

Identifying and Addressing Regional Education Needs

U.S. Department of Education



Central Regional Advisory Committee



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The Central Region:

A Report Identifying and Addressing the Region's Educational Needs

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Authors

Karla Eslinger
Chris Lee Nicastrò

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Program Officer

Kim Okahara

Submitted by

Insight Policy Research, Inc.
1901 North Moore Street
Suite 1100
Arlington, VA 22209

Project Director

Laura Holian

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and results of the Central Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), 1 of 10 RACs established under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.). The RACs were formed to identify the region’s most critical educational needs and develop recommendations for technical assistance to meet those needs. The technical assistance provided to state education agencies (SEAs) aims to build capacity for supporting local education agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, especially low-performing districts and schools; improving educational outcomes for all students; closing achievement gaps; and improving the quality of instruction. The report represents the work of the Central RAC, which includes Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Committee members convened three times and reached out to their respective constituencies between July 19, 2016, and August 25, 2016. Members of the Central RAC represented a variety of stakeholders, including LEAs and SEAs; institutions of higher education; parents; practicing educators; and organizations serving youths, educators, or both. The members collaborated, communicated, and shared resources using Communities360^o, an interactive online platform hosted within the larger GRADS360^o system housed within the secure U.S. Department of Education environment. Table A provides a list of committee members and their affiliations. Originally there was another representative from the Colorado Department of Education on the Central RAC, but she left for another organization and could no longer participate. An invitation was also extended to a superintendent in Wyoming who declined participation.

Table A. Central RAC members

Member Name	Affiliation	State Represented
Roberta Bizardie	Todd County Elementary School	South Dakota
Bronwyn Fees	Kansas State University	Kansas
Kenya Haynes	Wyoming Department of Education	Wyoming
Kyle Hoehner	Lexington High School	Nebraska
Abby Javurek-Humig	South Dakota Department of Education	South Dakota
Laurie Matzke	North Dakota Department of Public Instruction	North Dakota
Chris Neale	Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Missouri
Keith Owen	Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8	Colorado
Kenneth Willard	Kansas State Board of Education District 7	Kansas

Members reviewed a regional profile containing educational statistics and other relevant data to inform their individual assessments of the challenges facing their region. The following summarizes regional characteristics:

- ▶ The Central region serves a total of 3,101,126 students in K–12 public and private schools; of these students, almost 90 percent attend the more than 6,700 public schools in the region.
- ▶ The overwhelming majority of districts throughout the region are categorized as rural, with the next highest proportion located in towns.

- ▶ The student population throughout the region is predominately White and Hispanic, with a significant Black student population in one of the region’s seven states. Throughout the region, the predominant language spoken at home by those who are 5 years and older is English. In three states, the percentage of the population speaking Spanish at home is somewhat high relative to the rest of the region. All states, however, are experiencing an increase in racial, ethnic, and language diversity.
- ▶ The percentage of persons in poverty is lower throughout the region than that of the nation as a whole; however, there are significant issues with poverty in some rural, urban, and reservation communities.
- ▶ Household income and unemployment are generally lower throughout the region than in the nation as a whole.
- ▶ Participation in the free or reduced-priced lunch program is lower than the national average throughout the region. In all but one state in the region, the percentage of students with disabilities meets or exceeds the national average. With some exceptions, the majority of states in the region have lower percentages of English language learners, student participation in gifted and talented programs, and participation in state-funded early childhood education programs.
- ▶ All but two states in the Central region have high school graduation rates higher than the national rate, yet in only three states in the region (Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska) does the proportion of the adult population holding a bachelor’s or higher degree exceed the national average.
- ▶ Educational attainment on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the ACT, the SAT, AP exams, ACT college-readiness indicators, and college graduation rates across the region are equal to or are higher than the national average. Gaps in achievement, nevertheless, are a significant concern in the region, particularly for children of color and children with disabilities.
- ▶ In the last 2 years, all states have had relatively stable leadership in the governor’s office and on the state boards of education; there has been significant turnover in the chief state school officers in the region, with four new officers appointed in 2015 and 2016.
- ▶ State boards are a mixture of elected and appointed officials; chief state school officers are appointed, except in North Dakota where the chief is elected.
- ▶ The percentage of revenue for public schools from local sources is higher than the national average in four states (Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota), while the percentage of revenue from state sources is higher than the national average in the other three states in the region. The percentage of revenue from federal sources is generally lower throughout the region than the national average.
- ▶ Teacher preparation programs in the Central region are generally traditional and address shortages of highly qualified teachers in areas of certification, subject, and specialty. Large proportions of newly licensed teachers are educated out of state, and the region is experiencing teacher shortages in some areas.

See appendix A for detailed tables on the educational characteristics of the region.

Members also collaborated to develop a plan for soliciting information on the region’s educational needs. Members engaged stakeholders and disseminated information using the following strategies: administrating an online survey, meeting with stakeholder groups face-to-face, and using social media. Members also consulted available reports and other resources to identify priority needs for the region; however, members focused most of their efforts on distributing the survey to the widest possible group of stakeholders.

As a result of the committee’s outreach efforts, a total of 1,364 individuals from all 7 states in the region responded to the survey. Of the respondents, 523 represented individuals at the classroom level (e.g., teachers, librarians, curriculum specialists, students), 334 represented school and district leadership (e.g., principals, superintendents, school board members), 179 represented business and community members, 138 represented state education and other government agencies, and 186 represented various K–12 support agencies including higher education.

Each committee member prepared a report containing a needs assessment and specific recommendations for future technical assistance based on his or her assessment of the region’s unique educational environment, the survey results, and the results of other data collection efforts.

Committee members in the Central region identified the following five needs. They are listed in ranked average order of priority as listed by RAC members:

- ▶ preparing students to be college and career ready;
- ▶ improving access to quality early childhood education, especially in rural and high-poverty areas;
- ▶ implementing the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), specifically focusing on personalized learning and achievement gaps;
- ▶ developing and ensuring an equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders; and
- ▶ ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality in funding, discipline, and special education services.

Committee members developed 78 individual recommendations for technical assistance to better address the educational needs, which are summarized in the following four overall recommendations:

- ▶ **Support training for SEA staff.** SEA staff need training on college and career readiness, early childhood education, personalized learning, effective teaching strategies, effective discipline strategies, and other issues necessary for school improvement and the successful implementation of ESSA.
- ▶ **Provide models, templates, training materials, and other tools.** Across all needs, members recommended providing models, guides, templates, and tools to help SEAs, schools, and educators.
- ▶ **Assist in developing collaborative relationships and workgroups.** Members noted that educators and decision makers could use assistance discussing issues around implementing strategies.
- ▶ **Convene stakeholders and educators.** Members noted a need for greater communication to educate all parties about critical needs and to engage their support.

See appendix B for each committee member’s individual needs assessment and recommendations for addressing those needs.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This report represents the regional needs assessment by the Central Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The Central region includes Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The RAC members used statistical data from the Central regional profile (appendix A); conducted data collection and outreach activities to obtain input from various constituencies; and met three times between July 16, 2016, and August 19, 2016, to assess regional needs and how to address those needs.

A. Legislative Background

The RACs are authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq.). Section 203 of Title II of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107–279) directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to establish not less than 20 comprehensive centers to provide technical assistance to state, local, and regional educational agencies and to schools. The technical assistance is to be directed toward implementing the ESSA and achieving goals through the use of evidence based teaching methods and assessment tools for use by teachers and administrators in the following areas:

- ▶ core academic subjects of mathematics, science, and reading or language arts;
- ▶ English language acquisition;
- ▶ education technology;
- ▶ communication among education experts, school officials, teachers, parents, and librarians;
- ▶ information that can be used to improve academic achievement; close achievement gaps; and encourage and sustain improvement for schools, educators, parents, and policymakers within the region in which the center is located; and
- ▶ teacher and school leader in-service and preservice training models that illustrate best practices in the use of technology in different content areas.

B. Regional Background Information

A variety of educational data sources informed the development of the Central regional profile, which provides a descriptive snapshot of the educational landscape in the region. The RAC members used these data to inform their individual assessments of the region's most pressing needs. The regional profiles include sections on demographics; SEA capacity; educational resources; teacher preparation, qualifications, and certification; and student educational attainment. A bulleted summary of region-specific contextual data related to the identified priority needs appears below. While this contextual information may not provide a full view on the region, it should provide sufficient background to help interpret the needs and recommendations included in chapter 2. See appendix A for the descriptive tables and charts that represent this regional profile.

An overview of the student enrollment and diversity in the Central region follows:

- ▶ The size of the student population varies across the Central region, ranging from a K–12 public and private school student population of just over 95,000 in Wyoming to more than 1 million in Missouri. Though the student population in all states in the region is predominantly White, it is becoming more diverse because of increases in different minority populations. In four states (Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming), this expanding diversity is reflected in a growing Hispanic population, in Missouri in its Black population, and in two states (South Dakota and North Dakota) in the American Indian populations. With the exception of Colorado, states in the Central region serve a higher percentage of students with disabilities than schools nationally.
- ▶ Public school districts in the Central region are predominantly rural. The percentage of rural districts within each state ranges from 56 percent in Wyoming to 89 percent in North Dakota. Although the majority of districts in each state are rural, it should be noted that the proportion of the student population in rural districts may not be as skewed because small, rural school districts serve fewer students than sub-urban and urban districts.
- ▶ Throughout the region, English is the primary language spoken at home by those 5 years and older. In every state, the percentage of those speaking English at home is higher than the national average (79 percent).
- ▶ Only Kansas (55 percent), North Dakota (51 percent), and Wyoming (52 percent) receive a higher percentage of revenue from state sources than the national average (45 percent); all but two states (Kansas, 36 percent, and North Dakota, 37 percent) receive a higher percentage of revenue from local sources relative to the national average (46 percent).
- ▶ Per-pupil spending varies widely across the region, from a low of \$10,092 in Colorado to a high of \$18,187 in Wyoming. Four of the seven states in the region exceed the national average of total expenditures on education.

The statewide performance on a few key indicators of college and career readiness offers an overview of the current educational attainment in the Central region as compared to the U.S. average:

- ▶ Overall, educational attainment and achievement is lower in the region than nationally. While the rate of students attaining a high school diploma exceeds the national average, the proportion of adults who go on to receive a college degree is equal to or lower than the national average in five of the seven Central region states.
- ▶ In two states, a smaller percentage of students are classified as proficient or advanced on the 4th-grade reading NAEP than the national average, and the percentage meeting ACT® college readiness benchmarks is lower than the national average in mathematics and science in three of the four states.

- ▶ The states in the Central region use the ACT assessments. Over 91 percent of students in Colorado, North Dakota, and Wyoming take the ACT. Average ACT composite scores are higher than the benchmark (21) and the national average (21) in Kansas (22), Missouri (22), Nebraska (22), and South Dakota (22).
- ▶ Significant achievement gaps between White and Black, White and Hispanic, and White and American Indian/Alaska Native exist in every state, as demonstrated by the high school graduation rate for public high school students. In every state, the graduation rate for White students is at least 10 percentage points higher than for other students, and in some cases, when compared to American Indian/Alaska Native students, it is 40 or more percentage points higher.

Statewide information on a few key data points related to early childhood program availability and funding offer an overview of the current state-funded early childhood offerings in the region:

- ▶ The region is lacking in high-quality early childhood programs, and those in place are funded at a rate significantly below the U.S. average. State-funded pre-K programs are offered in only four of the region's seven states, with North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming offering no state-funded program. The remaining states spend significantly less than the U.S. average (\$4,489) on state-supported programs, ranging from \$2,001 in Colorado to \$3,212 in Missouri. Of all the states in the region, only Colorado has been awarded a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant for program development (U.S. Department of Education 2016).
- ▶ The percentage of children enrolled in state-funded early childhood programs is lower than the U.S. average for 3- and 4-year-olds throughout the region.

