

National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

Final Report

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Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The research team for this evaluation consists of a prime contractor, Branch Associates, Inc. and two subcontractors, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA), and Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR). None of these organizations or their key staff members has a financial interest that could be affected by findings from the evaluation of the Comprehensive Center program considered in this report. Additionally, no one on the Technical Working Group, convened by the research team to provide advice and guidance, has financial interests that could be affected by findings from the evaluation.

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Executive Summary

This final report presents findings from a multi-year evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers, a federally funded program that provides technical assistance to states in connection with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The law authorizing the Centers, the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, mandated that a national evaluation of the program be conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The legislation indicated that the evaluation should “include an analysis of the services provided...[and] the extent to which each of the comprehensive centers meets the objectives of its respective plan, and whether such services meet the educational needs of State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools in the region.” The program evaluation was conducted by Branch Associates, Inc., Decision Information Resources, Inc., and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

With the redesign of the Center program, the primary focus of technical assistance was directed to states. In order to build states’ capacity for carrying out NCLB responsibilities, which include assistance to struggling school districts and schools as well as other areas of NCLB program administration, the Center program was designed to supply ongoing technical assistance in using research knowledge and promising practices. There are two types of Centers:

- Sixteen Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) are responsible for providing ongoing technical assistance to states assigned to their region, working with a range of one to eight states per Center
- Five Content Centers (CCs) are expected to supply knowledge to RCCs and work with RCCs to assist states in the CC’s specialty area: Assessment and Accountability, Instruction, Teacher Quality, Innovation and Improvement, or High Schools

Given this program design, the evaluation provides a description of Center operations. It also reports on assistance delivery and contributions to state capacity as judged by managers in state education agencies (SEAs), on quality as judged by panels of subject-matter experts, and on relevance and usefulness as judged by practitioners who participated in Center activities or received Center products. The evaluation data, collected annually, pertain to the Center program years 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09, covering three of the five program years starting with the second year of program funding.¹

- ***The operations of the RCCs and CCs were consistent with the Center program design.*** RCCs and CCs assessed client needs annually to determine their technical assistance plans, with informal communications as the mode most commonly reported for 2008-09. The most common activity found in sampled RCC projects²

¹ Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 2005. *Federal Register*. (2005, June 3). 70(106), 32583-94. The awards were subsequently extended.

² For the purposes of this evaluation, the team identified “projects” as a common level of aggregation of Center activities that would constitute units large enough for review and rating, but focused enough for coherence. A

was “ongoing consultation and follow up” (82, 93, and 91 percent of the sampled RCC projects in years 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09, respectively), consistent with the charge to provide frontline assistance on an ongoing basis to states. In CC projects the most common activity was “research collections and synthesis” (more than 70 percent of sampled projects in each year), consistent with the CCs’ prescribed focus on synthesizing, translating, and delivering knowledge to RCCs and states. Across the three years studied, both RCCs and CCs were more involved in each other’s projects. Among sampled RCC projects, the percentage that included direct assistance from CC staff was 18 percent in 2006-07, 22 percent in 2007-08 and 30 percent in 2008-09. The percentage of CC projects that included RCC direct assistance was 11 percent in 2006-07, 12 percent in 2007-08, and 38 percent in 2008-09. In addition, by 2008-09 all 16 RCCs reported receiving knowledge resources from CCs and all 5 CCs reported providing knowledge resources to RCCs.

- ***Centers addressed the most frequently cited state priority of “statewide systems of support,” and an increasing number of state managers reported each year that Center assistance served their purposes.*** “Systems of support” consists of an infrastructure for the delivery of onsite assistance, and strategies and materials designed to help struggling schools and districts improve student performance. The most widespread NCLB-related priority for state managers was “statewide systems of support or school support teams,” which was identified as a major or moderate priority for technical assistance by more than 90 percent of managers, weighted, in each year. Of this group of state managers, more than 90 percent reported each year that the Centers delivered assistance related to this responsibility. “Systems of support” was not only the most widely reported state priority but also the topic addressed in more Center projects in each year than any other topic, according to the inventories compiled by the Centers (19 percent of all projects in 2006-07, 25 percent in 2007-08, and 21 percent in 2008-09, compared with 10 percent or fewer projects addressing any other topic). With each state weighted equally in the analysis, the proportion of state agency managers reporting that assistance from the Centers had “served the state’s purposes completely” rose from about one-third (36 percent) in 2006-07 to more than half (56 percent) in 2008-09.
- ***Center assistance was reported by state managers as having expanded state capacity in “statewide systems of support,” which has been a predominant focus of Center assistance.*** Among state managers who reported statewide systems of support or school support teams as a state priority for technical assistance in 2008-09, 82 percent credited Center assistance with a “great” or “moderate” expansion of state capacity in this area. In other areas of state responsibility identified by state managers to be a priority for technical assistance, the percentage reporting a great or moderate expansion of state capacity in 2008-09 ranged from 77 percent (for research-based curriculum, instruction, or

“project” was defined as *a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience.*

professional development in academic subjects) to 39 percent (for NCLB's provisions on supplemental educational services and choice).

- ***On average across each of the three years, expert panels rated sampled project materials between “moderate” and “high” for quality, and project participants rated the sampled projects “high” for relevance and usefulness.*** Program-wide average ratings, on a 5-point scale with 5 at the high end, were 3.34 in 2006-07, 3.51 in 2007-08, and 3.57 in 2008-09 for technical quality; 3.94, 4.08, and 4.15, respectively, for relevance; and 3.69, 3.95, 3.96, respectively, for usefulness.³ In addition, the average quality rating was consistently higher among CC projects than RCC projects by more than one-half of a standard deviation while RCC ratings went up each year.⁴ The average ratings of relevance were higher for RCC than CC projects in 2006-07 and 2007-08 although CC ratings went up each year; there were no consistent differences in the usefulness ratings between RCCs and CCs.

The Comprehensive Centers Program

In its authorization under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, the Center program was given an overall charge of supporting state and local NCLB implementation. The U.S. Department of Education (ED), using discretion provided in the legislation, established two major program features that differed from the design of Comprehensive Center programs under prior legislation:⁵

- First, the primary focus would be on assisting states to carry out NCLB responsibilities and helping build state capacity to deliver assistance to schools and districts; ED specified that Centers could only work directly with districts or schools under special circumstances.
- Second, awards would be made to 21 Centers to establish two-tiers of technical assistance with 16 RCCs and 5 CCs. They were instructed to work as follows:
 - Each RCC was charged with providing ongoing assistance directly to states in its region (“frontline assistance”), serving the needs of either one

³ This averaging procedure across Centers and across projects was designed so that each Center contributed equally to the overall mean for the program (or for its type of Center, where RCC means were compared with CC means), and each project sampled from a Center contributed equally to the Center mean.

⁴ All project-level differences described in this report (e.g., more, higher) reflect a difference of one-half of one pooled standard deviation between groups of projects. Using a metric derived from Cohen (1988), the evaluation team estimated Cohen's d (an estimate of the effect size defined as the difference in means divided by the pooled standard deviation) and adopted the logic of Cohen for what would be considered a moderate difference. For this study, inferential tests of statistical significance were not conducted to examine project-level differences in these non-probability samples. All participant-level differences described in this report reflect statistical test of significance with a criterion value of $p < .05$.

⁵ Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 2005. *Federal Register*. (2005, June 3). 70(106), 32583-94.

large state or a group of two to eight states and other jurisdictions.⁶ The RCCs were also expected to deliver technical assistance to their assigned states, addressing the needs and building capacity of the states to assist their districts and schools.

- Meanwhile, each CC would work on a nationwide basis to provide in-depth knowledge of the content and research within a particular substantive area: Assessment and Accountability, Instruction, Teacher Quality, Innovation and Improvement, or High Schools. CCs would facilitate access to, and use of, existing research and practices.
- The absolute priorities for the two types of Centers indicated that they should work together: Regional Centers should draw information and resources from Content Centers as well as other sources; and Content Centers should both supply knowledge to Regional Centers and “work closely with Regional Centers to provide technical assistance to States.”

Research Questions and Methods

The research priorities for the evaluation were primarily driven by the statute and focused on the following key research questions:

1. How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers operate as part of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program?
 - How did Centers develop, refine, and carry out their plans for technical assistance? How did they define their clients’ educational needs and priorities?
 - What were the objectives of the technical assistance the Centers offered? What kinds of products and services were provided by the Centers?
 - How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers coordinate their work?
2. What was the performance of the Comprehensive Centers in addressing state needs and priorities? How did their performance change over the period of time studied?
 - How did the Centers’ state clients define their needs and priorities?
 - To what extent, as reported by states, did Center assistance expand state capacity to address underlying needs and priorities and meet the goals of NCLB?

⁶ The nonstate jurisdictions that the Centers were to serve were the following: the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. Throughout this report, the term “state” will be defined to include the 50 states as well as these other jurisdictions.

- To what extent did states rely on other sources of technical assistance besides the Centers? What were other sources of technical assistance that states used? How did the usefulness of Center assistance compare with the usefulness of assistance from other sources?
3. To what extent was the assistance provided by the Centers of high quality, high relevance, and high usefulness?
- Did the quality, relevance, or usefulness of Center assistance change over the period of time studied?
 - What was the variation in the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center assistance across types of projects and participants?

The evaluation gathered information annually on the Center program for the years 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 from six data sources in order to address the research questions above. Data sources included:

- **Management plans.** The evaluation reviewed these plans as a data source for each Center's intended focus at the beginning of the year, drawing from the plans a list of topics as foci of Center objectives.
- **Project inventory forms and cover sheets.** Each Center completed an inventory of its work that grouped related activities and deliverables into "projects," with the project defined as a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience. Projects were in turn classified by the Centers into major, moderate, and minor projects on the basis of the relative level of effort they reflected. The Centers also classified the projects, according to the topics addressed, into 22 topical categories.⁷ At each stage, the evaluation team provided written guidance and training for inventory development, reviewed the Centers' drafts, and clarified definitions as needed. For projects sampled for the evaluation, the Centers prepared "cover sheets" providing brief descriptions and contexts for the activities and resources included in the project. The evaluation team used the cover sheets as a data source for coding project activities and resources.

⁷ The 22 topics were: components of effective systems of support for states, districts, and schools; data use or data-driven decision making; formative assessment; reading; adolescent literacy; mathematics; dropout prevention; high school redesign or reform; transition to high school; special education curriculum, instruction and professional development; special education assessment; English language learners;" highly qualified teacher" provisions of NCLB; teacher preparation and induction; teacher professional development; supplemental educational services; Response to Intervention; migrant education; Indian or Native American education; data management and compliance; assessment design; and parent involvement. In addition, projects that addressed none of these 22 topics were categorized as "other."

- **Center staff interviews.** Using structured response categories, Center staff were asked about how they planned their programs of work; how their plans evolved during the program year; and what they offered to clients with respect to the topics addressed, the delivery modes used, and their sources for content expertise.
- **Survey of senior state managers.** SEA managers were surveyed about their state's technical-assistance needs and what was provided by the Centers (including their RCC and any CCs with whom their state had worked).
- **Expert panel review.** The same sample of major and moderate projects was reviewed for quality by a panel of experts. Content experts were recruited and trained to use standard criteria to rate the *technical quality* of the sampled Center projects on the basis of a review of all project materials.
- **Survey of project participants.** A representative sample of clients who had participated directly in the evaluation's purposive sample of major and moderate Center projects furnished descriptive information, through surveys, on the activities and resources that the project had delivered to them. These clients included individuals working at the state level who had participated in RCC or CC projects, and RCC employees who were among the clients of CC projects. They rated the *relevance* and *usefulness* of the sampled projects.

Center Operations

In designing the Center program, ED established structures and expectations for the functioning of the Centers. Key features of the design, emphasized in ED's Notice Inviting Applications, were a requirement for needs assessment in consultation with clients, a focus on technical assistance with state responsibilities in school and district improvement, and the specialized roles of RCCs and CCs. The Centers' work from 2006-07 to 2008-09 conformed to the program's requirements in each of these respects. The barriers to technical assistance that Centers most often reported were staff turnover in state agencies and limitations on the CCs' scope of work.

A key expectation of the Centers was to organize their plans around the priorities and needs of client organizations. At the start of each program year, the Centers were required to deliver a management plan to ED outlining the program of technical assistance they planned to provide. Across years, Centers used a range of methods to assess needs and plan technical assistance with their clients. Among RCCs, there was a shift away from conducting surveys for needs assessment while maintaining frequent interaction with states as a means of learning about needs: all 16 RCCs reported assessing needs for 2008-09 through ongoing communication with state staff (an increase from 15 RCCs in 2006-07); 15 had a designated liaison to the SEA on staff in 2008-09 (up from 13 in 2006-07); 8 of the 16 conducted surveys (down from 11). Across years, all 5 of the CCs reported forming their work plans with RCC input acquired through ongoing communication; in 2008-09 all 5 CCs reported surveying RCCs (up from 4 of the 5 in

2006-07). In addition, all 5 CCs reported learning about state needs for 2008-09 through ongoing interaction with states as well as through communication with RCCs.

Centers were expected to show responsiveness to needs and requests for technical assistance but might not be in a position to respond to every client request. In each year, more than half of the Centers reported that they had turned down a client request for assistance, a situation that was handled differently by RCCs and by CCs. The number of Centers that reported having turned down one or more requests was 12 of the 21 in 2006-07, 13 of 21 in 2007-08, and 14 of 21 in 2008-09. Among Centers that declined any client request for assistance in 2008-09, RCCs most often reported substituting a different type of assistance (7 of the 10 RCCs that turned down work used this strategy), but none of the CCs reported doing so. The reason most commonly reported by RCCs was that a request fell outside their legitimate scope of work (5 RCCs vs. 1 CC). CCs reported more concerns with the requests fitting the Center's priorities (2 of the 4 CCs that turned down work vs. 2 of the 10 RCCs) or the Center's capacity (2 of the 4 CCs that turned down work vs. 2 of the 10 RCCs).

The Centers placed a priority on assistance with the state role in supporting improvement in struggling schools and districts. In every year of the evaluation, on the inventories completed by Centers that grouped their technical assistance activities into projects and categorized projects into 23 topics, the most common topic for all Center projects was "components of effective systems of support—state, district, school," a topic that included but was not limited to statewide systems of support and school support teams. Among all projects on the Center's inventories, 19 percent in 2006-07, 25 percent in 2007-08, and 21 percent in 2008-09 addressed the topic of systems of support, which in each year was more than twice as many as any other topic.

Although the two types of Centers each retained a focus on activities distinctly associated with the original program design, their ways of working became more similar over the years. The guidance given by ED through the Center grant competition and afterwards laid out a particular structure for the Centers' work: RCCs would specialize in interactions with state clients while CCs would specialize in activities that required a content focus. The most common activity found in sampled RCC projects was "ongoing consultation and follow up" (82 percent in 2006-07; 93 percent in 2007-08; 91 percent in 2008-09); in CC projects, it was "research collections and synthesis" (74 percent in 2006-07, 85 percent in 2007-08, and 77 percent in 2008-09), while fewer RCC projects included this activity (53 or 54 percent in each year) (exhibit ES.1). In 2008-09, in a departure from past CC practice, a majority of sampled CC projects (62 percent) included ongoing consultation and follow-up.

Exhibit ES.1. Sampled RCC and CC projects by types of activities and resources, by year

| Activities and resources | Percent of sampled RCC projects | | | Percent of sampled CC projects | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=96) | 2007-08 (n=96) | 2008-09 (n=93) | 2006-07 (n=27) | 2007-08 (n=26) | 2008-09 (n=26) |
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | 82% | 93% | 91% | 22% | 15% | 62% |
| Research collections and syntheses | 54 | 53 | 53 | 74 | 85 | 77 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | 45 | 63 | 59 | 30 | 31 | 27 |
| Training events | 43 | 55 | 59 | 37 | 50 | 50 |
| Task force meetings and work | 50 | 58 | 56 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Conferences | 27 | 35 | 40 | 63 | 42 | 38 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | 19 | 32 | 31 | 7 | 15 | 23 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 82 percent of sampled Center projects included ongoing consultation and follow-up.

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials. In addition to serving as resource material for the expert reviewers, these cover sheets were coded by the evaluation team.

The delivery of technical assistance depended on the Centers working effectively with their clients. Both RCCs and CCs described the barriers they perceived as having impeded their assistance to states. Turnover in staff within state offices or intermediary units was reported by both types of Centers as a barrier to achieving their objectives in assisting states (10 of 16 RCCs and 3 of 5 CCs). Turnover at the leadership level was a reported barrier for 8 RCCs and 3 CCs. Three of the 5 CCs reported “a state’s most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center’s scope of work,” as a barrier; they indicated that some states wanted help with topics that went beyond their own assigned substantive focus.

Under the two-tiered Center program design, RCCs and CCs were expected to work together to serve state clients. Among RCC projects, 48 percent had a CC contribution (of materials, in-person assistance, or advice) in 2006-07, 32 percent in 2007-08, and 47 percent in 2008-09. Among CC projects, the percent incorporating some RCC contribution was 37 percent, 38 percent, and 42 percent across the years. The extent to which RCCs and CCs drew on the other as substantive partners in delivering assistance increased in 2008-09: the percent of sampled RCC projects in which CCs delivered technical assistance went up from 18 percent in 2006-07 to 30 percent in 2008-09, and the percent of sampled CC projects in which the RCCs delivered technical assistance rose from 11 percent in 2006-07 to 38 percent in 2008-09.

With 16 RCCs and 5 CCs all charged with working with the other type of Center, coordination varied across the different pairs of an RCC and a CC. For example, while 15 of the 16 RCCs reported teaming up with at least one CC to provide technical assistance to states, 14 of them reported teaming up with one of the CCs but 7 of them reported doing so with another of the CCs. In addition, CCs were expected to provide assistance to RCCs, and the barrier most often reported by both types of centers to have impeded CCs' achievement of their technical assistance objectives with RCCs was that "RCCs' most important priorities for assistance fell outside the CC's scope of work" (reported as a barrier by 7 of 16 RCCs and 4 of 5 CCs).

Extent to Which Centers Addressed State Priorities

The perceptions of senior managers in state education agencies, who are involved in identifying state needs and priorities for technical assistance, provide a relevant perspective on the outputs of the program. Because the Centers had a mandated focus on the states, the extent to which state managers perceived that Center technical assistance served state purposes is one way of gauging the program's attainment of its objectives. Capacity building for states is also a focus of this evaluation, because it was prominent as a goal for the Comprehensive Centers program. The first priority for all Centers, articulated by ED in the Notice Inviting Applications, included "helping states build the capacity to help school districts and schools implement NCLB provisions and programs."⁸

An increasing percentage of state managers (weighted) over three years reported that the Centers' technical assistance "served the state's purposes completely" (exhibit ES.2). Thirty-six percent of the state managers, weighted, chose this response for 2006-07, 47 percent for 2007-08, and 56 percent for 2008-09.

Among the managers who said their state's purposes were not completely served, a larger proportion in each year reported that they wanted more interaction with the Centers. The percent of weighted state managers saying, "Center staff are not able to spend as much time working with the state as we would like" was 17 percent of those who did not say the state's purposes were "completely" served in 2006-07. The corresponding figures for subsequent years were 27 percent in 2007-08 and 43 percent in 2008-09.⁹ (These respondents were 9 percent, 10 percent, and 16 percent, respectively, of all state managers, weighted.)

⁸ Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 2005. *Federal Register*. (2005, June 3). 70(106), 32585.

⁹ The percentage of state managers reporting that their state's purposes were not completely served varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question ("reasons the technical assistance has been less helpful than it might be"), comparison of percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

Exhibit ES.2. Extent to which technical assistance from the Centers served state purposes, as judged by state managers, by year

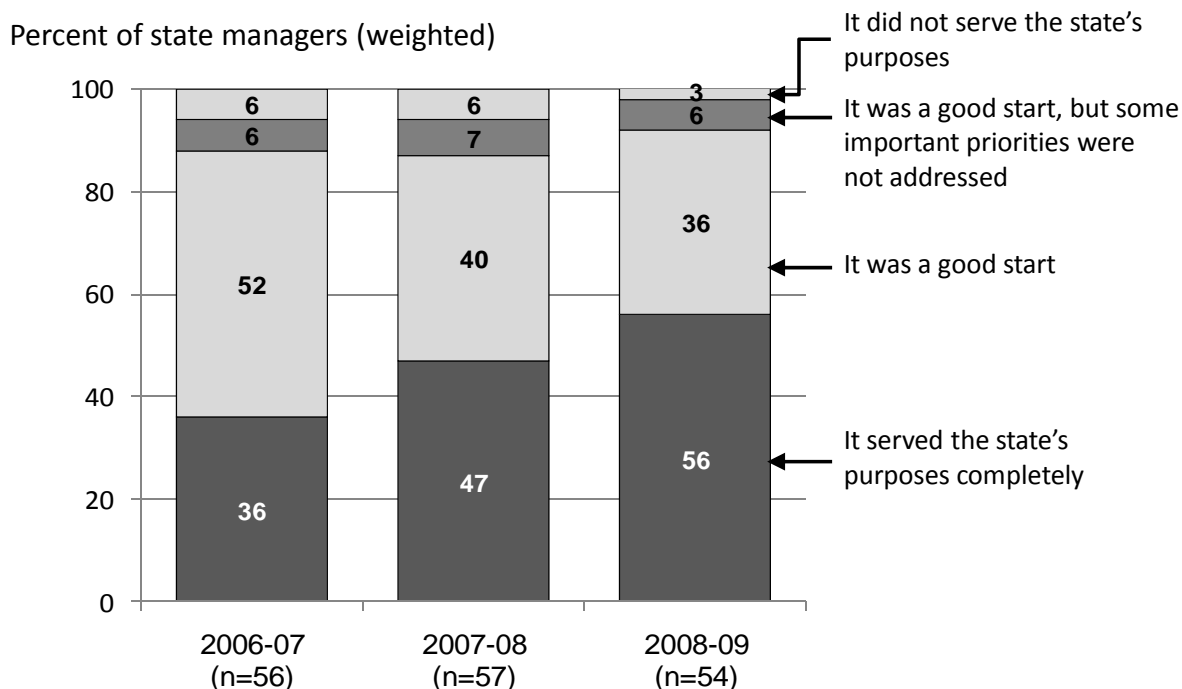


EXHIBIT READS: In 2006-07, 36 percent of state managers, weighted, reported that Center technical assistance served the state's purposes completely.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

State managers in a high proportion of states reported that Centers delivered assistance on “statewide systems of support or school support teams,” which was the most widespread priority among areas of technical assistance for state managers. In 2007-08 and 2008-09, more than 90 percent of state managers, weighted, identified this area of state responsibility as a major or moderate priority for technical assistance (95 percent in 2007-08, 94 percent in 2008-09). Of this group of state managers that reported this priority¹⁰, more than 90 percent reported that the Centers delivered assistance related to this responsibility (94 percent in 2007-08, 91 percent in 2008-09).

Looking at state reported capacity building across areas of major or moderate state priority for technical assistance, the highest percentage of state managers reported Center assistance to have expanded their agency's capacity to a “great” or “moderate” extent in statewide systems of support or school support teams¹¹ (72 percent in of those who rated the area

¹⁰ The subgroup of state managers who identified a particular area of state responsibility to be a major or moderate priority for technical assistance varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question about the priority areas in which states received technical assistance from Centers, a comparison of the percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

¹¹ Percentages are based on the state manager respondents who rated each area as major or moderate technical assistance priority, which varied by year. Thus, for the question about state capacity building, comparison of

as a state priority in 2007-08 and 82 percent in 2008-09) (exhibit ES.3). The next-highest in both 2007-08 and 2008-09 was “development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s)” (64 percent in 2007-08 and 77 percent in 2008-09). In both years, the lowest was “administration of supplemental educational services and choice provisions” (44 percent and 39 percent, respectively, of those who rated the area as a priority), which was an area rated as a priority by the fewest state managers (49 percent and 48 percent, respectively).

