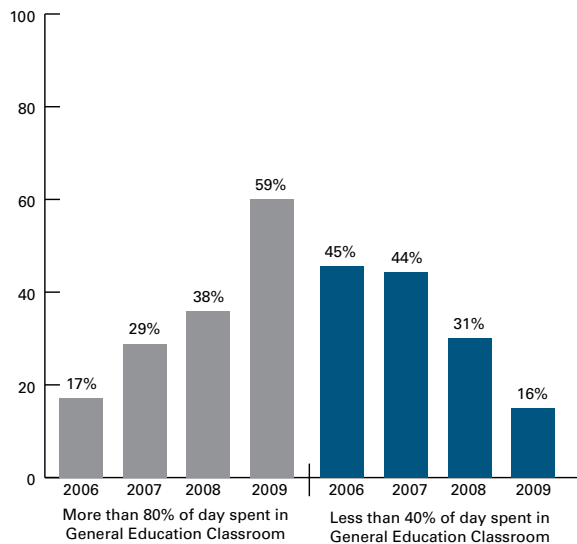


Figure 3: Liberty Middle School Percentage of Special Education Students in General Education Classrooms

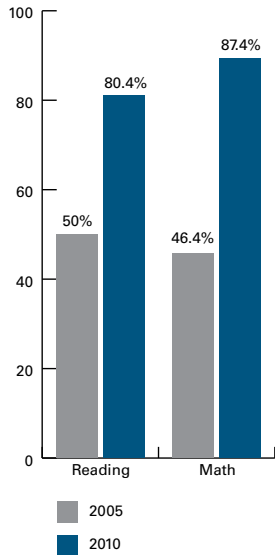


Figure 4: Patrick Henry High School Pass Rates

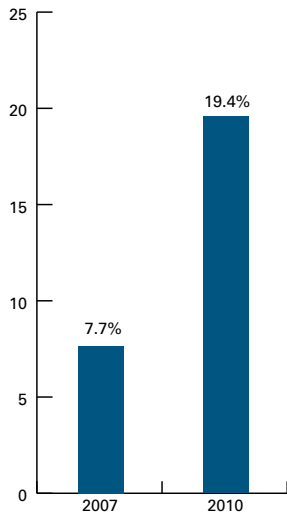


Figure 5: Students with Disabilities Receiving Advanced Diplomas

year, the student demonstrated great leaps in her comprehension abilities in both Spanish and English.

“Just because she struggled in English didn’t mean she had to struggle in Spanish as well,” says Stanford, who is World Languages department chair and a CLC teacher leader at Patrick Henry High School.

A common twist in the stories emerging from these Hanoover County schools is the teacher who needs to see proof in her own classroom before fully embracing CLC and SIM. Janie Brown, physical science teacher at Liberty Middle School, was just such a teacher. For Brown, evidence of success came early when she used the *Unit Organizer Routine* to introduce her first unit, Map Skills. Brown says she dreaded the Map Skills unit test because her students generally performed poorly—many Cs, with a number of Ds and Fs. The year she used *Unit Organizer*, though, the results impressed her.

“The majority of my grades were in the B range and a good amount in the A range,” she says, and students attributed their success to the *Unit Organizer*. “It felt like everything they needed to know was laid out for them with no hidden content.”

Brown is now a SIM Professional Developer and CLC project co-lead in her school. “You see steady gain every year, but more importantly, I see students who come to class with tools and strategies to learn,” she says. “These give them confidence and have allowed them to feel more confident in tackling new and difficult subject matter. True student achievement is creating effective life-long learners, and isn’t that what we are all about?”

## SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Virginia's CLC project includes one key piece that has been under-represented in previous projects: A central role for speech-language pathologists.

From the beginning, the developers of the Content Literacy Continuum envisioned speech-language pathologists working alongside teachers and administrators to provide comprehensive literacy services to students. Until now, though, most CLC projects have not realized the full potential of SLPs.

"It's so unusual to have a speech-language pathologist at the secondary level," says Patty Graner, director of professional development at the Center for Research on Learning. "These school communities *do* have speech-language pathologists, and they're using them in a way that provides better services to kids overall."

The speech-language pathologists in the Hanover and Botetourt schools work at all levels of the Content Literacy Continuum to help other educators identify the language variables related to literacy and learning problems. Their work may involve demonstration teaching, intervention instruction, or collaboration with two aims: raise awareness of the role of language in literacy and identify students who are having problems achieving for language reasons.

"They are using speech-language pathologists in a way that is really ground breaking and quite exciting," says Barbara Ehren, professor and director of the doctoral program at the University of Central Florida and KU's original project coordinator for the Virginia project. "Language is a part of learning. Past first grade, very few teachers really pay attention to language."