Understanding the differing structures and characteristics of the various states will be important to supporting their efforts to meet the requirements of ESSA:

- ▶ There are more than 9,000 public and private K–12 schools in the Central region serving more than 3 million students. Wyoming, South Dakota, and North Dakota are the smallest educational systems in the region, with fewer than 800 schools each. Missouri, with more than a million students, hosts close to a third of the student population in the region.
- ▶ As noted above, all states in the region have a White public school student population exceeding the national average; only Missouri has a higher percentage of Black students enrolled than the national average, and only Colorado has a higher percentage of Hispanic students enrolled than the national average.
- ▶ South Dakota has the highest percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native populations in the region (12 percent). This far exceeds all other states in the region and in the United States; and, as noted earlier, there is great disproportionality in high school graduation rates for American Indian/Alaska Native students compared to White students.
- ▶ States differ significantly in the number of districts and the number of service agencies serving districts. Missouri (521) and Kansas (309) are notable in that they have the largest number of districts with no regional service agencies.
- ▶ Only Colorado and Missouri have independent charter schools, with 1 and 42, respectively.

- ▶ State education structures vary across the region. Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska have elected boards, while the other states have appointed boards. Only North Dakota has an elected chief state school officer.
- ▶ There has been recent turnover in the chief state school officer’s role in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, and Wyoming.
- ▶ Compared to the national average of 35 percent, every state in the region has the same or a higher percentage of students at or above proficient on the 2015 4th-grade NAEP reading assessment. However, in every state, there are significant achievement gaps across all subgroups, including Black, Hispanic, and American Indian.

Below is statewide information on a few key data points related to teacher preparation program enrollment, completion, and school demographics in the region as compared to the U.S. average:

- ▶ Total enrollment in teacher preparation programs across the region varies widely from 991 in Wyoming to 10,390 in Missouri. Traditional teacher preparation programs are responsible for the vast majority of program completers in the region.
- ▶ There is wide variability in the percentage of newly licensed teachers receiving their initial credential who are prepared out of state. Colorado (11 percent) and Nebraska (13 percent) fall below the national average (22 percent). Large proportions of newly licensed teachers are trained out of state in Wyoming (72 percent) and North Dakota (100 percent).
- ▶ Teacher preparation programs address shortages of highly qualified teachers by area of certification in every state, and in all states but Missouri, they address shortages in subject and specialty.

C. Challenges Affecting Regional Needs

RAC members’ data collection efforts identified several challenges affecting the Central region’s education needs. The cross-cutting challenges affecting educational outcomes in the Central region are briefly summarized below:

- ▶ **Adapting to new standards and accountability systems.** Stakeholders and RAC members expressed a high level of anxiety about the educational landscape across the region. While the transition from the constraints of No Child Left Behind to the state-centered ESSA appears to be welcome, surveyed parties seem to understand the transition will require significant changes in the education system. The landscape, which includes new standards, new assessments, new accountability systems, and a renewed focus on issues of access and equity, has created a tremendous need for support.
- ▶ **Increasing diversity in student needs.** The growing diversity in the Central region increases the need for programs and services to serve the disparate populations. Consequently, there is strong support for extending the traditional K–12 programs and services to include early childhood education and an increased emphasis on preparation for college, other training, and life after high school. An increase in personalized, student-centered approaches is mentioned by surveyed parties frequently as a way to address learning and access gaps at both ends of the pre-K–20 spectrum.

- ▶ **Funding programs and initiatives.** Underlying all the work necessary to implement ESSA is a strong push for additional resources: financial, technical, and human. While the financial support in the region varies significantly, all the states mention the need for training and tools to assist in SEA efforts.
- ▶ **Attracting teachers to rural areas.** States across the Central region reported difficulties in attracting highly effective teachers in identified areas of shortage, such as science, math, and special education, and to rural areas. As noted above, teacher preparation, recruitment, and compensation remain priority areas for the region.

D. Data Collection and Outreach Strategies

A main priority of each RAC was to solicit input from numerous constituencies, including teachers, principals, SEA and LEA administrators, governors, institutions of higher education/community colleges, postsecondary technical programs, school boards, parents, education professional organizations, teachers unions, local government, youth organizations, community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, and business leaders.

RAC members received briefs, PowerPoint presentations, and other RAC-related materials that describe the purpose of the Comprehensive Centers program and how technical assistance builds the capacity of SEAs and LEAs. These materials were disseminated to their educational organizations and their professional networks.

RAC members conducted needs sensing and data collection between July 19, 2016, and August 25, 2016. Methods included disseminating an online survey link through email, posting on social media, posting in newsletters, and posting on public websites. The online survey asked respondents to identify their state and affiliation and allowed them to identify needs and make recommendations through open-ended responses in comment boxes. RAC members also made personal phone calls and conducted small meetings and focus groups to identify priority education needs for the region.

RAC members had access to a Community of Practice website to help facilitate interactions and align data collection activities. The site was used to post important documents such as report templates, sample PowerPoint presentations, meeting notes, background profile information, and timelines. The site also provided a convenient location for ongoing communication within and between regions, enabling both facilitators and committee members an opportunity to ask and answer questions and see responses. RAC members held three meetings internally to review the data collected and discuss the needs and the strategies to address those needs.

A total of 1,364 individuals responded to the online survey; an additional 117 individuals provided feedback through face-to-face meetings and direct conversation. Table 1 illustrates responses received through the survey and other data collection efforts in each of the states.

Table 1. Members of the public submitting comments by state

State	Number of individuals providing feedback	Percent
Colorado	116	8
Kansas	338	23
Missouri	128	9
Nebraska	63	4
North Dakota	256	17
South Dakota	72	5
Wyoming	483	33
Multiple states within region	25	2
Total Central region	1,481	100

Note: Some percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Table 2 shows the number of responses received by each stakeholder group.

Table 2. Members of the public submitting comments by stakeholder group

Role	Number of individuals providing feedback	Percent
State level	191	13
SEA staff	110	7
State board of education	15	1
Other state or local government	55	4
Other, state level	11	1
Local district or regional level	178	12
Superintendent or director of schools	79	5
School board member	61	4
LEA or central office	29	2
Other, local or regional level	9	1
School level	511	35
Principal or other school administrator	169	11
Librarian	115	8
Curriculum specialist or instructional coach	29	2
Parent/grandparent/guardian	105	7
Other, school level	93	6
Classroom level	336	23
Teacher	336	23
Community level	257	17
Higher education	157	11
Community member	51	3
Other, community level	49	3
Other or missing	8	1
Total	1,481	100

Note: Some percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Chapter 2. Educational Needs and Recommendations for Addressing the Needs

RAC members used information from the regional profile, input from constituencies, and their individual expertise to identify the region’s most pressing educational need areas and to make recommendations accordingly. Overall, seven of the nine members of the Central RAC submitted individual needs assessment reports (see appendix B for each individual report). Collectively, they identified the following five needs:

- ▶ **Preparing students to be college and career ready.** Ensuring that every student graduates from high school ready to be successful in higher education, technical training, or the workforce is a formidable task. As the country moves into the second generation of expecting “universal proficiency” with the passage of ESSA, schools continue to struggle to reach this goal. Broad-based and widespread acknowledgement of this as a priority need will assist SEAs in their efforts to support school improvement across the region.
- ▶ **Improving access to high-quality early childhood education.** The importance of high-quality early childhood programs was noted by virtually all participants in the needs assessment process. Access to high-quality early childhood programs was recognized as a critical feature in future academic progress, social and emotional well-being, mental health, discipline issues, school completion, and economic success. Lack of adequate state support throughout the region is an overwhelming concern cited by many as a hurdle to significant progress.
- ▶ **Implementing the requirements of ESSA, specifically focusing on personalized learning and achievement gaps.** Participants throughout the region are concerned about some of the requirements of ESSA; specifically, the focus on subgroup achievement. Large populations in some areas and some schools that are non-English speaking, have low incomes, are Black or Native American, and have disabilities highlight the potential impact of the new law. The need to implement best practices in personalized learning and successful strategies in addressing achievement gaps will be part of any successful implementation of ESSA in the Central region.
- ▶ **Developing and ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders.** Because much of the region is rural, attracting and retaining high-quality educators is a significant challenge. Exacerbating this isolation is the lack of contact between many rural schools and the preparation institutions. Urban and reservations schools have similar difficulty in securing high-quality staff. Systems for the systematic recruitment, selection, and retention of high-quality educators—likely based on distinct area characteristics and models for reward and compensation—will be necessary to meet this priority need.
- ▶ **Ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality in funding, discipline, and special education services.** Equity in general was mentioned by many participants as an issue that requires attention. The term was used to discuss financial disparities between schools and states; the impact of poverty on learning; disparate distributions of students of poverty, color, ethnic origin, and socioeconomic status; and services required, such as discipline and special education. Economic factors have caused these issues to be significant points of conflict within districts and states.

The committee members made recommendations in four broad categories to help address the identified needs:

- ▶ support training for SEA staff;
- ▶ provide models, template, training materials, and other tools;
- ▶ assist in developing collaborative relationships and workgroups; and
- ▶ convene stakeholders and educators.

Table 3 provides a high-level summary of the recommendations expressed related to the priority need areas.

Table 3. Summary of needs and recommendations by committee member

Member name	Recommendation
<i>Preparing students to be college and career ready</i>	
B. Fees	Help SEAs and LEAs assess labor market demand by providing monitoring systems to identify high-demand careers and program development
K. Haynes	Guide SEAs through a process to develop a common definition of college and career readiness
B. Fees K. Hoehner C. Neale	Work with SEAs to implement new standards, new assessments, and new systems of accountability
B. Fees K. Hoehner	Disseminate research-based, proven, effective practices and opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish scaffolding support and professional development for teachers to improve instruction and academic proficiency of students • support SEAs’ efforts to disseminate guidance to high school guidance counselors and teachers about preparing students for college and careers
<i>Improving access to high-quality early childhood education</i>	
B. Fees A. Javurek-Humig	Provide evidence-based training to states on best practices in early childhood education, successful transitions, and strategies for addressing mental health issues Provide support to SEAs to conduct a gap analysis of access to high-quality early childhood programs in rural and low-income communities
B. Fees K. Haynes	Facilitate partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between SEAs and universities to improve SEA access to research on early childhood education • between SEAs and universities to conduct needs assessments in communities to identify early childhood education needs • between SEAs and universities to help improve understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act • between SEAs and universities to help improve instructions for students with exceptional development
K. Haynes	Develop an online, editable repository of research and evidence-based resources to support early childhood education teachers

Member name	Recommendation
<i>Implementing ESSA, specifically focusing on personalized learning and achievement gaps</i>	
A. Javurek-Humig K. Hoehner C. Neale	Identify and disseminate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • region-specific promising practices in school improvement efforts • research, guidance, and success stories from different contexts on implementing personalized learning and addressing achievement gaps
B. Fees	Facilitate conversations between SEA staff and classroom teachers about how policies are implemented on the ground, and what teachers see as working/not working
A. Javurek-Humig	Improve efficiency in data collection and analysis by assisting SEAs in leveraging state data systems to support local needs analysis
<i>Developing and ensuring an equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders</i>	
B. Fees	Help SEAs partner with institutions of higher education to improve educator preparation and provide feedback to institutions about content need areas
L. Matzke C. Neale	Develop a community of practice for beginning teachers and leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share best instructional practices from mentor teachers • allow communication and collaboration across levels
L. Matzke C. Neale	Provide region-sensitive (rural, urban, reservation) research and models for effective strategies in the recruitment and retention of educators
K. Haynes	Improve recruitment and retention of educators by describing different incentive models for schools and districts to attract and retain staff, including costs, benefits, how to work with unions, and unintended consequences. Share this resource broadly
<i>Ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality in funding, discipline, and special education services</i>	
A. Javurek-Humig K. Haynes K. Owens	Create or compile resources, tools, and best practice guides. Specifically through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a research base of best practices to assist struggling schools and students differentiated by target area (homeless, gifted, rural, etc.) • supporting SEAs in creating rubrics and monitoring plans to evaluate innovative supports and interventions • identifying and highlighting demonstration sites with successful practices • providing states opportunities for sharing best practices
B. Fees K. Hoehner	Assist SEAs with training educators on cultural competence and cultural deficits. Provide examples of models of school improvement that focus on positive school climate and improved learning environments

