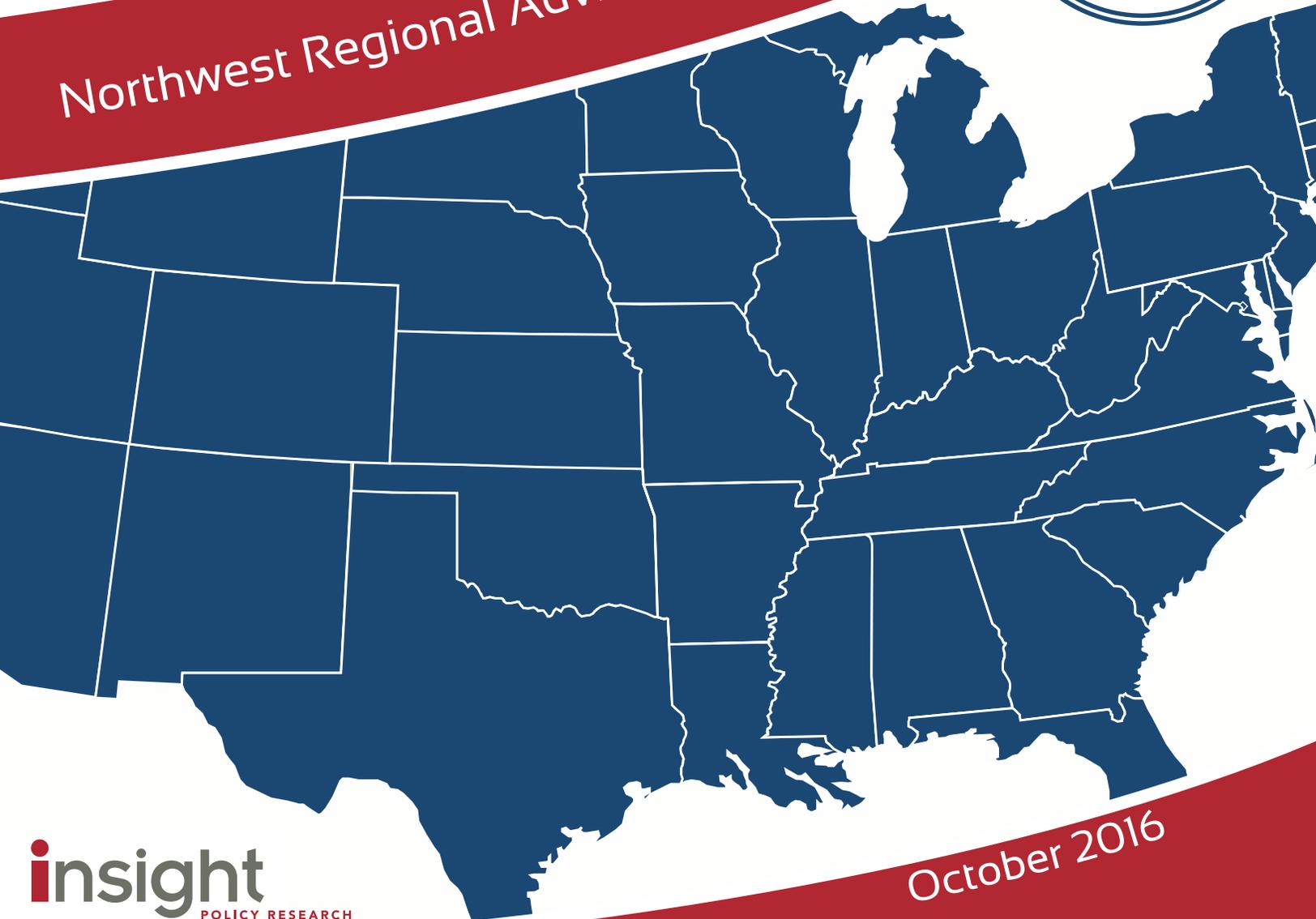


Identifying and Addressing Regional Education Needs

U.S. Department of Education



Northwest Regional Advisory Committee



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The Northwest Region:

A Report Identifying and Addressing the Region's Educational Needs

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and results of the Northwest 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; improve educational outcomes for all students; close achievement gaps; and improve the quality of instruction. The report represents the work of the Northwest RAC, which includes Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Committee members convened three times and reached out to their respective constituencies between July 19, 2016, and August 31, 2016. Members of the Northwest RAC represented a variety of stakeholders, including the business community, LEAs and SEAs, institutions of higher education, and practicing educators. 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. A superintendent in Oregon and a representative from Office of the Superintendent of Instruction in Washington State were invited to participate in the Northwest RAC but declined the invitation.

Table A. Northwest RAC members

Member name	Affiliation	State
Barbara Adams	University of Alaska Fairbanks	Alaska
Janelle Vanasse	Lower Kuskokwim School District	Alaska
Richard Osguthorpe	Boise State University	Idaho
Rod Gramer	Idaho Business for Education	Idaho
Linda Clark	Idaho State Board of Education	Idaho
Chuck Zimmerly	Idaho Department of Education, Office of Public Instruction	Idaho
Greg Alexander	Garden Valley School District	Idaho
Christina Spriggs	Idaho Digital Learning Academy and Glens Ferry High School	Idaho
Deborah Hunsaker	Montana Office of Public Instruction	Montana
Deborah Halliday	Montana Office of Public Instruction	Montana
Michael Magone	Lolo School District	Montana
John George	Dexter McCarty Middle School	Oregon
April Campbell	Oregon Department of Education	Oregon
Lois Davies	Pateros School District	Washington

Members reviewed a regional profile containing educational statistics and other relevant data to inform their individual assessments of the challenges facing their region. Demographically, the Northwest has a large distribution of public school districts in rural areas, an average of 66 percent compared to the U.S. average of 53 percent. Due in part to the rural makeup of the region, states have experienced shortages of highly qualified teachers, particularly in math and science. Of the region’s 2.2 million public school students, American Indian/Alaska Natives make up a significant proportion of minority students. In both

Alaska and Montana, the American Indian/Alaska Native population enrolled in public schools is the largest minority group. These regional characteristics present unique strengths and challenges when it comes to language, access, and equity.

One overarching issue affecting students in the Northwest region is educational attainment: four of the five Northwest states have a lower public high school adjusted cohort graduation rate than the United States as a whole. When broken down by race and ethnicity, all minority groups in the region, particularly American Indian/Alaska Native students, have lower average graduation rates than those of the same race/ethnicity across the United States. With regard to higher education, of the four states with reported results, the Northwest region is at or below the U.S. average of college completion rates for 4-year public schools (table 26, appendix A). See also appendix A for other detailed tables on the educational characteristics of the region.

Members also collaborated to develop a plan for soliciting information from a diverse group of stakeholders on the region's educational needs. Members engaged stakeholders and disseminated information by administering an online survey and conducting informal and formal interviews in person, via telephone, or by sending the questions via email. Members focused 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 1,048 individuals responded to the survey. Of the respondents, 212 were teachers; 195 were principals; 122 were librarians; 123 were parents; 113 were superintendents; 20 were community members; 4 were students; 8 were curriculum specialists; 68 were central office staff; 41 were staff from institutions of higher education; 36 were state education agency staff; 13 were business community members; 11 were state and local government employees; and 82 reported other primary roles, including advocate, education service agency, instructional coach, nonprofit, PTA/PTO, school board member, school counselor/school psychologist/social worker, and state board of education.

Each committee member of the Northwest RAC 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 identified and prioritized the following 6 priority needs:

- ▶ preparing students for college and career;
- ▶ recruiting and retaining highly qualified educators and leaders;
- ▶ addressing disproportionalities in educational equity, including funding;
- ▶ implementing personalized learning;
- ▶ supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps; and
- ▶ improving assessment and accountability.

Committee members also developed 43 recommendations for technical assistance that aligned with the six priority needs described above. These recommendations are summarized using the following 8 categories:

- ▶ **Identify and disseminate effective strategies, resources, and policy exemplars.** Members recommended resources that support college career readiness outcomes, particularly for first generation college-going, and students from rural and remote contexts.
- ▶ **Support SEAs in developing professional development and training programs.** This recommendation was specifically requested for teachers and counselors in the areas of literacy; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and career counseling.
- ▶ **Assist states in developing plans.** Members recommended Comprehensive Centers help states create plans to recruit and retain high-quality teachers, increase the quality and scope of teacher preparation and teacher professional development programs, and promote evidence-based practices.
- ▶ **Help SEAs alleviate funding inequities.** Members noted that comprehensive centers could help states by identifying: (1) freely available professional development and resources, (2) grants and other external funding opportunities aligned with key educational priorities, (3) strategies for developing consortia of smaller/rural schools/districts, and (4) effective practices for maximizing resources and achieving optimal funding levels.
- ▶ **Help SEAs identify districts doing innovative work.** With their broader regional perspective, members noted that comprehensive centers could identify and share examples of innovative work in classrooms, schools, and districts despite financial limitations, and highlight these examples through professional development and mentoring programs.
- ▶ **Share research and data.** States and districts could use assistance finding research and data on effective strategies and interventions for personalized learning. Comprehensive centers could help identify vendors and quality applications/software that will enhance efforts to pursue personalized learning. They could also provide resources and data that support comprehensive approaches to working with the lowest performing schools.
- ▶ **Assist SEAs in their efforts to develop better and more efficient assessment systems.** Members recommended assistance creating systems that focus on student growth, yield information that is useful for targeting instruction, reduce over testing, and promote alignment among high school and post-secondary assessments.
- ▶ **Conduct regional assessments of states' needs.** As policies change, and student populations change, the needs in a region also change. Members recommended comprehensive centers continue to conduct needs assessments related to: (1) improving teacher hiring/certification processes, (2) addressing educational equity/disproportionality, and (3) capacity to provide effective early childhood education/pre-Kindergarten. Target technical assistance efforts to the identified needs.