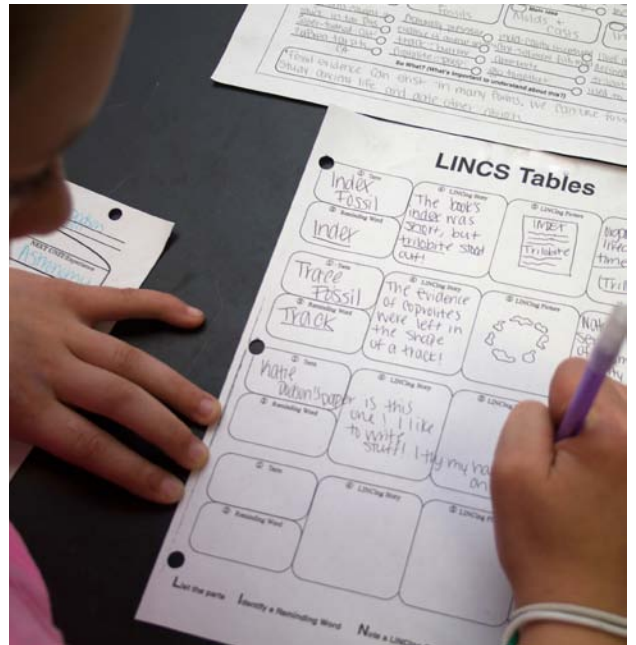
Kim McCallister is the speech-language pathologist at Liberty Middle School in Hanover County. Most of her time is spent working in Levels 3-5, including handling a caseload of 25 students who have individualized education

programs (Level 5). However, she also consults with teachers about making Levels 1 and 2 more "language friendly" and works with general education students who need short-term explicit instruction as they work toward improved literacy.

"It is exciting to be on the proactive end rather than waiting for students to have difficulty and get services solely through an IEP," she says.

McCallister was a staunch supporter of CLC from the beginning. "I had worked with students in grades 3-5 who required additional support to master reading comprehension skills and fully understood the value of intensive and explicit instruction to address this deficit," she says.

Susan Trumbo is the speech-language pathologist serving both Central Academy Middle School and James River High School in Botetourt County, where she works with some of the same students she knew in her previous assignment at two of Botetourt's elementary schools.



“When I was approached about this position six years ago, I was uncertain as to what my role would encompass,” she says.

Once she began working in the CLC setting, though, she became a firm believer in the value of the speech-language pathologist’s role in secondary literacy. Like McCallister, Trumbo has a caseload of 25 students but may work with 80 to 100 students across all five levels of the CLC in any given week.

“Support of staff and administration with flexibility in scheduling is a critical factor,” she says. “My schedule may change weekly and sometimes even daily because it is student-driven.”

The transformation of the speech-language pathologist role in Botetourt and Hanover is a departure from the traditional model. Before CLC, McCallister saw IEP students in a pull-out model, spending only part of her day at Liberty before moving on to another school.

“There was no time to build trust for collaboration or consultation, no time for working beside teachers to improve classroom performance, and as a result, there was little buy-in for the SLP role in literacy,” she says. “I think that only by being involved on a daily basis with the staff and students can this credibility develop.”

Now, teachers and SLPs work together to address the language and literacy needs of their students.

“I believe the SLP’s main role has been to break down the language barrier that our non-IEP students possess,” says Janie Brown, CLC project co-lead and physical science

teacher at Liberty Middle School. “Most teachers knew some of their kids didn’t get the information but weren’t sure how to tackle that because they had no formal language education. Many of us now are more cognizant of the language we teach.”

Trumbo, who uses SIM interventions in almost all of the services she provides to students, would not be comfortable with a return to the traditional model of speech-language service delivery.

“I feel that the most challenging, valuable, and rewarding work I have done is in the secondary setting through the CLC framework,” she says.



# SPECIAL THANKS

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## **BOTETOURT SCHOOL DIVISION**

*Anthony Brads, Superintendent*

*John Busher, Assistant Superintendent*

*Joni Poff, Supervisor of Instruction, SIM Professional Developer*

*Diana Dixon, Former Director of Instruction*

## **CENTRAL ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

*Tim McClung, Principal*

*Andy Bell, Teacher Leader*

*Cathy Cronise, Teacher Leader*

*Tammy Ferris, Teacher Leader*

*Pam Kettelson, Teacher Leader*

*Suzanna Mejia, Teacher Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer Apprentice*

*Denise Sprinkle, Teacher Leader,*

*Building Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

*Susan Trumbo, Teacher Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer*

*Sandra Witt, Teacher Leader*

## **JAMES RIVER HIGH SCHOOL**

*Jami Talbott, Principal*

*Jennifer Alderson, Teacher Leader*

*Donna Cox, Teacher Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer Apprentice*

*Richard Furman, Teacher Leader*

*Philip King, Teacher Leader*

*Leah Lorton, Teacher Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

*Dana McCaleb, Teacher Leader, Building Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer*