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Appendix A. Central Region Educational Profile

Demographics

Understanding the demographic makeup of the states in each region helps to establish the context for the educational issues that are most pressing. This section presents tables from the *Digest of Education Statistics*, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and *American FactFinder* related to

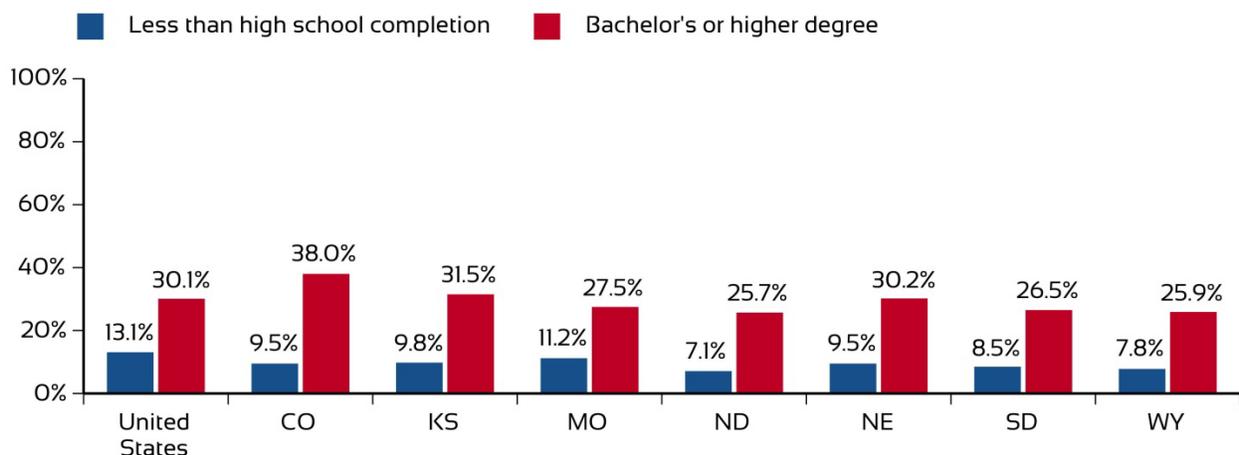
- ▶ the educational attainment of the adult population;
- ▶ the poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment rate;
- ▶ the overall number of students, teachers, and schools, both public and private;
- ▶ the racial/ethnic distribution of students served by public schools;
- ▶ participation in public school services (free or reduced-price lunch program, English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, state-sponsored prekindergarten); and
- ▶ the percentage of the population who speaks a language other than English at home.

A. Educational Attainment

The highest level of education completed by the adult, working-age population (25- to 64-year-olds) is a proxy for human capital—the skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or population. Higher educational attainment (a bachelor’s degree or higher) is associated with better income and employment. Figure 1 displays the percentage of the adult population with less than a high school diploma in 2014, and the percentage with a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2014.

Additional information about the **educational attainment of young adults**, and differences by race/ethnicity can be found in the latest *NCES Condition of Education*.

Figure 1. Educational attainment by state, 2014



Source: 2015 *Digest of Education Statistics*, table 108.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_104.80.asp.

B. Economic Indicators

Table 1 displays socioeconomic indicators such as the percentage of persons and percentage of children below the poverty level in 2014. The table also displays the median annual household income in 2014 and the unemployment rate in May 2016.

Table 1. Selected economic indicators, by state

State	Percent of Persons in Poverty, 2014 ^a	Percent of Children Ages 5 to 17 in Poverty, 2014 ^a	Annual Household Income (Median), 2014 ^b	Unemployment Rate, May 2016 ^c
United States	15.1	20.3	\$53,700	4.9
Colorado	11.9	15.1	\$61,300	3.4
Kansas	13.2	16.4	\$52,500	3.7
Missouri	14.9	18.9	\$48,400	4.3
Nebraska	12.3	15.7	\$52,700	3.0
North Dakota	11.5	13.6	\$59,000	3.2
South Dakota	14.2	16.3	\$51,000	2.5
Wyoming	11.7	12.9	\$57,100	5.6

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 102.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_102.40.asp?current=yes.

^b 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 102.30. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_102.30.asp?current=yes.

^c Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Unemployment Report. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>.

C. Schools and Students

Tables 2 through 5 contain school and student demographics such as the total number of schools, teachers, and students; the racial/ethnic distribution of students in public schools; the percentage of schools by urbanicity; and the percentage of Title I schools.

Number of schools, teachers, and students. Table 2 displays the number of schools, teachers, and students in fall 2013 for public and private schools.

Table 2. Count of schools, teachers, and students, by sector and state, fall 2013

State	Public			Private		
	Schools ^a	Teachers ^b	Students ^c	Schools ^d	Teachers ^d	Students ^d
United States	94,758	3,113,764	50,044,522	33,620	441,500	5,395,740
Colorado	1,831	50,157	876,999	430	4,640	60,690
Kansas	1,342	38,153	496,440	360	3,060	41,520
Missouri	2,267	66,651	918,288	‡	10,860	139,570
Nebraska	1,017	22,401	307,677	220	3,000	42,300
North Dakota	467	8,805	103,947	50	680	8,290
South Dakota	692	9,510	130,890	70	780	9,950
Wyoming	352	7,555	92,732	40	270	2,780

‡ Reporting standards not met.

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 216.43. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_216.43.asp?current=yes.

^b 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 208.30. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.30.asp?current=yes.

^c 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 203.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_203.40.asp?current=yes.

^d 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 205.80. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_205.80.asp?current=yes.

Percent of public school students by race/ethnicity. Table 3 displays the racial/ethnic background of public school students in fall 2013.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and state, Fall 2013

State	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or More Races
United States	50.3	15.6	24.8	4.8	0.4	1.0	3.0
Colorado	55.0	4.7	32.8	3.1	0.2	0.7	3.5
Kansas	65.9	7.2	18.4	2.7	0.2	1.0	4.7
Missouri	73.2	16.5	5.4	1.9	0.2	0.4	2.4
Nebraska	68.9	6.7	17.3	2.3	0.1	1.4	3.3
North Dakota	81.4	3.1	3.7	1.4	0.2	8.7	1.5
South Dakota	76.9	2.7	4.5	1.7	0.1	11.5	2.6
Wyoming	79.4	1.2	13.1	0.9	0.1	3.4	1.9

Source: 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 203.70. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_203.70.asp.

Percentage of school districts by urban-centric locale. Table 4 displays the percentage of school districts classified by the Census locale codes. The large, midsize, and small city codes were summed to create the total number of city districts. The large, midsize, and small suburban codes were summed to create the total number of suburban districts. The fringe, distant, and remote town codes were summed to create the total number of town districts. The fringe, distant, and remote rural codes were summed to create the total number of rural districts. The percentages of districts within each of the four major locale code are presented.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of public school districts, by urban-centric locale and state, 2013/14

State	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
United States	5.7	22.9	18.4	53.0
Colorado	6.7	10.7	19.7	62.9
Kansas	2.6	4.9	25.9	66.7
Missouri	2.7	9.4	18.4	69.5
Nebraska	2.8	2.0	15.7	79.5
North Dakota	2.3	1.1	7.4	89.2
South Dakota	1.3	0.7	13.9	84.1
Wyoming	4.2	0.0	39.6	56.3

Source: *National Center for Education Statistics Rural Education in America*, table A.1.a.-1. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/a.1.a.-1.asp>.

Percentage of Title I schools. Table 5 presents the total number of schools and the percentage of schools that were eligible for Title I in 2010–11. A Title I eligible school is one in which the percentage of children from low-income families is at least as high as the percentage of children from low-income families served by the local education agency (LEA) as a whole, or because 35 percent or more of the children in the school are from low-income families.

Table 5. Number of schools and percentage by Title I status, 2010–11

State	Number of Operating Schools	Percent Title I
United States	98,817	67.4
Colorado	1,796	36.6
Kansas	1,378	83.3
Missouri	2,410	48.3
Nebraska	1,096	47.8
North Dakota	516	58.7
South Dakota	710	84.6
Wyoming	360	51.4

Source: *Number and Types of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2010-11*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/pesschools10/tables/table_02.asp.

D. Participation in Public School Services

Tables 6 and 7 provide information about participation in public school services.

Public school services. Table 6 provides the percentage of students in public schools who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, participated in English Language learner programs, were served under the Individuals with Disabilities Act Part B, or participated in programs for gifted and talented students.

Table 6. Percentage of public school students participating in school services

State	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, 2013-14 ^a	English Language Learners, 2013-14 ^b	Students with Disabilities, 2013-14 ^c	Gifted and Talented, 2006 ^d
United States	52.0	9.3	12.9	6.7
Colorado	42.0	12.2	10.4	6.8
Kansas	50.1	9.4	13.8	3.0
Missouri	49.7	2.8	13.4	3.6
Nebraska	44.9	5.0	15.3	11.4
North Dakota	30.2	2.7	12.9	2.8
South Dakota	39.6	3.3	14.1	2.7
Wyoming	37.7	3.0	12.9	2.2

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 204.10. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.10.asp?current=yes.

^b 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 204.20. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.20.asp?current=yes.

^c 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 204.70. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.70.asp?current=yes.

^d 2014 Digest of Education Statistics, table 204.90. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_204.90.asp?current=yes.

Prekindergarten participation and per student spending. The National Institute for Early Education Research publishes a yearly *State of Preschool* report with **profiles of each state**. The state profiles provide detailed information on access to preschool, quality standards, and resources. Table 7 displays the percent of 3-year old and the percentage of 4-year-old population enrolled in prekindergarten and state spending per child enrolled in prekindergarten.

Table 7. State-funded prekindergarten programs, 2015

State	State Spending per Enrolled Child	Percent of 4-Year-Old Population Enrolled in State-Funded Program	Percent of 3-Year-Old Population Enrolled in State-Funded Program
United States	\$4,489	29	5
Colorado	\$2,001	23	8
Kansas	\$2,262	20	N/A
Missouri	\$3,212	4	2
Nebraska	\$2,759	31	14
North Dakota	No program offered.	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	No program offered.	N/A	N/A
Wyoming	No program offered.	N/A	N/A

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from <http://nieer.org/research/state-preschool-2015-state-profiles>.

E. Other

Table 8 contains linguistic indicators such as the percentage of the population who speak English only at home, the percentage who speak Spanish at home, the percentage who speak another Indo-European language at home, and the percentage who speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language at home.

Table 8. Percentage of population 5 years and older by language spoken at home and by state

State	Language Spoken at Home, Percent of Population 5 and Older				
	English Only	Spanish	Other Indo-European Language	Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	Other Languages
United States	79.1	13.0	3.7	3.3	0.9
Colorado	83.1	11.9	2.3	1.9	0.8
Kansas	88.9	7.4	1.5	1.8	0.5
Missouri	93.9	2.6	1.8	1.2	0.5
Nebraska	89.3	7.1	1.5	1.4	0.7
North Dakota	94.6	1.4	2.5	0.7	0.9
South Dakota	93.3	2.2	1.7	0.8	2.0
Wyoming	93.1	4.9	1	0.6	0.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *American FactFinder*.

State Education Agency Capacity

State Education Agencies (SEAs) are the primary customers of the Comprehensive Centers. Understanding the capacity in the SEA, the number of districts served, and the governance structure of each state provides context. Data in this section come from the *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, the Education Commission of the States report, *50-State Comparison: K-12 Governance Structures*, and Achieve’s report, *Leadership Turnover: 2015 Year of Significant Change in State Education Leadership*.