Exhibit ES.3. Extent to which Center assistance expanded state capacity in priority areas, as judged by state managers who rated the area as a major or moderate technical assistance priority, by year

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent reporting capacity expanded by a great or moderate extent | |
|--|---|---------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (n=56, n=50) | 72% | 82% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (n=43, n=40) | 59 | 73 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (n=42, n=39) | 57 | 59 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (n=41, n=39) | 64 | 77 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (n=37, n=36) | 62 | 61 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (n=35, n=30) | 57 | 57 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (n=25, n=26) | 44 | 39 |
| Communication with parents or the public (n=25, n=26) | 48 | 50 |

NOTE: Percentages are based on the state manager respondents who rated each area a major or moderate technical assistance priority, which varied by year. State managers who chose the response, “Does not apply, or not able to judge,” were included in the denominator of the percent calculation.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, among the 56 state managers (weighted) who reported that technical assistance in statewide systems of support or school support teams was a major or moderate priority for their state, 72 percent reported that technical assistance received from the Centers expanded the state's capacity in this area to a great or moderate extent.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

State managers reported that the Centers were one of multiple sources that they used for technical assistance, but over time they turned to the Centers for more purposes. The purposes for which states used the Centers more than other sources in each of the three study years were “to plan the initial steps in solving a problem” (reported as a purpose for Center technical assistance by at least 60 percent of state managers in each year) and “to develop the skills of SEA or intermediate education agency staff” (at least 55 percent of state managers in each year). In 2007-08 and 2008-09, Centers were reported by state managers to be the top source for two additional purposes: to help states complete tasks where they lacked resources (58 percent and 64 percent, respectively) or expertise (49 percent and 53 percent, respectively).

Ratings of Center Assistance

To assess the technical assistance provided by the Center program, quality, relevance, and usefulness of a sample of Center projects were rated. All sampled projects were identified by the Centers as “major” or “moderate” in their level of effort, relative to other projects in the same Center. The projects were rated for technical quality by panels of experts with strong knowledge of the content or substantive focus of the specific projects they reviewed. Projects’ relevance and usefulness were rated by a sample of participants—state staff, intermediate agency staff, local educators working on behalf of the state, and RCC staff—who were the intended beneficiaries of the project and who had received at least some of the technical assistance the project provided. Quality was judged on three dimensions; relevance was assessed with eight survey items and usefulness with 11 survey items (exhibit ES.4). Each overall measure (relevance, usefulness, or quality) was calculated as the mean of ratings assigned to each item. The item-level ratings themselves were based on 5-point rating scales.¹²

Based on the ratings, Center technical assistance was rated higher on each measure in each successive year, with program-wide average ratings in 2008-09 falling in a range between “moderate” and “high” for quality, and around “high” for relevance and usefulness (exhibit ES.4). On a scale of 1 to 5 with a 3 representing “moderate” and a 4 representing “high,” the program-wide average ratings for the sampled projects were 3.34 in 2006-07, 3.51 in 2007-08, and 3.57 in 2008-09 for technical quality, scored by panels of content experts. Program-wide average ratings for relevance, scored by participants, were 3.94 in 2006-07, 4.08 in 2007-08, and 4.15 in 2008-09. Average usefulness ratings for the program were 3.69 in 2006-07, 3.95 in 2007-08, and 3.96 in 2008-09, also scored by participants.¹³

¹² Efforts were made to develop parallel wording and rubrics that would result in similar gradations between rating levels (e.g., very high vs. high vs. moderate) across the three measures. However, given the different content of each set of items within the three measures and the different contexts for the ratings (experts who underwent training for the rating process and reviewed identical packages of materials vs. survey respondents who typically participated in different subsets of project activities), the ratings across the three measures are not directly comparable.

¹³ This averaging procedure across Centers and across projects was designed so that each Center contributed equally to the overall mean for the program (or for its type of Center, where RCC means were compared with CC means), and each project sampled from a Center contributed equally to the Center mean.

Exhibit ES.4. Quality, relevance, and usefulness items

| From expert panel scoring | From project participant surveys | |
|--|---|--|
| Technical quality | Relevance | Usefulness |
| <p>Reviewers were directed to assign a score to each dimension and to include the basis for their ratings on the rating form, including the specific artifacts on which their score was based. The three dimensions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrated use of the appropriate documented knowledge base – to include an accurate portrayal of the current state of information with prominence to those with the most accurate/rigorous evidence b. Fidelity of application of the knowledge base to the products and services provided – materials are consistent with the best/accurate information available and the presentation adequately conveys the confidence of the information c. Clear and effective delivery – information is well organized and written and accessible to the intended audience for easy use | <p>Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources relevant to your work, in each of the following respects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Addressed a need or problem that my organization faces b. Addressed an important priority of my organization c. Addressed a challenge that my organization faces related to the implementation of NCLB d. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be directly applied to my organization's work e. Addressed our particular state context f. Addressed my organization's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics) g. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, or practices h. Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for policies, programs, or practices | <p>Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources useful to you, in each of the following respects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provided resources that were easy to understand and easy to use b. Employed an appropriate format (e.g., a work group, a conference, individual consultation, written products) c. Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states d. Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources e. Were timely f. Helped my organization solve a problem g. Helped my organization maintain or change a policy or practice h. Helped my organization take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort i. Provided my organization with information or resources that we will use again j. Helped my organization develop a shared expertise or knowledge-base k. Helped individuals in my organization to develop skills that they will use again |

Exhibit ES.5. Mean ratings of technical quality, relevance, and usefulness, by center type and by year

| | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| All Centers (N=21) | 3.34 | 3.51 | 3.57 | 3.94 | 4.08 | 4.15 | 3.69 | 3.95 | 3.96 |
| All RCCs (N=16) | 3.21 | 3.41 | 3.52 | 3.99 | 4.18 | 4.15 | 3.71 | 3.99 | 3.94 |
| All CCs (N=5) | 3.73 | 3.86 | 3.72 | 3.78 | 3.96 | 4.17 | 3.65 | 3.84 | 4.01 |
| Difference of RCC and CC means | -0.52[†] | -0.45[†] | -0.20[†] | 0.21[†] | 0.22[†] | -0.02 | 0.06 | 0.15[†] | -0.07 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation (all Centers)</i> | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.37 | 0.34 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.34 | 0.23 | 0.27 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | -1.28 | -1.09 | -0.55 | 0.62 | 1.00 | -0.08 | 0.18 | 0.64 | -0.26 |

NOTE: All ratings were on a 5-point scale, with 5 as the high value. The “technical quality” rating is the mean of the ratings for the three quality dimensions. A notation of [†] indicates that the difference in the mean ratings between the CCs and RCCs within that year is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: In 2006-07 among the 21 Centers, the mean technical quality rating was 3.34.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings; each project contributed equally to Center ratings; and each Center contributed equally to cross-Center ratings.

Given that the RCC and CC roles and activity emphases differed, the evaluation looked at variation across Center types. The mean ratings for types of Centers, based on their sampled projects, showed the CCs with higher mean ratings than RCCs for the quality of their sampled projects in all three years although RCCs’ average quality ratings were higher in each successive year (exhibit ES.5). The RCCs had higher mean ratings than CCs for the relevance of their sampled projects in 2006-07 and 2007-08 although the average ratings of relevance for CCs went up each year. There were no consistent differences in mean ratings of usefulness across types of Centers.

The evaluation also looked at the relationships between the three measures: quality, relevance, and usefulness. It was reasoned that the content experts rating quality and the participants rating relevance and usefulness might be better able to judge different aspects of a Center project. On this rationale, content experts rated the projects for their technical quality, and participants rated the projects for relevance and usefulness. An examination of the associations among the three dimensions was conducted by calculating correlation coefficients.¹⁴ Such a statistic indicates the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two factors. A correlation coefficient can vary from positive 1.00 (indicating a perfect positive relationship),

¹⁴ For this analysis, the evaluation team used Spearman’s rank order correlation, as this non-parametric rating is the appropriate statistical function to describe correlations between two variables where the values of the variables are not normally distributed and are on a scale (such as ratings).

through zero (indicating the absence of a relationship), to negative 1.00 (indicating a perfect negative relationship). If the correlation is statistically significant ($p < .05$), we can have strong (95 percent) confidence that what we calculated is not due to chance.

In every year, ratings of quality were unrelated to ratings of relevance and usefulness, although relevance and usefulness ratings were highly correlated with each other within each of the three data collection years. The correlation coefficient for relevance and usefulness was +0.84 for 2006-07, +.79 for 2007-08, and +.83 for 2008-09. This indicates that the extent to which participants rated the projects as relevant was associated with how they deemed the project to be useful to their agency. These coefficients were all statistically significant at $p < .05$. On the other hand, the results indicated correlations ranging from -0.12 to +0.04 between quality and relevance, and from -0.09 to +0.07 between quality and usefulness. Because these coefficients are not statistically significant we cannot be sure that they are different from zero (no relationship). In other words, the extent to which a project faithfully reflected the knowledge base on a topic and provided appropriate caveats about the quality of its evidence was unrelated to the extent to which participants deemed that project relevant or useful to their agency.

Given the variation in ratings across Centers, additional analyses were conducted to explore whether there were consistent patterns between ratings and the particular features of the projects. Such information could provide suggestions for possible program improvement if there were consistent relationships. Quality ratings in 2008-09 were higher for RCC projects that included CC contributions of materials or in-person help than projects that the RCCs completed without CC contributions (3.72 vs. 3.39), although this was not the case in earlier years. In addition, quality ratings were higher in 2008-09 for projects that had been reviewed by CCs (3.83 vs. 3.46) and by outside experts (3.73 vs. 3.42) for quality assurance as opposed to projects that had not been reviewed in each of these ways (a project-level feature that was studied only in that year of the evaluation). In other analyses of project-level variation, projects that differed from each other in the activities they encompassed or the topics they addressed did not show differences in ratings of quality, relevance, or usefulness that were consistent across the three years.

On the other hand, more consistent differences were found in ratings of relevance and usefulness awarded to projects by different types of participants. Higher ratings were awarded by those participants who had been involved in determining the project goals or design than by participants not involved in this way, and by those who had spent more time in project activities (i.e., 6 or more days) as compared to participants who had spent five days or less (these differences were statistically significant, with $p < .01$ for both relevance and usefulness). For 2007-08 and 2008-09, also, each type of Center targeted its assistance more successfully to participants who worked in one type of agency, compared with participants who worked in other types of agencies: specifically, RCC projects were rated higher by participants from SEAs than participants from intermediate or local education agencies or schools; CC projects were rated higher by RCC staff than by SEA staff (statistically significant differences, with $p < .05$ for both relevance and usefulness).

1. Introduction and Background

The Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers are authorized under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 to provide technical assistance for implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act at the state, district, substate region, and school levels for the purposes of “improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and encouraging and sustaining school improvement” (Section 203). The law authorized the Secretary of Education to award “not less than 20 grants to local entities, or consortia of such entities, with demonstrated expertise in providing technical assistance and professional development in reading, mathematics, science, and technology” (Section 203). Grants were awarded to 21 Centers to serve different geographic regions across the United States from FY2006 through FY2010.

The same law authorizing these technical assistance centers also mandated that the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers undergo independent evaluation under the direction of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) in the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The legislation indicated that the evaluation should “include an analysis of the services provided...[and] the extent to which each of the comprehensive centers meets the objectives of its respective plan, and whether such services meet the educational needs of State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools in the region.”

This is the final report of a multi-year evaluation conducted for NCEE by Branch Associates, Inc., Decision Information Resources, Inc., and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. This final report presents an overall description of how the system of technical assistance centers has operated from July 2006 to June 2009, covering the period from the second to the fourth program year (out of the five years), as part of the evaluation to inform the current grants as well as the grant recompetition.

This introductory chapter provides background information on ED’s purposes and design for the Center system. It also describes key state responsibilities included in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act with which the Centers were expected to provide assistance. The chapter concludes with a description of the major evaluation questions.

The Center Program

The current Center program represented a departure from the previous program with a new design for targeting services replacing the 15 existing Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 (ESEA). The 1994 reauthorization of ESEA had charged the previous set of 15 Centers with delivering assistance to support standards-based reform as envisioned in other sections of the 1994 law. They were to provide training and technical assistance to states, local education agencies (LEAs), schools, tribes, community-based organizations, and other ESEA grantees related to several areas of local responsibility. These included: (1) improving the quality of instruction, curricula, assessments, and other aspects of school reform; (2) implementing effective

schoolwide programs; and (3) meeting the needs of children, especially children in high-poverty areas, migrant children, immigrant children, limited-English-proficient children (LEP), neglected or delinquent children, homeless children, Indian children, and children with disabilities [Section 13102 (a)(1)(A-L)]. In short, the previous Centers' mandate included a focus on a number of aspects of local educational practice.

A previous evaluation¹⁵ found the majority of the technical assistance was targeted to school districts and schools. The study, based on surveys of clients conducted in 1999, found that the majority of direct participants in major Center training and technical assistance activities were school staff (either teachers or principals), and that the majority of clients who arranged for services from the Centers were also based in school districts or schools. At the state level, among those state education agency (SEA) staff members who had received assistance, 64 percent reported that the Centers had improved the ability of their SEA to provide assistance to districts and schools. The report noted that higher ratings for Centers were associated with more intensive technical assistance, based upon survey findings.

The current design of the Center program reflects changes from the design of the predecessor program. The Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 authorized a new group of Centers to provide technical assistance for NCLB implementation at the state, district, substate region, and school levels for the purposes of "improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and encouraging and sustaining school improvement" (Section 203). It also gave ED discretion to "establish priorities" for the Centers (Section 207).

In making its design choices, ED set up an advisory process to identify priorities for the new Centers: in 2004 the Secretary of Education appointed 10 Regional Advisory Committees that would conduct needs assessments in their regions and make recommendations regarding technical assistance. The committees said SEAs needed help making better use of scientifically based research in decisionmaking, and that strengthening SEAs' capacity to serve local school districts was critical to the success of NCLB reforms, according to a synthesis of their recommendations.¹⁶

Following this effort, ED identified states as the Centers' primary client base, although the program had in the past served local clients, as described above. ED charged the Centers to work in new ways to expand and strengthen states' capacity to deliver assistance to schools and districts. The new program would also consolidate and expand responsibilities for Center assistance in that it would replace the Regional Technology in Education Consortia, the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education, and the Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division. (2000). *Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers Program: Final Report on the Evaluation*(Volume I). Washington, DC: Author.

¹⁶ Sheekey, A., Cymrot, D.J., and Fauntleroy, C. (2005, March). *A Report to the U.S. Department of Education: Overview and Synthesis of the Regional Advisory Committee Reports on Educational Challenges and Technical Assistance Needs*. Alexandria, VA: The CNA Corporation.

Structure of the Center Program

To implement the provisions of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, ED created a new Center structure with two tiers of technical assistance. The Notice Inviting Applications detailed the design. Under the new design, the Secretary of Education would award grants to 21 Centers, each tasked with “provid[ing] technical assistance to States as States work to help districts and schools to close achievement gaps in core content areas and raise student achievement in schools. To accomplish this goal, ED stipulated that applicants had to “propose a plan of technical assistance specifically focused on helping States implement the provisions of NCLB applicable to States, and helping States build the capacity to help school districts and schools implement NCLB provisions and programs.”¹⁷

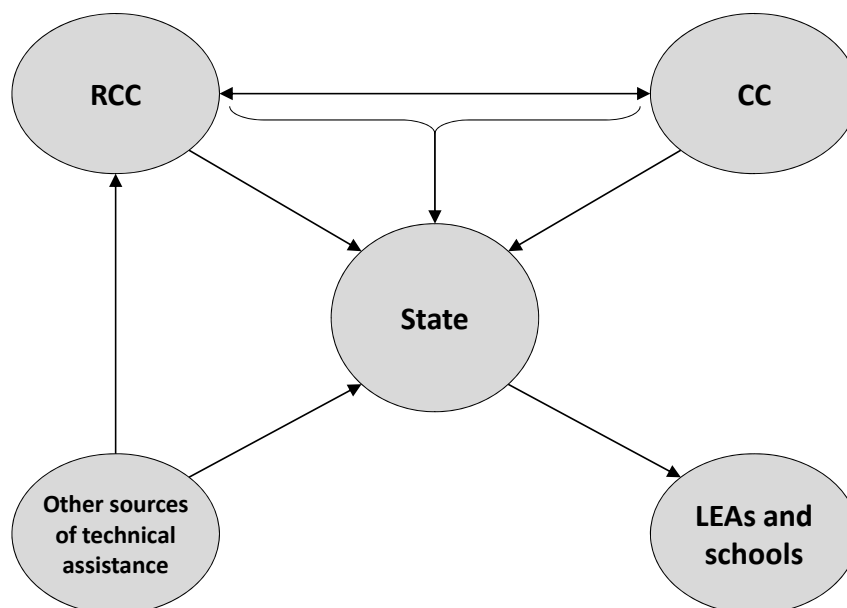
While the overall goal of assisting states with NCLB implementation was common to all 21 Centers, the two-tiered technical assistance designed by ED created distinct roles for the two types of Centers. These are described next.

Distinct RCC and CC Roles

Within the 21 Centers, ED constituted 16 Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) and five Content Centers (CCs). By design, RCCs and CCs were given different roles and functions in a system of technical assistance (exhibit 1.1). RCCs, embedded within distinct geographic regions across the United States and territories, would deliver technical assistance to the states and territories in their region, addressing their needs and building their capacity to assist their districts and schools. Meanwhile, each CC would take responsibility for synthesizing knowledge from the research and promising practices within a particular substantive area. The CCs would build the capacity of the RCCs by providing research-based information, products, guidance, and knowledge on key topics. The CCs would also work with RCCs to provide technical assistance to states. In turn, each state would help its districts and schools meet NCLB requirements.

¹⁷ Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 2005. *Federal Register*. (2005, June 3). 70(106), 32585.

Exhibit 1.1. Center program design



Elaborating on the functions of RCCs, ED required them to work directly with states to “provide frontline assistance.”¹⁸ ED mandated that RCCs provide states with ongoing assistance and training that would draw from a range of knowledge sources, including but not limited to CCs; provide CCs with information about promising practices; convene states for collaboration; and deliver information based on both research and best practice. The specific list of RCC responsibilities included the following:¹⁹

- “Working closely with each State in its region on an ongoing basis”
- “Linking States with the resources of Content Centers, Department staff, Regional Educational Laboratories, The What Works Clearinghouse, and other entities”
- “Suggesting sources of appropriate service providers or assistance for State activities that are not within the core mission of the centers”
- “Assisting State efforts to build statewide systems of support for districts and schools in need of improvement”
- “Working to identify, broker, leverage, and deliver information, resources and services from the Content Centers and other sources”
- “Convening in partnership with Content Centers and others, as appropriate, States and districts to receive training and information on best practices and research-based improvement strategies”
- “Providing guidance and training on implementation of requirements under NCLB and other related Federal programs”
- “Facilitating collaboration at the State level to align Federal, State, and district school improvement programs”

¹⁸ Ibid., 32585.

¹⁹ Ibid., 32585-6.

- “Helping Content Centers to identify, document, and disseminate emerging promising practices”

The Notice Inviting Applications portrayed CCs as a central source of readily accessible knowledge, resources, and tools. Each CC was designed to consolidate in-depth knowledge in one of five key content areas: Assessment and Accountability, Instruction, Teacher Quality, Innovation and Improvement, or High Schools. The types of knowledge specifically mentioned included research, scientifically valid practices, and promising practices. The degree of emphasis on research and scientifically valid practice was heightened in this redesign of the Center program. This was consistent with NCLB, which stated that scientifically based research must inform local practice.

Within their content areas ED tasked CCs to:²⁰

- “Identify, organize, select and translate existing key research knowledge...and communicate the information in ways that that are highly relevant and highly useful to State and local level policy makers and practitioners”
- “Benchmark State and district practices for implementing NCLB provisions and school improvement interventions...and identify promising approaches that can be shared with States and districts”
- “Convene States and districts, researchers and other experts to learn from each other about practical strategies for implementing NCLB provisions and programs”
- “Train Regional Center staff on what is known about scientifically valid practices and programs”
- “Collaborate with Regional Centers to address specific State requests for assistance”
- “Communicate to the field...Department guidance related to the center’s content focus”
- “Design needs assessment and data analysis tools that States and districts can use to benchmark their programs and progress”

Awards to Centers

At the conclusion of the competition, new Regional Comprehensive Centers were located in 16 regions of the United States, covering all U.S. states and territories, and the five new Content Centers had also entered into cooperative agreements with ED (exhibit 1.2). Of the 16 RCCs, there were four that served only their respective state: New York, Texas, California, and Alaska. The remaining 12 Centers served from two to seven states and other jurisdictions. The non-state jurisdictions that the Centers were to serve were the following: the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia [Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap], Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. Throughout this report, the term “state” will be defined to include the 50 states as well as these other jurisdictions. A full list of the grantees and subgrantees appears in appendix A of this report.

²⁰ Ibid., 32586-7.

Center funding for each of the three years that are the subjects of this evaluation totaled \$56.3 million, with variation across Centers (exhibit 1.2). In 2008-09 (FY 2008) individual Regional Centers' funding ranged from a low of \$860,000 in Alaska and Pacific to a high of \$6,039,909 for the California Comprehensive Center. The funding for each RCC was driven by a formula based on the region's total population and its number of poor children ages 5-17. Average funding across all RCCs was \$2,854, 047.

Content Center funding for 2008-09 ranged from \$1,518,400 for the Assessment and Accountability Center and Center on Innovation and Improvement, to \$2,518,400 for the Centers on Instruction, Teacher Quality, and High Schools. The latter group of Centers was co-funded in each year with an allocation of \$1 million each from the Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination Act, authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The average funding across CCs was \$2,046,096.

Background on the State Role in NCLB

A basic premise of the Center program as designed by ED was that NCLB assigned many tasks to states. The background section of the Notice itemized the following NCLB requirements for states:

...set standards for student performance, implement statewide testing and accountability systems to measure school and student performance toward achieving those standards, adopt research-based instructional and program improvements related to teaching and learning in the classroom, ensure that all teachers in core subject areas are highly qualified, and improve or ultimately restructure schools that are consistently low-performing.²¹

With respect to consistently low-performing schools and also low-performing districts, NCLB mandated that all states establish and sustain statewide systems of support and improvement for school districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB. Districts and schools identified for improvement must receive assistance from support teams, institutions of higher education, and regional service centers in the state. This "statewide system of support" (SSOS) must include individuals who were knowledgeable about research and practice on teaching and learning and who could develop and implement comprehensive improvement strategies. "State support teams" (SSTs) were required to help schools plan for improvement and to evaluate the effectiveness of school personnel. The NCLB legislation also provided that these support teams should receive technical assistance from Comprehensive Centers and others.²²

²¹ Ibid., 32584.

²² No Child Left Behind, Title I, Part A, § 1117 (a) (1).