*Teresa Simmons, Teacher Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer*

*Dreama McMillan, Former Assistant Principal*

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Jeffrey Crook, *Principal*

Paul Vecchione, *Former Principal*

Brian Maltby, *Co-Building Lead*

Ian Shenk, *Co-Building Lead*

Farley Allen, *Teacher Leader*

Chris Belcher, *SIM Professional Developer*

Karin Caskey, *Teacher Leader*

Kristina Godbey, *Teacher Leader*

Cathy Guillena, *SIM Professional Developer*

Tara Holladay, *Teacher Leader*

Terri Lent, *SIM Professional Developer*

Elizabeth Markwood, *SIM Professional Developer*

Chrisana Reveley, *SIM Professional Developer*

Hannah Sacra, *SIM Professional Developer*

Princess Sawyer, *SIM Professional Developer*

Alice Scheele, *Teacher Leader*

Stacy Stanford, *Teacher Leader*

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Peggy Whitlock, *Teacher Leader*

Jean Wright, *SIM Professional Developer*

Frances Warnick, *Former Building Lead*

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*SIM Professional Developer*

Janie Brown, *SIM Professional Developer*

Deverick Strand, *Teacher Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

Rhonda Booth, *Teacher Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

Holly Drake, *Teacher Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

Lisa Atkins, *Teacher Leader, SIM Professional Developer*

Lalisha Fitchett, *Teacher Leader,*

*SIM Professional Developer Apprentice*

Kim McCallister, *Speech and Language Pathologist*

Julie Dauksys, *Reading Specialist, Building Lead*

### UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON LEARNING

Donald Deshler, *Director*

Barbara Ehren, *Former Project Coordinator*

Diane Gillam, *Project Manager*

Joan Fletcher, *Former Site Leader*

Rosemary Tralli, *Former Site Leader & Project Coordinator*

Ann Hoffman, *Site Leader*

Jerilyn Neduchal, *Site Leader*

### VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPORT

Tom Manthey, *Project Director*

Doug Cox, *Assistant Superintendent of Special Education  
and Students Services*

Patricia Abrams, *Director of Special Education,  
Office of Special Education and Instructional Services*

### VIRGINIA TECH/TAC SUPPORT

Helen Barrier, *SIM Professional Developer*

Ben Tickle, *SIM Professional Developer*

# SIM LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

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## 1994

Connie Gentle  
Fran Clark  
Jeri Neduchal

## 1995

Rosemary Tralli  
Vicky Day  
JoAnn Graham  
Anne Millea

## 1996

Gail Cheever  
Joseph Rogan  
Kim Short  
Janet Jones  
Shari Schindele

## 1997

Elaine Fine  
Carla Soronen  
Tony Van Reusen  
Becky Wetzel

## 1998

Lawrence Bemish  
Barbara Millikan  
Judy O'Malley  
Mary Anne Tharin

## 1999

Beverly Colombo  
Mary Ellen O'Hare  
Judy Wollberg  
Alice Henley  
Susan Woodruff  
Ann Valus

## 2000

Nancy Sander  
Susan Peterson Miller

## 2001

Debbie Cooke  
Patricia Graner  
Karen Koskovich  
Keith Lenz  
Luanne Todd

## 2002

Helen Barrier  
Beverly Mommsen Downey  
Cathy Spriggs

## 2003

Cynthia Gibson  
Peggy Graving-Reyes  
Jane Stevenson  
Barbara Vallejo

## 2004

Charles A. Hughes  
Diane Larson

## 2005

Joan Fletcher  
Ginger Williams

## 2006

Victoria Cotsworth  
Jim Knight  
Lee Schwartz

## 2007

Anita Friede  
Joyce Rademacher

## 2008

Barb Ehren

## 2009

Pam Leitzell

## 2010

Sheri Fiskum  
Janet Atallah

## 2011

Irma Brasseur-Hock  
Kimberly K. Toebe

# SIM IMPACT AWARD RECIPIENTS

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## 1998

Osseo School District, Osseo, Minnesota

## 1999

Summit School &  
Sharyl Kennedy, Dundee, Illinois

## 2000

Karen Mortimer, Casey Family Program

## 2003

Olathe Unified School District, Olathe, Kansas  
St. Tammany Parish Public Schools,  
Covington, Louisiana

## 2005

Cobb Middle School, Tallahassee, Florida  
Science Department of Turlock Junior High,  
Turlock, California

## 2007

Riverbank High School, Riverbank, California

## 2008

Alameda Unified School System, Alameda, California

## 2009

Connecticut Technical High Schools

## 2010

Holland Public Schools, Holland, Michigan

## 2011

Liberty Middle School, Ashland, Virginia  
Patrick Henry High School, Ashland, Virginia  
Central Academy Middle School, Fincastle, Virginia  
James River High School, Buchanan, Virginia

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