Table 9 displays the number of agencies in each state. Table 10 displays the governance model (e.g., who is elected, who is appointed). Table 11 shows changes in education leadership over the past 2 years (2015 and 2016).

Table 9. Number of education agencies in 2013–14, by type and state

State	Total	District/LEA	RESA	State	Independent Charter Schools and Other
United States	18,194	13,491	1,522	255	2,923
Colorado	261	178	81	1	1
Kansas	321	309	0	12	0
Missouri	568	521	0	5	42
Nebraska	287	249	33	5	0
North Dakota	222	176	43	3	0
South Dakota	170	151	15	4	0
Wyoming	61	48	0	13	0

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 214.30. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_214.30.asp?current=yes.

Note: RESA = Regional Education Service Agency

Table 10. State governance

State	Governance Model	Legislature	Local School Boards
Colorado	Elected board, board appoints chief	The legislature has a house education committee, a senate education committee and a joint education committee.	178 local boards; members elected.
Kansas	Elected board, board appoints chief	The legislature has a house education committee, a house education and legislative budget committee, a senate education committee and a joint legislative educational planning committee.	136 local boards; members elected.
Missouri	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education and health committee.	302 local boards; members appointed and elected.
Nebraska	Elected board, board appoints chief	The legislature has an education committee (Nebraska has a unicameral legislature).	500 local boards; members elected.
North Dakota	Appointed board, elected chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	220 local boards; members elected.

State	Governance Model	Legislature	Local School Boards
South Dakota	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	172 local boards; members elected.
Wyoming	Appointed board, appointed chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	48 local boards; members elected.

Source: Education Commission of the States. (2013). *50-State Comparison: K-12 Governance Structures*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <http://www.ecs.org/k-12-governance-structures/>.

Table 11. State education leadership changes in 2015 or 2016

State	New Governor	New State Board Members	New Chief State School Officer	New State Higher Education Officer
Colorado	N/A	3/7 voting members	Richard Crandall, Jan 2016	N/A
Kansas	N/A	1/10 voting members	Randy Watson, Jul 2015	Blake Flanders, Apr 2015
Missouri	N/A	N/A	Margie Vandeven, Jan 2015	N/A
Nebraska	Pete Ricketts-R, Jan 2015	2/8 voting members	N/A	N/A
North Dakota	* will change in 2016	N/A	N/A	Mark Hagerott, Jul 2015
South Dakota	N/A	2/9 voting members	N/A	Michael G. Rush, Jun 2015
Wyoming	N/A	1/11 voting members	Jillian Balow-R, Jan 2015	* will change in 2016

Source: Achieve. (2015). *Leadership Turnover: 2015 Year of Significant Change in State Education Leadership*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <http://www.achieve.org/files/LeadershipTurnover2015.pdf>.

Educational Resources

Indicators of educational resources include school finance information such as revenues and expenditures, access to fiber and broadband connectivity, and pupil to teacher ratios. Data for the tables presented in this section come from the *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, *American FactFinder*, and *Education Superhighway's 2015 State of the States* report on broadband connectivity in public schools.

Table 12 provides the total revenue for each state by source of funds.

Table 12. Revenues for public elementary and secondary schools, by source, 2012-13

State	Total Revenue (in Thousands)	Percent Revenue From Federal	Percent Revenue From State	Percent Revenue From Local
United States	\$603,686,987	9.3	45.2	45.5
Colorado	\$8,905,156	7.9	42.3	49.8
Kansas	\$5,866,415	8.6	55.1	36.4
Missouri	\$10,311,473	9.0	32.8	58.2
Nebraska	\$3,800,737	9.4	32.0	58.5
North Dakota	\$1,354,505	11.8	51.0	37.3
South Dakota	\$1,323,242	15.0	31.2	53.8
Wyoming	\$1,694,441	6.7	52.0	41.3

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 235.20. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_235.20.asp?current=yes.

Table 13 provides the per-pupil expenditures, and the percentage of expenditures on instruction, support services (student support, instructional staff, general administration, operations and maintenance, student transportation, and other support services), and other (food services, capital outlay, interest on debt).

Additional data on total current expenditures for elementary and secondary education, by function, subfunction, and state is available through NCES. See http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015301/tables/table_03.asp.

Table 13. Per pupil expenditures, 2012-13, by function

State	Per Pupil Expenditures	Percent Instruction	Percent Support	Percent Other
United States	\$12,020	54.4	31.3	14.3
Colorado	\$10,092	49.9	32.6	17.5
Kansas	\$11,703	51.6	29.7	18.6
Missouri	\$10,975	52.4	31.8	15.8
Nebraska	\$13,068	57.2	26.7	16.2
North Dakota	\$14,022	47.9	28.0	24.0
South Dakota	\$10,225	49.5	29.9	20.7
Wyoming	\$18,187	51.3	33.0	15.7

Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 236.75. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_236.75.asp?current=yes.

Table 14 provides another look at education expenditures. The last column provides an index of state and local education expenditures (excluding capital outlay) to total expenditures (excluding capital outlay, utilities, and intergovernmental expenditures).

Table 14. State expenditures on education, fall 2013

State	Total Enrollment ^a	Total Direct State and Local Expenditures ^{b,c}	State and Local Education Expenditures ^{b,d}	Percent Education to Total Expenditures
United States	50,044,052	\$2,366,783,591	\$796,049,064	33.6
Colorado	876,999	\$36,861,636	\$12,037,945	32.7
Kansas	496,440	\$20,716,152	\$7,509,709	36.3
Missouri	918,288	\$39,458,634	\$13,179,647	33.4
Nebraska	307,677	\$13,462,690	\$5,543,678	41.2
North Dakota	103,947	\$5,878,390	\$2,190,034	37.3
South Dakota	130,890	\$5,056,779	\$1,789,632	35.4
Wyoming	92,732	\$6,667,484	\$2,225,522	33.4

Source: ^a 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 203.20. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_203.20.asp?current=yes.

^b American FactFinder, United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/govs/local/>.

^c Total direct expenditures do not include capital outlay, utilities, and intergovernmental expenditures.

^d Total education expenditures do not include capital outlay.

Table 15 displays school district broadband connectivity for each state. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) set a minimum Internet access goal of 100 Kbps per student. The table provides the percentage of school districts in each state meeting that goal. Districts with access to fiber connections are more likely to meet the minimum connectivity goal. The second column of table 15 presents the percentage of school districts in the state with access to fiber connections. The FCC funds upgrades to fiber networks. The FCC also subsidizes the deployment of wired and wireless networks in schools. Accessing the E-rate budget for Wi-Fi networks is an indicator of whether districts are aware their E-rate budget can be used to upgrade Wi-Fi networks. Lastly, \$3/Mbps is a price target that will enable school districts to meet Internet access goals.

Additional information and maps of district fiber connectivity are available through the Federal Communications Commission website (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/e-rate-fiber-map/>).

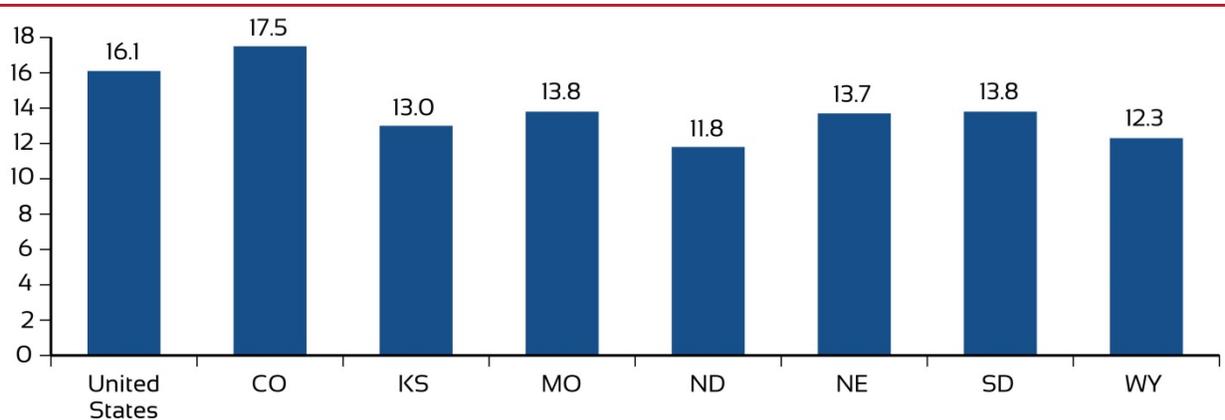
Table 15. School district broadband connectivity, 2015

State	Percent of School Districts			
	Meeting the Minimum 100 Kbps per Student Goal	That Have Fiber Connections To Meet Bandwidth Goals	That Accessed Their E-Rate Budget for Wi-Fi Networks	Meeting the \$3/Mbps Internet Access Affordability Target
Colorado	74	90	47	9
Kansas	82	72	53	5
Missouri	77	85	54	7
Nebraska	92	86	51	26
North Dakota	93	75	31	0
South Dakota	98	76	30	0
Wyoming	100	83	35	33

Source: Education Superhighway. (2015.) *2015 State of the States*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://stateofthestates.educationsuperhighway.org/assets/sos/full_report-55ba0a64dcae0611b15ba9960429d323e2eadbac5a67a0b369bedbb8cf15dddbb.pdf.

Another educational resource is teachers. Figure 2 presents the pupil-to-teacher ratio.

Figure 2. Pupil-to-teacher ratio, fall 2013



Source: *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*, table 208.40. Retrieved July 6, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.40.asp?current=yes.

Teacher Preparation, Qualifications, and Certification

Tables 16 through 20 display data on teacher preparation programs, the percentage of teachers who completed their training in a different state from where they are teaching, and ways teacher preparation programs are addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers.

All the data come from the Title II Reports National Teacher Preparation Data file.

Table 16. Number of completers of teacher preparation programs in 2013–14, by program type and state

State	Total Enrollment	Total Completers	Completers by Program Type		
			Traditional	Alternative, IHE-Based	Alternative, not IHE-Based
United States	465,540	180,745	149,369	13,011	18,365
Colorado	8,437	2,928	2,233	373	322
Kansas	5,379	1,901	1,794	107	N/A
Missouri	10,390	4,498	3,997	291	210
Nebraska	3,528	1,656	1,643	13	N/A
North Dakota	1,786	683	683	N/A	N/A
South Dakota	1,415	743	699	N/A	44
Wyoming	991	256	256	N/A	N/A

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved on July 12, 2016, from <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx>.

Note: IHE = Institute of Higher Education

Table 17. Percentage of completers of teacher preparation programs in 2013–14, by program type and state

State	Total Completers	Program Type		
		Percent Traditional	Percent Alternative, IHE-Based	Percent Alternative, not IHE-Based
United States	180,745	82.6	7.2	10.2
Colorado	2,928	76.3	12.7	11.0
Kansas	1,901	94.4	5.6	0.0
Missouri	4,498	88.9	6.5	4.7
Nebraska	1,656	99.2	0.8	0.0
North Dakota	683	100.0	0.0	0.0
South Dakota	743	94.1	0.0	5.9
Wyoming	256	100.0	0.0	0.0

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/DataTools/2015/AllStates.xls>.