Exhibit 1.2. Center funding, by year

| Centers | States | FY 2006 | FY 2007 | FY 2008 |
|--|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total | | \$56,256,713 | \$56,256,750 | \$56,256,750 |
| Regional Centers | | | | |
| Alaska Comprehensive Center | AK | \$850,000 | \$860,000 | \$860,000 |
| Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center | KY, NC, TN, VA, WV | 3,829,927 | 3,912,131 | 3,912,131 |
| California Comprehensive Center | CA | 5,912,997 | 6,039,909 | 6,039,909 |
| Florida and Islands Regional Comprehensive Center | FL, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands | 3,788,289 | 3,869,599 | 3,869,599 |
| Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center | IN, MI, OH | 3,592,771 | 3,669,885 | 3,669,885 |
| Great Lakes West Region Comprehensive Center | IL, WI | 3,702,196 | 2,448,739 | 2,448,739 |
| Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center | DE, MD, NJ, PA, DC | 3,388,147 | 3,460,868 | 3,460,868 |
| Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center | AR, KS, MO, OK | 2,111,226 | 2,156,541 | 2,156,541 |
| New England Comprehensive Center | CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT | 1,644,795 | 1,680,099 | 1,680,099 |
| New York Comprehensive Center | NY | 2,886,970 | 2,948,935 | 2,948,935 |
| North Central Comprehensive Center | IA, MN, ND, SD, NE | 1,286,458 | 1,314,108 | 1,314,108 |
| Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center | ID, MT, WY, WA, OR | 1,630,818 | 1,665,821 | 1,665,821 |
| Pacific Comprehensive Center | HI, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Palau | 850,000 | 860,000 | 860,000 |
| Southeast Comprehensive Center | AL, GA, SC, LA, MS | 4,120,988 | 4,209,438 | 4,209,438 |
| Southwest Comprehensive Center | AZ, UT, CO, NV, NM | 2,491,327 | 2,544,800 | 2,544,800 |
| Texas Comprehensive Center | TX | 3,939,324 | 4,023,877 | 4,023,877 |
| Content Centers | | | | |
| Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center | | \$1,446,096 | \$1,518,400 | \$1,518,400 |
| Center on Innovation and Improvement | | 1,446,096 | 1,518,400 | 1,518,400 |
| Center on Instruction | | 2,446,096 | 2,518,400 | 2,518,400 |
| National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality | | 2,446,096 | 2,518,400 | 2,518,400 |
| National High School Center | | 2,446,096 | 2,518,400 | 2,518,400 |

NOTE: The figure shown in this table for Great Lakes West in FY 2006 is the sum of the six-month "start up" award (\$1,243,322) and the FY 2006 award (\$2,458,844) as both were awarded in FY 2006.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

Research Questions Addressed in This Report

The current evaluation takes a global look at the Center program as designed by ED, tracking the ways in which the Centers interacted with clients (both states and other Centers) over three program years. The first year of data collection was July 2006 through June 2007, the second year of program funding. The evaluation was designed to complete its data collection in 2008-09, covering three of the five program years.

The priorities for this study focused on the statute's charge for the evaluation to provide "an analysis of the services provided...[and] the extent to which each of the comprehensive centers meets the objectives of its respective plan, and whether such services meet the educational needs ... in the region." Among the following key research questions, the first focuses on an analysis of services provided and adherence to objectives; the second addresses the Centers' performance in meeting state needs; and the third calls for more detailed assessment of the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center technical assistance:

1. How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers operate as part of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program?
 - How did Centers develop, refine, and carry out their plans for technical assistance? How did they define their clients' educational needs and priorities?
 - What were the objectives of the technical assistance the Centers offered? What kinds of products and services were provided by the Centers?
 - How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers coordinate their work?
2. What was the performance of the Comprehensive Centers in addressing state needs and priorities? How did their performance change over the period of time studied?
 - How did the Centers' state clients define their needs and priorities?
 - To what extent, as reported by states, did Center assistance expand state capacity to address underlying needs and priorities and meet the goals of NCLB?
 - To what extent did states rely on other sources of technical assistance besides the Centers? What were other sources of technical assistance that states used? How did the usefulness of Center assistance compare with the usefulness of assistance from other sources?
3. To what extent was the assistance provided by the Centers of high quality, high relevance, and high usefulness?
 - Did the quality, relevance, or usefulness of Center assistance change over the period of time studied?

- What was the variation in the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center assistance across types of projects and participants?

Findings reported here address the Center program as a whole and also address each tier of Centers, RCCs and CCs, separately. Data gathered on individual projects were compiled and aggregated to the program level and by center type. Program-level aggregated findings reflect an average across all sampled projects, and center-type aggregated findings reflect the average across all RCC sampled projects or all CC sampled projects. Additional details are provided in chapter 2.

Organization of This Report

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 describes the study's methods. Chapter 3 addresses the first research question, describing Center technical assistance, procedures for needs assessment, and the functioning of the two-tiers of technical assistance. Chapter 4 addresses the second research question, describing the technical assistance priorities reported at the state level and the ways in which Centers were reported to have addressed these priorities and expanded state capacity. Chapter 5 addresses the third research question, reporting on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of selected Center projects as determined through expert review (for quality) and participant surveys (for relevance and usefulness). The report concludes with several appendices that provide additional technical notes, the materials used to collect data (surveys, protocols for Center interviews, and requests for materials from the Centers), and historical exhibits.

2. Study Design

The evaluation team used six data sources in each of the three rounds of data collection to address the report's research questions: documents produced by the Centers with assistance from the evaluation team, Center management plans, interviews with Centers, state manager surveys, expert panel reviews, and participant surveys (exhibit 2.1). Data were collected from all sources for the 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09 program years to describe changes over time in the Center operations and assessments of Center's technical assistance. This chapter describes those data sources and analytic procedures used in the analysis.

For the first three questions, which pertained to the operations of the Centers, the data were drawn from the Centers themselves. The team used Center management plans as a data source regarding Center objectives. In the summers of 2007 and 2008 as well as spring 2010, the team conducted interviews with the Centers; closed-ended prompts were used in face-to-face interviews to gather self-report data systematically on Center objectives, procedures for needs assessment and planning, and interactions with their clients. The final interviews (2008-09) included structured questions to gather Center perspectives on changes in technical assistance work across program years and on quality assurance procedures. Two documentary sources were used as sources for descriptions of Center technical assistance: the project inventory forms and project cover sheets completed by the Centers with review and feedback from the evaluation team. The definition of a project and the procedures for gathering and reviewing these data are discussed in detail in this chapter.

A survey of state managers was the source for data on the states' technical assistance needs and priorities, on other sources of technical assistance used, ratings of the overall technical assistance received, and on perceived capacity change at the state level. The technical quality of Center technical assistance was assessed by a panel of experts on the topic of each technical assistance project. Finally, participants answered survey questions pertinent to the relevance and usefulness of Center technical assistance.

Each of these data sources is described in this chapter, and the analytic procedures specific to each source are discussed. The data collection instruments and further details regarding data sources and procedures can be found in appendices referenced throughout the chapter. The chapter concludes with a brief explanation of units of analysis and use of statistical tests.

Exhibit 2.1. Data sources for the research questions, 2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09

| Research question | Project inventory forms and project cover sheets | Center management plans | Interviews with Centers | State manager survey | Expert review panels | Participant surveys |
|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers operate as part of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program? | | | | | | |
| How did Centers develop, refine, and carry out their plans for technical assistance? How did they define their clients' educational needs and priorities? | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| What were the objectives of the technical assistance the Centers offered? What kinds of products and services were provided by the Centers? | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers coordinate their work? | | | ✓ | | | |
| What was the performance of the Comprehensive Centers in addressing state needs and priorities? How did their performance change over the period of time studied? | | | | | | |
| How did the Centers' state clients define their needs and priorities? | | | | ✓ | | |
| To what extent, as reported by states, did Center assistance expand state capacity to address underlying needs and priorities and meet the goals of NCLB? | | | | ✓ | | |
| To what extent did states rely on other sources of technical assistance besides the Centers? What were other sources of technical assistance that states used? How did the usefulness of Center assistance compare with the usefulness of assistance from other sources? | | | | ✓ | | |
| To what extent was the assistance provided by the Centers of high quality, high relevance, and high usefulness | | | | | | |
| Did the quality, relevance, or usefulness of Center assistance change over the period of time studied? | | | | ✓ (overall relevance and usefulness) | ✓ (quality) | ✓ (project-level relevance and usefulness) |
| What was the variation in the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center assistance across types of projects and participants? | | | | ✓ (overall relevance and usefulness) | ✓ (quality) | ✓ (project-level relevance and usefulness) |

Identification of a Sample of Center Work for Expert Review and Participant Surveys

A critical component of the evaluation was to rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center products and services. Given available resources, it was not possible for the evaluation team to submit all of a Center's products and services to an independent review panel to rate quality. Nor was it feasible to survey all individuals who used Center products or participated in Center activities in the designated time period regarding relevance and usefulness. Therefore, the evaluation team developed and applied a strategy to select a sample of work from each Center for expert panel review and participant ratings.

The following sections describe: (1) the unit of analysis, (2) the sample frame, (3) the evaluation sample, and (4) materials obtained from Centers.

The Unit of Analysis: The Project

The evaluation team initially reviewed the Centers' 2006-07 management plans to understand the nature of the work the Centers were conducting and determine if the management plans might serve as an appropriate sampling frame for the evaluation. Based on this effort, the team determined that the sampling procedures could not be based on the management plans for two reasons. First, the Centers' plans and work continued to evolve over time. Consequently, the plans, which were prepared before the program year, did not comprehensively reflect the work actually being done by the Centers months later. Second, the Centers used different approaches to organizing and aggregating their work. For example, some presented their work by state while others organized it by topic area. For the purposes of this evaluation, the team identified "projects" as a common level of aggregation that would constitute units large enough for review and rating, but focused enough for coherence. A "project" was defined as ***a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience***. To ensure that projects would constitute units that were large enough for review and rating, but focused enough for coherence, the study team provided the following criteria:

- ***Complete and coherent whole.*** Because each project should be able to stand on its own in an expert panel review, it should include all related activities and products.
- ***Common intended outcome.*** Where a cluster of activities and deliverables was designed by the Center to lead to the same outcome for the same audience, those activities and deliverables should be grouped as one project.
- ***Topical focus.*** With few exceptions, a project addressed just one topic (for example, effective systems of support, adolescent literacy, assessment of English language learners) around which there was a body of research or professional wisdom.

Since the project was a unit developed for this evaluation and was not necessarily how Centers divided up their work for programmatic or cost-tracking purposes, the evaluation team took several steps to ensure that the project concept was clear and used consistently across Centers. The evaluation team developed a standard Project Inventory Form (PIF) that Centers used to create an inventory of their work for each of the program years in this evaluation (see appendix B for a copy of the PIF) as well as written guidance in the instructions for completing the PIF (described in appendix B) and a sample inventory to serve as an example of the kinds of projects that should be listed by the Centers. The sample inventory included examples of activities or resources for defining projects at each level of effort—major, moderate, or minor. Members of the study team also invited Center staff to attend training sessions by conference call on completing the PIF, including defining projects. When draft inventories were received, the study team reviewed them to make sure the entries listed met the three criteria used to identify projects. They also reviewed the Center’s reporting of the project level of effort for correspondence with the listed activities and resources, and listing of the projects under each topic for correspondence with the topic definitions provided in the written guidance. The study team provided technical assistance to Centers as needed to ensure that all projects conformed to the standards.

The Sampling Frame

The evaluation was designed to assess the quality, relevance, and usefulness of a sample of Center work. The PIFs served as the basis for identifying the sampling frame from which the study team drew the sample of projects that became the subject of expert panel reviews and participant surveys. For each data collection cycle, the evaluation team asked each Center to use the PIF to prepare an inventory of all the projects active during the appropriate grant period.²³ Exhibit 2.2 shows the total number of projects on the PIFs by project size for each of the data collection cycles.²⁴ Projects that spanned multiple years were counted each year they appeared on the PIF; therefore, the total number of distinct projects is less than the sum total of individual projects listed in Exhibit 2.2.

²³ In the instructions provided to Centers for completing the PIFs, “projects” excluded the following activities: (1) training or professional development of Center staff, (2) work on coordinating committees within the Comprehensive Center network, (3) annual needs assessments or negotiations with states, unrelated to specific projects, and (4) other internal meetings or documents.

²⁴ Centers designated on their PIFs whether each project was “major,” “moderate,” or “minor” in terms of the level of effort and/or resources the Center devoted to it, relative to other projects in the same Center. Examples of activities or resources defining each project level of effort were provided in the instructions for the PIFs. After draft inventories were received, the evaluation team also reviewed the Center’s reporting of the project level of effort for correspondence with the listed activities and resources and followed up with the Centers where there were questions. Although instructions were provided with examples and checks were conducted, these designations were not standardized across Centers and as a result a project considered major by one center might be viewed as moderate or minor by another Center.

Exhibit 2.2. Number of projects on the project inventory forms (PIFs), by project size and by year

| Project size | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 364 | 346 | 331 |
| Major | 110 | 111 | 108 |
| Moderate | 106 | 111 | 110 |
| Minor | 148 | 124 | 113 |

EXHIBIT READS: There were 364 projects included on the PIFs for the 2006-07 program year. Of these, 110 were classified as major projects, 106 were moderate projects and 148 were minor projects.

SOURCE: Project inventory forms.

To be eligible for the sampling frame, projects first needed to represent a reasonable amount of effort (i.e., classified as “major” or “moderate” by the Center) and have a sufficient amount of material to give reviewers enough information to judge the quality of the work. Projects included in the sampling frame also needed to have identifiable participants since the evaluation design called for collecting relevance and usefulness ratings through surveys of project participants. All minor projects (approximately one-third of the Center projects in each year) were excluded from the sampling frame, as few of them had identifiable participants or sufficient materials for panel review. Thus, the sampling frame represents the portion of each Center’s work that they identified as using a major or moderate amount of their efforts or resources.

The Sample of Projects

To ensure that the final sample of projects reviewed each year reflected a range of each Center’s work across topics and states and captured work that represented the largest investment of resources, the team implemented a sampling strategy that included a combination of Center-nominated projects and a stratified set of purposively-selected projects.²⁵ The desired sample size at each Center was a function of that Center’s budget amount. For each of the three data collection years, the number of projects sampled for each Center ranged from three to eight depending on the size of the Center’s annual budget. Centers with smaller budgets (less than \$2 million) were asked to nominate one project for inclusion in the study sample while those with budgets of \$2 million or more were asked to nominate two projects. Exhibit 2.3 shows the target and actual sample distribution by budget size across study years. In some cases, the Centers did not have enough eligible projects in the sample frame to meet their desired sample size so the total number of projects sampled was lower than expected. Although the sample was not statistically representative in scientific terms, it was designed to include a high percentage of the major projects of each Center as well as projects that Centers thought best represented their work.

²⁵ The full list of decision rules, applied across all Centers sampling projects within center are provided in appendix B.

To increase buy-in from the Centers and to allow them to showcase a project of their choice, Centers were given an opportunity to nominate the one or two projects they felt best represented their work.²⁶ These Center-nominated projects were selected first for the sample. Selection of the remainder of the sample was then completed by the evaluation team using an iterative sampling process to randomly select projects while controlling for topic and state. Major projects (across topics and states) were sampled first and then moderate projects (if needed). When choosing between projects of similar categorical size, the evaluation team selected projects from different topics before sampling multiple projects within a given topic. When choosing between projects of similar categorical size and topic, the evaluation team selected projects from different states before sampling multiple projects within a given state.²⁷

Using these methods, the evaluation team selected a total sample of 122 projects in 2006-07 and 2007-08 and 118 projects in 2008-09. Exhibit 2.4 shows the number of projects in the sample by project size and by year. In each of the years, the sample predominantly included the most major work of the Centers although the sample was not statistically representative in scientific terms, and covered 33 to 36 percent of all projects reported on the PIFs.

²⁶ The number of projects a Center was able to nominate depended on the size of its annual budget, as shown in exhibit 2.3.

²⁷ Overall, the procedures used to select the sample of projects to be included in the study each year were intended to provide a “fair” representation of Center work. In addition to the bias introduced by Center nominations of projects they considered to best represent their work, there are two dimensions for which there is the potential for selection bias in the sample of projects. Projects were selected to ensure inclusion in the study sample of projects covering a variety of content areas and serving all geographic areas. However, this strategy produced a non-probability sample. In addition, this strategy ensured that topic areas addressed by the largest number of projects are underrepresented in each year’s project sample, and topic areas addressed by relatively few projects are overrepresented. It is also possible that topic areas addressed by relatively few Centers would be underrepresented in the sample. The other dimension on which the sample is likely to be biased is project size. The evaluation team deliberately selected major projects over moderate projects whenever possible. To the degree that the major projects are unrepresentative of the Centers’ work conducted under moderate or minor projects, then the study sample is biased.

Exhibit 2.3. Sample size by budget

| Center funding level—annual federal contract (number of Centers) | Target number of projects to be selected for review, per Center | Number of projects nominated/ Number of projects selected purposively, per Center | Number of projects selected across Centers in: | | |
|--|---|---|--|------------|------------|
| | | | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Total | | | 122* | 122 | 118 |
| Less than \$1 million (N=2) | 4 | 1/3 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| \$1 to 1.9 million (N=5) | 5 | 1/4 | 25 | 23 | 25 |
| \$2 to 2.9 million (N=7) | 6 | 2/4 | 41 | 43** | 40 |
| \$3 to 3.9 million (N=5) | 7 | 2/5 | 34 | 34 | 31 |
| \$4 million or more (N=2) | 8 | 2/6 | 16 | 16 | 16 |

* This total includes a collaborative project conducted jointly by an RCC and a CC that is accounted for once in the total sample but included once for each relevant Center in the table rows.

** The total number of projects exceeded the expected target by one due to a program that was misclassified in a budget category with a larger target sample size.

EXHIBIT READS: There were two Centers whose annual funding level was less than \$1 million. Four projects were selected for review for each of these centers, one of which was nominated by the Center for selection and three of which were selected for inclusion by the study team.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education.

Exhibit 2.4. Number of projects in the study sample, by project size and by year

| Project size | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 122 | 122 | 118 |
| Major | 93 | 88 | 92 |
| Moderate | 29 | 34 | 26 |

EXHIBIT READS: There were 122 projects in the project sample for the 2006-07 program year. Of these, 93 were classified as major projects and 29 were classified as moderate projects.

SOURCE: Project inventory forms (PIFs) submitted by the Centers.

Further detail on the sampled projects by topic in relation to all major and moderate Center projects for the 2008-09 data collection cycle appears in exhibit 2.5. Refer to appendix B, exhibits B.2 and B.3 for similar exhibits showing the sampled projects by topic for 2006-07 and 2007-08. In 2008-09, 50 percent or more of all major or moderate projects were selected for the

project sample in 16 of the 23²⁸ topics. This figure was 17 of 23 for 2006-07 and 15 of 23 for 2007-08.

Exhibit 2.5. Distribution of all major and moderate projects and projects in the evaluation sample, by topic in 2008-09

| Project topic | Number of major and moderate projects on project inventories | Number of projects in the sample (all major or moderate) | Percent of all major and moderate projects in evaluation sample |
|---|---|---|--|
| Total | 218 | 118 | 54% |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 54 | 33 | 61 |
| Data use/data-driven decisionmaking | 6 | 3 | 50 |
| Formative assessment | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| Reading | 6 | 3 | 50 |
| Adolescent literacy | 10 | 6 | 60 |
| Mathematics | 16 | 8 | 50 |
| Dropout prevention | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| High school redesign/reform | 7 | 4 | 57 |
| Transition to high school | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Special education—assessment | 5 | 1 | 20 |
| English language learners | 26 | 12 | 46 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 11 | 4 | 36 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| Teacher professional development | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Response to Intervention (Rtl) | 14 | 9 | 64 |
| Migrant education | 7 | 3 | 43 |
| Indian/native American education | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| Data management compliance | 9 | 5 | 56 |
| Assessment design | 3 | 2 | 67 |
| Parent involvement | 6 | 2 | 33 |
| Other | 15 | 8 | 53 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, there were 54 major and moderate projects on the project inventories that focused on components of effective systems of support. Of these, 33 (or 61 percent) were in the project sample.

SOURCE: Project inventory forms submitted by the Centers.

²⁸ In all years, the topic area of “other” is included as the 23rd topic area, as a small number of the sampled projects were included in that area. Subsequent discussions in the report use the 22 specific substantive topic areas.

Materials from Centers

The evaluation team notified the 21 Center Directors about projects selected for review and sent a standard *Request for Materials for Expert Panel Review* (see appendix B for a copy of the transmittal memo and request form). Centers were asked to assemble and submit a comprehensive set of pre-existing materials associated with each project (meeting agendas, briefing books, meeting summaries, training materials, white papers, web resources, etc.) that would fully describe the project and provide reviewers with a sufficient basis for rating the technical quality of the work. Centers were also asked to include a participant list and a standard cover sheet, using a format developed by the evaluation team, for each project. The participant lists were used to draw the sample for participant surveys.

When the project materials were received, they were reviewed by evaluation team members for completeness. If materials were missing or inaccessible (e.g., electronic files didn't open) or the cover sheet was incomplete, a follow-up memo was sent to the Center describing any issues. Evaluation team members then worked with the Center to obtain the missing information and finalize the review package (see appendix B for a copy of the follow-up memo).

Describing Center Operations

The purpose of collecting data from the Centers was to describe Center operations and to address research questions regarding the objectives of the Centers, the kinds of products and services provided, how the Centers defined their clients' needs and priorities, and the extent to which the Centers met the objectives of their own plans. The description of Center operations in chapter 3 of this report is drawn from three sources of data: interview responses gathered from the Centers, PIFs, and the cover sheets submitted for the sampled projects. The procedures used in gathering and analyzing data from these sources in all three years are described in the following pages.

Management Plans

Centers stated their objectives for each year in their annual program management plans. For example, for the 2006-07 program year, Centers had developed their management plans in spring 2006, prior to the program year. The evaluation team relied on these management plans to gather information from statements of the Center's intended substantive focus for the year's technical assistance. The team coded each Center's stated objectives in their management plan by subject area, using the same list of 22 topics used to code the PIFs. Appendix C provides a description of the process used to code the management plans as well as an analysis of the intercoder reliability.

Interviews with Centers

The evaluation team visited each of the Centers in person in the summers of 2007 and 2008 and conducted the third interview by phone in spring 2010. The primary purpose of these interviews was to capture descriptions of Center operations during each of the program years. Interviews conducted with Center directors and other key leadership staff posed a combination of structured open-ended and binary questions regarding the following topics (see appendix C for the protocols):

- Center organization (lead organization, subgrantees, ways of dividing responsibilities among staff)
- Major areas of focus
- Communication with client organizations (states in the case of RCCs, or RCCs and states in the case of CCs) regarding needs and assistance to be provided
- Modes of delivering technical assistance
- Reasons for not carrying out technical assistance requests
- Barriers to delivering technical assistance
- Approaches taken in quality assurance
- Working relationships within the Center network

For the third round of Center interviews, the evaluation team added probes on topics of emerging policy interest such as the ways in which Centers viewed their work to have evolved over the years, the Centers' views on barriers to providing technical assistance, and additional description of the process for quality assurance that Centers established.

Project Inventory Forms (PIFs)

While the main purpose of the PIFs was to build the sample frame (described earlier in this chapter), the evaluation team also used the PIFs to gain data on the work the Centers undertook in each of the study years. The projects sampled for quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings were classified by topic (see appendix B).

Project Cover Sheets

For projects included in the sample each year, the standard cover sheets provided by the Centers described project activities and cross-Center collaboration in the project. The project cover sheets were primarily collected from each Center to help orient expert panels to the

purpose and content of the materials to be reviewed (see appendix B for a copy of the *Request for Materials for Expert Panel Review* transmittal memo and cover sheet).