See chapter 2 for a summary of the 43 specific recommendations. 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 conducted by the Northwest Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The Northwest region includes Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The RAC members used statistical data from the Northwest 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 31, 2016, to discuss regional needs, and how Comprehensive Centers could help address them.

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 programs of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and to 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; closing 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 Northwest regional profile, which provides a descriptive snapshot of the educational landscape in the region. The RAC members used the 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. Summaries of the data presented in each section of the profiles appear below. See appendix A for the descriptive tables and charts that represent this regional profile.

More than 2.2 million students attend public schools in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington (table 2, appendix A). The demographics of the region’s public school population are unique: American Indian/Alaska Natives and Hispanic students represent the largest minority groups enrolled in public schools in the Northwest, and students who identify as “two or more races” make up a larger percentage distribution of enrollment than the U.S. average (table 3, appendix A). The American Indian and Alaskan Native public school population is larger than the U.S. average in all five Northwest states, with the majority residing in Alaska and Montana (table 3, appendix A). It is also notable that the

Asian and Black student percentage distribution of enrollment in the region is substantially lower than the U.S. average (table 3, appendix A).

Socioeconomic indicators such as the percentage of children in poverty and annual household income are similar in the Northwest and the United States as a whole. However, students in the Northwest are more likely, on average, to attend a Title I school compared to the entire United States, indicating there is a substantial percentage of students from low-income families in the region (table 5, appendix A).

With regard to educational resources in the region, per-pupil expenditures in 2012–2013 were lower in four of the five Northwest states than the average expenditures in the United States. The lowest spending was in Idaho, \$7,455 per pupil compared to the U.S. average of \$12,020 (table 14, appendix A). In the area of state-funded pre-K programs (2015), the three states reporting results—Alaska, Oregon, and Washington—spent more per enrolled child than the U.S. average of \$4,489. However, the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in state-funded programs in the region was on average below the United States as a whole (table 7, appendix A).

Regarding educational attainment, four of the five Northwest states have a lower public high school graduation rate than the United States as a whole (table 25, appendix A). While the Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander graduation rates for Northwest students were on average slightly below the U.S. rate, the American Indian/Alaska Native rates had a larger discrepancy: the adjusted cohort graduation rate was 70 percent for American Indian/Alaskan Natives in the United States, while the rate for students in the Northwest states ranged from 54 to 65 percent (table 25, appendix A). In regards to higher education, of the four states with reported results, the Northwest states were at or below the U.S. average of college completion rates for 4-year public schools (table 26, appendix A).

The Northwest has a large distribution of public school districts in rural areas, an average of 66 percent compared to the U.S. average of 53 percent (table 4, appendix A). The rural makeup of the region has caused some states to experience shortages of highly qualified teachers, particularly in math and science. To address the challenges of recruitment and retention, Northwest states have implemented numerous innovative approaches (table 20, appendix A). In Idaho, two universities are partnering with preparation programs and focusing on math and science, working to create highly qualified, highly effective STEM teachers. Washington is working to identify and assist candidates from underrepresented populations seeking careers as teachers through the Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) program. RWT supports high school students interested in exploring education careers through teaching academies across the state. In Alaska, four universities have made it possible for individuals with a bachelor's degree in high-needs areas to qualify for teacher certification in a more streamlined manner. Alaska has also received assistance through an alternative teacher preparation program managed by the Department of Education. Since 2009, in partnership with the 15 highest needs districts in the state, the department has recruited and trained individuals with bachelor's degrees in highly qualified shortage areas.

C. Challenges Affecting Regional Needs

RAC members' data collection efforts identified several challenges affecting the Northwest region's education needs. The challenges affecting the region are briefly summarized below:

- ▶ **Achievement gaps.** In Alaska and Montana, the American Indian/Alaska Native population is the largest minority group enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. In all five Northwest states, this population has a lower graduation rate than the average U.S. graduation rate of American Indian/Alaska Native students (table 25, appendix A).
- ▶ **Attracting and retaining effective teachers, especially in rural areas.** As shown in the Regional Profile, most states in the region have more rural schools than the national average. Stakeholders in Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and Washington reported it is challenging to fill openings for teachers in these areas and to retain effective teachers. In many instances, school districts rely on long-term substitutes or teachers with fewer qualifications than preferred.
- ▶ **Providing school services.** Oregon's student population has the highest percentage of eligible students for free or reduced-price lunch, the most students with disabilities, and the most gifted and talented students across the region.
- ▶ **Geographic or economic isolation.** Stakeholders in all five states emphasized challenges related to preparing students for college and career, citing geographic or economic isolation as an obstacle to providing adequate opportunities for youth.

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 31, 2016. Methods included disseminating an online survey link (through email or posting on public websites) and formal and informal interviews conducted in person and via telephone or email. 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 had access to a Communities of Practice website to help facilitate interactions and align data collection activities. Members stored contact information, needs sensing notes, and outreach/data analysis assignments on the website. They also directed potential survey respondents to the information stored on the website to help contextualize their requests for stakeholder feedback. 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 1,048 individuals took the online survey. An additional 54 individuals provided feedback through informal and formal interviews conducted in person and via telephone or email. 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
Alaska	185	17
Idaho	230	21
Montana	177	16
Oregon	179	16
Washington	331	30
Total Northwest region	1,102	100

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

Table 2 shows the number of responses received by the self-identified roles of the respondents.

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

Role	Number of individuals providing feedback	Percent
State level	55	5
SEA staff	36	3
Other state or local government	11	1
Other, state level	8	< 1
Local district or regional level	262	24
Superintendent or director of schools	154	14
School board member	35	3
LEA or central office	68	6
Other, local or regional level	5	< 1
School level	475	43
Principal or other school administrator	195	18
Librarian	122	11
Curriculum specialist or instructional coach	15	1
Parent/grandparent/guardian	127	12
Other, school level	16	1
Classroom level	212	19
Teacher	212	19
Community level	97	9
Higher education	41	4
Community member	20	2
Business	26	2
Other, community level	10	1
Other	1	< 1
Total	1,102	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 committee members' individual expertise to identify the region's most pressing educational need areas and to make recommendations for technical assistance accordingly (see appendix B). Nine reports were submitted by 11 of the 14 RAC members (two pairs of members teamed together to submit joint reports). Neither member representing Oregon submitted a needs assessment report, nor did one member from Idaho.

Overall, individual members of the Northwest RAC identified the following six priority needs:

- ▶ **Preparing students for college and career.** The geographic and economic isolation of the Northwest has meant a lack of opportunities for many rural youth to explore college and career opportunities. Committee members emphasize a need for connecting states and districts to accessible, culturally relevant online resources and training related to college preparation and career development. Committee members also cite the need to educate SEAs on strategies to support families of first-generation college-going students.
- ▶ **Recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators and leaders.** The largely rural makeup of the Northwest region has led to acute teacher shortages in some states. To address this issue, committee members cite a need for increased incentives and additional support for schools in rural areas to obtain and retain quality teachers and leaders. They also indicate a need for developing strategies with SEAs on improving certification and hiring processes to ensure retention of highly qualified educators in the region.
- ▶ **Addressing disproportionalities in educational equity, including funding.** Schools serving students who disproportionately suffer from inadequate educational opportunities need more support to develop students' socioemotional learning skills and implement culturally relevant approaches to education. Rural districts in particular struggle to pay for the services and supports that students need to thrive. Given both the rural context and the region's significant number of Hispanic, Native American, and Alaskan Native students who are not achieving at levels comparable to their White counterparts, there is a great need for technical assistance to address equity. Specifically, committee members seek targeted training for educators of these populations and strategies for expanding access to scholarship and grant programs for minority students.
- ▶ **Promoting and implementing personalized learning.** As districts increasingly use technology in classrooms, strategies to personalize learning have become more feasible but also more complex. Given the below-average number of college- and career-ready students in the region, personalized learning is seen as a potential strategy to accelerate achievement. To effectively implement personalized learning, committee members note a need for technical assistance in identifying and sharing proven personalized learning techniques.