Table 18. Number and percentage of newly licensed teachers who received their credential from a teacher preparation program in a different state

State	Total Number Receiving Initial Credential in the State in 2013-14	Total Number Who Completed Their Teacher Preparation Program in Another State	Percent Who Trained Out of State
United States	254,272	56,718	22
Colorado	3,047	340	11
Kansas	2,720	869	32
Missouri	4,990	1,418	28
Nebraska	2,527	338	13
North Dakota	586	590	101
South Dakota	1,300	284	22
Wyoming	893	645	72

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Table 19. Do teacher preparation programs address shortages of highly qualified teachers by area of certification or licensure, subject, or specialty

State	Area of Certification or Licensure	Subject	Specialty
Colorado	No	Yes	No
Kansas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	Yes	No	No
Nebraska	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wyoming	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Table 20. Description of ways teacher preparation programs are addressing shortages of highly qualified teachers

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
Colorado	In Colorado, 99 percent of the teachers meet the qualifications for highly qualified. Teacher preparation programs attempt to recruit new candidates into shortage areas by visiting content courses for instructors on college campuses and providing students incentives to go into teaching in shortage areas. Alternative teacher preparation programs address shortage areas by partnering with school districts and other educational entities to allow individuals with subject matter/content expertise to fill vacancies, while also providing them the requisite pedagogical and other preparation-related coursework they will need to become a licensed teacher.
Kansas	Mathematics, Science, Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Foreign Language are designated as Teacher Shortage Areas due to the uneven distribution of highly qualified teachers geographically. Recently adopted regulations will provide for the ability of IHEs to offer an initial teacher preparation program for Special Education. Kansas does not offer an initial license in ESOL. Each institution sets their goals for the initial programs and some set goals in ESOL and Special Education because they have those advanced programs. Some Kansas institutions offer an ESOL program concurrently with an initial program. This does assist with addressing shortages. A consortium, Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, consisting of six

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
	<p>private institutions offer a special education add-on endorsement program concurrently with their initial programs. Kansas approved an innovative special education program and increased the number of special education programs offered through institutions. In light of the well-documented shortages of teachers in certain disciplines and geographic areas, the 2007 Kansas Legislature enacted H.B. 2185, which established the Teacher Education Competitive Grant Program. The grant program aims to increase the number of teachers in hard-to-fill disciplines and under-served geographic areas. The initiative will provide resources to institutions for expanding current programs or creating new ones, while a complementary initiative – the Teacher Service Scholarship Program– will provide support for students interested in pursuing teaching careers in Kansas. Although support for these initiatives is subject to future appropriations, the Board expects the program to receive funding over the long-term.</p>
Missouri	<p>The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) creates an annual teacher shortage area proposal for designation by the U.S. Department of Education which allows qualified teachers to participate in Federal loan forgiveness programs and grants. DESE informs teacher preparation programs of the teaching fields which fall within the parameters of a "shortage area". Teacher preparation programs are encouraged to counsel potential teachers related to those fields.</p>
Nebraska	<p>Teacher preparation programs in Nebraska control the number of students admitted into their programs based upon supply and demand, as there is no state regulation that requires an institution to target shortage areas. The Nebraska P-16 Initiative has identified a goal to increase supply in certain content areas; however, no specific funding has been attached to this goal. Specific institution initiatives are described in the Institution Program Report Cards (IRPC) found on the Nebraska Department of Education website, but include: increase hours in the study of differentiated instruction and assessment, and media/technology as a tool to advance learning within the PK-12 systems; provide employment for math majors to act as tutors; hire an admissions recruiter with an education background to recruit minority candidates for the teaching profession specifically in high-need endorsement areas; host on-campus science and math events for K-12 students; use of alternative forms of communication technology to reach a broader target population; guest speakers including current candidates, current teachers and employers, and faculty; work with the admissions to increase recruitment of candidates for specific endorsement areas; development of special programming, to encourage students to prepare for teaching careers in STEM areas; provide state-funded financial assistance to candidates seeking to enter high-need fields; collaboration between instructors in Teacher Education and content faculty to increase course availability; support for Future Teachers chapters (and a state conference) to promote interest in teaching in a high-need field; participate in a consortium that is a catalyst for identifying priority issues common to member organizations and addressing these issues through joint task forces and projects; created the Northeast Nebraska Teacher Academy (NENTA), an entity that prepares candidates to serve as substitute teachers in the partner school districts; revising course rotation to accommodate more students.</p> <p>An annual Teacher Supply Survey is conducted and results are provided to Nebraska institutions to inform recruitment efforts. The survey also designates Nebraska shortage areas for federal loan forgiveness. The Excellence in Teaching Act (ETA) resources prioritizes shortage areas for the initial certification Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP) awards. The current teacher Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program (EETP) uses shortage areas as 1 of 4 criteria for consideration in selection of recipients for the award. Nebraska's new Career Education Model – Education and Training cluster includes a specific pathway which supports high school students who have an interest in a teaching career with experiences that are articulated for transition from high school to postsecondary education.</p>

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
North Dakota	Teacher preparation programs in North Dakota are providing assistance to local districts in the recruitment and preparation of HQT teachers. ESPB has developed a Teacher Support System for first year teachers.
South Dakota	<p>IHE's have set goals to increase the numbers of candidates in teacher shortage areas and are making progress toward meeting those goals. Some of the strategies being implemented by IHE's in these shortage areas are:</p> <p>Online course opportunities - IHE's are increasing the online course opportunities for candidates;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math - increase recruitment strategies and meet personally with prospective students; provide information sessions for non-education majors to ensure they are aware of the secondary education track available to them; use of targeted scholarships; partner with Arts and Sciences faculty; apply for recruitment and retention grants; develop a collaborative on-line certification program; members of the education department visit area high schools and have developed a marketing piece to leave with prospective students; offering additional scholarships to students pursuing math education. • Science - increase recruitment strategies and meet personally with prospective students; provide information sessions for non-education majors to ensure they are aware of the secondary education track available to them; use of targeted scholarships; partner with Arts and Sciences faculty; apply for recruitment and retention grants; develop a collaborative on-line certification program; members of the education department visit area high schools and have developed a marketing piece to leave with prospective students; offering additional scholarships to students pursuing science education; Women in Science and Technology (WIST) program was started to encourage females to enter the science programs. • Special Education - increase recruitment strategies and meet personally with prospective students; provide information and encourage candidates to complete a double major with SpEd; use of targeted scholarships; apply for recruitment and retention grants; market an on-line endorsement program to practicing teachers; develop a collaborative on-line certification program; offering additional scholarships to students pursuing a SpEd program; working to reduce the current 4 ½ year program to a 4 year program. • Instruction of LEP students - researching the option of offering coursework necessary for an endorsement; information sessions to encourage candidates to add this endorsement.
Wyoming	All graduates of teacher preparation programs at University of Wyoming (Wyoming's only Institution of Higher Education) are HQT upon program completion. Each graduate of the College of Education (COE) must complete coursework required for content area in addition to the education degree in all endorsement areas. Secondary graduates in any content area complete concurrent majors in their content and in education. For example: Mathematics and Mathematics Education, English and English Education, Chemistry and Science Education. The content degrees are equivalent to a content degree through Arts and Sciences (A&S) and have been articulated with the College of Education. The COE students take the same A & S courses. The elementary majors take 66 hours of content requirements along with education courses, though the content is of a broader range. Examples of content are 9 hours of math with 2 hours of math seminars, 12 hours of science with 3 hours of science seminars, an area of concentration of 18 hours. All COE teacher certification programs have been accredited through NCATE and, in addition in the case of secondary, through their specific content Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs). Passing the Praxis II in Elementary Education and Social Studies Comprehensive is required for licensure and is used to qualify the applicant for HQT status.

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/DataFiles/DataFiles.aspx?p=5_01.

Student Educational Attainment

Indicators of student educational attainment include:

- ▶ Fourth grade literacy;
- ▶ Advanced Placement participation and performance;
- ▶ performance on college readiness assessments (ACT and SAT);
- ▶ averaged freshman graduation rates; and
- ▶ college completion rates.

A. Fourth Grade Literacy

Research has shown that students who are not reading well by third grade have a higher probability of dropping out of high school. Each state uses different assessments of reading and literacy. Table 21 presents results from the 2015 4th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment.

Table 21. Percentage at each achievement level on the 2015 4th grade NAEP reading assessment, 2015

State	Achievement Level				
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	At or Above Proficient
United States	32	33	27	8	35
Colorado	29	32	29	10	39
Kansas	32	32	26	9	35
Missouri	30	33	28	9	36
Nebraska	26	34	30	9	40
North Dakota	27	36	30	7	37
South Dakota	32	33	27	8	35
Wyoming	25	34	32	10	41

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. *The Nation's Report Card*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading/state/acl?grade=4.

B. Advanced Placement Participation and Performance

Participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and performance on AP exams are predictors of college enrollment and performance. By taking AP courses, students are exposed to college-level course material while in high school. There are currently more than 30 AP courses. At the end of the school year, students in AP courses have the opportunity to take the associated AP exam. The exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Many colleges and universities grant college credit, depending on the score. Each college has discretion for awarding credit based on AP exam performance, but generally a student must earn at least a 3 to receive college-level credit. Table 22 provides the number of students who took an AP course in 2015, the number of exams taken, the average exam score, and the percentage of exams scored 3 or higher. There are more exams taken than students taking AP courses because individual

students may take more than one AP course in a given year. The College Board provides detailed reports for each state, available [here](#).

Table 22. AP participation and exam performance, 2015

State	Number of Students Taking AP Course	Total Number of Exams Taken	Average Exam Score (1 to 5 Scale)	Percent of Exams Scored 3 or Higher
United States	2,416,329	4,343,547	2.82	57
Colorado	45,633	77,067	2.90	60
Kansas	10,023	16,350	2.92	62
Missouri	24,164	39,510	3.00	64
Nebraska	7,395	12,873	2.78	57
North Dakota	1,763	2,438	3.01	67
South Dakota	2,785	4,644	2.99	64
Wyoming	1,767	2,766	2.72	55

Source: *College Board State Summary Reports*. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from <https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap/data/participation/Ap-2015>.

C. Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks

The two primary college readiness assessments in the United States are the ACT® and the SAT. Both tests have historically been taken by high school students planning on attending college. The test taken is largely a function of the state where a student attends high school. Recently, several states began providing all students the opportunity to take college readiness assessments. In 2015, 13 states had 100-percent participation of graduates in the ACT assessment: Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming. Because not all students participate in the ACT® and/or SAT assessments, it is not appropriate to make comparisons between states. When larger percentages of students in a state participate in the assessment, the average score is generally lower because students from all ability levels are tested. In states with lower participation rates, the students tested are often more likely to be higher achieving.

The ACT® consists of four subject area tests (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science), which are often combined for a composite score. ACT® sets benchmarks for each subject-area test. The ACT® benchmarks are the scores associated with a 50-percent chance of earning a B or higher in corresponding first-year college courses. The ACT® benchmarks are 18 in English, 22 in both Mathematics and Reading, and 23 in Science.

The SAT consists of three subject area tests (Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing). The College Board sets a benchmark for the SAT composite score associated with a 65-percent probability of obtaining a first-year GPA of a B-minus or higher. The SAT college readiness benchmark is a 1550 composite score. The College Board produces detailed program results for each state. The state reports provide additional details and breakdowns by student subgroup. See more at <https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

Table 23. ACT® and SAT participation and mean scores, 2015

State	Percent of Graduates Taking ACT® ^a	Average ACT® Composite Score (Benchmark 21.25) ^a	Percent of Graduates Taking SAT ^b	Average SAT Composite Score (Benchmark 1550) ^b
United States	51 to 60	21.0	N/A	1,490
Colorado	91 to 100	20.7	11 to 20	1,736
Kansas	71 to 80	21.9	0 to 10	1,748
Missouri	71 to 80	21.7	0 to 10	1,777
Nebraska	81 to 90	21.5	0 to 10	1,755
North Dakota	91 to 100	20.6	0 to 10	1,791
South Dakota	71 to 80	21.9	0 to 10	1,753
Wyoming	91 to 100	20.2	0 to 10	1,737

Source: ^a *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2015*. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-report-2015.html?page=0&chapter=9>.
^b *The College Board Program Results, SAT State Profile Reports*. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

Table 24. Percentage of ACT® and SAT test takers meeting college readiness benchmarks, 2015

State	Seniors Taking ACT® ^a	Met ACT® College Readiness Benchmark				Seniors Taking SAT ^b	Met SAT College Readiness Benchmark ^b
		English ^a	Reading ^a	Mathematics ^a	Science ^a		
United States	59	64	46	42	38	N/A	42
Colorado	100	63	43	40	39	12	77
Kansas	74	71	53	49	44	5	73
Missouri	77	71	51	44	42	4	77
Nebraska	88	69	49	44	42	4	73
North Dakota	100	62	41	42	38	2	82
South Dakota	76	70	54	51	46	3	74
Wyoming	100	60	40	36	34	3	74

Source: ^a *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2015*. Retrieved July 2, 2016, from <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-report-2015.html?page=0&chapter=9>.
^b *The College Board Program Results, State Reports*. Retrieved July 15, 2016, from <https://www.collegeboard.org/release/2015-program-results>.