The evaluation team used the cover sheets as a data source for an overall description of activities and collaboration in the sampled projects (reported in chapter 3) and for use in classifying projects into subgroups for which the ratings of relevance and usefulness could be analyzed (reported in chapter 5, as described below). The cover sheets provided descriptive information for each project, including the activities and deliverables associated with the project and the contributions of other Centers to the project. Categories of Center activities and resources were drawn from review of the Center management plans and site visit interviews. These coding categories, thus, permitted a yes/no judgment of whether each project offered each of the following activities or resources to participants:

- Ongoing consultation and follow-up
- Research collections or syntheses
- Engagement of participants in project planning
- Training events
- Task force meetings and work
- Conferences
- Support for development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy

The team also coded the type of contribution, if any, of any CC to each RCC project, and of any RCC to each CC project.

Additionally, for the 2008-09 data collection cycle, the evaluation team used the project cover sheets to provide additional detail regarding the 33 projects in the study sample included under the topic of effective systems of support. For these projects, the evaluation team coded activities and resources at a more fine-grained level.

All these elements of the cover sheets were coded by members of the evaluation team using procedures described in appendix C; the appendix also provides a detailed description of all the codes used as well as the results of the analysis of intercoder reliability.

Survey of State Managers

The purposes of the survey of state managers were to obtain information on state priorities in terms of state responsibilities related to the implementation of NCLB, obtain the state perspective from SEA administrators working with the Centers on the relevance and usefulness of Center assistance, and obtain a comparative judgment of Center assistance in

relation to assistance available through other sources such as professional associations. The survey instrument used for the survey of state managers appears in appendix E of this report.

In order to identify appropriate respondents for the survey of state managers, each year the evaluation team collected the names of each RCC's main point(s) of contact in each SEA from the RCCs. For each of the data collection years, this resulted in a total of over 120 respondents across the 62 states included in the study.²⁹

To be fully reflective of all SEAs in the analysis of these data, it was critical that the study team receive completed surveys from state managers in each state. In 2006-07 there was at least one response from each of the 50 states and 6 of 12 outlying areas, in and 2007-08 there was at least one response from each of the 50 states and 7 of 12 outlying areas. In 2008-09, the evaluation team received responses from 48 states and 6 of 12 outlying areas.

In each of the years, there were a number of states for which the evaluation team received completed responses from more than one state manager. Exhibit 2.6 shows the number of responses to the state manager survey for each of the years. The state was the primary unit of analysis in analyzing data from the state manager survey for this report. The state managers' responses were weighted to ensure that each state was equally represented in all summary statistics while taking into account the variation in responses within each state. The weighting procedure, where each response was weighted by the inverse of the number of managers responding from that state, ensured that each state was equally represented when the evaluation team aggregated responses across states to describe the distribution of responses.

Exhibit 2.6. Number of responses to the state manager survey, by year

| Number of responses from the states | Number of states | | |
|--|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Total | 56 | 57 | 54 |
| 1 | 36 | 30 | 34 |
| 2 | 15 | 21 | 19 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, in 36 states the survey of state managers was completed by a single respondent. There was one state where the state manager survey was completed by four separate respondents.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

²⁹ The Centers were expected to serve 62 jurisdictions including the 50 states and 12 other jurisdictions: the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. For purposes of this report, the term "state" refers to the 50 states and the outlying territories listed here.

At the conclusion of the state manager survey, respondents were asked to describe the offices or departments within their state department of education they directed. The responses to this question show that across the states the offices most often represented by the state managers were federal programs and school improvement. Exhibit 2.7 shows the distribution of weighted responses to these questions across the three data collection years.

Exhibit 2.7. Office division or department directed by state manager survey respondents, by year

| Office/department | Percent of state managers (weighted) | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Federal programs | 68% | 64% | 65% |
| School improvement | 64 | 66 | 67 |
| Curriculum and instruction | 53 | 50 | 45 |
| Assessment and accountability | 40 | 45 | 38 |
| Special education | 30 | 28 | 24 |

NOTE: Survey respondents were able to select multiple responses to this question and as a result, the percentages do not add to 100 percent.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 68 percent of state managers (weighted) indicated that they directed the federal programs office in their state. Sixty-four percent of the state managers (weighted) indicated that they headed the school improvement office.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Assessment of Quality by Expert Panels

Given the Centers' charge to focus on scientifically based research and evidence-based practices to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps, one goal of the evaluation is to assess the technical quality of work across the Centers using an independent panel of expert reviewers. Each sampled project was independently rated by a panel of three experts.³⁰ Reviewers assigned a score to each of three quality dimensions discussed below, using a 5-point rating scale.

In an effort to maximize interrater reliability, the evaluation team: (1) defined quality and developed a detailed scoring rubric that could be applied across all Centers and a range of projects; (2) recruited, trained and assigned highly qualified expert panelists; and (3) implemented a process for reviewers to discuss their findings with one another when scores were discrepant for particular projects. The following sections describe each of these steps, followed by a brief discussion of how the final technical quality ratings were calculated.

³⁰ In each of the years, there were between 2 and 9 projects that were rated by only two panelists.

Define Technical Quality and Develop Scoring Rubric

Developing the definition of technical quality and the rubric used to measure it incorporated information from many sources, including federal legislation and ED specifications on what constituted scientifically based evidence and an example from another federal agency.³¹ When defining technical quality and developing the scoring rubric, the evaluation team sought to ensure that the definition was relevant to the range of projects Centers would provide—recognizing that some projects might have a substantial research knowledge base and others might be guided more by promising practices (those that were supported by evidence but not yet rigorously studied) or legislative or regulatory requirements. Also, the definition of quality and the associated rubric had to be applicable to projects at varying points of development and implementation, from early-stage needs assessment and design work to fully-developed products and services. The evaluation team developed a quality scoring rubric, included in appendix G, to assess quality along the following three dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Demonstrated use of the appropriate documented knowledge base
- Dimension 2: Fidelity of application of the knowledge base to the products and services provided
- Dimension 3: Clear and effective delivery

Reviewers assigned a score to each dimension, using a 5-point rating scale (where 1 meant “very low quality” and 5 meant “very high quality”), according to the indicators defined for each dimension and examples in the scoring booklet.

Recruit, Train, and Assign Expert Panelists

To meet the selection criteria for this evaluation, expert panelists had to have current, rigorous work in the particular topic of interest (for example, publications in peer-reviewed, scholarly journals; presentations at relevant professional organization meetings; recent membership on advisory panels or task forces) and be free of conflicts of interest.³² Nominations for panelists were made by staff in ED’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Technical Work Group for this evaluation, members of the evaluation team, and Center staff. Based on the selection criteria, for the 2006-07 data collection cycle the evaluation team selected a total of 70 expert panelists, 94 percent with a doctorate degree and two-thirds (67 percent) with university affiliations, to review the Centers’ 2006-07 sampled projects.³³ An additional 14 expert reviewers were recruited and trained for the second round of reviews to replace four reviewers

³¹ *Review of Instructional Materials for Middle School Science*. (1997, February). National Science Foundation, Retrieved from <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf9754/nsf9754.htm?org=NSF>.

³² Current Comprehensive Center staff, as well as individuals employed by organizations that had an ongoing financial relationship (for example, a contract or cooperative agreement) with a Comprehensive Center and who worked on a Center project, were not eligible to serve as reviewers.

³³ The final expert panels for 2006-07 were made up of 67 expert reviewers. One of the initial trainees was removed due to a conflict of interest, and two reviewers were later dropped from the review process when they failed to complete their reviews in a timely fashion.

who did not return and to add additional depth in certain topical areas, in particular state systems of support. All but two of the 77 second round reviewers returned for the third and final round of reviews.

The evaluation team sought to maximize interrater agreement in scoring of quality by training expert reviewers to systematically use a standard rubric. During the two-day training, experts worked in small groups to discuss how each of the three quality dimensions, and their corresponding indicators, applied to sample project descriptions that were provided by the study team. Reviewers independently scored one of two projects overnight and submitted their dimension-level scores at the beginning of the second day. Scores were posted and analyzed in terms of rater agreement at the dimension level. The panelists again worked in small groups to discuss their scores and identify possible reasons for any discrepancies in the results. During the small group discussions, evaluation staff circulated among the groups to assess whether reviewers had adhered to the standards of evidence discussed on Day 1.³⁴ The same training was offered to newly recruited reviewers for the second round of reviews, while returning reviewers completed a refresher training session offered by Webinar. A similar refresher training session was also provided for all returning reviewers in advance of the third and final round of reviews.

During the actual review process, expert reviewers were asked to score four to eight projects in their area(s) of expertise, with no more than three projects from any given Center. Since judgments about the state of the available evidence on a given topic and its applicability to the project being rated relied heavily upon the knowledge of the expert reviewers, it was important that reviewers were assigned projects that matched their area(s) of expertise. The evaluation team was also careful when assigning projects to avoid known conflicts of interest.³⁵ When needed, the evaluation team reassigned projects when reviewers were unable to complete their reviews in a timely fashion, identified unforeseen conflicts of interest, or did not feel they had the requisite expertise to review the assigned projects.

Overall, between 93 and 98 percent of all projects sampled were reviewed by three panelists. In each year, a small number of projects (9 projects for 2006-07, 2 projects for 2007-08, and 3 projects for 2008-09) were reviewed by only two panelists because the third assigned reviewer did not complete the review within a reasonable timeframe.³⁶

³⁴ During training, expert reviewers scored a sample project and discussed their scores in small groups, paying particular attention to areas where scores were divergent. This approach allowed the evaluation team to identify dimensions or indicators within the scoring rubric that seemed to be problematic (resulting in discrepant scores) or particular reviewers who needed additional training or appeared to be inappropriate to use. The goal was to have panelists leave the training with a common understanding of how to apply the quality rubric; the evaluation team did not intend to attempt to establish a specific interrater reliability criterion at training.

³⁵ For the purpose of assignments, the term “conflict of interest” meant any financial or other interest that appeared to conflict with or significantly compromise the service of the individual reviewer because it could significantly impair the individual’s objectivity.

³⁶ In consultation with IES, the evaluation team decided to forgo the third review on these particular projects since there was interrater agreement (i.e., a difference less than 2 points) between the two scores that had been submitted by the other panelists assigned to these projects.

Address Interrater Reliability

In addition to the detailed scoring rubric and training provided, a resolution process was used to help achieve a high degree of interrater reliability in scoring. If the reviewers' project-level scores (defined as the simple average of their three dimension-level scores) were found to differ by 2 or more points from each other for any given project, the evaluation team convened the panel by telephone to discuss the ratings.³⁷ The goal of the discrepancy conference calls was to give panelists an opportunity to understand the rationale behind their colleagues' scores and consider whether, on the basis of that discussion, any scoring revisions were warranted. The evaluation team emphasized to the reviewers that these discussions were not intended to achieve consensus among them.

Overall, between 76 and 83 percent of them had no discrepancies in the original project-level scores (exhibit 2.8). After a discrepancy conference call, panelists were given the opportunity to submit a revised scoring form and narrative report of the project's strengths and weaknesses. Although panels were not required to reach consensus, discrepancies were resolved in all but two to four cases, increasing the number of projects in agreement from 76 percent to 98 percent in 2006-07, and from 83 percent to 97 percent in 2007-08 and 2008-09.

To estimate interrater agreement, we calculated the rWG(J) index.³⁸ Before the discrepancy calls, the average rWG(J) coefficient ranged from 0.75 to 0.87 across the three years of review (exhibit 2.9).³⁹ After the calls were conducted, the value increased to 0.87 for program year 2006-07 and 0.88 for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

³⁷ The 2-point difference threshold was selected in an effort to identify projects with widely divergent scores that cut across qualitative categories (i.e., "low" quality versus "high" quality), while at the same time minimizing burden on expert panelists.

³⁸ James, L.R., Demaree R.G., and Wolf G. (1984). Estimating within-group interrater reliability with and without response bias. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(1), 85-98.

³⁹ We estimated interrater agreement using the rWG(J) index. Treating each dimension as an "item," we first calculated the score variance between raters on each dimension and then averaged the three variances. We assumed the random error variance to be 2.0 for a 5-point scale, as suggested by James et al. (1984). An rWG value between 0.71 and 0.90 is generally considered an indicator of "strong agreement" (LeBreton, J.M., and Senter, J.L. (2008, October). Answers to 20 questions about interrelated reliability and interrater agreement. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11, 815-852. Retrieved from <http://orm.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/4/815>).

Exhibit 2.8. Distribution of discrepancies and results of the discrepancy call process, by year

| Description | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|---|--|--|--|
| Total number of projects reviewed by expert panels | 122 | 121 | 118 |
| Projects without a project-level discrepancy | 93 (76 percent of 122) | 100 (83 percent of 121) | 98 (83 percent of 118) |
| Project-level discrepancies identified | 29 (24 percent of 122) | 21 (17 percent of 121) | 20 (17 percent of 118) |
| Project-level discrepancies resolved* by panel calls | 27 (93 percent of 29 calls conducted) | 17 (81 percent of 21 calls conducted) | 16 (80 percent of 20 calls conducted) |
| Project-level discrepancies remaining after panel calls | 2 (7 percent of 29 calls conducted) | 4 (19 percent of 21 calls conducted) | 4 (20 percent of 20 calls conducted) |

* Discrepancies were considered resolved when the project-level scores differed by less than 2 points.

EXHIBIT READS: Of the 122 projects reviewed for the 2006-07 program year, 93 (76 percent) had no discrepancies in the project level scores.

Exhibit 2.9. Interrater agreement before and after discrepancy calls (original versus revised scores), as measured by the rWG(J) index, by year

| rWG(J) index | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Before discrepancy calls (original scores) | 0.75 | 0.81 | 0.87 |
| After discrepancy calls (revised scores) | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.88 |

EXHIBIT READS: The interrater agreement index for the original scores for 2006-07 project sample was 0.75. This number increased to 0.87 after discrepancy calls were conducted.

Calculate Aggregate and Dimension-Level Measures of Technical Quality

In order to analyze the technical quality of sampled projects in each year, a series of steps was taken to combine individual expert ratings into aggregate scores. The first step was to combine the individual dimension-level scores into a single rating from each panelist. For each project reviewed, a simple average of the three dimension-level scores was computed to generate a project-level score for each reviewer. In the second step, the three reviewers' scores were averaged to determine the overall quality score for each project. In the third step, the overall project scores across the set of sample projects were averaged within each Center to calculate a Center-level quality score.

Center-level scores were aggregated to calculate the average quality rating across sampled projects for the Center program as a whole, as well as for two subgroups of interest, the 16 RCCs and the 5 CCs. Each Center was given equal weight in computing the overall program-wide rating for technical quality, as well as the mean ratings for the RCCs and the CCs respectively, for the sampled projects; within Centers, each project was given equal weight.

Survey of Project Participants

The purpose of the participant survey was to obtain client views of technical assistance from the Centers, particularly in the areas of relevance and usefulness. As the primary role of the RCCs is to provide technical assistance to the states in their regions, the clients for the RCCs included state-level staff. The clients for the CCs included both RCC staff and state-level staff, corresponding with the role of the CCs to build the capacity of the RCCs as well as to work with RCCs in providing technical assistance to states.

The evaluation team developed two parallel survey forms for project participants to administer each year: one for state-level staff who participated in any Center project, and one for RCC staff who participated in a CC project (located in appendix G of this report).⁴⁰ In sampling participants to respond to surveys focused on specific projects, the goal was to identify a sizable number of participants, drawn from complete lists of all participants, so that their responses would collectively provide a picture of all participants' views regarding the sampled projects. For each survey administration, the evaluation team drew samples of participants in the projects that were selected for expert panel review. In this way, expert panel ratings of quality and participant ratings of relevance and usefulness were gathered for the same set of projects. A brief description of the process used to calculate the measure of relevance and usefulness is provided at the end of this section.

In each data collection year, Centers were asked to furnish full lists of all participants and their contact information for each sampled project. These lists made up the sample frame and included individuals who had participated in projects in numerous ways including: (1) serving on task forces, school support teams, and work groups associated with the project; (2) attending conferences, technical assistance retreats, and other meetings held as a part of the project; or (3) receiving written materials or other disseminated resources. State-level participants included staff who were employed by SEAs as well as employees of intermediate agencies, LEAs, schools, or other agencies who had responsibilities for state-level implementation of NCLB; they could be participants in both RCC and CC projects. RCC staff, as clients of the CCs, were participants solely in CC projects.

After identifying the sampling frame, the team implemented a sampling strategy that combined random sampling from each project and a replacement strategy to minimize

⁴⁰ Since the survey asked respondents for their experiences with the Centers in relation to a specific project, the survey team provided each respondent with a list of the activities included in that project, based on the content of the project cover sheets provided by the Centers. For the on-line survey, this information was displayed on the first screen of the survey. For the paper version of the survey, the project-specific information was printed on yellow paper and inserted into the front of the booklet.

respondent burden. A power analysis was not conducted as part of the sampling plan for the participant survey. A sampling strategy was developed for selecting a sufficient number of participants to obtain fair representation of client views for each project, and across projects, while balancing respondent burden and data collection costs. The team drew a simple random sample of participants within each sampled project using the following sampling rules, based on the number of participants in the project:

- All participants in projects with 12 or fewer participants were sampled.
- A random sample of 12 participants was selected for projects with 13 to 25 participants.
- A range of 12 to 48 participants were randomly selected to represent 48 percent of participants for projects with 26 to 100 participants.
- For each project with more than 100 participants, a random sample of 48 participants was selected.

Exhibit 2.10 provides an overview of the participant survey sampling and administration. The exhibit shows the overall process used in each year to select the sample in each of the data collection years. The number of respondents for each round of data collection was 1,208 project participants in 2006-07, 1,319 participants in 2007-08, and 1,035 participants in the final round in 2008-09. Details on the sampling frame for each administration and the number of participants at each stage of data collection are included in the appendix (see appendix B, exhibit B.4).

The evaluation team initially administered the participant survey to the sampled respondents online. Nonrespondents were contacted by phone, sent reminder cards, and sent paper survey forms, all in an effort to obtain completed responses. Nonrespondents included participants who did not return a completed survey because they no longer worked for the state organization or RCC, as well as participants whose contact information was incorrect.

Exhibit 2.10. Survey of project participants sampling and survey administration summary

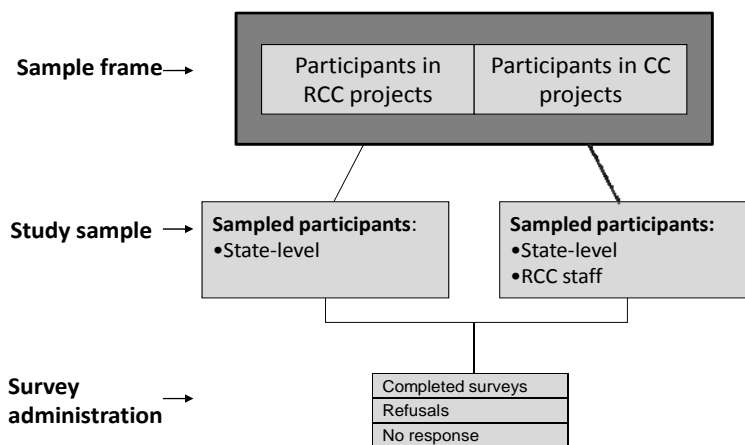


EXHIBIT READS: The sample frame was made up of participants in RCC projects as well as those in CC projects. The resulting sample included state-level participants for RCC projects and a combination of RCC and state-level participants for CC projects.

Calculate Measures of Relevance and Usefulness

For the relevance and usefulness questions in the participant survey, respondents were asked to rate each aspect of relevance and usefulness using a 5-point scale ranging from 5 (a very high degree) to 1 (a very low degree).⁴¹

For each of the data collection cycles, the evaluation team analyzed the properties of the items included in the survey for constructing indices of relevance and usefulness. Principal components analysis with no rotation was conducted on each set of items in the relevance and usefulness scales to determine the underlying dimensions represented by these items. For each scale, analyses of each year of data resulted in a one-factor solution comprised of the same items and with comparable levels of reliability. For the relevance scale, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 in 2006-07 and 0.94 in 2007-08 and 2008-09; it was 0.95 for the usefulness scale in all three years. Additional information on the factor loadings and psychometric properties for the three years of data collection is presented in appendix B (exhibits B.5 and B.6).

In each year, the mean ratings at the respondent level were averaged so that each respondent for a given project contributed equally to a project-level rating. Thus, the relevance or usefulness rating at the project level was a mean of the ratings provided by sampled participants in that project (ranging in number from 1 to 48) who returned surveys.⁴² Next, the rating of each sampled project contributed equally to the computation of the mean rating across projects for each Center. Finally, the team calculated an overall mean across the 21 Centers and overall means for the 16 RCCs and the 5 CCs, respectively, for the relevance and usefulness ratings of the sampled projects. In calculating these overall means, each Center's mean rating was weighted equally.

Units of Analysis and Use of Statistical Tests in this Report

In analyzing the quality, relevance, and usefulness data for this study for projects in the study sample, there were two important features of the data that had to be accommodated. First, the data were aggregated into several different units of analysis including the Center, project, and participant. Second, the process used to identify projects both for the sample frame and the study sample had an impact on the use of statistical tests in the resulting analyses. Both of these aspects of the data analysis are described below.

⁴¹ The response category, "Not able to judge," on the survey instruments indicated those respondents who were not appropriate for addressing the particular item and were, therefore, not included in analyses. In each of the data collection years, less than 1 percent of respondents indicated that they were "not able to judge" across either the eight items of the relevance scale or the 11 items of the usefulness scale.

⁴² In each of the years across the eight items on the relevance scale, the rate of item nonresponse ranged from less than 1 percent to 2.5 percent. The rate of missing data among the 11 usefulness scale items was slightly higher with the percent of item-level nonresponse ranging from 0.1 to 2.8 percent. For both relevance and usefulness calculations, respondents with missing data on more than two of the items were excluded from the calculation, resulting in a small number of respondents being excluded from the analysis in each year.

Units of Analysis for Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness Ratings

The quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of the sampled projects were used in analyzing and reporting data for several different units of analysis: the projects sampled from the program as a whole (all 21 Centers), the projects sampled for the 16 RCCs and the 5 CCs respectively, subgroups of the projects, and (for relevance and usefulness) subgroups of the participants. For a Center's mean rating on quality, relevance, or usefulness, the team weighted each sampled project from that Center equally; for a mean across the entire program or a set of Centers, the team weighted each Center's mean equally.

Several analyses were conducted for subgroups of projects across Centers—e.g., those projects that included a research synthesis among their products, or included training among their services. Each rater (an expert or survey respondent) had equal weight in the individual project's rating, and each project had equal weight in the subgroup mean rating.

Finally, some analyses were conducted for subgroups of participants across projects. For example, the ratings of relevance provided by participants who spent at least three days in a project activity were compared with the ratings provided by participants who spent less time. In these analyses, the unit was the participant, not the project, and the weighting was designed to permit generalization to all the participants across all the sampled projects. Thus the weight for each participant's response was the inverse proportion of the number of respondents compared with the total number of participants in the population for that project.

Number of Projects Varying with the Unit of Analysis. Readers will notice slight variations in the total number of projects shown in the exhibits and analyses throughout this report. These figures differ for two reasons.