- ▶ **Supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps.** Educators, parents, and community members are concerned about low-achieving, rural schools that are falling well below average on state tests. In many cases, these schools lack the resources and funding to close the achievement gaps. Committee members see a need for a demonstration program that would allow teachers to observe successful strategies for reaching low-performing students. Committee members also cite the potential role of Comprehensive Centers in researching data and opportunities for inexpensive after-school and summer school programs to help struggling students reach proficiency.
- ▶ **Improving assessment and accountability.** Without effective assessments and accountability, schools cannot guarantee all students will be prepared for college and careers. Committee members suggest a need for technical assistance in helping states define systems focused on growth that yield information supporting targeted instruction. They also cite the need for strategically aligning postsecondary placement exams with existing high school assessments.

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

- ▶ identify and disseminate effective strategies, resources, and policy exemplars;
- ▶ support SEAs in developing professional development and training;
- ▶ assist states in developing plans to recruit and retain high-quality teachers;
- ▶ help SEAs alleviate funding inequities;
- ▶ help SEAs identify districts doing innovative work;
- ▶ share research and data;
- ▶ assist SEAs in their efforts to develop better and more efficient assessment systems; and
- ▶ conduct regional assessments of states' needs.

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 for college and career</i>	
L. Clark	Help SEAs to identify and disseminate effective strategies, resources, and policy exemplars for
R. Gramer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing graduation rates and promoting college/work readiness
B. Adams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using technology-based approaches to address opportunity and funding gaps,
D. Halliday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing challenges endemic to first generation college-going students, and/or students from rural and remote contexts
R. Osguthorpe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing local community involvement in the education process to improve student outcomes
J. Vanasse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining college/work readiness using multiple measures
C. Zimmerly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing accountability systems with aligned assessments and rigorous measurable objectives
D. Hunsaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving transition from secondary to postsecondary education/workforce

Member name	Recommendation
L. Clark	Assist SEAs in the development of high quality, on demand, and low cost professional development/training programs that build educator capacity to deliver personalized instruction in the areas of literacy and STEM and engage in effective career counseling
R. Gramer D. Halliday R. Osguthorpe	Coordinate or otherwise facilitate a convening of education stakeholders across the Northwest region to develop strategies for increasing community involvement in education and building a strong education culture
<i>Recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators and leaders</i>	
L. Davies M. Magone	Assist in conducting a regional assessment of states' technical assistance needs related to improving teacher hiring/certification processes and improving the recruitment of highly effective teachers and leaders
R. Osguthorpe	Support SEA-sponsored or other professional development/technical assistance initiatives to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop statewide plans to recruit and retain high quality teachers • address the quality and scope of teacher preparation and professional development programs • promote evidence-based practices in teacher recruitment, retention, and professional preparation/development, • foster development of a growth mindset among teachers and leaders, and • help districts and schools develop buy-in from teachers, leaders and education stakeholders around shared continuous improvement goals
R. Gramer	Support SEAs efforts to prepare teachers for culture challenges, meeting individual students' needs, technology use, effective instruction, curriculum, and assessment
<i>Addressing disproportionalities in educational equity, including funding</i>	
C. Zimmerly	Assist in conducting a regional assessment of district needs related to educational equity/disproportionality. Provide targeted technical assistance to SEAs in the region based on the results
B. Adams	Assist SEAs in identifying and disseminating exemplars of best practice and resources related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing professional development/training specific to low achieving subgroups of students • using evidence-based interventions for trauma-informed care • districts, schools, and educators doing innovative work in classrooms and achieving results despite financial limitations
R. Osguthorpe	Providing technical assistance to state education agencies that will enable them to provide additional support to districts for pre-K, special education, and English language learners
L. Davies M. Magone	Assist in conducting a survey of each state in the Northwest region to measure district capacity to provide effective early childhood education/pre-k. Target technical assistance efforts to the identified capacity deficiencies
<i>Promoting and implementing personalized learning</i>	
L. Clark B. Adams	Support SEA efforts to implement personalized learning by identifying and disseminating exemplars of best practice and resources related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective strategies and interventions for personalized learning • policies from jurisdictions that are effectively implementing personalized learning models • effective professional development on personalized learning strategies for teachers and leaders • vendors and quality applications/software that will enhance efforts to pursue personalized learning

Member name	Recommendation
C. Zimmerly	<p>Support professional development/technical assistance for SEA staff on how to utilize technology for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessing open educational resources to develop curriculum • identifying research-based interventions • establishing effective progress monitoring of student achievement outcomes
<i>Supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps</i>	
D. Halliday D. Hunsaker	<p>Help SEAs to collect data and resources that highlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • districts making achievement gains for the lowest performing schools and using effective innovations • curriculum and resources that can support quality supplemental instruction programs (e.g., afterschool, summer programs) • professional development practices and opportunities available to teachers in the lowest performing schools
C. Zimmerly	<p>Assist SEA efforts to provide professional development and demonstration programs on how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze data to identify achievement gaps • identify and tailor research-based interventions to address gaps • establish effective progress monitoring systems to determine the success or failure of interventions
C. Spriggs	<p>Support SEAs in developing comprehensive approaches to working with the lowest performing schools by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring ESSA-mandated plans for those schools identified for targeted and comprehensive support include strategies that adequately address the needs of struggling students • emphasizing cultural relevance and meaningful family and community engagement throughout the PK-12 continuum
R. Gramer D. Halliday R. Osguthorpe	<p>Organizing forums to facilitate community engagement. Coordinate or otherwise facilitate a convening of education stakeholders across the Northwest region to develop strategies for increasing community involvement in education and building a strong education culture. This recommendation can address multiple needs</p>
<i>Improving assessment and accountability</i>	
R. Gramer	<p>Assist states in their efforts to define key performance indicators that predict academic success, adopt accompanying assessments, and use the resulting data to hold school leaders accountable for results</p>
L. Clark	<p>Help SEAs develop better and more efficient assessment systems that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure student growth • Yield information that can be used by teachers to target instruction • Reduce over-testing
J. Vanasse	<p>Assist SEAs efforts to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate high school assessments that meet ESSA requirements and are useful for postsecondary placement • Align university/trade school placement exams with assessments available and/or required in high school

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Appendix A. Northwest 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

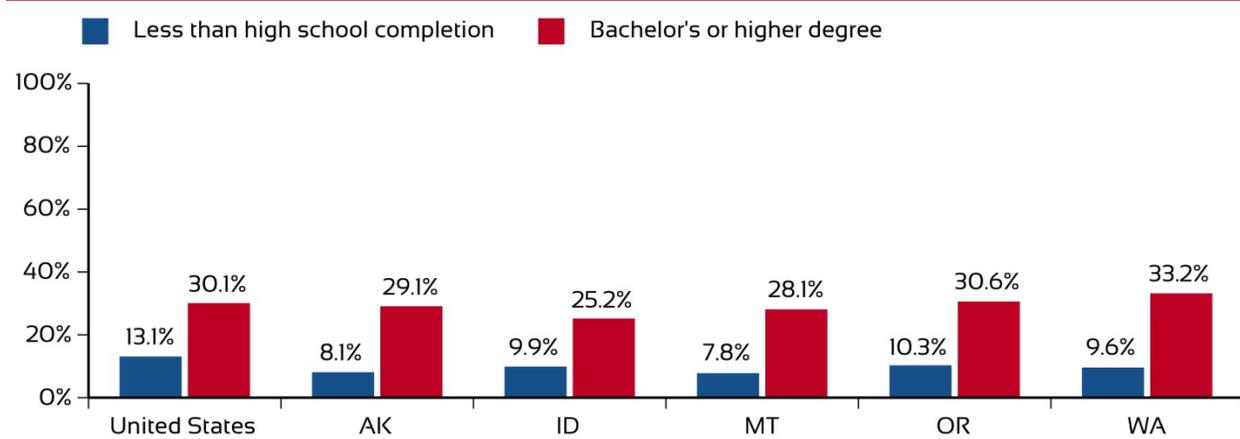
- ▶ the educational attainment of the adult population;
- ▶ the poverty rate, median household income, and unemployment rate;
- ▶ the overall number of students, teachers, and schools, both public and private;
- ▶ the racial/ethnic distribution of students served by public schools;
- ▶ participation 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 speak 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 104.80. 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
Alaska	12.0	15.3	\$71,600	6.7
Idaho	14.6	17.1	\$47,900	3.7
Montana	15.7	18.1	\$46,300	4.2
Oregon	15.8	17.7	\$51,100	4.5
Washington	13.0	15.6	\$61,400	5.8

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
Alaska	501	7,898	130,944	50	410	5,080
Idaho	684	15,002	296,476	200	1,360	18,580
Montana	823	10,310	144,129	140	880	10,560
Oregon	1,226	26,733	593,000	480	4,310	58,830
Washington	2,297	54,867	1,058,936	800	8,720	119,730

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 208.40. Retrieved July 5, 2016, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_208.40.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.