D. Public High School Graduation Rates

The adjusted cohort graduation rate (known as ACGR) measures the percentage of public school students who attain a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time.

Table 25. Adjusted cohort graduation rate for public high school students overall and by race/ethnicity, 2013–14

State	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native
United States	82	87	73	76	89	70
Colorado	77	83	69	67	84	61
Kansas	86	88	77	79	90	76
Missouri	87	90	75	80	90	83
Nebraska	90	93	81	83	78	69
North Dakota	87	90	76	74	85	66
South Dakota	83	89	73	71	80	47
Wyoming	79	81	69	72	85	47

Source: 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 219.46. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_219.46.asp?current=yes.

E. College Completion Rates

One way that secondary schools measure their performance is by the transition of high school graduates into post-secondary education or the labor force. One source of longitudinal data on postsecondary enrollment and completion is the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Following are data from a new report that shows 6-year outcomes for students aged 20 or younger at time of first entry. A detailed report and data tables are available for download from NSC (see <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport10-statesupplement/>).

Table 26 shows 6-year completion rates for students aged 20 or younger who were first-time degree-seeking students who started their postsecondary studies in fall 2009. The states refer to the state where a student entered an institution of higher education, not the state where a student graduated from high school.

Table 26. Overall 6-year completion rates for students aged 20 or younger who were first-time, degree-seeking students in postsecondary institutions in fall 2009, by institution type

State	4-Year Public	4-Year Private Nonprofit	2-Year Public
United States	64.97	76.02	40.72
Colorado	64.07	81.28	39.68
Kansas	65.71	N/A	49.26
Missouri	64.68	73.12	39.99
Nebraska	65.06	73.50	45.66
North Dakota	64.72	67.38	62.49
South Dakota	65.69	76.74	66.92
Wyoming	*	N/A	48.18

Source: Shapiro, D., Dunder, A., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., and Harrell, A. (2015, February). *Completing College: A State-Level View of Student Attainment Rates* (Signature Report No. 8a). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

* Fewer than three institutions

Appendix B. Needs and Recommendations From Committee Members

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Bronwyn Fees

Affiliation: Kansas State University

Priority Need 1. Greater financing of public education from pre-K through post-secondary including institutions of higher education (IHE) and preparing students for college and/or career (workforce development)

Justification: Community stakeholders report that preparing students for college and/or career is the highest priority based on reported frequency in the forced-choice format on the survey. Overwhelmingly, increased, equitable and sustainable funding for schools and higher education was a priority in the qualitative comments. Industry, commerce and service providers expect highly trained employees to provide appropriate services and remain competitive. Graduates from the public primary and secondary schools fulfill this demand. Consequently, schools must have adequate funding to pay and retain highly qualified teachers, provide technology, appropriate facilities and meet related program and material demands in order to prepare students to attend post-secondary education or directly enter the workforce. The balance between federal, state and local revenue to fund public education varies widely between states in the central region (Insight Policy Research, July 2016).

Community stakeholders identified better calibration of public education with workforce needs; more career classes; working with students in middle school to begin career exploration; teaching a curriculum that is directly applicable to the real world so students recognize the immediate application; building clearer pathways and relationships between high school to college; and preparing students who prefer to be trained in a technical trade rather than pursuing a degree at a college or university.

More specifically related to becoming college-ready, stakeholders identified the needs as ensuring faculty are well prepared; supporting dual enrollment in high school and in college coursework; making a university education more accessible for low income families; addressing the conundrum of increasing tuition and few scholarships for low income students; and to cease defunding higher education (a concern particularly when the top priority was to prepare students for a rigorous college experience).

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: *Comprehensive Centers can identify, share, and disseminate resources.* Specifically, resources are needed for high school guidance counselors and teachers to articulate alignment between the high school curriculum and admission standards at post-secondary institutions, admission to technical colleges and trade schools, particularly as these may vary by institution. Students who identify college as their next step must demonstrate mastery of basic skills to be successful at the next level.

Comprehensive Centers can facilitate collaboration between SEAs and other agencies to monitor and track students. To prepare for jobs out of high school, Centers may offer a monitoring system (in collaboration with Dept. of Labor) identifying occupations in demand within states and entry level job requirements that could be met in high schools and bringing programs and certifications within the high school curriculum that may qualify students for these positions in trade occupations.

Comprehensive Centers can support research and sharing of descriptive information. Centers may monitor workforce needs and salaries to inform program development; create an advisory board with representatives of high demand jobs to inform curriculum; create industry sponsorships of labs and materials in schools and professional development for teachers.

Comprehensive Centers can help SEAs do more with less. Comprehensive centers may provide assistance by monitoring funding opportunities from various sources (public and private) to support innovative and evidence based pedagogy for all grades. SEAs may partner with research faculty at IHEs on collaborative research and pilot programs engaging local schools.

Priority Need 2. Equitable access and fulfilling the needs of diverse students from preschool through graduation including affordable early childhood education

Justification: Early childhood education and ensuring equity in access were dominant themes in both the forced choice survey format and the qualitative analysis. Community stakeholders identified a diverse set of issues regarding engaging children in learning and supporting their educational needs early, individually and successfully. Stakeholders called for supporting the needs of children with disabilities, children who are at high risk as well as children who are high-achieving academically. Stakeholders commented on the need for more teachers trained in specific abilities (e.g., gifted through deaf education) as well as inclusive practices in classrooms, and more individualized time with each child (personalized learning opportunities), for all children achieving at all levels. Stakeholders identified the need for teachers who are attentive to the individual needs of children (academic as well as social and emotional needs) and working with their parents/families to meet the needs. Stakeholders requested remedial education and resources for students as well as accommodation for individual learning styles of students.

Stakeholders called for increasing access to early childhood education, including affordable, high quality programs. Indeed, only five of the eight states in the Central region report supporting state-funded prekindergarten programs (Insight Policy Research, July 2016). Stakeholders identified the need for greater support of Head Start and access to other programs for low-income families. They also identified improving the quality of the early childhood workforce (professional development). Empirical research strongly suggests that experiences from birth lay foundation upon which further educational experiences build (Institute of Medicine [IOM] and National Research Council [NRC], 2015). According to the IOM report, “young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationship with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning and are responsive to their individual progress” (p. 1).

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: *Comprehensive Centers can disseminate evidence based evidence and best practices related to early childhood education and serving students with disabilities.* Provide evidence-based TA from the rapidly changing scientific literature for early childhood educators (pre-K through grade 3) in both typical and exceptional development, best classroom practices, cultural competence and inclusive education. Provide TA to teachers on working with parents/families and IDEA. Comprehensive Centers work with SEAs to build systems of support for students in pre-service teacher education programs (teacher preparation) with opportunities to gain meaningful and well-supervised hands-on practice in inclusive and diverse programs (children with diverse abilities) including supporting collaborations between districts and universities/community colleges. Comprehensive Centers work with SEAs to provide frequent, evidence based professional development for teachers (and include pre-service teachers) and administrators in home-based

intervention on coaching parents/families in working the unique needs of their child. Close partnerships with families continues throughout all grades for every child; teachers need professional development on establishing, building and maintaining family connections for each child.

Comprehensive Centers can assist SEAs in collecting longitudinal data that incorporates information from teacher preparation programs, and generating reports for districts and schools. Provide data to high school counselors and teachers on the need for well-trained early childhood educators to support recruiting and advising students in to college teacher licensure programs including the Child Development Associates (CDA) and associates degree through community colleges.

Comprehensive Centers can identify and disseminate resources or best practice guides on transitions from early education to elementary school. Technical assistance may be provided jointly with pre-kindergarten and primary grade teachers to offer seamless transition in to the formal school setting. Guides should include information on how to support collaboration with community leaders, to educate all stakeholders regarding the relationship between home and school as well as early life experiences and later development in all children. They should also provide information on infant and child mental health so teachers working with children with diverse abilities and circumstances (high risk) can engage families in the process. The need for these resources/guides may be especially great in rural school districts and lower income schools where access to services may be more limited.

Priority Need 3. Highly effective teachers and leaders in education

Justification: Developing and ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and education leaders is the third highest priority identified in the survey data. Community stakeholders called for greater school and instructional leadership. Issues specifically identified included the need to recruit and retain highly qualified educators in the classrooms (as previously noted) and to modify current curricular expectations for children in primary and secondary grades in the “basics,” that is, better instruction in mathematics, science, writing, and critical thinking.

Stakeholders identified the need for more experiential learning within the curriculum, instruction in basic life skills, sexuality education, and instruction in moral development. A dominant theme among qualitative comments was to stop test-based instruction and teach within the discipline making the learning process enjoyable for children. There were contradictory calls for keeping and removing Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as well as the Common core. Innovative and effective use of technology were requested repeatedly; however, it was unclear if this call was for greater use of instructional technology (e.g., distance learning), technology in streamlining management or technology in technical trades or all of these.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: *Comprehensive Centers can facilitate collaboration between SEAs and institutions of higher education.* In order to prepare highly qualified educators, comprehensive centers must consider partnering with institutions of higher education charged with teacher preparation. Indeed, there is a shortage of highly qualified teachers in the Central region (see Appendix A). Both faculty in higher education and teachers in the schools must be highly prepared. Such partnership may include frequent discussions on the pre-service teacher education coursework and experiences to remain on the forefront of evidence-based pedagogy (best practices) as well as the changing research and theory in the content areas of specialization (in-service training on research-based developments in content areas and implications for primary and secondary curriculum). Comprehensive centers may consider partnering with IHE faculty in pre-service teacher education and

high school teachers to place faculty in a wide range of occupational settings to observe and, in turn, use these experiences to inform their practice in the classroom and enhance pre-service teacher education and/or the in-service experience.

It is relevant that much of the research in pedagogy is conducted by educational faculty in IHEs and thus a professional collaboration (between the Center and universities) may assist in the distribution of evidence based best practices in a timely manner. Colleges of Education are also producing the leaders in education (e.g., principals, superintendents, advisers, curriculum coordinators) through graduate programs. Consequently, TA may include a collaborative relationship between the Center and Deans, graduate program faculty and graduate students.

Rigorous professional development for teachers and administrators (e.g. face to face, by distance, online learning modules) is a constant and imperative particularly the farther teachers are from their own date of graduation. Such training may be offered through a Learning Management System (LMS) at a convenient time for teachers after the school day, regardless of the location of the teacher.

Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC). 2015. *Transforming the workforce for children birth through age 8: A unifying foundation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Kenya Haynes

Affiliation: Wyoming Department of Education

Priority Need 1. Improving Access to Early Childhood Education

Justification: In ranking and addressing the priority needs described by State constituencies (State Education Agencies, State Boards of Education, or other state or local government agencies) it was important to review their selections in both sections of the Needs Sensing Document. In the first section, participants were asked to select a single item from a menu of choices provided by the US Department of Education. In the second section, participants had the option of open-ended responses. Participants were able to enter as many as three self-selected needs and priorities for their localities. Though the responses in the open-ended sections were broader, themes in the responses were evident.