First, in each of the survey years, there was a small number of projects for which the evaluation team did not receive any completed surveys (two in 2006-07, four in 2007-08, and six in 2008-09). This meant that for any analysis incorporating participant data, the maximum number of projects in the analysis was reduced. For analyses that did not rely on participant data (e.g., the quality ratings), the team included all projects.

Second, as described earlier in this chapter, in both 2006-07 and 2008-09 one project included in the sample was conducted jointly by an RCC and a CC. This “combined project” was one of the projects counted in analyses specific to RCC projects, and *also* one of the projects counted in analyses specific to CC projects. For analyses across all projects or all participants, however, the joint RCC/CC project or its participants were counted only once in the analysis.

Use of Statistical Tests

In this report, the presentation of results is sometimes framed by statistical tests, but in other instances those tests are not part of the presentation. The description below provides the rationale for these differences.

Analyses of Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness Ratings

The findings presented in the last section of chapter 5 are based on the ratings of Center projects. For analysis by subgroups of project participants (last section of Chapter 5), inferential statistics and a level of statistical significance of $p < .05$ were used to decide which differences would be noted in the report. The evaluators adopted inferential statistics for analysis of the differences among project participants' responses because the participants were selected using a stratified random sampling process. However, these results should not be generalized beyond the sample of projects selected for each year of the evaluation.

For the interpretation of the analysis of project-level ratings for this study, the evaluation team adopted a difference of at least one-half of one standard deviation (calculated as the pooled standard deviation for all projects) in size as the minimum threshold for highlighting differences. Using Cohen (1988) as a conceptual framework, the evaluation team estimated Cohen's d (an estimate of the effect size defined as the difference in means divided by the pooled standard deviation) and adopted the logic of Cohen for what would be considered a moderate difference.

Although the report highlights general patterns in ratings from year to year, comparisons in ratings across year were not conducted. Because each study year's sample of projects was selected through a non-probability procedure, evaluators determined that there was no basis for determining what portion of any differences in the distribution of project characteristics or ratings across years was the result of sampling bias and what portion reflected true changes in the operation of the projects.

State Managers' Assessment of Center Technical Assistance

The data source for the state managers' assessment of Center technical assistance in chapter 4 is the survey of state managers. The responses from this survey comprise a census of all state departments of education and not a probability sample. Thus, inferential statistics and assessments of statistical significance are not necessary, and any observed difference in the distribution of responses to the survey across time is considered a real change. While there may be measurement error, the estimate of whether any observed differences might be a result of chance incurred as part of a sampling process is not applicable.

3. How the Centers Operated

An important context for assessing performance of the Centers is to understand Centers' operations in each year and the changes in operations that occurred in the third and fourth program years (2007-08 and 2008-09). As described in chapter 1, ED established structures and expectations for the functioning of the Centers, including the division of responsibilities between the two types of Centers, the emphasis on applying scientifically based research and promising practices to build state capacity to carry out NCLB, and the flow of communication between and among the Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs), the Content Centers (CCs), and state agencies.

This chapter describes the work of the Centers, addressing the following research questions:

- How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers operate as part of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program?
 - How did Centers develop, refine, and carry out their plans for technical assistance? How did they define their clients' educational needs and priorities?
 - What were the objectives of the technical assistance the Centers offered? What kinds of products and services were provided by the Centers?
 - How did the Regional Comprehensive Centers and Content Centers coordinate their work?

For this report a description of the Center operations focuses primarily on the most recent program year for which data were collected, the 2008-09 program year. To describe how Center operations have evolved over time, data from all three years are presented.⁴³ The chapter begins with a discussion of the processes by which Centers negotiated their work, describing ways in which they reportedly met the requirement to assess their client organizations' needs. It provides information about the range of technical assistance objectives the Centers addressed and the products and services they delivered. Because the two types of Centers were expected to coordinate, it discusses ways in which they reportedly did so. The chapter concludes with a discussion of procedures for quality assurance that Centers reported. The analysis draws on information gathered from the Centers' submitted Project Inventory Forms (PIFs), Centers' annual management plans, cover sheets that Centers prepared for the expert reviews of their

⁴³ In general, trend data include all three years of data collection with the following exceptions: management plans were reviewed for program years 2006-07 and 2008-09 only; more detailed reviews of the 2008-09 PIFs and accompanying cover sheets were performed to better understand the nature of Center work; questions addressing Center investments, processes, and working relationships with SEAs and other Centers were added in the last year of interview data collection and thus are only available in 2008-09.

sampled projects, and interviews with Center staff conducted by the evaluation team.⁴⁴ It also draws information about Center technical assistance from the survey of state managers.⁴⁵

Throughout the chapter, findings are presented separately for RCCs and CCs. As described in more detail in Chapter 1, RCCs were charged with providing direct assistance to states on an ongoing basis (“front-line assistance”) while CCs were charged with providing sound knowledge about their content areas to both states and RCCs. Because the two types of Centers differed in their charge and in their mix of clients, as explained in Chapter 1, one would expect differences in their procedures for planning and needs assessment, their objectives, and the products and services they delivered.

Developing Plans: Identifying Client Needs and Priorities

Before the start of each program year, the Centers were required to deliver a management plan to ED outlining the program of technical assistance they planned to provide to clients. A key expectation of the Centers was that they would organize their plans around the priorities and needs of client organizations. RCCs, charged with providing “front-line” assistance to a set of state clients, were expected to communicate with and serve those state agencies directly. The CCs served both RCCs and states as clients for their technical assistance. Because their technical assistance for states was to be provided in concert with RCCs, they could depend in part on the RCCs to alert them to state priorities. In addition to serving the RCCs and states, the CCs also served the needs of ED, responding to requests in specific content areas to advance federal priorities. The evaluation team gathered Center reports on how they identified client needs.

According to the Centers, they gathered information to develop and refine their management plans for each year in a variety of formal and informal ways. A comparison of needs assessment techniques used for the 2006-07 program year with those used for the 2008-09 program year shows the extent of continuity in these approaches to needs assessment.

- ***Centers conducted needs assessments annually with their respective primary client organizations.*** In 2008 the two most common modes that RCCs reported using to assess state needs were informal communications with state staff (all 16 RCCs) and designation of a liaison to the SEA (15 of 16 RCCs) (exhibit 3.1). As compared with 2006, fewer RCCs reported communicating with chief state school officers in 2008 (11 in 2008 vs. 14 in 2006). For CCs, procedures used in assessing RCC needs in both 2006 and 2008 included communications with RCC staff (5 CCs in 2006 and 2008) and with RCC directors (4 of 5 CCs in 2006 and 2008), and surveys (4 CCs in 2006 and 5 CCs in 2008).

⁴⁴ See chapter 2 for more information about the data sources and the procedures for gathering, coding, and analyzing the data reported in this chapter.

⁴⁵ A detailed description of the process used to gather and code the information discussed in this chapter can be found in appendix C and related supplemental tables are in appendix D.

Exhibit 3.1. RCC and CC interaction with clients in planning work, by year

| Mode of interaction | Number of Centers reporting this mode of interaction with clients | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|--------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| | RCCs (N=16) | | CCs (N=5) | | All Centers (N=21) | |
| | 2006-07 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2008-09 |
| Informal needs assessment through communication with state staff/ RCC staff | 15 | 16 | 5 | 5 | 20 | 21 |
| Communication with chief state school officers/ RCC directors | 14 | 11 | 4 | 4 | 18 | 15 |
| Surveys | 10 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 13 |
| Designated liaison to SEA | 13 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Liaison to SEA with office space in SEA building | 4 | 3 | NA | NA | NA | NA |

NOTE: NA=Not Applicable. CCs were not asked about liaisons to SEAs because they worked nationally and were not expected to provide “front line” assistance.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 15 RCCs reported that they conducted informal needs assessment through communication with state staff; 5 CCs reported that they conducted informal needs assessment through communication with RCC staff.

SOURCE: Center responses to binary interview questions.

- ***CCs assessed state-level needs both through direct communication with states and through communication with RCCs.*** For 2008-09, when an interview question asked about their means of assessing state needs, all 5 of the CCs reported interacting both with states and with RCCs in order to assess state needs (exhibit 3.2). Three of them volunteered a response that did not appear on the interview protocol: that they anticipated state-level issues and needs by following ED requests and national trends.
- ***CCs also reported continuing to respond to ED requests.*** In 2008, 4 of 5 CCs reported responding to requests made by ED; the same number reported doing so in 2006.

Exhibit 3.2. CC assessment of state needs, 2008-09

| Means of assessing state needs | Number of CCs (N=5) |
|--|------------------------|
| Ongoing interaction with states | 5 |
| Communication with RCCs about state needs | 5 |
| Anticipation of issues by following ED initiatives and national trends | 3 |
| Survey | 1 |

NOTE: The response, "anticipation of issues..." applies to three answers volunteered in response to a probe for "other" sources of input for planning.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, all 5 CCs reported that they assessed the needs of the states through ongoing interaction.

SOURCE: Center responses to binary interview questions.

As a program providing services to the states, the Center program was expected to show responsiveness to needs and requests for technical assistance. However, Centers might not be in a position to respond to every client request. Whether in negotiating their management plans with clients or in discussing emerging needs over the course of the program year, Centers did not always agree to every request. Center staff provided the reasons for which they turned down client requests.

- ***In each year, more than half of the Centers reported that they had turned down a client request for assistance.*** The number of Centers that had turned down one or more requests increased within a narrow range over the years, from 12 of the 21 in 2006-07 (9 of 16 RCCs and 3 of 5 CCs) to 13 of 21 in 2007-08 (9 of 16 RCCs and 4 of 5 CCs), and 14 of 21 (10 of 16 RCCs and 4 of 5 CCs) in 2008-09.
- ***Among Centers that declined any client request for assistance in 2008-09, the substitution of a different type of assistance was reported by more than half of the RCCs but none of the CCs.*** Among the 10 RCCs that declined one or more requests, 7 RCCs worked out a different plan of assistance for the client; none of the CCs reported working out an alternate plan (exhibit 3.3). Of the 10 RCCs that had declined client requests, 5 RCCs reported that they could not honor a request because it fell outside their legitimate scope of work. Among the 4 CCs that declined requests, 2 CCs turned down requests that did not fit their priorities or their available staff time.

Exhibit 3.3. Reasons reported for declining technical assistance requests, 2008-09

| | RCCs (N=16) | CCs (N=5) | All (N=21) |
|---|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| The Center did not turn down any requests for service | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| The Center turned down requests for service: | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| Turned down request but the Center and the client instead agreed on a plan for related, but different, technical assistance | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Reasons for turning down request: | | | |
| A request fell outside the legitimate scope of work for a Center | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| A request was potentially legitimate Center work but did not fit this Center's priorities for work with the state | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Staff time and resources were already fully committed to other work | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| The Center did not have access to the needed expertise to carry out the request | 0 | 1 | 1 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 6 of 16 RCCs did not turn down any requests for service.

SOURCE: Center responses to standard response categories in interviews.

Adjustments Made in Ongoing Work

The Centers' stated objectives could be found in their written annual management plans, but the ways in which they refined their plans might result in departures from these objectives. Annual management plans written in advance might in some ways be an asset to the Centers, enabling them to mount sustained efforts around their intended programs of work. At the same time, however, the plans might impose rigidity on Center technical assistance, impeding a flexible response to changing circumstances. The evaluation addressed this matter by assessing the extent to which Centers followed or adjusted their initial plans with respect to the topical coverage of the technical assistance, as stated in the objectives found in each annual management plan in the second and fourth program years (2006-07 and 2008-09).

- ***Across years, Centers continued to address a majority of the topics they had planned to address in each year, with some flexibility to make adaptations.*** The content of the Center management plans was compared with the projects Centers reported on the project inventory forms (PIFs) that they had conducted. In both 2006-07 and 2008-09 Centers delivered technical assistance on a particular topic in at least 80 percent of the instances in which they stated that topic as part of their management plan objectives (80 percent in 2006-07, 84 percent in 2008-09) (exhibit 3.4 and appendix exhibit D.1). The analysis showed that of 117 topic-related objectives in the 2008-09 plans, the Centers provided services and products on 98 of them. The fact

that some planned cases⁴⁶ (117-98=19) were not listed on the PIFs indicates that 16 percent of the cases (19 of the planned 117) were not conducted. The corresponding figure was 20 percent for 2006-07. Looking at the work actually conducted, in 36 percent of cases ([152-98]/152) the Center provided technical assistance on a topic not initially cited in its planned objectives in 2008-09. The corresponding figure was 38 percent for 2006-07.

- ***There was continuity across years in the topics most often added to or deleted from Center agendas during program years; the topics of English language learners and response to intervention were added in more instances than other topics, while special education curriculum, instruction, and professional development was deleted in more instances than other topics.*** In Exhibit 3.4, comparing columns 3 and 2 provides an indication of topics not included in a Center's management plan but in which technical assistance was delivered by that Center (additions). Comparison of columns 1 and 2 indicates topic areas in which Centers planned but did not deliver a project (deletions). Eight Centers conducted work in 2008-09 related to English language learners but had not included that topic among their objectives for the year. The other topics added by the next-largest number of Centers were response to intervention (7 Centers) and migrant education (6 Centers). For 2006-07 the additions found in the largest number of Centers were response to intervention (7 Centers), English language learners (5 Centers), highly qualified teacher provisions (5 Centers), and supplemental educational services (5 Centers). There were 12 of the 22 topics on which Centers initially stated an objective but did not deliver a project in 2008-09, and 10 such topics in 2006-07. The topic for which work was deleted by the largest number of Centers in both years was special education curriculum, instruction, and professional development (4 Centers in 2008-09, 5 in 2006-07).
- ***Adaptations in the topical focus of plans were more common among RCCs than CCs.*** For 2008-09, the RCCs added work on 21 of 22 topics while CCs did so on 4 of 22 topics (exhibit 3.5). The same difference was found in 2006-07, when the figures were 19 of 22 topics for RCCs and 7 of 22 for CCs (appendix exhibit D.2). Deletions of planned work also spanned more topics among RCCs than CCs across years, being observed for 12 of 22 topics among RCCs in 2008-09 (11 of 22 in 2006-07) and 3 of 22 topics among CCs in 2008-09 (2 of 22 in 2006-07).

⁴⁶ Using each Center's management plan, the evaluation team coded for each Center whether it had specifically stated an intention/objective to address work in each of the 22 topics (i.e., the first column of numbers in exhibit 3.4 indicates the number of Centers that stated an objective of conducting any work in each topic, beginning with the topic of state systems of support). Using the PIFs, the evaluation team coded project topics to determine the number of Centers that actually did work in each topic (i.e., the last column of numbers, by topic, in exhibit 3.4).

Exhibit 3.4. Topics on which Centers stated objectives and/or delivered projects, 2008-09

| Topic | Number of Centers (<i>N</i> =21) | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Objective on topic stated in management plan (1) | Objective on topic stated in management plan AND at least one project on topic reported on PIF (2) | At least one project on topic reported on PIF (3) |
| Total cases of a Center setting an objective and/or reporting a project | 117 | 98 | 152 |
| Components of effective systems of support--state, district, school | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| English language learners | 9 | 8 | 16 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Teacher professional development | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Data use /data-driven decision making | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Assessment design | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| Formative assessment | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Special education--curriculum, instruction, and professional development | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 5 | 4 | 11 |
| Special education--assessment | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| High school redesign/reform | 8 | 7 | 9 |
| Transition to high school | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Dropout prevention | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Mathematics | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| Adolescent literacy | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| Reading | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Parent involvement | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Migrant education | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Data management compliance | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Indian/Native American education | 1 | 0 | 2 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, for the topic “Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school,” 16 Centers had a related objective in their respective annual management plans; of these, all 16 reported projects on the topic in their PIF; and a total of 17 Centers had projects on the topic, whether or not they had stated an objective related to it in their management plan.

SOURCES: Center management plans for 2008-09 and PIFs prepared by Centers in consultation with evaluation team.

Exhibit 3.5. Topics on which RCCs and CCs stated objectives and/or delivered projects, 2008-09

| | Number of RCCs (<i>N</i> =16) | | | Number of CCs (<i>N</i> =5) | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Objective on topic in management plan (1) | Objective on topic in plan AND project(s) on topic on PIF (2) | Project(s) on topic on PIF (3) | Objective on topic in management plan (4) | Objective on topic in plan AND project(s) on topic on PIF (5) | Project(s) on topic on PIF (6) |
| Total cases | 98 | 82 | 130 | 19 | 16 | 22 |
| Components of effective systems of support-state, district, school | 15 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| English language learners | 7 | 6 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 6 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher professional development | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Data use / data-driven decision making | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Assessment design | 6 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Formative assessment | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction and professional development | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 5 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Special education—assessment | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| High school redesign/reform | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Transition to high school | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Dropout prevention | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Adolescent literacy | 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Reading | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Parent involvement | 5 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Migrant education | 2 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Data management compliance | 3 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indian/Native American education | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, for the topic “Components of Effective Systems of Support—State, District, School,” 15 RCCs reported a related objective in their management plans; of these, all 15 reported projects on the topic; and a total of 16 RCCs had projects on the topic, whether or not they had originally stated an objective related to it.

SOURCES: Center management plans for 2008-09 and PIFs prepared by Centers in consultation with evaluation team.

The Nature of Center Work

Centers carried out a variety of technical assistance activities across and within projects. Their work reflected change and continuity across years as well as decisions about priorities negotiated with clients for each year. We discuss here the types of project investments reported by Centers in 2008-09, the topics addressed across all projects in all three years, the activities carried out in sampled projects in all three years, and the nature of the sampled projects in 2008-09 on a high-priority topic, that of statewide systems of support.

Throughout this section we refer to seven distinct types of activities⁴⁷, which the team identified and defined as follows: (1) *ongoing consultation and follow-up* through multiple service contacts over time, either to fulfill repeated requests or to follow up with individuals who participated in another assistance activity; (2) *research collections and syntheses* distributed by a Center, whether developed by that Center or elsewhere; (3) *engagement of participants in project planning*, defined as going beyond needs assessment to include opportunities for at least some participants to shape the specific assistance; (4) *training events*, designed to impart skills and equip participants to carry out a particular program or strategy; (5) *task force meetings and work* in which a Center supported a group that was itself constituted as a task force to address a state purpose; (6) *conferences*, defined as single events in which multiple speakers or discussants presented information; and (7) *support for development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy*, where the Center supported work by participants in a state.

Center Investments

For the fourth program year, 2008-09, interviewers asked the Centers to identify their investment priorities with respect to project duration and change, as well as to the types of technical assistance activities that were priorities for their clients and themselves. Another perspective on these matters was provided by the state managers who were asked in surveys about the types of technical assistance that their state received from Centers.

- ***Center directors reported their largest investments to be in multi-year projects following “a long term plan.”*** This response was given by 13 of the 16 RCCs and 4 of the 5 CCs (exhibit 3.6). For three RCCs, the greatest investment was in multi-year projects that had undergone “substantial shifts from the originally planned participants, activities, or purposes.” One CC reported the greatest investment in projects that were self-contained within 2008-09.

⁴⁷ At the project level, the cover sheets that Centers submitted along with their materials for expert review provided data on the types of activities and resources that the project offered to some or all of its participants. See Chapter 2 for additional details.

Exhibit 3.6. Reported investment of Center resources in long-term vs. short-term projects, 2008-09

| Types of Center projects | Number of Centers reporting as the largest investment of resources for 2008-09 | | |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|
| | RCCs (N=16) | CCs (N=5) | All (N=21) |
| Multi-year project(s) that followed a long-term plan for participants, activities, and purposes | 13 | 4 | 17 |
| Multi-year project(s) with substantial shifts from the originally planned participants, activities, or purposes | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Projects that were self-contained within a single year rather than extending across years | 0 | 1 | 0 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 13 RCCs reported that their largest investment of resources was in multi-year projects that followed a long-term plan for participants, activities, and purposes.

SOURCE: Center responses to standard response categories during interviews.

When asked in interviews about the changes in Center work from 2006 to 2009, Center directors from 6 RCCs and 3 CCs described Center assistance as becoming more long term and ongoing, whereas it previously was more likely to focus on delivering discrete activities or materials. Among the 16 RCCs, 9 reported their work as increasingly focused on systemic and structural issues at the state level, with more efforts to build sustainable structures and processes. In addition to a shift in focus, 9 RCCs also described providing more “on-call assistance” to SEA leaders to think through and help solve pressing problems or plan for improvement. Four of the 5 CC directors reported an increase in direct assistance to state or RCC clients, such as consultative assistance in applying research.

Centers could address state needs and priorities in a wide range of ways, and in making choices among activities they had to strike balances. In negotiating their management plans and project activities, they had to recognize clients’ demand for particular modes of technical assistance while using their professional judgment about what would be most productive in meeting Center objectives.

- ***Ongoing consultation was the type of project activity cited by the largest numbers of RCCs and CCs as (1) most requested by clients, (2) the largest investment, and (3) the most important for achieving Center aims in 2008-09.***
 Asked to select from a general list of seven types of project activities and resources, the directors of 5 of the 16 RCCs and 2 of the 5 CCs said they made the greatest investment of resources in “ongoing consultation” in 2008-09 (exhibit 3.7). Directors also identified this activity as the one most requested by clients (4 of the 16 RCCs and 4 of the 5 CCs), and the one most important for achieving Center objectives (6 of the 16 RCCs and 3 of the 5 CCs).

Exhibit 3.7. RCC and CC activities and resources by reported client demand, investment, and importance to objectives, 2008-09

| Activities and resources | Most requested by clients | | | Largest investment | | | Most important to achieve objectives | | |
|---|---------------------------|-----|-------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| | RCCs | CCs | All Centers | RCCs | CCs | All Centers | RCCs | CCs | All Centers |
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | 4 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Research collections and syntheses | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Training events | 4 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Task force meetings and work | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Conferences | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, four of the 16 RCCs indicated in interviews that ongoing consultation and follow-up was the service most requested by their clients.

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials and coded by the evaluation team.

- *State managers' survey responses across the three years corroborated the Centers' reports of continuity in the work, and indicated that Centers provided a combination of hands-on help and delivery of knowledge resources.* The largest number of state managers, weighted,⁴⁸ said in each year that the Centers had provided "major" assistance with facilitating work groups, with the percentage ranging from 43 to 65 percent across years) (exhibit 3.8). The next most often reported type of assistance was hands-on help with designing, delivering, or convening professional development for local educators (ranging from 29 to 55 percent), followed by delivery of information about policies and practices in other states (ranging from 28 to 46 percent) or about research findings (ranging from 25 to 45 percent).

⁴⁸ For 20 or more states in each year, the evaluation team received completed responses from more than one state manager. As the state was the primary unit of analysis in analyzing data from the state manager survey for this report, the state managers' responses were weighted to ensure that each state was equally represented in all summary statistics while taking into account the variation in responses within each state. The weighting procedure, where each response was weighted by the inverse of the number of managers responding from that state, ensured that each state was equally represented when the team aggregated responses across states to describe the distribution of responses. See chapter 2 for a detailed description of the sampling and analysis procedures.