Percentage 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
Alaska	49.2	3.4	6.6	6.2	2.4	23.9	8.3
Idaho	76.8	1.1	17.2	1.3	0.3	1.3	2.0
Montana	80.0	0.9	4.1	0.8	0.2	11.3	2.6
Oregon	63.8	2.5	22.4	3.9	0.7	1.6	5.1
Washington	58.2	4.5	21.1	7.2	1.0	1.4	6.7

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 codes 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
Alaska	5.7	3.8	11.3	79.2
Idaho	4.3	5.2	25.2	65.2
Montana	1.7	1.2	13.3	83.8
Oregon	7.2	11.1	33.3	48.3
Washington	9.7	18.1	20.5	51.7

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
Alaska	509	71.9
Idaho	748	73.1
Montana	827	83.7
Oregon	1,296	46.3
Washington	2,338	64.9

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. Participation in Public School Services.

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
Alaska	43.0	11.4	13.7	4.1
Idaho	47.4	4.7	9.3	4.2
Montana	42.1	2.3	11.4	5.2
Oregon	53.5	8.8	13.9	6.9
Washington	46.3	9.4	12.5	3.9

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 percentage 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
Alaska	\$6,270	3	N/A
Idaho	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montana	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oregon	\$8,648	10	6
Washington	\$7,599	8	3

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
Alaska	83.8	3.3	2.4	5.4	5.1
Idaho	89.4	8.0	1.4	0.9	0.4
Montana	95.8	1.5	1.4	0.4	0.9
Oregon	85.1	8.8	2.5	2.9	0.6
Washington	81.2	8.3	3.9	5.6	1.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder*.

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
Alaska	54	53	0	1	0
Idaho	152	115	2	3	32
Montana	493	407	77	4	5
Oregon	220	180	19	4	17
Washington	318	298	9	0	11

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
Alaska	Governor appoints board, board appoints chief	The legislature has a house health, education and social services committee and a senate health, education and social services committee.	34 local boards; members elected.
Idaho	Appointed board, elected chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	114 local boards; members elected.
Montana	Appointed board, elected chief	The legislature has a house education and cultural resources committee and a senate education and cultural resources committee.	454 local boards; members elected.
Oregon	Governor appoints board, board appoints chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	199 local boards; members elected.
Washington	Joint Elected/Appointed State Board; Elected Chief	The legislature has a house education committee and a senate education committee.	296 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
Alaska	Bill Walker-R, Jan 2015	2/7 voting members	Susan McCauley, interim, Mar 2016	Jim Johnsen, Jul 2015
Idaho	N/A	1/8 voting members	Sherri Ybarra-R, Jan 2015	Matt Freeman, Jun 2015
Montana	N/A	2/7 voting members	N/A	N/A
Oregon	Kate Brown-D, Feb 2015	N/A	Salam Noor, Jul 2015	N/A
Washington	N/A	2/14 voting members	* will change in 2016	N/A

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
Alaska	\$2,670,758	12.1	68.5	19.3
Idaho	\$2,103,804	11.9	64.0	24.0
Montana	\$1,657,908	12.9	48.1	39.0
Oregon	\$6,160,158	9.2	49.4	41.4
Washington	\$12,142,892	8.6	59.0	32.4

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.

Note: † District of Columbia is not a state; all nonfederal revenue is from local sources.

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
Alaska	\$20,397	49.6	36.9	13.5
Idaho	\$7,455	54.6	31.2	14.2
Montana	\$11,577	54.9	33.2	12.0
Oregon	\$10,375	51.3	33.9	14.8
Washington	\$11,456	49.1	31.7	19.1

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
Alaska	130,944	\$11,454,698	\$3,064,926	26.8
Idaho	296,476	\$9,323,107	\$2,957,834	31.7
Montana	144,129	\$7,171,973	\$2,463,031	34.3
Oregon	593,000	\$29,383,089	\$9,528,218	32.4
Washington	1,058,936	\$50,878,233	\$17,334,781	34.1

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/>).

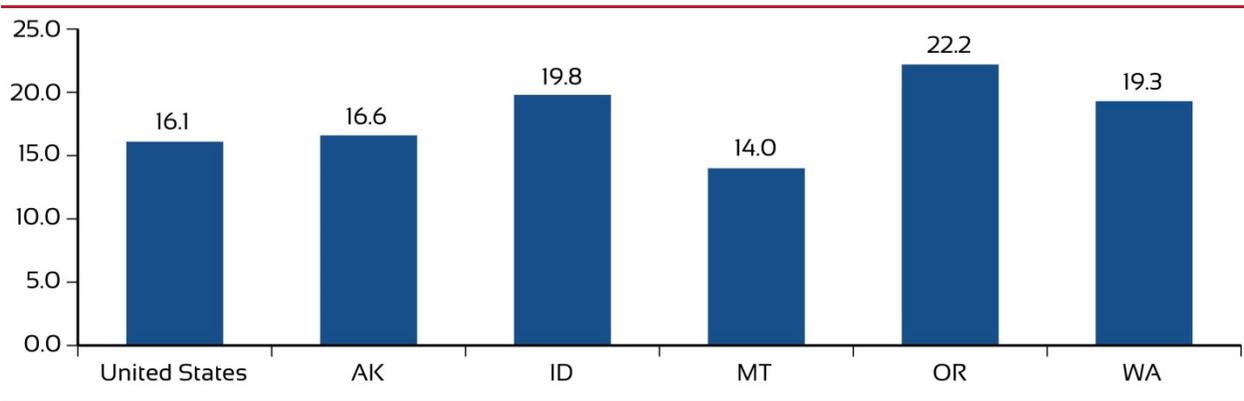
Table 15. School district broadband connectivity, 2015

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
Alaska	42	97	57	0
Idaho	65	90	41	7
Montana	78	65	23	22
Oregon	75	88	43	29
Washington	88	83	55	29

Source: Education Superhighway. (2015.) 2015 State of the States. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://stateofthestates.educationsuperhighway.org/assets/sos/full_report-55ba0a64dcae0611b15ba9960429d323e2eadbac5a67a0b369bedbb8cf15ddbb.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
Alaska	707	252	238	N/A	14
Idaho	5,397	1,193	994	5	194
Montana	2,598	793	751	42	N/A
Oregon	2,013	1,432	1,432	N/A	N/A
Washington	5,241	2,333	2,219	114	N/A

Source: 2015 All States Report Data File, Title II Reports: National Teacher Preparation Data. Retrieved 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
Alaska	252	94.4	0.0	5.6
Idaho	1,193	83.3	0.4	16.3
Montana	793	94.7	5.3	0.0
Oregon	1,432	100.0	0.0	0.0
Washington	2,333	95.1	4.9	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
Alaska	984	737	75
Idaho	1,242	601	48
Montana	1,390	636	46
Oregon	1,722	1,066	62
Washington	1,621	226	14

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
Alaska	Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montana	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oregon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	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
Alaska	<p>The Alaska Pacific University, the University of Alaska Anchorage, the University of Alaska Southeast, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks have approved post-baccalaureate and M.A.T. teacher preparation programs that can be complete in one year. This allows individuals with a bachelor degree in high needs areas to be able to qualify for certification.</p> <p>The alternative teacher preparation program managed by the Department of Education also addresses the shortages of highly qualified teacher. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, in collaboration with the fifteen highest need districts in Alaska, the Department recruited and trained individuals with bachelor's degree in highly qualified shortage areas.</p>
Idaho	<p>Due to the rural nature of Idaho, some of the shortage areas are not a result of lack of preparing teachers in the applicable subject area of need, but rather the willingness of the candidate to relocate to a rural area. Individual teacher preparation programs work with school districts in the region to identify areas of need in subject and specialty areas.</p> <p>The need for highly qualified, highly effective, STEM teachers continues to be a main focus for state teacher preparation programs. For example, Lewis-Clark State College's Pathways for Accelerated Certification and Endorsement (PACE) and Boise State University's I doTeach programs work with pre service teachers and existing teachers, specifically in mathematics and science.</p> <p>The Content Specialist alternate certification process identifies potential teachers in high need areas and allows them to become certified while teaching.</p>