The need for improved access to early childhood education was consistently ranked as a great need across both the menu options and the open-ended responses. Respondents spoke to the need for both access to, and quality of early childhood education, including early intervention services, and high quality instruction.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Assist states with needs assessments to identify the gaps in early childhood education opportunities, including access to early intervention services. Provide resources to assist SEAs to partner with various early childhood organizations in their states. Identify professional development opportunities for early learning professionals.

Priority Need 2. Developing and Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders

Justification: In ranking and addressing the priority needs described by State constituencies (State Education Agencies, State Boards of Education, or other state or local government agencies) it was important to review their selections in both sections of the Needs Sensing Document. In the first section, participants were asked to select a single item from a menu of choices provided by the US Department of Education. In the second section, participants had the option of open-ended responses. Participants were able to enter as many as three self-selected needs and priorities for their localities. Though the responses in the open-ended sections were broader, themes in the responses were evident.

The need for high quality teachers and leaders was strongly indicated in the open-ended responses. In particular, respondents discussed difficulties in attracting highly effective teachers to the field, particularly in the sciences and special education areas. Difficulties in drawing teachers to rural areas were also mentioned. The open responses addressed the need for increasing the quality of teacher preparation, ensuring continued professional development and opportunities for collaboration, and retaining teachers once they entered the field. Teacher compensation was also addressed.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Centers could assist with this need by providing research and information to states on effective strategies for teacher recruitment and retention. In order to be most useful, this information would need to differentiate between the needs of

rural communities and more urban locales. The Comprehensive Centers could also provide research and professional development in the area of effective instructional techniques. It would be helpful to have access to differing models for rating teacher effectiveness.

Priority Need 3. Preparing Students to be college and career ready

Justification: In ranking and addressing the priority needs described by State constituencies (State Education Agencies, State Boards of Education, or other state or local government agencies) it was important to review their selections in both sections of the Needs Sensing Document. In the first section, participants were asked to select a single item from a menu of choices provided by the US Department of Education. In the second section, participants had the option of open-ended responses. Participants were able to enter as many as three self-selected needs and priorities for their localities. Though the responses in the open-ended sections were broader, themes in the responses were evident.

In the menu options, Preparing Students to be College and Career Ready was the most popular selection. This need was mentioned far less often in the open-ended responses, however many things that were mentioned, such as teaching citizenship and self-direction, increasing the relevancy of curriculum, coordination of education P-16, and effective use of educational technology could be considered components of a college- or career-ready strategy.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: One item missing from many discussions of college and career readiness is a common definition or standard for what this term means. 50 stakeholders would most likely have 50 different indicators for the term. Guiding states through the process of standard-setting would be useful.

Priority Need 4. Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act

Justification: In ranking and addressing the priority needs described by State constituencies (State Education Agencies, State Boards of Education, or other state or local government agencies) it was important to review their selections in both sections of the Needs Sensing Document. In the first section, participants were asked to select a single item from a menu of choices provided by the US Department of Education. In the second section, participants had the option of open-ended responses. Participants were able to enter as many as three self-selected needs and priorities for their localities. Though the responses in the open-ended sections were broader, themes in the responses were evident.

Guidance and support implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act was one of the top five selections in both the menu and the open-ended responses. States are actively involved in the process of developing Comprehensive State Plan documents, reviewing state statute and policy for alignment with ESSA, planning communication strategies, and collecting stakeholder feedback. While the increased flexibility of ESSA is welcomed by some at the State level, there is uncertainty about implementation of the new statute. Many feel that there are mixed messages about the way SEAs should approach planning and implementation.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: SEAs are seeking templates for drafting planning documents, exemplars of ESSA training materials for LEAs and other constituents, and assistance with the technical writing involved in the process of launching the new federal statute. States are also seeking avenues to collaborate and support each other through online communities.

Priority Need 5. Ensuring Equity, Including Addressing Issues of Disproportionality

Justification: In ranking and addressing the priority needs described by State constituencies (State Education Agencies, State Boards of Education, or other state or local government agencies) it was important to review their selections in both sections of the Needs Sensing Document. In the first section, participants were asked to select a single item from a menu of choices provided by the US Department of Education. In the second section, participants had the option of open-ended responses. Participants were able to enter as many as three self-selected needs and priorities for their localities. Though the responses in the open-ended sections were broader, themes in the responses were evident.

Like the goal of college- and career-readiness, the goal of educational equity may encompass several different needs. For example, many of the open-ended responses explicitly used the term “equity” while speaking to a variety of issues. It was used to discuss variations in school funding, achievement gaps for students, access to special education and preschool, and school safety.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: One of the primary needs of States is access to research-based and/or best practice regarding interventions to assist struggling schools and students. A repository of this research, differentiated by the type of community or student population (rural, homeless, gifted, etc.) would be of great use. In addition strong models for SEA support to LEAs is needed. One emerging area of needed support is ensuring equitable access, participation, and safety to sexual-minority youth.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Kyle Hoehner

Affiliation: Lexington High School Principal, Nebraska

Priority Need 1. Preparing students to be college and career ready

Educators in their individual states must be provided a strong voice in the analysis, identification, implementation and continued support of strong state standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics that will ensure college and career readiness for its students when they graduate.

Justification: In the Central Region, one of the top priorities identified by all stakeholder respondents is the implementation of a state-supported, locally driven college and career readiness program for its students. Stakeholder feedback strongly indicated high school graduates be academically, socially and emotionally prepared for success at the postsecondary level. Stakeholder recommendations included the following:

- ▶ Provide assistance and resources that will lessen the achievement gaps that exist between socioeconomic and ethnic groups
- ▶ Improve teacher, stakeholder and community engagement
- ▶ Provide greater challenges and opportunities for gifted students
- ▶ Provide greater access and resources for low socioeconomic students
- ▶ Strengthen the services available for preK-12 students
- ▶ Focus on strong, research-based educational leadership
- ▶ Support growth as well as overall assessment scores
- ▶ Choose state control and reduce federal control
- ▶ Support and training opportunities
- ▶ Create a culture of collaboration within and between schools, school districts and state departments
- ▶ Establish a balanced assessment system at the local level that supports the state accountability system
- ▶ Increase experiential learning opportunities for all students
- ▶ Address the social and emotional wellness of and provide social and emotional learning opportunities for students
- ▶ Providing researched-based professional learning for teachers
- ▶ Improve data analysis of educational programs to ensure improved instructional strategies
- ▶ Establish equitable statewide assessments

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers can assist states to develop, establish, implement, and maintain several programs:

- ▶ Develop a statewide system that provides the best practice models of instructional methodology and curricular programming in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- ▶ Establish scaffolding support systems for teachers, counselors, and administrators in their roles to improve instruction, beginning at the primary level of education.
- ▶ Implement high-quality state standards that can be assessed with great integrity for accountability; standards that will guarantee a mastery of English Language Arts and Mathematics at each grade level, beginning at the primary level and continuing to graduation.
- ▶ Use annual assessments to identify learning gaps at each grade level and drive instruction at each continuing grade level.
- ▶ Identify meaningful professional development that address instructional leadership, learning and implementation at the classroom, building, district and state levels.

Priority Need 2. Ensuring equity for all students by addressing the issues of disproportionality in schools

Justification: Survey data in the Central Region indicates that inequity due to disproportionality in schools is a prevalent issue for respondents. Disproportionate representation in schools has resulted in highly inequitable cause and effect for its school children based on racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic status, national origin, and English proficiency. Student subgroup populations that are notably over-represented or under-represented in the disproportional need for special education services, placement in particular educational settings, and discipline referrals and inequitable accountability (including suspension and expulsion) are directly affected by other variables, such as language, poverty, assessment practices, and professional development opportunities for teachers. Misplacement, misidentification and unfair discipline practices are cause identifiers of the disproportionality that exists in many schools. Unfortunately, the dreaded reality is a reciprocation of poor attendance, low graduation rates, and derisory test scores which all perpetuate this vicious cycle.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Establish a program of strategies and interventions that will support local schools that have been identified with disproportionate representation:

- ▶ Cultivate and sustain a strong relational school environment that is driven by a non-negotiable student-student, student-teacher, and teacher-students support (i.e. systemic, consistent practice in which “teachers will never give up on students and students will never give up on themselves or each other”)
- ▶ Provide support for struggling students with repeated behavior issues
- ▶ Implement discipline policies that are fair and equitable – eliminate zero tolerance except in warranted cases
- ▶ Provide ongoing all-school (teachers, administrators, classified staff, etc.) training that exposes the aforementioned to the cause and effect of implicit racial and ethnic bias
- ▶ Provide professional development that focuses on improved learning environments and instructional strategies that ensure educational, disciplinary, social and emotional equality for all students

- ▶ Remove all forms of bias through cultural competence and cultural deficit training
- ▶ Establish a personalized learning environment in which all school stakeholders (students, staff, community) have a strong “voice” in school policy and practice

Priority Need 3. Closing the achievement gap that exists in our lowest performing, high poverty schools

Justification: According to respondents in the Central Region, a high priority is to close the achievement gap that exists in our lowest performing, high poverty schools. As is the case in Priority Need #2 (above), the reciprocal effect of high performing schools is much like those listed in schools with disproportionate representation. These include:

- ▶ High dropout
- ▶ High absenteeism
- ▶ Poor health and nutrition
- ▶ Poor vocabulary
- ▶ Lack of hope
- ▶ A strong, often-present sense of helplessness
- ▶ Poor and/or missing relational skills
- ▶ Low cognitive skills
- ▶ Significantly lower assessment scores and graduation rates

Educational experts have too often fallen back into the “Woe is us,” mentality when dealing with poverty children and achievement gaps. In his speech to the NAACP in July 2000, George W. Bush’s referred to this education vs. poverty conundrum as “The Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations.” In order to affect change that is substantive and sustainable, the focus needs to shift from the rather defeatist view of poverty’s effect on education to the promising vision of education’s effect on poverty. The shift must be significant, impactful and sustainable enough to turn the tables on generational, cyclic poverty.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers can help SEAs establish online, collaborative learning communities. Through collaborative processes, educators will have a voice and can establish an environment to improve student achievement. Stakeholders could access resources and learn from one another about different strategies for engaging students, empowering students, providing personalized learning, and establishing collaborative leadership.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Abby Javurek-Humig

Affiliation: South Dakota Department of Education

Priority Need 1. Support of Implementation of the ESSA including accountability determinations and refinement, public reporting issues, and school improvement efforts

Justification: While this was not necessarily the top priority selected by state agency officials in the survey selected, many of the comments and discussions circled back to how other issues fit into the context of design of meaningful systems under the new flexibility afforded to ESSA. Conversations and written responses revealed that SEAs want to implement flexibility to highlight the good things happening at the local level, and to approach school improvement from a more individualized perspective that allows schools to focus on what the real needs are instead of prescribing a one size fits all model. The concern at the SEA level was that it will be difficult to build capacity to do so, especially in rural states with limited resources.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers can provide support and capacity building by leveraging existing state data systems to support local needs analysis. Comprehensive Centers can help states identify where growth is happening, and disseminate this information. Centers can also capture information about interventions causing growth as recommended supports in new school improvement models.

Priority Need 2. Stakeholder Engagement

Justification: Again, while this was not a top priority on the survey data, it was an underlying theme in conversations and many written comments. SEA leaders suggested that there may be better ways to partner with comprehensive centers to engage stakeholders invested in supporting some of the most vulnerable groups in states. They also suggested that support around engaging meaningfully with the Native American tribes in the region would be beneficial at both the state and LEA level. Additionally, many comments that were written in spoke about the desire for supports and training to better be tailored to the local classroom level, instead of decided by or mandated by the state. In order for states to do this effectively, they must have a system set up that allows for meaningful consultation with LEAs. Designing meaningful stakeholder engagement systems can further help SEAs support LEAs as they work through root cause analysis, and engage their own local stakeholders in the continuous improvement process.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers can assist SEAs in developing Stakeholder Engagement Plans related to developing relationships between:

- ▶ SEAs and tribal entities;
- ▶ LEAs and school boards;
- ▶ Communities and tribal entities;
- ▶ Schools, parents, and communities.