Exhibit 3.8. State managers' reports of assistance from Centers, by type of assistance, by year

| Type of assistance | Percent of state managers (weighted) reporting "major" assistance from any Center | | |
|---|---|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Facilitating work groups or committees | 43% | 56% | 65% |
| Designing, delivering, or convening PD and conferences for local educators | 29 | 45 | 55 |
| Collecting/disseminating information about policies and practices in other states | 28 | 33 | 46 |
| Synthesizing and disseminating research findings | 25 | 44 | 45 |
| Analyzing data or conducting needs assessments | 16 | 35 | 34 |
| Developing tools for monitoring programs | 15 | 35 | 32 |
| Reviewing state plans and policies | 21 | 31 | 29 |
| Assisting with a response to federal planning and reporting requirements | 15 | 20 | 21 |
| Completing routine tasks more efficiently | 13 | 12 | 17 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 43 percent of state managers (weighted) reported that their state had received "major" assistance from their RCC or any CC that consisted of facilitating work groups or committees.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Topics of Projects

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Centers classified all of their projects for each year of the study according to the primary topics addressed, using a list of topics developed for this evaluation, to complete their annual project inventory forms (PIFs). The number and percent of all projects addressing each topic gives an indication of the substantive priorities identified by Centers and their clients in each year. Across 23 topics (including "other"), one was the focus for the largest share of projects in each year:

- ***A prioritized topical focus for Center projects in each year was assistance with "systems of support," addressing support for improvement in struggling schools and districts.*** Among all projects, 19 percent addressed this topic in 2006-07, 25 percent in 2007-08, and 21 percent in 2008-09 (exhibit 3.9). After "systems of support", the topic area with the second largest number of projects each year focused on English language learners (7 percent of all projects in both 2006-07 and 2007-08, and 10 percent in 2008-09). Center services were otherwise widely dispersed across topic areas, and no other topic was the focus of as many as 10 percent of projects in any year.

Exhibit 3.9. Percent of projects on PIFs, by topic and by year

| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|--|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| Total number of projects | 365 | 346 | 332 |
| Topics | Percent of total | | |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 19% | 25% | 21% |
| English language learners | 7 | 7 | 10 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| Teacher professional development | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Data use / data-driven decision making | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Assessment design | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Formative assessment | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction and professional development | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Response to Intervention (Rtl) | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Special education—assessment | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| High school redesign/reform | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Transition to high school | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Dropout prevention | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| Adolescent literacy | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Reading | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Parent involvement | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Migrant education | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Data management compliance | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Indian/Native American education | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 13 | 7 | 9 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the topic “Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school,” there were 71 projects on all PIFs for the 2006-07 program year, which was 19 percent of the total number of projects for that year.

SOURCE: PIFs prepared by Centers in consultation with evaluation team.

Types of Activities and Resources

A closer look at the Center projects in each year's sample provided further insight into their scope and the activities they encompassed. For each year, the team's analysis of sampled projects (through procedures described in chapter 2) provides information about the nature of Center technical assistance activities or resources. Although the sample of projects is not statistically representative of the Centers' work, project sample selection for review of each Center's work favored the most dominant projects and included more than half (56 percent) of the designated major or moderate projects.

Here we focus particularly on comparing activities across RCCs' and CCs' sampled projects across years. We first remind readers that a project is a unit of analysis that may encompass many different activities:

- ***Projects entailed multiple activities, with RCC projects averaging between 3 and 4 activities in each year and CC projects averaging between 2 and 3 activities.***
The mean number of activities in RCC projects was 3.2 in 2006-07, and 3.9 in 2007-08 and 2008-09. In CC projects, the mean was 2.4 in 2006-07, 2.5 in 2007-08, and 2.8 in 2008-09.

Exhibit 3.10. Sampled RCC and CC projects by types of activities and resources, by year

| Activities and resources | Percent of sampled RCC projects | | | Percent of sampled CC projects | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=96) | 2007-08 (n=96) | 2008-09 (n=93) | 2006-07 (n=27) | 2007-08 (n=26) | 2008-09 (n=26) |
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | 82% | 93% | 91% | 22% | 15% | 62% |
| Research collections and syntheses | 54 | 53 | 53 | 74 | 85 | 77 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | 45 | 63 | 59 | 30 | 31 | 27 |
| Training events | 43 | 55 | 59 | 37 | 50 | 50 |
| Task force meetings and work | 50 | 58 | 56 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Conferences | 27 | 35 | 40 | 63 | 42 | 38 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | 19 | 32 | 31 | 7 | 15 | 23 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 82 percent of sampled RCC projects included ongoing consultation and follow-up.

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials. In addition to serving as resource material for the expert reviewers, these cover sheets were coded by the evaluation team.

- ***Across years, the kinds of support provided by the RCCs and CCs differed in ways that were consistent with the model of technical assistance envisioned by ED.*** The guidance given by ED through the Center grant competition and afterwards laid out a particular structure for the Centers' work: RCCs would specialize in interactions with state clients to provide frontline assistance while CCs would specialize in activities that required a content focus. In each year, the most common activity found in sampled RCC projects was "ongoing consultation and follow-up" (82 percent in 2006-07; 93 percent in 2007-08; and 91 percent in 2008-09) (exhibit 3.10). In CC sampled projects, it was "research collections and synthesis" (74 percent in 2006-07, 85 percent in 2007-08, and 77 percent in 2008-09), an activity that fewer RCC projects included (53 or 54 percent in each year).
- ***While the two types of Centers each retained a focus on activities distinctly associated with the original program design, their ways of working became more similar over the years.*** For example, in a departure from past CC practice, more than half of the sampled CC projects in 2008-09 (62 percent) included ongoing consultation and follow-up, an activity found in the great majority of RCC projects (at least 82 percent in every year). Conferences, which had been more than twice as common in the CC project sample as in the RCC project sample in 2006-07 (63 percent of projects vs. 27 percent) were found in 38 percent of the CC projects and 40 percent of the RCC projects in 2008-09 (exhibit 3.10).

Projects on “Effective Systems of Support – State, District, School”

In every year, the topic addressed by the largest number of Center projects was “components of effective systems of support—state, district, school.” This included technical assistance with the statewide systems of support (SSOS) that SEAs are required to mobilize to help struggling schools and districts improve student performance. An SSOS comprises an infrastructure for the delivery of onsite help, and strategies and materials designed to guide local improvement. For the sampled projects addressing statewide systems of support in 2008-09, further detail is provided about patterns of activities conducted and resource materials used. Among the 33 sampled projects on systems of support in 2008-09, Centers assisted in one or both of two ways:

- Working with SEA decision makers in redesigning their state’s SSOS infrastructure, revising strategies for local improvement, or both (24 projects). SSOS redesign efforts included reorganization of the SEA and delineation of responsibilities in the SSOS. Revising strategies centered on the content to be delivered, for example, approaches to instructional coaching or a framework of indicators to guide school improvement.
- Teaching (or helping teach) support providers in carrying out their work in the field (15 projects). The content of project training centered on using the SEA improvement and planning tools with schools and districts (e.g., planning templates, guides, rubrics, self-assessments). In 12 of these projects, Centers also assisted in developing the state materials for use in the field.

Among the materials that RCCs or CCs employed in their work with SEAs or support providers in these projects, the three used most often were published by the Content Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) in 2007:

- *“Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support”* (9 projects). This 294-page handbook reviews research related to SSOS and principles for improving schools. It includes chapters on the state role, a conceptual framework for an effective SSOS, case studies of RCC support, and tools for assessing SSOS.
- *“Strengthening the Statewide System of Support: A Manual for the Comprehensive Center and the State Education Agency”* (7 projects). This 99-page manual is designed to guide an RCC in facilitating SSOS self-assessment with an SEA.
- *“Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement”* (6 projects). This 125-page handbook offers modules with action principles on district frameworks, school board and central office roles, school change, learning-focused leadership, monitoring and changing instruction, and systems for improved teaching. It also provides approximately 150 indicators of success in school restructuring. This manual builds on the publication *School Restructuring Under NCLB: What Works When?*, produced by Public Impact and the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

Working Relationships in Technical Assistance Delivery

The delivery of technical assistance could be affected by several types of working relationships: the coordination of work between RCCs and CCs in the two-tier system; the Centers’ working relationships with their clients; and the engagement of knowledgeable individuals in quality assurance. Based on the design of the center system, the RCCs and CCs

were expected to work together to serve state clients, and at the same time CCs were to provide technical assistance to the RCCs. Impediments could arise in RCC-CC coordination, in the provision of technical assistance to states, and in CCs' assistance to RCCs. Also, in the process of preparing technical assistance activities and resources for delivery to clients, Centers drew on various sources of quality assurance. These various aspects of coordination and service delivery were examined in the evaluation based on the sampled projects across the three years (2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09). Questions addressing Center investments, processes, and working relationships with SEAs and other Centers were added in the last year of data interview collection, and thus are only available in 2008-09.

RCC-CC Coordination

Charged with working together to assist the states, RCCs and CCs had to communicate and coordinate. Cooperation across Centers could be manifested not only in communication across organizations but also within specific projects: technical assistance projects of each type of Center could potentially incorporate help from the other type of Center. The evaluation tracked each of these types of coordination.

For a description of coordination between CCs and RCCs, each CC director was asked about types of activities it had carried out in 2008-09 with at least some of the RCCs. Corroboration was sought from RCCs, whose directors were asked whether each of the CCs (by name) had coordinated in these ways with them.

- ***All RCCs and CCs reported communicating at least monthly with at least one Center of the other type in 2008-09, but working relationships varied across the specific Centers.*** When asked about their coordination practices, all 16 RCCs reported receiving knowledge resources from CCs and communicating at least monthly with CCs (exhibit 3.11); all 5 of the CCs also reported these coordination practices. However, there was variation in the number of RCCs reporting that individual CCs had coordinated with them. For example, 15 RCCs reported monthly communication with "CC A," whereas 7 RCCs reported monthly communication with "CC D."
- ***All but one of the RCCs reported teaming up with a CC to provide assistance to states, but this type of coordinated assistance occurred more often with particular CCs.*** When asked about their coordination in providing assistance to states, 15 RCCs reported teaming up with CCs and all 5 CCs reported teaming up with RCCs. However, the extent to which this type of coordination occurred varied by CC. For example, 14 RCCs reported working with 1 CC while 7 RCCs reported working with another CC.
- ***Communication about promising practices in states was the least common type of coordination.*** Two of the 5 CCs reported soliciting information about promising state practices from RCCs. Ten of the 16 RCCs reported offering such information to CCs (exhibit 3.11), with 2 to 7 RCCs reportedly communicating with each specific CC about promising state practices.

Exhibit 3.11. RCC-CC coordination reported by Center directors, 2008-09

| Type of coordination | Number of RCCs reporting this type of coordination with one or more CCs (N=16) | Number of RCCs reporting this type of coordination with individual CCs (N=16) | | | | | Number of CCs reporting this type of coordination with one or more RCCs (N=5) |
|---|---|--|------|------|------|------|--|
| | | CC A | CC B | CC C | CC D | CC E | |
| RCC received CC knowledge resources (materials or experts); CC provided knowledge resources | 16 | 16 | 15 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 5 |
| RCC and CC communicated at least monthly | 16 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 5 |
| RCC and CC teamed up to provide technical assistance to states | 15 | 14 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 5 |
| RCC provided information about promising state practices to CC(s); CC solicited information about promising state practices from RCCs | 10 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 2 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, all 16 RCCs reported that they received knowledge resources from one or more of the CCs. Sixteen RCCs also reported this type of coordination with CC "A."

SOURCE: Center responses to standard response categories during interviews.

For insight into the nature of joint RCC-CC work at the project level, the study team determined whether each RCC project sampled for the evaluation in each year incorporated specific types of input from one or more CCs, and vice versa.

- ***In all three years, more than half of Center projects were completed by a single type of Center, although the types of roles that Centers played when involved in each others' projects were consistent with the design of the Center system.*** The CCs, which were expected to focus on the research in a content area, provided substantive materials, assistance, or advice in connection with between 32 percent and 48 percent of sampled RCC projects across years (exhibit 3.12). The RCCs, which were expected to maintain contact with the states in their regions, recruited participants or brokered services for 35 to 38 percent of sampled CC projects (exhibit 3.13).
- ***Across years, there were upward trends in CCs and RCCs providing direct technical assistance in the other type of Center's projects.*** Among sampled RCC projects, the percentage that included direct assistance from CC staff was 18 percent in 2006-07, 22 percent in 2007-08, and 30 percent in 2008-09 (exhibit

3.12). The corresponding figures for RCC delivery of technical assistance in sampled CC projects were 11 percent, 12 percent, and 38 percent (exhibit 3.13).

Exhibit 3.12. Sampled RCC projects by CC contribution, by year

| | Percent of sampled RCC projects | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=96) | 2007-08 (n=96) | 2008-09 (n=93) |
| RCC project had no CC contribution | 52% | 67% | 52% |
| RCC project had a CC contribution | 48 | 32 | 47 |
| <i>CC provided materials used in this RCC project</i> | 44 | 28 | 35 |
| <i>CC delivered technical assistance to project participants</i> | 18 | 22 | 30 |
| <i>CC provided advice to the RCC on this project</i> | 17 | 17 | 26 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, there was no CC contribution in 52 percent of sampled RCC projects.

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials and coded by the evaluation team.

Exhibit 3.13. Sampled CC projects by RCC contribution, by year

| | Percent of sampled CC projects | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=27) | 2007-08 (n=26) | 2008-09 (n=26) |
| CC project had no RCC contribution | 63% | 62% | 58% |
| CC project had an RCC contribution | 37 | 38 | 42 |
| <i>RCC recruited participants or brokered service</i> | 37 | 38 | 35 |
| <i>RCC delivered technical assistance to project participants</i> | 11 | 12 | 38 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, there was no CC contribution in 63 percent of sampled CC projects.

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials and coded by the evaluation team.

Center Reports of Barriers to Achieving Technical Assistance Aims

The effective delivery of technical assistance depended on the Centers' working effectively with their clients. Centers had the opportunity to describe in interviews the circumstances that might have impeded these working relationships. Both RCCs and CCs described the barriers that they perceived in achieving their objectives for assisting states. (In chapter 4, Centers' perceptions are compared with those reported by state managers.) Each type of Center, from its own perspective, also addressed barriers impeding the delivery of CC technical assistance to RCCs as clients.

- ***Turnover in staff within state offices or intermediary units was the barrier most widely reported by both types of Centers, but reported by RCCs to be the greatest barrier.*** Staffing turnover was reported as a barrier by 10 of the 16 RCCs and 3 of the 5 CCs (exhibit 3.14). Six RCCs (but no CCs) identified it as the greatest barrier. Turnover at the leadership level was a reported barrier for 8 RCCs and 3 CCs, and the greatest barrier for 2 RCCs.
- ***The two greatest barriers CCs reported were policy shifts at the state level and a mismatch between state priorities and their own scopes of work.*** Two of the 5 CCs reported policy or priority shifts as a barrier, and both of them termed this the greatest barrier to achieving their objectives with states (exhibit 3.14). Three of the 5 CCs reported that “a state’s most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center’s scope of work,” and 2 of them viewed this as their greatest barrier.
- ***Four RCCs raised an issue that had not been on the list of responses: cuts in state staffing and budgets.*** In response to the prompt, “other,” 4 of the 16 RCCs brought up the states’ fiscal difficulties as an impediment to technical assistance, noting that state layoffs or hiring freezes were challenges for their assistance plans (exhibit 3.14).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Since the Centers were not specifically prompted with this response option, we cannot say how many others would have reported it as a barrier if asked. (An additional 4 RCCs and 1 CC gave a range of different responses to the “other” prompt, as shown in the exhibit.)

Exhibit 3.14. Centers' perception of barriers to achieving objectives in delivering technical assistance to states, 2008-09

| Barrier to achieving technical assistance objectives | Number of Centers reporting: | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Barrier | | Greatest barrier | |
| | RCC (N=16) | CC (N=5) | RCC (N=16) | CC (N=5) |
| No barriers reported to achieving objectives in serving states | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A state office, division, or intermediary unit experienced turnover in staffing | 10 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| A state experienced turnover in leadership | 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| A policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center's assistance to be less helpful than it might | 8 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| There was a lack of coordination or communication within a state agency | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| State staff did not have time to work with the Center | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Cuts in state staff and budgets* | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| A state would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with the Centers | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| A state's most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center's scope of work | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| A state secured most of the technical assistance it needed from other sources | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with a state as the state would have liked | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| State clients placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Center was unable to develop a productive working relationship with a state | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The Center did not have the expertise a state needed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 |

NOTE: *This response was volunteered by multiple respondents in response to the "other" prompt and was re-coded as a separate response.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, One RCC reported no barriers to achieving objectives in serving states. Ten RCCs reported that a barrier to achieving its technical assistance objectives was that a state office, division, or intermediary unit experienced a turnover in staffing.

SOURCE: Center responses to standard response categories during interviews.

Turning to the technical assistance relationship between the two types of Centers, the CCs described the barriers that they saw as impeding their assistance to RCCs, and the RCCs reported on barriers in this same relationship from their perspective as the client.

- ***The greatest barriers reported in the RCC-CC technical assistance relationship were limitations of the CC's scope of work and staff capacity, and the issue of shifts in state policies or priorities.*** Four of the 5 CCs reported that “RCCs’ most important priorities for assistance fell outside the CCs’ scope of work,” and 2 of them called this the greatest barrier (exhibit 3.15). Seven of the 16 RCCs reported that this was a barrier, with 4 calling it the greatest barrier. Five of the 16 RCCs reported that, “CC staff were not able to spend as much time working with us as we would have liked,” and 3 of them named it as the greatest barrier. None of the CCs reported this as an impediment to achieving its technical assistance objectives with RCCs. For 2 CCs, shifts in state policies or priorities were said to impede not only their technical assistance to states but also their technical assistance to the RCCs working with states. Both reported this barrier as the greatest one they encountered in assisting RCCs. One of the 16 RCCs reported this as a barrier to receiving assistance from CCs, but not the greatest barrier.
- ***Four RCCs reported no barriers to receiving technical assistance from CCs.*** However, all 5 CCs did identify barriers (exhibit 3.15).

Exhibit 3.15. Barriers to CCs' assistance to RCCs, 2008-09, perceived by RCCs and CCs

| Barrier to delivery/ receipt of technical assistance | Number of Centers reporting | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| | Barrier | | Greatest barrier | |
| | RCC (N=16) | CC (N=5) | RCC (N=16) | CC (N=5) |
| No barriers reported to receiving assistance | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| RCCs' most important priorities for assistance fell outside the CCs' scope of work | 7 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| CC staff were not able to spend as much time working with RCCs as the RCCs would have liked | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| The RCC and CC were unable to develop a productive working relationship | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RCCs secured most of the technical assistance they needed from other sources | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| CCs did not have the expertise RCCs needed | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| A policy or priority shift at the state caused the CCs' assistance to RCCs to be less helpful than it might | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| There was a lack of coordination or communication within an RCC | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| RCC staff did not have time to work with CCs | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| RCCs experienced turnover in staffing | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| RCCs placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RCCs would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with the CCs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RCCs experienced turnover in leadership | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, four RCCs reported no barriers to achieving receiving technical assistance from CCs. Seven RCCs reported that a barrier to the receipt of technical assistance was that the RCCs' most important priorities for assistance fell outside the CCs' scope of work.

SOURCE: Center responses to standard response categories during interviews.

Quality Assurance Procedures

Finally, a potentially important aspect of Center operations was the steps taken to ensure quality in the technical assistance delivered. Depending on what a Center provided to clients, different approaches to quality assurance might be feasible: in particular, materials would lend

themselves more readily to formal review before delivery, compared with services. Recognizing that there were differences in the mix of resources and activities delivered across projects and across Centers, the team gathered Centers' self-reports on the particular sources of expertise brought to bear in quality assurance for each project in the 2008-09 sample, selected from a list of possible sources. In addition, the interviews with Center directors addressed their standard procedures, if any, for quality assurance.

- ***While most RCC and CC projects were reviewed in-house, many of the CC projects also underwent review by external experts and by ED.*** Review by Center staff was reported for more than 90 percent of projects (92 percent of RCC projects, 96 percent of CC projects) (exhibit 3.16). Just under half of all projects were reviewed by other staff, not regularly employed by the Center, in the lead grantee organization (47 percent of RCC projects, 31 percent of CC projects) or in subgrantee organizations (38 percent of RCC projects, 58 percent of CC projects). For 85 percent of the sampled CC projects, experts were retained to review materials; for 81 percent, ED provided a review. The corresponding figures for RCC projects were lower, at 44 percent and 17 percent respectively.

Exhibit 3.16. Sources of expertise used in quality assurance, by Center type, 2008-09

| Source | Percent of sampled Center projects | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | RCC projects (n=93) | CC projects (n=26) | All projects (n=119) |
| Internal Center staff (of lead grantee organization and/or subgrantees) | 92% | 96% | 93% |
| Other staff in the lead organization, not formally employed by the Center | 47 | 31 | 44 |
| Outside experts retained to review drafts/materials | 44 | 85 | 53 |
| Content Center(s) | 39 | 15 | 34 |
| Other staff in subgrantee organization(s) | 38 | 58 | 42 |
| U.S. Department of Education | 17 | 81 | 31 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 92 percent of RCC projects reportedly underwent review by internal Center staff prior to delivery

SOURCE: Project cover sheets prepared by Centers for the expert review of project materials and coded by the evaluation team.

When Center directors were asked in interviews whether they had “a formal process” for “quality assurance in technical assistance during 2008-09,” all but 1 of the 21 (an RCC director) said yes. The specific procedures Center directors reported using for quality assurance differed for products and services. Across the 14 Centers who described their in-house product reviews

(10 of the 16 RCCs and 4 of the 5 CCs), Centers explained the two types of pre-release reviews conducted for the products they distributed in print or electronic form. Most often, in-house reviews targeted formatting and style, such as copy editing (7 RCCs and 3 CCs). Centers also reported using one or more of the following sources for conducting substantive internal reviews (9 RCCs and 3CCs): knowledgeable Center staff members, Center directors personally reviewing all products, or staff members from the grantee or subgrantee organization who were not on the Center staff.

For services, a detailed review prior to delivery would not be feasible in the same way that it would for a product, and Centers instead described cycles of in-house review informed by evaluative feedback from clients. As a part of these cycles of review, client feedback was gathered systematically by internal or external evaluators or gathered by the technical assistance providers in service reviews with clients. A total of 10 Centers (9 RCCs and 1 CC) cited client feedback (e.g., event evaluations) as a source of input to quality assurance.

4. State Managers' Assessment of Center Technical Assistance

The Centers were expected to provide technical assistance that would build states' capacity to carry out their responsibilities under NCLB, supporting district and school efforts to close achievement gaps and raise student achievement. Thus, the perceptions of Center assistance expressed by state agency managers provide a relevant perspective on the outputs of the overall Center program. These managers were in a position to view the planning, operations, and state agency perceptions of the technical assistance provided by both the RCCs and the CCs. This evaluation inquired into the extent to which Center technical assistance served state purposes and, according to state managers, built state capacity.

This chapter examines how the work of the Centers was regarded by senior managers in state education agencies, addressing the following research questions:

- What was the performance of the Comprehensive Centers in addressing state needs and priorities? How did their performance change over the period of time studied?
 - How did the Centers' state clients define their needs and priorities?
 - To what extent, as reported by states, did Center assistance expand state capacity to address underlying needs and priorities and meet the goals of NCLB?
 - To what extent did states rely on other sources of technical assistance besides the Centers? What were other sources of technical assistance that states used? How did the usefulness of Center assistance compare with the usefulness of assistance from other sources?

The analysis in this chapter draws on information gathered through the survey of state managers administered in each of the three data collection year as well as interviews with Center staff conducted by the evaluation team.⁵⁰

Extent to Which Center Assistance Served State Purposes

ED placed a significant emphasis on having the Centers, both RCCs and CCs, deliver technical assistance that would advance state efforts to implement NCLB. In developing their work plans and delivering technical assistance, the Centers were expected to target their work on

⁵⁰ A detailed description of the changes to the state manager survey between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 administration cycles as well as copies of both survey instruments can be found in appendix E. Supplemental tables related to this chapter are in appendix F.

state concerns and priorities. States' views of how well the assistance met their own purposes provided one perspective on the success of the program.