State	Description of the Extent to Which Teacher Preparation Programs Are Addressing Shortages of Highly Qualified Teachers
Montana	Critical Quality Educator Shortage Annual Report http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/cert/CrShortageNov2014.pdf
Oregon	Oregon currently is producing a surplus of educators in almost all areas. In addition, the economic situation of the state has reduced significantly the number of recent graduates being hired by districts. Shortages of highly qualified educators is driven more by location of the district than by supply of educators.
Washington	<p>The PESB designates subject area shortages based on periodic analysis of educator supply and demand in Washington. The state has not currently defined any geographic shortage areas. The following areas are currently considered to be in shortage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Special Education • Special Education • Mathematics • Middle Level–Math • Science (broad field) • Biology • Earth Science • Physics • Chemistry • Middle Level--Science <p>Washington's ongoing efforts to address these needs include the following actions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Washington's Legislature recognizes widespread concerns about the potential for teacher shortages and finds that classified instructional staff in public schools, current certificated staff, and unemployed certificate holders represent a great untapped resource for recruiting more teachers in critical shortage areas. PESB continued to develop and enhance high quality alternative route certification programs for this potential educator pool. 2. PESB has continued its focus on creating programs that identify and support candidates from underrepresented populations seeking careers as teachers. Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) supports high school students who are interested in exploring careers in education. Currently there are 4 active sites including Tacoma, Renton, Mt. Vernon and Burlington Edison operating teaching academies with previous sites in Yakima and Seattle. The Paraprofessional Pipeline Program (Pipeline) programs previously support candidates in earning their Bachelor's Degree and Residency Certification in shortage areas however funding for that program has been suspended since 2010. Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success Pilot program is a collaborative program between PESB and OSPI to focus on teacher preparation and student achievement with three schools and university partners. PESB intends to continue to elevate innovative practice around the state. 3. Per recent legislation, PESB and educational service districts (ESD) will annually convene school district and educator preparation program representatives to review district and regional educator workforce data supply and create programmatic responses to address identified needs in regional or subject areas shortages. 4. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) continued funding of the Educator Retooling program which provides state-funded conditional loans for teachers to earn additional endorsements in designated shortage areas. The shortage areas that qualify for this program are: Middle Level Math, Middle Level Science, Secondary Math and all Secondary Science endorsements. Educators are obligated to teach for two years in the endorsement area earned per each scholarship received in a Washington State K-12 public school. See Educator Retooling Program link below.

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
Alaska	39	31	24	6	30
Idaho	31	33	29	8	36
Montana	28	35	29	8	37
Oregon	33	33	26	8	34
Washington	29	30	28	12	40

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
Alaska	3,355	5,759	2.87	59
Idaho	6,151	10,442	2.90	62
Montana	3,247	5,090	2.92	62
Oregon	18,943	30,672	2.92	61
Washington	50,268	84,866	2.92	61

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 to attend 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
Alaska	31 to 40	21.1	51 to 60	1,494
Idaho	41 to 50	22.7	91 to 100	1,372
Montana	91 to 100	20.4	11 to 20	1,655
Oregon	31 to 40	21.5	41 to 50	1,546
Washington	21 to 30	22.4	61 to 70	1,496

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
Alaska	39	64	50	45	37	52	43
Idaho	42	77	60	55	48	100	26
Montana	100	57	44	41	36	15	67
Oregon	38	67	51	47	43	47	49
Washington	25	68	55	56	49	66	44

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
Alaska	71	79	66	70	74	55
Idaho	77	79	75	70	79	56
Montana	85	88	89	81	85	65
Oregon	72	74	60	65	83	54
Washington	78	81	68	68	84	57

Source: 2015 Digest of Education Statistics, table 219.46, retrieved July 5, 2016 from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_104.80.asp

E. College Completion Rates

One way that secondary schools measure their performance is by the transition of high school graduates into postsecondary 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
Alaska	††	*	N/A
Idaho	46.00	*	37.94
Montana	53.96	66.69	45.11
Oregon	64.12	82.61	32.92
Washington	64.97	83.39	48.53

Source: Shapiro, D., Dundar, 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. †† Results are not reported because the cohort includes both two-year and four-year enrollments.

Appendix B. Needs and Recommendations From Committee Members

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Barbara Adams

Affiliation: Adjunct Professor and researcher, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Priority Need 1. Improving reading proficiency of high school graduates to prepare them for college and careers

The K–12 education system should be preparing students to be college- and career-ready, which also infers that all students need to be proficient readers and information literate when they graduate high school.

Justification: Responses on the survey from librarians, community members and curriculum specialists (n=150) identify the top priority in education being the need to prepare students to be post-secondary and work force ready (n=36). This is strongly coupled with several other factors that predate and support this goal including ensuring that students are information literate and proficient readers. Given the lower than average graduation rate in the region (Alaska 71 percent, Idaho 77 percent, Oregon 72 percent, Washington 78 percent, Montana 85 percent) compared to the overall U.S. (82 percent), this priority is substantially supported. For students of color this discrepancy is even worse. Only 60 percent of Black students in Oregon graduate compared to 73 percent nationally and only 55 percent of Alaska Native/American Indian students in Alaska graduate compared to 70 percent nationally.¹

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Not surprising, this subgroup of the survey respondents believe librarians can be a centerpiece of change and support in this priority area. Although many of the suggestions focused on funding and supporting libraries, the suggestions have been transformed to provide technical assistance to states, districts and school staff.

Perhaps the roles that comprehensive centers could play would focus more on

- ▶ sharing data on reading proficiency and information literacy with state and district leaders to enhance their knowledge of effective programs and practices
- ▶ sharing data to support the role of the librarian and collaboration with teachers with state, district and school staff to encourage increased knowledge and practice
- ▶ providing exemplars of research driven practices, tools and resources at district and school level
- ▶ highlighting most effective practices within rural context and for AI/AN populations in particular at state, district and school level
- ▶ defining what an effective school library program is by looking at the recommendation from the American Library Association and supporting districts in implementing necessary changes
- ▶ providing technical assistance around developing, obtaining and using digital resources at the school level

¹ All data provided in the Northwest Region Education Profile compiled and shared by Insight Policy Research, August 12, 2016.

- ▶ developing consortium ideas
 - to provide free or drastically reduced costs for access to databases and other resources that our students wouldn't be able to otherwise use (especially with cuts to State Library resources)
 - to develop access to ACT/SAT prep resources - especially important in remote areas where prep classes aren't available – that are interactive with videos, chats, and not just sit in front of a screen and select multiple choice answers

Priority Need 2. Increasing equity to support students

Two of the priorities group together (n=35) to form the second overarching priority need of increasing equity practices to support underserved students: (a) developing and ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders and (b) ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality.

Justification: In the Northwest we have a diverse student population with a much less diverse teacher population (and even less diverse administration). Looking at race/ethnicity of students enrolled in the K-12 systems in the five states of the Northwest we have a drastically different picture than the average U.S. Two of our states have the largest minority population of students falling in the AI/AN category (Alaska 23.9 percent and Montana 11.3 percent), and the other three under the Hispanic category (Idaho 17.2 percent, Oregon 22.4 percent and Washington 21.1 percent) in contrast to the overall U.S. where Hispanic (24.8 percent) and Black students (15.6 percent) are the predominant underserved populations.²

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The comments from librarians, community members and curriculum specialists that identify how to increase equity practices to support minority students cover funding, interventions, technology, school access, teacher certification and professional development, and improving the reputation of the education profession. To move these ideas into the context of what the Comprehensive Centers could provide I've reformulated them to focus on technical assistance at the state, district and school levels.

- ▶ Share data that support school-wide efforts that positively impact student learning, such as the school library or learning commons, including a certified, high-qualified teacher librarian.
- ▶ Provide research that investigates how federal mandates without funding are (not) effective.
- ▶ Support development and implementation of innovative literacy and college-and -career readiness through library and information technology programs...for all.
- ▶ Support states on developing policy language that insists on fully staffed and supported school libraries.
- ▶ Support states to change legislation to the effect that instructional staff are qualified and pay them accordingly.
- ▶ Support districts and schools to develop and implement innovative ways of involving and serving parents. For example, more activities for parents to visit and have fun there would help.

² All data provided in the Northwest Region Education Profile compiled and shared by Insight Policy Research, August 12, 2016.

- ▶ Reading/ game nights, Math/ Science evenings, things like that. Help parents/guardians better understand complex educational issues
- ▶ Support state, district and schools in implementing strategies of working with para educators to increase equity practices with minority students. Simultaneously, be sure that certified staff spend the appropriate amount of time with those same students.
- ▶ Provide technical assistance to working effectively with trauma-informed care for kids coming from traumatic homes? Evidenced-based, professional interventions for those kiddos?
- ▶ Technical assistance on effective early childhood (birth – 5 years old) education and interaction with the current K-12 system.

Priority Need 3. Developing strategies for personalized learning

The third priority need as identified by librarians, community members and curriculum specialists who responded to the survey is developing strategies for promoting personalized learning (n=12). This priority need overlaps with both priority needs 1 and 2 shared here in terms of the potential policies, actions, and outcomes.