Comprehensive Centers can also help SEAs/LEAs/schools identify the groups that they need to engage.

Priority Need 3. College and Career Readiness Support

Justification: College and Career Readiness was the most commonly selected SEA representative need on the surveys across the region. Many of the written in comments and discussions with key stakeholder groups suggested that states could use support in: A) thinking through the various paths for college readiness; B) Providing Opportunities for all students to have access to high quality opportunities to get them ready for college; C) Communicating with parents about what it means to be college and/or career ready; D) Finding alternative paths to readiness for students to become ready when traditional paths do not work.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Convening of key stakeholders to discuss current definitions of readiness and to consider other ways of measuring this. Support to states to help build capacity to increase course offerings and access to opportunities that help students become ready for college or careers. Development of training for teachers and students around the skills needed to demonstrate readiness. Support to help students/teachers/parents examine student data to identify what types of college and career opportunities might best benefit students.

Priority Need 4. Early Childhood Education

Justification: This was an additional commonly selected area of need across all SEA respondents. The challenge in looking at this as was pointed out in multiple stakeholder conversations, across multiple states, is that at least in this region, often there is no authority of SEAs to work with early learning programs even though there is agreement that early learning is important.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Help states identify what is currently in place and what they have authority to work on in the area of early learning. Help states connect with regional centers and partners that can help support early learning. Work with states to develop training for pre-school and early learning teachers to strengthen support.

Priority Need 5. Address the Achievement Gaps

Justification: This was one of the most commonly selected survey items across the 140 SEA level representatives that answered the survey for the region. This was also a common theme in all conversations and has implications for other potential areas such as equity and college and career readiness. Comments and discussions indicated that SEAs are well aware of where achievement gaps are in their states, and that in many cases it is difficult to figure out how to meet the needs of students and educators in low income, extremely rural, and reservation schools. Comments also suggest that the needs across these schools differ, but that students in these areas contribute significantly to achievement gaps and the nature of their communities may sometimes hinder access equitable opportunities. In the central region, these issues must be overcome to see meaningful gains for students.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance Training: Help states to identify strategies that are showing promise in low income, rural, and reservation schools and add supports for these at the SEA level to impact meaningful school improvement. Help states identify resources such as distance learning that can help rural areas meet needs of students and teachers, and help states develop implementation

plans that allow these supports to be implemented with fidelity. Help states develop templates to allow schools that are contributing to the achievement gaps the opportunity to do meaningful needs sensing and root cause analysis that engages key local stakeholders, and that promotes innovative solutions to address the achievement gaps. Help states create rubrics and manageable monitoring plans to determine whether innovative supports and interventions are working.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Laurie Matzke, Assistant Superintendent

Affiliation: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Note: This needs assessment focuses on feedback from North Dakota stakeholders in the Central region. The recommendations are specific to the needs in North Dakota, but may be generalizable elsewhere.

Priority Need 1. Preparing students to be college and career ready

Justification: This need was ranked number one on the survey disseminated statewide to a multitude of North Dakota stakeholders.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Support state departments by disseminating research-based, proven practices, strategies, and programs. In addition, provide opportunities for state departments' personnel to share effective practices. In particular, it is beneficial for states similar in size and structure to collaborate and share ideas with each other (e.g., small, rural).

Priority Need 2. Developing and ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders

Justification: This need was ranked number two on the survey disseminated statewide to a multitude of North Dakota stakeholders.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: As many states across the nation are experiencing a teacher shortage, state departments need research-proven strategies and ideas for both retaining and attracting effective teachers and leaders, in particular to high need schools. In addition, states need opportunities for sharing promising practices with each other.

Priority Need 3. Developing strategies for promoting personalized learning

Justification: This need was ranked towards the top on the survey disseminated statewide to a multitude of North Dakota stakeholders.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: North Dakota, like all other states across the nation, is becoming more diverse. Our English Learners population is quickly increasing. Therefore, there is a need for research, resources, and support for promoting personalized learning for targeted populations of students.

Priority Need 4. Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Justification: Even though this topic was not ranked the highest need, it was towards the top and over the next six to eight months that will change. The topic is not a priority now because of the transition year. However, over the next several years, state departments are going to need support and guidance on the rollout of the ESSA.

Recommended Strategy: Provide opportunities for states to share ESSA implementation strategies with each other. Provide states with resources and templates to implement the provisions within ESSA.

Priority Need 5. Improving access to early childhood education

Justification: Early childhood education is a need that is going to continue to grow in the future as more states begin to strengthen their early learning programs.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: In North Dakota, we are seeing a surge of new early childhood education programs emerge across the state. We, therefore, have many new teachers who have graduated with an early childhood education degree. These teachers need access to resources that have been proven to support and be effective with young children.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Chris Neale

Affiliation: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

I have written to broad topics in reaction to feedback from stakeholders gathered informally. The feedback has noted that the mission/agenda of the Comprehensive Centers can be restricting rather than empowering when SEAs seek help. My belief is that the report's final recommendations should include making explicit that the mission of Comprehensive Centers is to empower and support. With a broad set of recommendations, I believe the Comprehensive Centers would find that they are better positioned to fulfill their future that we cannot yet adequately predict.

Priority Need 1. Best practices in Personalized Learning

Justification: Personalized learning was not the highest scoring response in regard to student level needs. However, the highest scoring one (preparing students for college and career readiness) is easily served by an emphasis in this area. When one examines the underlying areas of dissatisfaction with state assessment systems, one often finds that immediate feedback to the student is lacking. Again, best practices in personalized learning would include ways in which assessments serve both the learning needs of the students and provide a basis for accountability.

In addition to personalization by way of a personal plan of study, etc. the area is ripe for improvement through innovation. Topics should include:

- ▶ Competency- (or proficiency-) based learning
- ▶ Nonstandard delivery systems
- ▶ Restructuring/systemic approaches that de-emphasize time and emphasize learning

In addition to the survey data, the findings of the Proficiency-Based Learning Task Force (uploaded) informed this writing.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: State education agencies would benefit from both accessible research and knowledge of demonstration sites. The former is readily available, although abstracts and summaries might provide some increased accessibility. To address the issue of practicability, demonstration site identification would be a first step for promotion of the concept. Collaborative SEA teams, possibly across states, would benefit from site visits to these locations. Further, home SEAs for the demonstration sites may provide insight into the legislative and policy actions that created an environment in which the site flourished.

Priority Need 2. Improvement of Assessment and Accountability Systems

Justification: As written to in Priority Need A, the improvement of Assessment systems is a significant topic in the survey. The recommendations of the MASA Assessment and Accreditation Task Force (uploaded) provide specific information about what improvements should be considered. Generally, summative assessments, used primarily for accountability, fail to provide feedback to students and

teachers adequately. The emphasis in this area should be the marriage of accountability systems with assessment for learning designs.

Among the areas of significant challenge for accountability systems is the area of preparation for the “next step” for students. This is most commonly referred to as College and Career Readiness. While valid and reliable assessment data exists for college bound students, and to some extent also for career bound, a single measure across all possible aspirational directions does not exist. Further, this lack is also present in cases where a school is preparing students for further public schooling, e.g. a k-8 district that sends students to high school elsewhere.

It is fair to say that there is more than an uneasy tension in the use of subgroups and super subgroups in accountability systems. These structures aim to protect classes of students but because of the variable nature of district and school demographics, treat those organizations differentially.

An additional and significant issue for accountability is what measure to use as a proxy for poverty. The Community Eligibility Program, provision 2, has resulted in a masking of results through over identification. Nationally, the discussion of a replacement measure continues in the direction of using Direct Certification data rather than program eligibility. Even so, research indicates that early and generational poverty has a significant educational effect in contrast to situational poverty, especially later in development, has much less effect (National Forum on Educational Statistics brief, uploaded, New York Times: Why American Schools Are Even More Unequal Than We Thought - NYTimes.com). Accurate measures are more likely to improve interventions.

As an extension of the metrics part of accountability, the ability to make some sort of comparability and accountability judgments across multiple assessments is needed in the field. Clearly, the region is in a state of some flux when one views the comments on implementing standards. Further evidence is provided, particularly on a national scale, when one notes the number of states changing standards and/or assessment systems. In light of the changes in assessments, information on how to analyze outcomes across multiple assessments is a critical need.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Amass and summarize research on the areas of concern, specifically:

- ▶ Use of assessment for learning in concert with accountability purposes
- ▶ Equitable use of subgroup data
- ▶ Cross-assessment comparisons
- ▶ Proxy measures for poverty
- ▶ Broad measures for combined college / career readiness (as well as high school readiness)

Disseminate research and convene collaborative groups to consider how this research can be put into policy and practice.

Priority Need 3. Best practices in Standards Implementation

Justification: As noted in priority need 2, the field is currently undergoing much change in regard to state learning standards. Survey data, reports on the actions of legislatures and SEAs as regards the

abandonment of the CCSS, and the statutory requirements of ESSA all point to these changes as being broad and significant.

The implementation of new standards is, at first blush, a fairly straightforward operation. However, the current context may give rise to opportunities for SEAs to foster some innovation, e.g. adoption of power standards or standards-based grading, etc. Further, both comparability issues across generations of standards and ensuring rigorous implementation processes are important.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Convening collaborative working groups would be a helpful approach to increasing capacity. Effectiveness would be significantly increased if experts and facilitators could be secured for this work.

Priority Need 4. Improving Instructional Leadership

Justification: Survey data indicates that this is an important topic. Marzano established that a primary school-level factor in student achievement is the quality of the teacher. Wallace Foundation research indicates that effective leadership was present in every case of where an underperforming school improved student achievement (Leithwood et al, 2010; uploaded).

Recommended Strategy: SEAs are minimally the gatekeepers for principal certification. However, once certified, little supports the continued growth and improvement of instructional leadership skills for principals over the life of their careers. Absent personal motivation, growth is left to chance. While the research has established what makes a principal effective, little information is available on practical programs, actions, policies, etc. that foster continuous growth for principals.

Action research and dissemination through briefs, site visits, speakers bureaus, and collaborative working groups are all needed to develop programs and policies that support career-long growth for principals.

Priority Need 5. Improving Access to Early Childhood Education

Justification: Survey data indicates that this is a priority. This conclusion mirrors public discourse in the area. However, in contrast to the rhetoric, action is lagging. Lack of funding is often cited as a significant challenge. Funding, however, is a relevant factor only in state-run or –subsidized operations. Access to quality experiences for children may well be increased through the improvement of their current care contexts. Since children are already learning [hyperbole intended] and being cared for, the greatest method of low- to no-cost improvement is through ensuring that their current experiences effectively support development.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Research is needed into the best and most practical approaches to support child development across all early care and education contexts. Further, effective ways in which states can influence both the policy and programmatic approaches for both public and non-public contexts should be considered and disseminated. A research brief on the topic is recommended.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Dr. Keith Owen

Affiliation: Superintendent, Public school district in Colorado

Priority Need 1 Better funding of public education from pre-K through post-secondary

Justification: Survey responses, general outreach and personal experience

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Provide Colorado citizens best practices from around the country on how to ensure better funding of k-12 public education and higher education. Colorado has struggled to provide adequate funding to k-12 public education and could really benefit from the expertise of leading states on how to provide better funding to ensure better outcomes for all students.

Priority Need 2. Ensuring equity in educational opportunities for all students

Justification: Survey responses, general outreach and personal experience

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Provide a data base of research on best practices that school districts can use from around the country. Provide professional development opportunities to school district staff on how best to ensure equitable opportunities to all students.

Priority Need 3. Taking full advantage of the opportunities outlined in the implementation of the ESSA Act

Justification: Survey responses, general outreach and personal experience

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Giving state departments of education guidance on how to maximize flexibility under ESSA for school districts. In addition, providing exemplars from states that have really looked at accountability and assessment differently under the new law and provide those to all states to learn from.