All state managers responding to the survey indicated the extent to which Center technical assistance had served their state purposes, in each year of the study. Further elaboration was provided by those who reported that this assistance had served state purposes less than completely:

- ***More state managers in each year reported that Center technical assistance addressed their states' purposes.*** The percentage reporting that Center technical assistance had "served the state's purposes completely" was 36 percent for 2006-07, 47 percent for 2007-08, and 56 percent for 2008-09 (exhibit 4.1).⁵¹

Exhibit 4.1. Extent to which technical assistance from the Centers served state purposes, as judged by state managers, by year

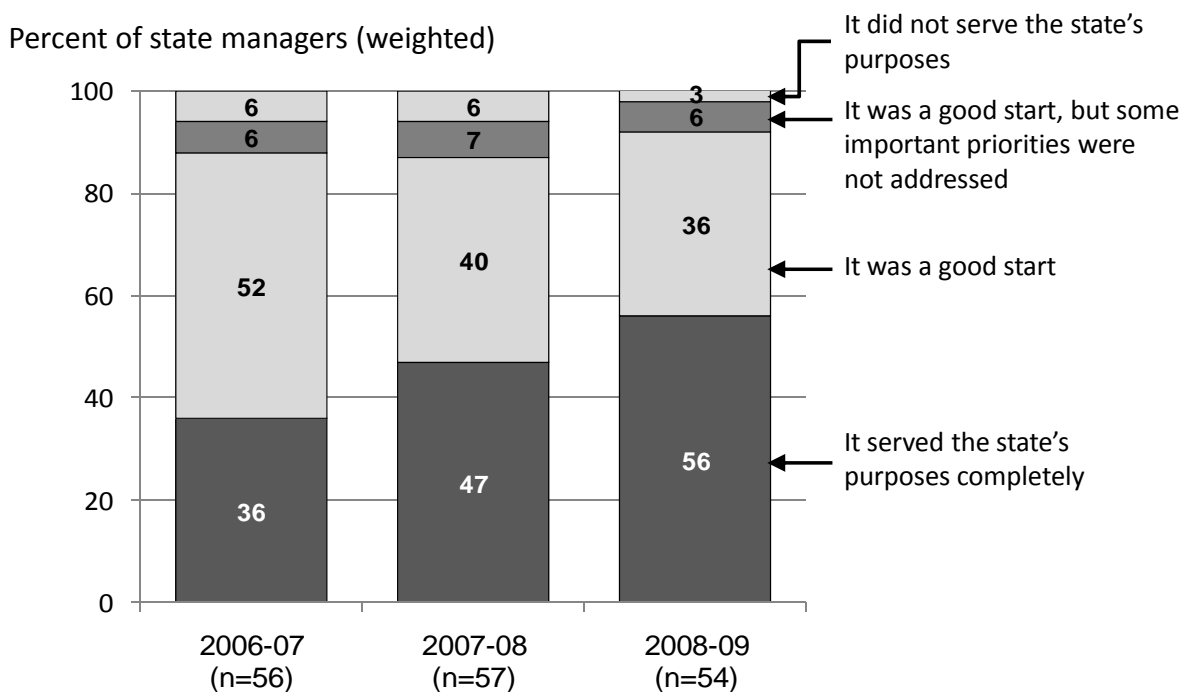


EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 36 percent of state managers, weighted, reported that Center technical assistance served the state's purposes completely.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

⁵¹ The survey of state managers was administered to managers in a census of all state departments of education. Therefore, difference in the distribution of state responses to the survey across time is presented without inferential statistics or assessments of statistical significance.

- ***Over the three years, state managers reported greater interest in seeking more technical assistance from Centers.*** The survey posed a series of follow-up questions asking why, to the respondents who did not report that Center assistance “served the state’s purposes completely” (exhibit 4.2).⁵² These state managers were asked to check off as many as eight possible reasons that the assistance was less helpful to their state than it might have been. In 2008-09, the most frequent response among the subgroup of state managers whose purposes were not completely served was, “Center staff are not able to spend as much time working with the state as we would like.” The frequency of this response increased over time: it was selected by 17 percent of these respondents in 2006-07, 27 percent in 2007-08, and 43 percent in 2008-09.⁵³ (These percentages of the subgroup represented 9, 10, and 16 percent of all state managers, weighted, respectively.)

- ***State managers’ reservations about Center technical assistance were not the same issues that Center directors saw as barriers to meeting their aims.*** As discussed in chapter 3, the Center directors were asked to indicate what had impeded their assistance to states in 2008-09, choosing from a list that included all the responses that also appeared on the state manager survey. For the 20 state managers (weighted) reporting Center assistance had served the state’s purposes less than completely, the issue reported by the highest percentage of state managers (43 percent) was that “Center staff are not able to spend as much time working with the state as we would like” while the top issue for Center directors (48 percent) was that “a policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center’s assistance to be less helpful than it might be” (exhibit 4.2).

⁵² In each reporting year, a small number of state managers who indicated they were not fully satisfied with the technical assistance they received from the Centers failed to answer the follow-up question asking why they were less than satisfied. In 2006-07, 64 percent of state managers were less than fully satisfied and 53 percent provided responses to the follow-up question. These percentages were 53 percent and 37 percent for 2007-08 and 44 percent and 37 percent for 2008-09.

⁵³ The percentage of state managers reporting that their state’s purposes were not completely served varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question (“reasons the technical assistance has been less helpful than it might be”), comparison of percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

Exhibit 4.2. Reasons why Center assistance served some states' purposes less than completely, by year, as reported by state managers, and barriers reported by Center directors to achieving Center aims, 2008-09

| Reasons/Barriers | Percent of those state managers (weighted) who reported Center assistance had not served their purposes completely | | | Percent of all Center directors reporting barrier |
|---|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | 2006-07 (Total n=30) | 2007-08 (Total n=21) | 2008-09 (Total n=20) | 2008-09 (N=21) |
| Center staff are not able to spend as much time working with the state as we would like | 17% | 27% | 43% | 5% |
| The state secures most of the technical assistance it needs from other sources | 31 | 24 | 27 | 14 |
| The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects takes too long | 33 | 31 | 25 | 5 |
| The state's most important priorities for assistance fall outside the Center's scope of work | 33 | 35 | 22 | 24 |
| The Center does not have the expertise the state needs | 15 | 31 | 18 | 0 |
| The state has been unable to develop a productive working relationship with the Center | 3 | 15 | 15 | 5 |
| The state would prefer to locate and contract directly with the experts or consultants from whom it needs assistance, rather than working through the Centers | 19 | 36 | 5 | 14 |
| A policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center's assistance to be less helpful than it might | 7 | 13 | 4 | 48 |

NOTE: The first three columns display the percentage of state managers (weighted so that each state was equally represented) reporting reasons the technical assistance has been less helpful to the state than it might have been. Based on Center director interview responses, the last column on the far right displays the percentage of Center directors who reported each to be a barrier to the Center achieving its aim.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, of the 30 state managers, weighted, reporting Center assistance served their state's purposes less than completely, 17 percent said a reason was that the Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with the state as they would like.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers and Center director responses to standard response categories during a phone interview. State respondents limited to those who did *not* answer "It served our purposes completely" to the preceding question. Responses to the state manager survey weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Reported Assistance Delivery and Capacity Building for State NCLB Responsibilities

The primary aim of the Center program was to deliver technical assistance that would both address state priorities in implementing NCLB and build state capacity for NCLB implementation. Senior state managers reported their perceptions of the extent to which the Centers had delivered assistance and built capacity in the areas of NCLB responsibility that were technical assistance priorities for their state.

- ***State managers consistently placed a priority on assistance with statewide systems of support or school support teams.*** When asked about state responsibilities with which they wanted technical assistance from any source (not just from the Centers), more than 90 percent of managers, weighted, (95 percent in 2007-08 and 94 percent in 2008-09) reported these functions to be a major or moderate priority for assistance in 2007-08 and 2008-09 (exhibit 4.3). In 2006-07, with a differently worded survey question, the responses were generally consistent: 98 percent reported that “building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB” was a major or moderate priority for assistance, and 90 percent said the same for “training or managing school support teams.”
- ***The other leading areas of priority for technical assistance were policies and practices for English language learners; state assessment and accountability systems; and research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development in academic subjects.*** For each area, between 73 and 74 percent of state managers in 2007-08 and between 75 and 79 percent of state managers in 2008-09 identified these areas of state responsibility as a major or moderate priority for technical assistance. (exhibit 4.3).
- ***State managers reported that Centers delivered technical assistance in an area they had identified to be a major or moderate state priority for technical assistance.*** This analysis focused on those managers who reported that their state prioritized technical assistance with a particular NCLB responsibility. Looking at the top four priorities for technical assistance reported by state managers, in 2008-09 at least 66 percent of those managers, weighted, who named a particular priority also reported that the Centers had delivered assistance with that area (at least 77 percent in 2007-08; exhibit 4.3).⁵⁴ For state systems of support and school support teams, the most widely reported priority across states, the percentage exceeded 90 percent in each year (94 percent in 2007-08 and 91 percent in 2008-09). The exceptions to the overall pattern of assistance delivery were found in the two least widely reported priorities, supplemental service and choice provisions

⁵⁴ The subgroup of state managers who identified a particular area of state responsibility to be a major or moderate priority for technical assistance varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question about the priority areas in which states received technical assistance from Centers, comparison of the percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

and communication with parents, where the percentages reporting help from the Centers were below 55 percent in both 2007-08 and 2008-09 (exhibit 4.3).

- ***State reporting of Center’s delivery of technical assistance across state priorities under NCLB declined from 2007-08 to 2008-09.*** With just one exception, communication with parents or the public, the state managers who placed at least a moderate priority on a particular area of NCLB state responsibility were less likely to report Center help with that responsibility in 2008-09 than in the previous year. The three largest drops from 2007-08 to 2008-09 were in the reports that Centers had provided assistance with educators’ use of assessment data (from 83 percent to 58 percent); research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development in academic subjects (from 88 percent to 72 percent); and monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (from 80 percent to 64 percent) (exhibit 4.3).⁵⁵

The drop in NCLB-related technical assistance was not accompanied, however, by an overall report that the Centers were failing to address state purposes. As discussed above, the weighted proportion of state managers reporting that Center assistance had served state purposes “completely” rose from 47 percent to 56 percent over this time (exhibit 4.1). As well, more state managers reported at least moderate contributions of Center technical assistance to increasing their state’s capacity in areas identified as state priorities:

- ***State managers’ perceptions of the Centers’ contributions to state capacity increased from 2007-08 to 2008-09 in the four NCLB-related areas of highest priority.*** Again, the focus here is on those managers who reported a particular responsibility as a technical-assistance priority. When asked to rate the extent to which Center assistance had expanded the state’s capacity to carry out state NCLB responsibilities, a higher percentage of those state managers who had identified each area of responsibility as a priority credited the Centers with great or moderate contributions to state capacity in 2008-09 than in 2007-08 in statewide systems of support (72 percent in 2007-08 and 82 percent in 2008-09), English language learners (59 and 73 percent), state assessment and accountability systems (57 and 59 percent), and research-based curriculum, instruction, and professional development (64 and 77 percent) (exhibit 4.4).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Percentages are based on the state manager respondents who identified a particular area of state responsibility to be a major or moderate technical assistance priority, which varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question about the priority areas in which states received technical assistance from Centers, comparison of the percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

⁵⁶ The subgroup of state managers who identified a particular area of state responsibility to be a major or moderate priority for technical assistance varied by year. Thus, for the follow-up question about state reported capacity building, comparison of the percentages from year to year may include variation in responses over time as well as changes in respondents addressing the question.

Exhibit 4.3. State priorities for technical assistance and assistance received from Centers, 2007-08 and 2008-09

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of state managers (weighted) | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | 2007-08 | | 2008-09 | |
| | Reporting responsibility as a major or moderate priority | Responsibility is major or moderate priority and Center technical assistance received in that area | Reporting responsibility as a major or moderate priority | Responsibility is major or moderate priority and Center technical assistance received in that area |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (n=56; n=52) | 95% | 94% | 94% | 91% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (n=55; n=51) | 74 | 79 | 79 | 76 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (n=53; n=50) | 74 | 77 | 79 | 66 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (n=54; n=51) | 73 | 88 | 75 | 72 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (n=54; n=51) | 68 | 83 | 69 | 58 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (n=53; n=51) | 64 | 80 | 59 | 64 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (n=54; n=50) | 49 | 52 | 48 | 43 |
| Communication with parents or the public (n=54; n=50) | 47 | 41 | 49 | 54 |

NOTE: Percentages are based on the state manager respondents who rated each area a major or moderate technical assistance priority, which varied by year.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, 95 percent of state managers, weighted, reported that the NCLB area of state responsibility of statewide systems of support or school support teams was a major or moderate priority for technical assistance for their state.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit 4.4. Extent to which Center assistance expanded state capacity in priority areas, as judged by state managers who rated the area as a major or moderate technical assistance priority, by year

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent reporting capacity expanded by a great or moderate extent | |
|--|---|---------|
| | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (n=56, n=50) | 72% | 82% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (n=43, n=40) | 59 | 73 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (n=42, n=39) | 57 | 59 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (n=41, n=39) | 64 | 77 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (n=37, n=36) | 62 | 61 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (n=35, n=30) | 57 | 57 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (n=25, n=26) | 44 | 39 |
| Communication with parents or the public (n=25, n=26) | 48 | 50 |

NOTE: Percentages are based on the state manager respondents who rated each area a major or moderate technical assistance priority, which varied by year. State managers who chose the response, "Does not apply, or not able to judge," were included in the denominator of the percent calculation.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, among the 56 state managers (weighted) who reported that technical assistance in statewide systems of support or school support teams was a major or moderate priority for their state, 72 percent reported that technical assistance received from the Centers expanded the state's capacity in this area to a great or moderate extent.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

While the analyses just described focus on reports of technical assistance delivery and capacity building in the specific areas of state responsibility that particular state managers identified as priorities, it is also useful to know the extent to which managers in all states said technical assistance from the Centers had expanded state capacity, irrespective of the priority the state accorded to that area.

- *The percent of all state managers, weighted, reporting that assistance from the Centers had increased their state's capacity to a "great" extent in at least one area of state NCLB responsibilities increased from 62 percent in 2007-08 to 75 percent in 2008-09. The percent reporting either a "great" or a "moderate"*

expansion of capacity from Center assistance in at least one area rose from 85 percent to 96 percent.

Capacity building at the state level can take many forms, and to help illustrate some of them the textbox below provides a summary from case studies, “*Illustrative Examples of Reported Capacity Building Activities*.” A description of this data collection is included in Appendix E.

Illustrative Examples of Reported Capacity Building Activities

As a supplementary data collection, we interviewed SEA staff in 10 states and relevant Center staff about the technical assistance provided on SSOS, the most common area for technical assistance. The states were selected to maximize the number of Centers included (a total of 10 RCCs and 3 CCs) and to represent the full range of SEA reported experiences (i.e., cases include SEAs whose staff reported capacity was expanded “to a great extent,” “to a moderate extent,” and “to a small extent”). The interviews elicited information about the capacity building support provided by the Centers and examples of what SEA staff perceived as the benefits of such assistance. The interviews focused specifically on three potential capacity building areas: i) technology, systems and infrastructure improvements; ii) SEA staff knowledge/skill enhancements; iii) access to external support/expertise. The following illustrative examples are not intended to be representative of all Center work and provide no indication of the extent to which the following descriptions are representative of all states.

Although SEA respondents commonly highlighted Center support with tool development and use, resulting assessments of these efforts varied. Products developed through Center assistance included things such as on-line application for districts to submit annual improvement plans that SEA staff could access for monitoring purposes, a data system with tools to facilitate district use of data for needs-assessment purposes, and a web-based store of resources, training materials, research materials, and other SSOS information. A couple of the interviewed SEAs reported that the developed tools improved SEA efficiency, while other SEAs reported the tools as useful but less integral to subsequent SEA activities in part because staff were not fully implementing the tools.

Working with Centers to refine state processes for supporting districts and schools in need of improvement was another Center activity highlighted by some interviewed SEAs. This work included things like establishing district and school support teams and training the support providers. SEAs also reported working with the Centers to help improve inter-departmental communication and coordination through Center facilitated meetings.

Finally, Centers reported providing SEA staff with knowledge and skills in order to potentially build SEA capacity. Such activities included access to synthesized research, best practices, policy briefs, and innovative approaches or SSOS models used by other states. Some SEA staff reported participation in RCC-led regional professional development workshops.

State Uses and Perceptions of the Centers Compared with Other Sources of Technical Assistance

With many other sources available to states, the Centers were designed to fill niches—in particular, that of building capacity for state implementation of NCLB requirements—rather than addressing every purpose for which states might seek technical assistance. The responses of state

managers confirmed that the states relied upon multiple sources of technical assistance in their practice in all three years and that they used these sources for different purposes.

- ***Among these state managers, the Centers were the source most often reported to be used to a “great” or “moderate” extent.*** More than 80 percent named the Centers as a technical assistance resource used at least to a moderate extent in both years, 2007-08 and 2008-09 (exhibit 4.5). More than three-quarters also cited their Regional Educational Laboratory as at least a moderate source in 2007-08 (76 percent) and professional associations in 2008-09 (79 percent). In 2006-07, with a differently worded question, the Centers were also ranked high as an assistance source: they were one of the top three sources, along with professional associations and Regional Educational Laboratories (appendix exhibit F.5).

Exhibit 4.5. States’ use of external sources of technical assistance, by year

| Source of technical assistance | Percent of state managers (weighted) reporting to a great or moderate extent: | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| | 2007-08 (n=57) | 2008-09 (n=50) |
| Comprehensive Center network | 87% | 82% |
| Regional Educational Laboratory | 76 | 74 |
| U.S. Department of Education | 64 | 66 |
| Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) | 64 | 79 |
| Senior managers in other SEAs | 59 | 64 |
| Consulting firms or private contractors | 56 | 51 |
| Colleges and universities | 46 | 52 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, 87 percent of state managers, weighted, said that they relied on the Centers as a source of technical assistance to a great or moderate extent.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

State managers’ reports of the purposes for which they used each source of technical assistance shed light on the niches occupied by the Center program—the purposes for which the Centers were the most commonly used source. These responses also revealed some purposes for which other sources were the most widely used in particular years.

- ***Across different purposes for technical assistance, state managers identified the Centers as the leading source for planning, completing tasks, and developing skills.*** In 2008-09, the Centers were cited as the top source “to plan the initial

steps in solving a problem” (59 percent), to complete tasks that either “the state could do itself if it had more staff or resources” (64 percent) or “for which the state lacks expertise” (53 percent), and “to develop the skills of SEA or intermediate education agency staff” (55 percent). While not the top source, the Centers were cited second to professional associations as a resource states used “to gather information or to keep current with new ideas” (73 percent compared with 79 percent) (exhibit 4.6).

Exhibit 4.6. Purposes for which states used external sources of technical assistance, 2008-09

| External Source | Purpose in seeking technical assistance (percent of state managers) (n=54) | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | To gather information or to keep current with new ideas | To plan the initial steps in solving a problem | To complete tasks that the state could do itself if it had more staff or resources | SEA or intermediate education agency staff | To develop the skills of agency staff | To work directly with districts and schools | Our state doesn't seek assistance from this source |
| Comprehensive Center network | 73% | 59% | 64% | 53% | 55% | 32% | 2% |
| Regional Educational Laboratory | 66 | 44 | 34 | 38 | 30 | 19 | 9 |
| U.S. Department of Education | 58 | 43 | 14 | 18 | 23 | 7 | 11 |
| Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) | 79 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 33 | 9 | 4 |
| Senior managers in other SEAs | 63 | 36 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 5 | 10 |
| Consulting firms or private contractors | 29 | 31 | 50 | 42 | 25 | 32 | 21 |
| Colleges and universities | 50 | 29 | 26 | 21 | 19 | 25 | 20 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 73 percent of state managers (weighted) said that they turned to the Centers to gather information or to keep current with new ideas.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

- **Over time, the Centers were reported by state managers as the top resource for more purposes.** In 2006-07, state managers reported Centers as the top source in two areas: for planning the initial steps in solving a problem (66 percent) and developing skills of SEA staff (61 percent). In the following years (2007-08 and 2008-09), Centers were reported as the top source for two additional purposes: to help states complete tasks where they lacked resources (58 percent and 64 percent, respectively) or expertise (49 percent and 53 percent, respectively).

State managers also provided a rating of the usefulness of Center technical assistance, in comparison with other sources, with respect to particular areas of NCLB state responsibility.

- *In the area of statewide systems of support or school support teams, a majority of state managers (62 percent, weighted) called the Centers' technical assistance "more useful" than assistance from other sources in 2008-09* (exhibit 4.7). This was the only area in which more than 80 percent of state managers said they could make a judgment on usefulness. The pattern of responses was similar in 2007-08 (appendix exhibit F.9).

Exhibit 4.7. Usefulness of Center assistance compared with assistance from other sources, 2008-09

| Areas of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of state managers, weighted, rating Center technical assistance as: | | | |
|---|---|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | More useful | About the same | Less useful | Not able to judge |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (<i>n</i> =49) | 62% | 21% | 4% | 13% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (<i>n</i> =46) | 35 | 29 | 4 | 32 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =41) | 23 | 28 | 6 | 42 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (<i>n</i> =45) | 41 | 35 | 2 | 22 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (<i>n</i> =41) | 28 | 37 | 14 | 21 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =38) | 43 | 19 | 7 | 32 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (<i>n</i> =32) | 16 | 16 | 11 | 58 |
| Communication with parents or the public (<i>n</i> =34) | 27 | 25 | 3 | 45 |

NOTE: States that chose the response, "not applicable, state has not sought assistance for this purpose," were excluded from the analysis.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 62 percent of state managers (weighted) reported that Centers were more useful than other sources of technical assistance for the state NCLB responsibility of statewide systems of support or school support teams.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

SEA Overall Rating of Center Assistance

As senior officials in their agencies, the state managers were in a position to provide overall judgments of the Center technical assistance their agency had received. The state manager survey included scales for the degree to which Center technical assistance, in general (not specific to a particular project), was seen as relevant and useful, comprising five indicators of relevance and five indicators of usefulness.⁵⁷ Ratings were based on a 1 to 5 scale.⁵⁸

- ***On a scale of 1 (very low degree) to 5 (very high degree), on average, state managers rated the Centers' technical assistance about a 4 ("high" degree) on relevance and usefulness in each year.*** The average relevance scores in each year were 3.94 in 2006-07, 3.92 in 2007-08, and 4.07 in 2008-09, and the average usefulness scores were 3.86 in 2006-07, 3.99 in 2007-08, and 4.21 in 2008-09.⁵⁹
- ***The 2008-09 ratings of relevance and usefulness from the survey of state managers suggest that Centers were targeting their assistance more closely on key priorities and providing resources that states could continue using.*** Among the individual components of the relevance index, state managers gave the highest average rating of 4.30 for Center assistance addressing "an important state priority" in 2008-09. On the usefulness index, the highest average rating of 4.40 in 2008-09 was for Centers' having "provided state staff with information or resources that they will use again" (exhibit 4.8).

⁵⁷ The survey items in the relevance and usefulness scales were reduced in number between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 surveys. Because no distinct sub-dimensions existed in the 2006-07 scales, the scales were simplified to reduce burden. Items were selected for deletion based on a detailed analysis of the impact of each item on the overall reliability of the scale. In 2007-08 the reliability of the revised relevance scale was .926 (Cronbach's Alpha) and that of the revised usefulness scale was .911.