Justification: Personalized learning is a potential strategy to address low college- and career-ready graduates from K-12 systems in the Northwest Region and the meet the needs of diverse student populations.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Very few suggestions from the data provided insights into how the Comprehensive Centers could provide technical assistance training to address this need. Here are a few ideas following others already provided.

- ▶ Provide technical assistance at the state and district level to support policy exemplars around personalized learning.
- ▶ Provide professional development to teachers, para-educators, and administrators in how to engage in personalized learning, especially for minority students, trauma-affected students, rural schools, multi-age classrooms, etc.
- ▶ Share data on effective strategies for incorporating personalized learning into the classroom.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Dr. Linda Clark

Affiliation: Member, Idaho State Board of Education

Priority Need 1. Preparing Students for College And Career

There is significant need for a focus on preparing students for college and career, or, stated in another way, to prepare them for the “Fourth R” – REALITY. It is the responsibility of education to prepare students for the reality of life after high school, ensuring that they are prepared for college, the military, or the workplace – whatever pathway they select.

Justification: Parents rated Preparing Students for College and Career as their #1 priority. There is strong justification for this as the top priority. First of all, the cohort high school graduation rate is below the national average in four of the five states in the Region. Further, data demonstrating the percentages of students in the region who go on to secondary education and the percentages who actually complete certificate or degree programs, while varied somewhat across the individual states, substantiate this as a priority area for action. Further, this was the top priority in the region across all survey respondents. Academic and economic data indicates that tremendous additional effort is warranted to attain this goal.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: This is an area where the Comprehensive Service Centers can utilize federal resources to provide focused professional development to augment the limited resources of states and local districts. During the financial downturn, funds for professional development in districts were almost eliminated and many districts are just now beginning to restore training, as states increase funding that can be used in these areas. Teachers need strategies to address individual student needs and foster academic growth toward attainment of instructional standards. This is especially true in mathematics where achievement consistently behind that of the English Language Arts. The Centers can assist state departments of education in the development of training programs that teachers can access 24/7. This training could be customized for different grades/subjects. Such an approach would greatly enhance availability to teachers, no matter the size or remoteness of their district. Further, the Centers can facilitate development of statewide mentoring programs can also provide support for teachers. By identifying districts/teachers who have developed effective instructional strategies and matching them with districts/teachers who are struggling, additional, much needed support can be realized.

Priority Need 2. Equity in Education (addressing disproportionality)

The educational attainment of minority groups, special education students, and students living in poverty is significantly lower than that of their White, more affluent counterparts. Addressing disproportionality and equity in education is a priority to ensure that all students have equal access and equal opportunity to learn, grow, and develop into productive citizens.

Justification: Equity in education is the second highest priority based upon data collected from parents in the region. The items from parent completion of the survey that dealt with Equity in Education were general in nature with statements around “equal access & expectation”; “promoting equity in

opportunity”; and “closing the opportunity/achievement gap.” Other individual items noted special education students, minority students & students in rural districts as specific populations for intervention. The educational attainment of these sub-groups is consistent with national data that indicates an achievement gap for minority and rural students throughout the nation. Three of the five states in the region serve higher percentages of Title I students than the national average which a further justification for this priority. In addition, these states have significant numbers of minority students, especially Hispanic and Native American students who are not achieving at levels comparable to their White counterparts.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Districts lack the resources for the development and delivery of targeted training for teachers who teach these students. Centers should work with SEAs in the creation of training specific to these populations and in the development of models for widespread dissemination of, and participation in the training. It would also be very useful for the Centers to identify best practices and successes of districts in the Region in working with these populations and to share them with other districts, providing specifics that can be replicated. Public awareness of successes would also be helpful.

The Centers could also work with SEAs to develop strategies for expanding access by minority students through enhanced scholarship and grant programs. Further, and similar to the above suggestion, the sharing of success stories of minority students in higher education would be encouraging and motivating to students who may not have even considered higher education. Public Service Announcements and similar methods that highlight successes would be useful.

Priority Need 3: Personalized Education

The goal of personalizing education is not new; however, the expansion of technology tools into the hands of America’s students makes this massive change in instruction attainable. In a personalized educational environment, students can move at their own pace, and can demonstrate mastery in real and meaningful ways. The teacher becomes a facilitator of learning and the reality of most classrooms – “teaching to the middle” -- will give way to higher attainment for all.

Justification: The need to promote and move to Personalized Education was the third highest priority area for the parents who completed the survey, and 70 survey participants overall indicated this as a priority. Additionally, there were numerous responses regarding personalized education or other statements about the use of technology, etc. that were related to this area of emphasis found in the “other” segment of the survey. As districts put more and more technology into their classrooms, strategies to personalize learning will become increasingly important. There is a growing interest in personalized learning and some states are moving to models of mastery-based learning. Training and resources will be needed to support these efforts.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Centers can work with the SEAs to identify the models of personalized learning and identification of districts across the US that are successfully implementing them. Further, Centers can assist the SEAs in developing methods for dissemination to districts and individual teachers. The Centers can also work with the SEAs to identify vendors and quality applications/software that will enhance the effort. The creation of systems for monitoring and reporting student achievement will be among the greatest challenges to districts. The Centers can support SEAs in providing the needed background and teacher training.

Note: While the area of testing reform was not the third priority in the overall parent responses, it appeared significantly throughout the “other” priorities for parents. Concerns expressed about testing included many statements about what is viewed as “over testing” along with others regarding the lack of quality, usefulness, and over-emphasis on testing. Because so much of this issue is policy-related and falls outside of the realm of the Centers, I chose not to make it Priority 3.

While this area of concern falls primarily into the public policy arena, the Centers can provide important assistance in working with the SEAs in the development of new and better ways to assess student achievement. Individual states will view this work based upon their own feeling about the standardized testing.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Michael Magone and Lois Davies

Affiliation: Superintendents, Lolo School District and Pateros School District

Priority Need 1. Recruiting and retaining high quality/highly effective teachers

Justification: Of the 113 survey-takers over 40 indicated improved funding for schools as the highest priority for school districts. One of the top three reasons for needing increased funding was for improving compensation for teachers and staff members in order to obtain/retain quality staff. Preparing students to be college and career ready was a common priority area for respondents. Ensuring quality educator staff is certainly one aspect of this. With considerably more demands being placed on educators by tax-paying society in general, parents, student individual needs, state and federal government, and with insufficient wages/salaries to compete for quality employees, it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain quality and qualified educators for school districts in the region, and probably across the country. Challenges in community cultures, geographical locations, insufficient resources to support education – all of these and more make it difficult to find, hire and keep quality educators.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Technical Assistance isn't going to take the place of increased funding for compensation of employees. But perhaps technical assistance and resources for professional development to districts with high needs areas related to climate and cultural challenges, high needs student behavioral issues, differentiating/meeting the needs of individual student learning needs (high, low, middle), technology use and instruction/curriculum/assessment areas would make employee's daily work a bit less daunting. Similarly, technical assistance training to state agencies might help improve teacher hiring/certification processes which would, in turn, assist districts with recruiting highly effective teachers and leaders. A state-based survey of school districts to help further define specific needs in this area would be advised.

Priority Need 2. Expanding access to early childhood education

Justification: Survey respondents mentioned needing additional funding and resources to improve or expand early (Pre-K) education services. Improving early/Pre-K education services will also address the priority need of preparing students to be college and career ready.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers can provide well-researched information showing the impact of expanded Pre-K services and the positive impact it has on students. Comprehensive Centers can also support professional development in the areas of Pre-K instruction, curriculum, assessment, behavioral intervention strategies, collaborating with parents about home-support, etc. Specifically, Comprehensive Centers can have each state agency conduct a specific survey for its districts to discover what specific technical assistance training would be most beneficial for helping meet its Pre-K education area needs and thereafter focus technical assistance training on those areas of need.

Priority Need 3. Addressing equity and disproportionality in education

Justification: Survey respondents identified funding, addressing equity and disproportionality in education, and preparing students to be college and career ready as priority needs. These are inter-related. Each of the region's states obviously has particular areas of equity/disproportionality in education concerns. However, they likely differ in specifics.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Again, each state's needs may have its own particular aspects which doesn't work with a one-size fits all approach. Thus, have each state agency conduct a specific survey for its districts to discover what specific technical assistance training would be most beneficial for helping meet that state's equity/disproportionality needs and thereafter focus technical assistance training on those areas of need.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Rod Gramer

Affiliation: President and CEO, Idaho Business for Education

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

Justification: Eight business leaders surveyed said that preparing students to be college and career ready was the most important goal. Students should be prepared to go on after high school to some form of post-secondary education that prepares them for a career. The credential can be a workforce-reading certificate, two-year associate's degree, four-year degree or even an advanced degree. In the 21st Century the overwhelming majority of jobs will require a post-secondary credential of some kind.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Number-one strategy to get students college and career ready is to focus on student academic outcomes. These academic outcomes should be measurable and educators should be held responsible for getting students to achieve and hit the measurable outcomes. Local communities – parents, educators and leaders – should come together and focus on continuously improving student outcomes in their communities. This will require stronger school leadership and greater effectiveness from classroom teachers. Communities should also view education as a continuum that starts with early education and continues through post-secondary education. There are mileposts along the way where student achievement should be assessed, celebrated and remediated where necessary so that all students graduate from high school ready for post-secondary and eventually a meaningful career. For example, the Comprehensive Centers could help school districts focus on closing the achievement gap in reading, math and science. Using scientifically-valid teaching methods and using effective assessment tools could assist educators in accomplishing this goal.

Priority Need 2. Improving assessment and accountability systems

Justification: Two business leaders cited improving assessment and accountability systems. Without effective assessments one cannot measure whether students are progressing successfully along the education continuum. For example, assessments are needed starting when students enter kindergarten to ensure that they are ready to learn how to learn. Then we need effective assessments along key mileposts on a student's academic journey, including 4th Grade reading and math, 8th grade reading and math, high school and eventually a standardized assessment like the SAT and ACT to determine if they are prepared for post-secondary. No assessment system can be effectively used unless educators are held accountable for students hitting the appropriate benchmarks at these mileposts. Without accountability, some students will be prepared for college and career and others will not be prepared. There must be "forcing functions" that hold professionals accountable for outcomes. Otherwise, the education system will wander and students will be left behind, setting them up for less of an effective personal and professional life.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: States must define what key performance indicators are important for academic success, how to measure those benchmarks with effective assessments and hold school leaders accountable for results. This one, two, three strategy is fundamentally important if states are to have effective assessments that lead to academic achievement and eventually to students

who are college and career ready. Comprehensive Centers can assist SEAs in this by ensuring that teachers are using scientifically valid teaching methods and assessment tools.

Priority Need 3. Improving instructional leadership

Justification: One business leader identified improving instructional leadership as the top priority, but five business leaders cited improving educational instruction and leadership as a need in the system. Research shows that the number one in school factor in determining whether students learn is the effectiveness of the teacher in their classroom. Effective teachers can help students advance academically over the course of a school year. Ineffective teachers can actually set students back academically. That is why it is essential that every student has an effective teacher in their classroom. But school administrators also play a critical role here. Strong school leaders can create a culture in their school where teachers excel in the classroom. Effective school leaders also ensure that ineffective teachers do not stay in the classroom where they can harm their student academically. Strong school leaders can also ensure that students are being effectively assessed at key mileposts along the academic continuum and that the students under their stewardship are prepared to move on to the next level of education.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: School leaders and classroom teachers must have a growth mindset – that is that all students are capable of learning and all students can be ready for post-secondary and for a career. Key to academic growth is to set measurable academic goals for students every year, achieve those goals and set higher goals. This “continuous improvement” cycle can lead to year-over-year academic growth for each student each year during their educational journey. Setting high academic standards each year for every student and ensuring that they meet them, students will unquestionably be prepared for post-secondary and a career. This “continuous improvement” cycle should be driven through annual plans that start at the local school board level, executed by the local superintendent, who empowers his or her principal to achieve their goals and by highly effective teachers who instruct in the classroom. This vertical integration of goals, effective instruction, assessment and achievement will ensure students are prepared for post-secondary and eventually a meaningful career. Everyone in the community – parents, students, teachers, school leaders, the business community – must buy into this vision for education and do everything possible to support it. The Comprehensive Center can facilitate improved instructional leadership through both teacher training in the use of data to drive student academic growth and by providing school leaders with training regarding strategic planning, including goal-setting and using data to drive student achievement.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Deb Halliday and Debbie Hunsaker

Affiliation: Title I Instructional Innovations Unit Director, Montana Office of Public Instruction

Priority Need 1. Supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps

Justification: The School Improvement Grant program, which is phased out in ESSA, provided SEAs with the opportunity to focus on developing specific strategies to help the state’s most struggling schools. Oftentimes, this meant support for instruction, administration and youth supports. The new ESSA regulation does not designate specific funds for this work, despite it being a core purpose of the federal education law.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Continue to support SEAs with best practices and research on what works to support rural school improvement. Catalog and provide professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers on what’s working. Topic areas should include cultural relevance and how to develop meaningful partnerships with schools and families/communities Pre-K through graduation. Support states in developing, implementing and evaluating state ESSA plans under targeted and comprehensive support that address academic and non-academic needs of struggling students.

Priority Need 2. Preparing students to be college and career ready

Justification: The college-going rates of minority students, special education students, and students living in poverty is significantly lower than that of white, affluent students. In Montana, the college-going rate for American Indian students is significantly lower than white students.

The rising cost of college is often out of reach for rural families. For rural students, colleges are geographically far removed from rural students’ home towns, which exacerbates cultural and financial barriers. In addition, internships and job exploration opportunities are limited by few workplaces and employers in rural areas. The math teacher shortage makes college preparedness challenging.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Continued support for professional development of teachers in core subject areas such as math and science, especially as higher standards are implemented; development of best practices for how LEAs and high education can work together to develop socio-emotional support for first-time college going students, who often struggle with the cultural and financial challenges of students attending college; provide information of effective efforts to expand access to dual credit and dual enrollment coursework; and increased support for CTE “career pathways” that help students explore college and career opportunities.

Priority Need 3. Ensuring equity

Justification: The academic achievement and high school graduation rates of minority students, special education students, and students living in poverty is significantly lower than that of white, affluent students. In Montana, American Indian student achievement is significantly lower than white students.

The lifelong impacts of under-education is well documented, and impacts a person's income, health and lifespan.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Provide technical support to LEAs and state efforts to develop funding plans that increase capacities of schools to provide an equitable education across a P-20 continuum; provide training to teachers and administrators on socio-emotional learning; provide professional development to communities that are trying to improve access to quality early childhood opportunities.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Richard Osguthorpe

Affiliation: Dean of the College of Education, Boise State University

Priority Need 1. Recruiting and retaining qualified, effective teachers in rural areas

There is a dire need for qualified, effective teachers, especially in rural areas of our region. The region needs more incentives to draw teachers into the profession and better support to retain them.

Justification: In the Northwest region, the top priority area identified by higher education staff was developing and ensuring equitable distribution of highly effective teachers and leaders. Specifically, higher education staff suggested that the teacher shortage is especially acute in rural areas and that we need increased incentives (teacher pay) and additional support for teachers in those areas to retain quality teachers and leaders. Most of the responses identified some level of increased funding as a connected educational need.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Develop a statewide plan to recruit and retain high quality teachers. This assistance should recognize the need to increase the quality and scope of teacher preparation and teacher professional development, instead of decreasing standards for the profession. The Comprehensive Center can provide technical assistance to state education agencies that includes the dissemination of evidence-based practices in teacher recruitment, retention, and professional preparation/development.

Priority Need 2. Find ways to address the equity gaps that have been created through funding issues, early childhood education, special education, and English language learning

Justification: The second priority area identified by higher education staff focused on ensuring equity throughout the educational system. Specifically, higher education staff identified needs related to inequities in funding for schools, providing pre-K education, educating students with learning disabilities, and serving English language learners. Feedback from respondents showed that there are a variety of concerns related to school funding, particularly from the federal level that would assist schools in meeting the needs of every student from cradle to career.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Center could address these needs by providing technical assistance to state education agencies that will enable them to provide additional support to districts for pre-K, special education, and English language learners.

Priority Need 3. There is a need to educate students that prepare them to be successful in college and career

Justification: The third highest area of need identified by higher education respondents related to college and career readiness. Specifically, the feedback for college and career readiness pointed up needs related to additional dual enrollment offerings, increased career counseling, and more access to higher education. Many respondents mentioned funding for higher education as an obstacle, and recommended an increase of funding to support students in pursuing college degrees.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Center could provide technical assistance to districts to help them strategize ways to affect graduation rates, along with professional development for teachers and counselors that focused on career counseling. The Center could also provide technical assistance to districts that emphasized best practices for ensuring college readiness.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Chris Spriggs

Affiliation: Classroom teacher, Glens Ferry School District

Priority Need 1. Ensuring equity in education

The government needs to ensure that there is equity in education. Funding should not be based on standardized test scores or facts that unfairly compare wealthy and high poverty districts. All students should be ensured the same level of quality education and the same level of teacher quality as the students in the top achieving, highest quality schools and districts around the nation. Furthermore, the lowest performing schools and districts need extra support in order to close the achievement gaps of their students.

Justification: In the Northwest region, the top three priorities according to the teachers surveyed were all somehow connected to funding and the support given to low-performing schools. Proportionally, the western United States and, especially the Northwest, spends less money per student than the national average. With this type of discrepancy between states and schools, an unfair disparity is created between the quality of education given to students in the different regions of the United States, especially those in low-performing, high-poverty schools and districts.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Comprehensive Centers could help the SEAs target these low-achieving schools and then work alongside the district administrators and teachers to create and implement a school-wide improvement plan that will help close the achievement gaps found through test data. Additionally, the Centers would be able to research and locate professional development opportunities that would provide the district with the information they need to make more informed decisions about their curriculum choices and teaching strategies. With this information, the districts would be better able to work toward closing their achievement gaps by engaging their teachers in quality professional development and using assessment data from the respective schools to identify their weaknesses. Furthermore, the Comprehensive Centers could be instrumental in using their resources to find curriculum and materials that districts could use to develop their own curriculum maps and to possibly implement inexpensive after- school and summer school programs to help their students reach proficiency. Finally, the Comprehensive Centers could work with SEAs and rural, low-achieving school districts to create networks of schools focused on collaboration, resource sharing, and professional development opportunities.

Priority Need 2. Improving assessments and accountability systems

States need to work on improving their assessments so that they meet the needs of individual schools, address the Common Core Standards, and fairly assess the learning of all students.

Justification: With the movement from individual state standards to the Common Core National Standards, states are having difficulty adjusting their state assessments to meet the needs of the new core as well as the individual needs of school and special student populations. Thus, many northwest states could use help in collecting information and research about reviewing, evaluating, and implementing Common Core-tied assessments.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Centers' goals include providing technical assistance in assessment implementation and evaluation. Therefore, many of the teachers surveyed said that the Centers should provide the SEAs with the research and resources necessary to write effective, Core-aligned assessments. The Centers could also provide in-service training for these individuals and research and locate professional development opportunities for school districts to provide their teachers.

Priority Need 3. Highly qualified, innovative teachers

Teachers across the Northwest felt that all schools should have highly qualified, innovative teachers who can not only provide the academic challenges students need, but also prepare them for the innovative world they will enter as future adults.

Justification: The implementation of the Common Core standards across the country as well as the signing in of the ESSA has increased the need for school districts to evaluate the curriculum and instructional practices of their staff members. Furthermore, according to teachers on the survey, one of the most important parts of a teacher's job is to engage their students and to prepare them for the rigors of college and real world experiences.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Centers could make a big difference in this arena. They could aid the SEAs in identifying successful districts in their region that are making great gains in academics thanks in part to innovative classroom practices. Thus, SEAs could then help districts collaborate to form a type of demonstration classroom/teacher program that would allow teachers to observe successful districts' teachers and classrooms as a form of professional development. Likewise, the Centers could provide SEAs and districts with material and research that would provide the basis for curricular development and evaluation. Finally, the Comprehensive Centers could help districts locate further professional development opportunities in the form of conferences, speakers, and books for district book studies.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Janelle Vanasse

Affiliation: Director of Secondary Education, Lower Kuskokwim School District

Priority Need 1. Helping students transition from secondary to postsecondary

There needs to be a strong link between K-12 and post secondary education making sure that all students have the opportunities to successfully transition to college or career. Transition opportunities should provide equitable access. There is a need to reduce testing as a sole access point and to find opportunities to reduce the volume of testing required.

Justification: In the Northwest region the top priority for parents is preparing students to be college and career ready. This was also the most frequently selected need by teachers. Comments included starting college and career preparation early, specifically middle school and several addressed equity issues. In addition, a common theme throughout the comments was a concern about testing, how much time is spent on testing and a general lack of usefulness or value.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance:

Help states adopt college readiness matrix that use more than an assessment to determine college readiness.

Help State Departments negotiate systems that focus on transition and blend grades 11-14. Rather than individual schools or districts negotiating dual credits or transition opportunities, a state department may be able to play a key role in developing a state wide system between the state K-12 schools and state universities. This system could:

- ▶ Identify key courses that could be offered for dual credit with consistent criteria and opportunities for participation without high costs
- ▶ Develop standardized dual credit agreements (in both college and vocational system)
- ▶ Negotiate a common assessment for college placement across the system to minimize testing
- ▶ Develop or assess current summer transition plans and address equitable access

Priority Need 2. Improving access to early childhood education and quality instruction

Need to address equitable education through providing early childhood education and strengthening the environments and instructional quality in the schools of greatest need.

Justification: Parents and teachers ranked addressing equitable education and/or supporting the lowest performing schools as a high need. Comments frequently referenced testing and need for quality education. There seemed to be a correlation between comments related to equity and the need for early education suggesting early education is a suggested method for addressing inequality or low performance.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Support states in building teacher training and collaborative professional learning that rural and poor urban schools can access directly (targeting schools who may not have the funds or capacity to do their own)

Work with States to identify funds and opportunities to support early childhood learning in poor or struggling school communities.

Priority Need 3. Improving assessment and accountability systems

Need to minimize school time dedicated to testing and ensure that the assessments that are administered are useful for students and teachers.

Justification: Issues with testing was the most common comment throughout all parent data. This concern was also prominent amongst teacher comments. Comments included a plea to reduce testing, however there were some comments about targeting supports and instruction to students needing support. Lastly, issues related to college readiness was frequent.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance:

Help states define an assessment system that:

- ▶ Focuses on growth and information that may be used by teachers for improvement or targeted instruction.
- ▶ Avoids judgment of students or schools on outcome data
- ▶ Coordinate high school assessment to serve as state/ESSA requirement but is also useful for post-secondary placement or application
- ▶ Help states build a system in which University/trade school placement exams are aligned with assessments available and/or required in high school.

Individual Needs Assessment

Name: Chuck Zimmerly

Affiliation: Community Relations Officer, Idaho State Department of Education

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

Justification: The US public education system is highly interconnected and complex. To paraphrase famed naturalist and conservationist John Muir, when looking at a system or nature, one cannot simply pluck at one specific piece without finding that is connected to everything else in the system. Such is the case with PK-12 public education. If we attempt to address one of the identified priority means we ultimately address them all. Improvement in just one priority will result in improvement in all.

All of the identified priorities are connected to each other. While the sensing data shows only moderate support of college and career readiness among SEA staff and students, other stakeholder groups report college and career readiness as the primary educational priority. Preparing students to be college and career ready can also be viewed as a broad umbrella that covers all of the other identified educational priorities. To address improvement in college and career readiness will mean addressing all of the identified priorities.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: Technical Assistance in equity, promoting personalized learning, accountability, instructional leadership, stakeholder engagement, supporting lowest achieving schools, federal funding streams can all be focused on preparing students to be college and career ready. Each of the other identified priorities are all important components in achieving college and career readiness. The Comprehensive centers can provide support in assisting states on defining college and career readiness, developing innovative assessments to determine college and career readiness, providing professional development on improving instructional leadership, and developing innovative strategies to ensure equity.

Priority Need 2. Ensuring equity, including addressing issues of disproportionality

Justification: Not surprisingly, ensuring equity surfaced as a top educational priority across all stakeholder groups responding to the needs-sensing survey, with only moderate support from SEA Staff and students, but overwhelming support from the 41 district superintendents I interviewed. As indicated above, addressing equity will also produce benefits and improvements in the other identified priorities.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: While there is strong support for ensuring equity, its actual achievement is complicated and localized. This means ensuring equity in Idaho is not necessarily the same in Washington or Alaska. Drilling down even further, ensuring equity in urban school districts is not the same as achieving it in small, remote, rural districts. This is where the Comprehensive Centers can be of great benefit in providing assistance to states and LEAs on research, strategies, awareness, and communication on achieving identified disproportionalities, inclusive of high SES, special needs, and English language learners.

Priority Need 3. Supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps

Justification: This priority was highly rated by the SEA staff and the 41 district superintendents interviewed. While the superintendents do not necessarily rate this priority as the highest it was always in their named top three priorities.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Centers can provide valuable technical assistance in several areas to assist teachers, administrators, and SEAs in supporting the lowest performing schools and closing achievement gaps. First there is a critical need for professional development in analyzing achievement data to identify gaps. Second, professional development for identifying and tailoring research based interventions to address achievement gaps. Third, the comp center can provide assistance in establishing effective progress monitoring systems to determine the success or failure of the interventions.

Priority Need 5. Ensuring innovative and effective uses of technology and digital learning

Justification: Well over half of the 41 district superintendents when interviewed provided this as a priority. Effective use of technology also surfaced as a high priority among district superintendents. Two main themes emerged in the use of technology priority. First, how teachers and administrators can utilize technology to identify weaknesses in student comprehension through performance and assessments. Followed secondly by how teachers and administrators can provide specific interventions to address those weaknesses in comprehension.

Recommended Strategy for Technical Assistance: The Comprehensive Centers can provide professional development and technical assistance for teachers, administrators, and SEA staff on how to utilize technology to access online resources (Open Educational Resources, OERs) to develop curriculum, identify research based interventions, and establish progress monitoring.