⁵⁸ The response options were: 5 (to a very high degree), 4 (to a high degree), 3 (to a moderate degree), 2 (to a low degree), and 1 (to a very low degree).

⁵⁹ The survey from 2006-07 was revised for the 2007-08 administration (and remained unchanged for 2008-09), so the scores are not directly comparable. The specific changes in the survey are described in appendix E.

Exhibit 4.8. Mean ratings of the relevance and usefulness of Center assistance by component, as judged by state managers, 2008-09

| Component | Ratings among state managers (weighted) |
|--|--|
| Relevance | 4.07 |
| Addressed an important state priority | 4.30 |
| Addressed a need or problem that the state faces | 4.23 |
| Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, and practices | 4.09 |
| Addressed a challenge that the state faces related to the implementation of NCLB | 3.94 |
| Addressed the state's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics) | 3.87 |
| Usefulness | 4.21 |
| Provided state staff with information or resources that they will use again | 4.40 |
| Was timely | 4.25 |
| Helped state staff to develop skills that they will be able to exercise again | 4.11 |
| Helped the state to solve a problem | 4.05 |
| Helped the state to maintain or change a policy or practice | 3.89 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, state managers (weighted) gave a mean relevance rating of 4.07 across all specific rating items, and a mean of 4.30 when rating whether the assistance their state had received from the Centers addressed an important state priority.

SOURCE: Surveys of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

5. Variation in the Reported Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness of the Centers' Technical Assistance

While state managers' reports provide important input to an assessment of the overall work of the Center program (chapter 4), additional perspectives are helpful in assessing the quality of the technical assistance projects and their relevance and usefulness to the offices and the teams of professionals directly served. As the two types of Centers played distinct roles in providing technical assistance, ratings were examined for the Center program and for each center type in the second through the fourth program years (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09). A deeper look at variation across Centers and projects and across program years might also provide information for program improvement: additional support or oversight might be provided if quality, relevance, or usefulness appeared substantially weaker in particular groups of Centers or projects, or for particular types of participants. Thus, variation was investigated by features of project design (project scope and the type of activities offered) and by participant experiences in the project as well as participant background.

This chapter analyzes the ratings of quality, relevance, and usefulness given to the Center projects sampled for the evaluation in each year, addressing the following research questions:

- To what extent was the assistance provided by the Centers of high quality, high relevance, and high usefulness?
 - Did the quality, relevance, or usefulness of Center assistance change over the period of time studied?
 - What was the variation in the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center assistance across types of projects and participants?

Quality was judged on three items called dimensions; relevance was assessed with eight survey items and usefulness with 11 items (exhibit 5.1). Sampled projects were rated for technical quality by panels of experts with strong knowledge of the content or substantive focus of the specific projects they reviewed.⁶⁰ Ratings of the sampled projects' relevance and usefulness were gathered by surveying a sample of participants—state staff, intermediate agency staff, local educators working on behalf of the state, and RCC staff—who were the intended beneficiaries of the project and had received at least some of the technical assistance it provided.⁶¹ Participant ratings focused on the specific project in which respondents had participated whereas the state managers rated the relevance and usefulness of the overall Center assistance that the state had received.⁶² Each overall measure (quality, relevance, or usefulness) was calculated as the mean

⁶⁰ See chapter 2 for more information about the data sources and procedures for gathering, coding, and analyzing the data reported in this chapter, including discussions of the methods used for expert ratings and participant surveys.

⁶¹ Copies of the expert panel review rating materials and the project participant surveys can be found in appendix G. Supplemental tables related to this chapter are in appendix H.

⁶² Additionally, the state manager survey items for the relevance and usefulness scales were reduced in number between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 surveys. Thus, measures of relevance and usefulness for the state managers were different from the measure administered to project participants.

of ratings assigned to each item. The item-level ratings themselves were based on 5-point rating scales (exhibit 5.2).⁶³

The chapter describes patterns observed in the ratings across the three program years. However, changes over time are presented with caution given a number of limitations or caveats related to the ratings of quality, relevance, and usefulness. Each year's sample of projects was a purposive one, with unknown differences in the characteristics of the projects across years. For the quality ratings, while the same procedures were followed in each year, the cadre of panelists was not entirely unchanged.⁶⁴ Further, the Centers selected and submitted the specific project materials that the experts reviewed, and Center staff became aware of the evaluation procedures and criteria during 2007. In the first (2006-07) rating cycle, Centers were given instructions in May 2007, within two months of the end of the program year, for assembling materials. In the subsequent cycles, Centers knew what they would be asked to submit and thus may have gathered and prepared materials during the year as projects progressed. Similarly, for the relevance and usefulness ratings, the Centers learned in 2007 that they would be asked to provide full lists of project participants, from which the evaluation team would select survey respondents, and thus they had the opportunity to compile the needed records during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 program years. Finally, the participants surveyed were a different group of individuals in each year, sampled from all participants in the selected projects.

⁶³ Efforts were made to develop parallel wording and rubrics that would result in similar gradations between rating levels (e.g., very high vs. high vs. moderate) across the three measures. However, given the different content of each set of items within the three measures and the different contexts for the ratings (experts who underwent training for the rating process and reviewed identical packages of materials vs. survey respondents who typically participated in different subsets of project activities), the ratings across the three measures are not directly comparable.

⁶⁴ Sixty-six of the 70 panelists in 2006-07 returned for the 2007-08 rating cycle, and 14 new panelists were added. Seventy-eight of the 80 panelists who reviewed materials in 2007-08 returned for 2008-09.

Exhibit 5.1. Quality, relevance, and usefulness items

| From expert panel scoring | From project participant surveys ⁶⁵ | |
|---|--|---|
| Technical quality | Relevance | Usefulness |
| <p>Reviewers were directed to assign a score to each dimension and to include the basis for their ratings on the rating form, including the specific artifacts on which their score was based. The three dimensions are:</p> <p>a. Demonstrated use of the appropriate documented knowledge base—to include an accurate portrayal of the current state of information with prominence to those with the most accurate/rigorous evidence</p> <p>b. Fidelity of application of the knowledge base to the products and services provided—materials are consistent with the best/accurate information available and the presentation adequately conveys the confidence of the information</p> <p>c. Clear and effective delivery—information is well organized and written and accessible to the intended audience for easy use</p> | <p>Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources relevant to your work, in each of the following respects?</p> <p>a. Addressed a need or problem that my organization faces</p> <p>b. Addressed an important priority of my organization</p> <p>c. Addressed a challenge that my organization faces related to the implementation of NCLB</p> <p>d. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be directly applied to my organization's work</p> <p>e. Addressed our particular state context</p> <p>f. Addressed my organization's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics)</p> <p>g. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, or practices</p> <p>h. Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for policies, programs, or practices</p> | <p>Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources useful to you, in each of the following respects?</p> <p>a. Provided resources that were easy to understand and easy to use</p> <p>b. Employed an appropriate format (e.g., a work group, a conference, individual consultation, written products)</p> <p>c. Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states</p> <p>d. Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources</p> <p>e. Were timely</p> <p>f. Helped my organization solve a problem</p> <p>g. Helped my organization maintain or change a policy or practice</p> <p>h. Helped my organization take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort</p> <p>i. Provided my organization with information or resources that we will use again</p> <p>j. Helped my organization develop a shared expertise or knowledge base</p> <p>k. Helped individuals in my organization to develop skills that they will use again</p> |

⁶⁵ Participant surveys focused on the specific project in which respondents had participated in contrast to the state manager surveys that asked about overall Center assistance the state had received. In addition, the participant survey items measuring relevance and usefulness were different from those administered to the state manager survey items as the state manager survey items were reduced in number between the 2006-07 and 2007-08 surveys.

Exhibit 5.2. Scales for rating of quality by expert panels and relevance and usefulness by participants

| Rating | Quality ratings by content area experts | Relevance or usefulness ratings by project participants |
|--------|--|---|
| 5 | Very high —All or almost all of the project meets the given indicators for a dimension | To a very high degree |
| 4 | High —Most of the project meets the given indicators for a dimension | To a high degree |
| 3 | Moderate —Some of the project meets the given indicators for a dimension | To a moderate degree |
| 2 | Low —Limited parts of the project meet the given indicators for a dimension | To a low degree |
| 1 | Very low —None or almost none of the project meets the given indicators for a dimension | To a very low degree |

Average Ratings by Experts and Participants

Aggregated to the entire program, the ratings of expert panelists and project participants provide insight into the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center assistance. Trends in the ratings of sampled projects over time may also be indicative of trends in overall Center technical assistance. Thus the data gathered on individual projects were compiled to produce mean ratings of quality, relevance, and usefulness for the sampled projects across the program as a whole. In these averages, each Center contributed equally to the overall mean for the program.⁶⁶ Given the different roles assigned to the RCCs and CCs,⁶⁷ it is appropriate to examine whether there were differences in ratings between the two types of Centers.⁶⁸ In addition, any consistent variation in the quality, relevance, and usefulness across individual Centers would be useful to understand.

⁶⁶ This averaging procedure across Centers and across projects was designed so that each Center contributed equally to the overall mean for the program (or for its type of Center, where RCC means were compared with CC means), and each project sampled from a Center contributed equally to the Center mean.

⁶⁷ ED structured the Comprehensive Centers program to consist of 5 Content Centers charged with specializing in activities related to specific content areas and 16 Regional Centers charged with specializing in interactions with the states in a region.

⁶⁸ For analyses of ratings presented in this chapter with the project or Center as the unit of analysis, the evaluators used a metric derived from Cohen (1988) estimating Cohen's *d* (an estimate of the effect size defined as the differences in means divided by the pooled standard deviation). Adopting the logic of Cohen for what is a moderate difference, we adopted a difference in the means of one-half of one standard deviation (analogous to an effect size of .5) as our minimum threshold for highlighting differences. The "pooled standard deviation" for each computation varied with the unit of analysis. For analyses conducted at the Center level, the pooled standard deviation was

- ***Center technical assistance, overall, was rated higher on each measure in each successive year, with 2008-09 ratings between “moderate” and “high” for quality, and “high” for relevance and usefulness (exhibit 5.3).*** On a scale of 1 to 5 with a 3 representing “moderate” and a 4 representing “high,” the program-wide average rating for the sampled projects rose from 3.34 in 2006-07, to 3.51 in 2007-08, to 3.57 in 2008-09 for technical quality (scored by panels of content experts). Over this same period of time, Centers’ average rating for relevance (scored by participants) went up from 3.94 in 2006-07 to 4.08 in 2007-08 and 4.15 in 2008-09. The greatest changes in participant ratings of relevance were in the items related to the tailoring of assistance—addressing the specific challenges or particular context of the SEA, or providing information or resources that could guide decisions (appendix exhibit H.4). The program-wide participant ratings of usefulness rose from 3.69 in 2006-07 to 3.95 in 2007-08, to 3.96 in 2008-09, with the largest increases across years in ratings that gave credit to Center technical assistance for helping the participant’s organization to take action—maintaining or changing a policy or practice, taking next steps in a longer-term improvement effort, or solving a problem (appendix exhibit H.5).

Exhibit 5.3. Mean ratings of technical quality, relevance, and usefulness, by center type and by year

| | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| All Centers (N=21) | 3.34 | 3.51 | 3.57 | 3.94 | 4.08 | 4.15 | 3.69 | 3.95 | 3.96 |
| All RCCs (N=16) | 3.21 | 3.41 | 3.52 | 3.99 | 4.18 | 4.15 | 3.71 | 3.99 | 3.94 |
| All CCs (N=5) | 3.73 | 3.86 | 3.72 | 3.78 | 3.96 | 4.17 | 3.65 | 3.84 | 4.01 |
| Difference of RCC and CC means | -0.52[†] | -0.45[†] | -0.20[†] | 0.21[†] | 0.22[†] | -0.02 | 0.06 | 0.15[†] | -0.07 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation (all Centers)</i> | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.37 | 0.34 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.34 | 0.23 | 0.27 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | -1.28 | -1.09 | -0.55 | 0.62 | 1.00 | -0.08 | 0.18 | 0.64 | -0.26 |

NOTE: All ratings were on a 5-point scale, with 5 as the high value. The “technical quality” rating is the mean of the ratings for the three quality dimensions. A notation of † indicates that the difference in the mean ratings between the CCs and RCCs within that year is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: Among the 21 Centers, the mean technical quality rating was 3.34 for the 2006-07 program year.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings; each project contributed equally to Center ratings; and each Center contributed equally to cross-Center ratings.

computed as the standard deviation of the variable of interest (e.g., relevance) computed at the Center level. For analyses using the project as the unit of analysis, the pooled standard deviation was computed at the project level.

- ***The RCCs’ average quality rating was higher in each successive year but remained lower than that of the CCs in each year.*** The average rating of the RCCs for the quality of sampled projects, rated by experts, was below that of the CCs (3.21 vs. 3.73 in 2006-07, 3.41 vs. 3.86 in 2007-08, and 3.52 vs. 3.72 in 2008-09). The difference between RCC and CC means decreased from 0.52 in 2006-07 to 0.20 in 2008-09 (exhibit 5.3).
- ***The average relevance rating for RCCs was higher than for CCs in the first two years, although CC ratings rose in each year.*** For 2006-07, the relevance rating (from project participants) averaged 3.99 for the RCCs and 3.78 for the CCs (difference of 0.21 between RCCs and CCs). In the following year the relevance ratings averaged 4.18 for RCCs and 3.96 for CCs (difference of 0.22 between types of Centers). In 2008-09, the mean was 4.15 for RCCs and 4.17 for CCs (exhibit 5.3).
- ***On the usefulness of sampled projects, there was no consistent difference between RCCs and CCs.*** The 2006-07 average rating for usefulness (from project participants) was similar across types of Centers (3.71 and 3.65). In 2007-08 the RCC average (3.99) was higher than that of CCs (3.84). In 2008-09 there was not a substantial difference between the averages for the two types of Centers (3.94 and 4.01) (exhibit 5.3).

Variation by Type of Project

Analysis of the variation in ratings at the project level could provide information on the practices of Centers, indicating particular strengths of the Centers and areas for improvement. Perhaps the Centers were more successful, at least from the perspective of the reviewers, at some types of projects compared with others. Thus, the evaluation looked at different groups of projects across Centers that might be expected to show higher quality, relevance, or usefulness than other projects.⁶⁹ For example, projects that were larger in scope than others in the Center might have garnered higher ratings from the experts or the participants. Other potential sources of variation examined here included the types of activities or resources offered and the types of expertise brought to bear in delivering or reviewing the technical assistance.

- ***The distributions of ratings across projects were wider than the distributions across Centers, which on all three measures were clustered in the “moderate to high” range.*** Some projects were found in the “high to very high” range on each measure in each year (exhibit 5.4). There were also projects in each year below the “moderate” rating (i.e., in the “low to moderate” and the “low to very low” ranges combined) for quality and usefulness. For relevance, no sampled project was found below the “moderate” rating in 2007-08 or 2008-09.

⁶⁹ For analyses using the project as the unit of analysis, the pooled standard deviation was computed at the project level.

- *No sampled project received the lowest possible mean rating (“low to very low”) after 2006-07.* For 2006-07 both RCCs and CCs had 4 percent of their projects rated “low to very low” for quality by experts; in the subsequent years they had none. For both relevance and usefulness, 1 percent of RCC projects had a “low to very low” rating from participants in 2006-07, but no project of any Center received this rating in 2007-08 or 2008-09 (exhibit 5.4).

Exhibit 5.4. Percent of projects by rating for technical quality, relevance, and usefulness, by year

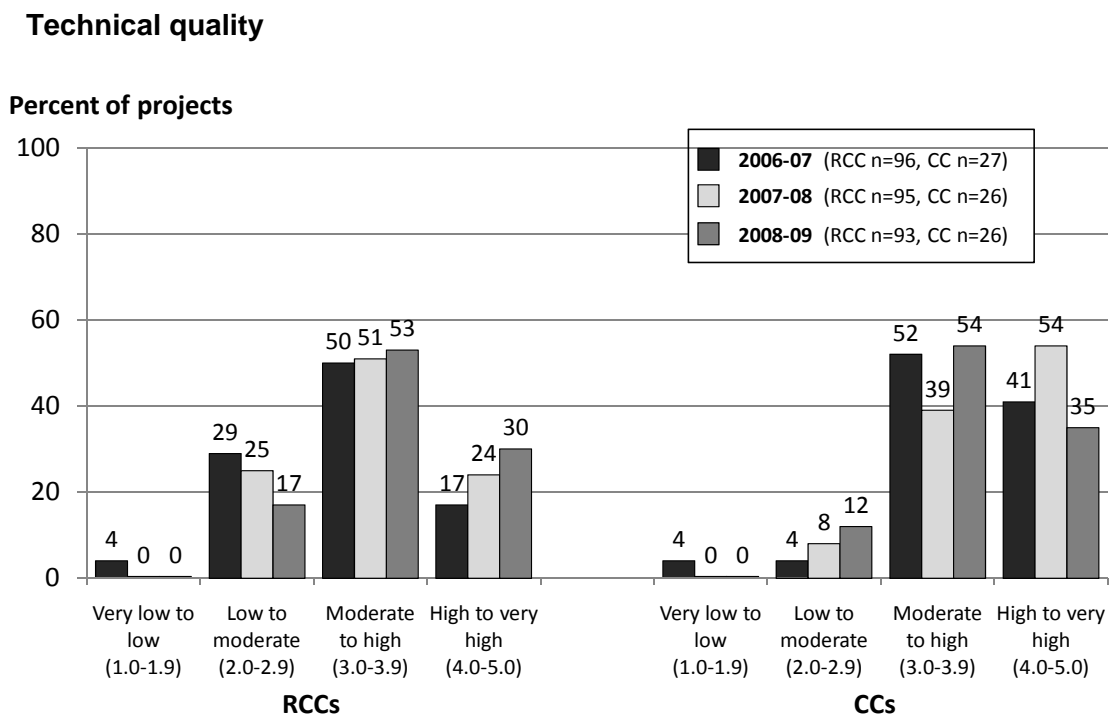
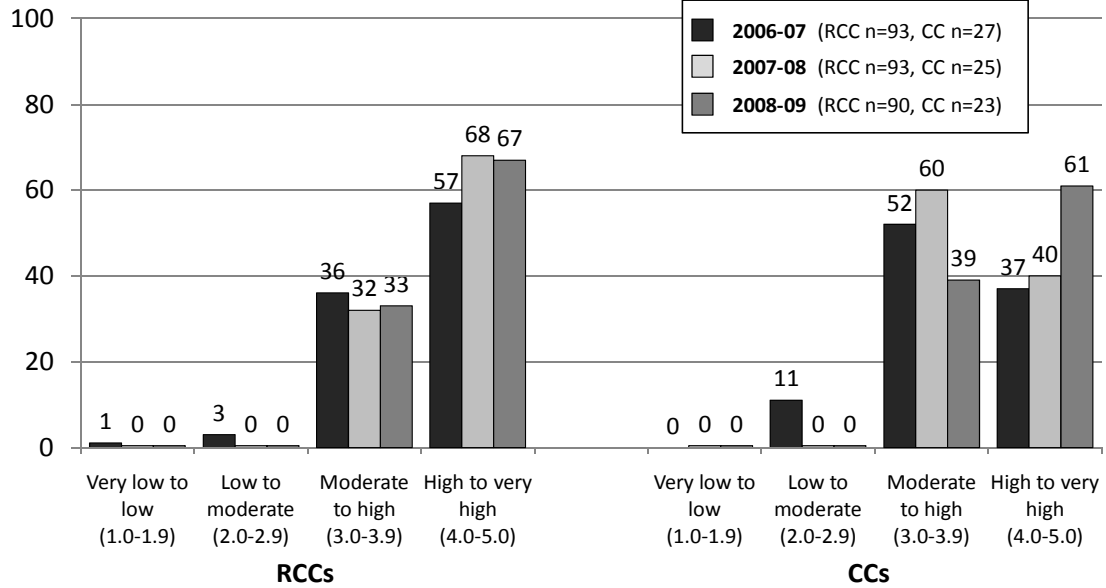


Exhibit 5.4. (continued)

Relevance

Percent of projects



Usefulness

Percent of projects

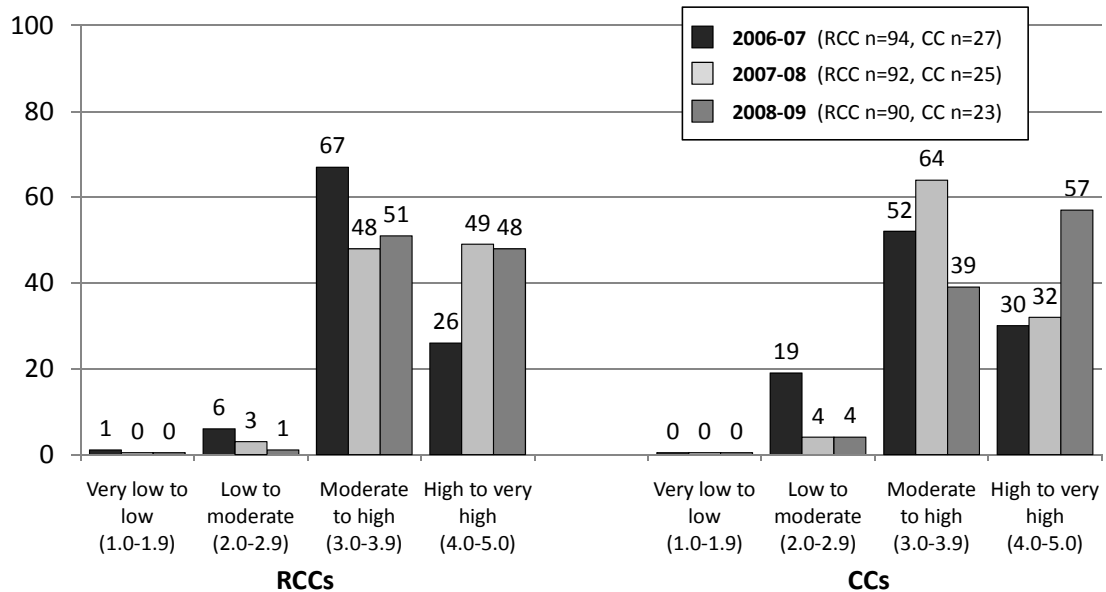


EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, four percent of the projects sampled from RCCs had a mean quality rating of very low to low (between 1.0 and 1.9 on a 5-point scale). Twenty-nine percent of the sampled RCC projects had a mean quality rating of low to moderate (2.0 to 2.9 on a 5-point scale) in that year.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings.

Ratings by Project Activities

The technical assistance provided by the Centers varied in delivery methods, including the types of activities offered. The following types of activities and resources were found across the sampled projects:⁷⁰

- Ongoing consultation and follow-up
- Research collections and syntheses
- Engagement of participants in project planning
- Training events
- Task force meetings and work
- Conferences
- Support for development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy

We examined whether projects that included certain types of technical assistance activities received more favorable project ratings either from experts knowledgeable about the topic or from participants in the project. By comparing the ratings of projects that offered each activity with ratings of projects that did not, strengths and weaknesses of particular modes of Center work might be discernible. However, no clear pattern of differences in ratings by activity type was found across all three years (appendix exhibits H.6-H.8).

Ratings by Whether the Project Addressed Systems of Support

Because technical assistance with statewide systems of support or school support teams was in high demand from the states (as discussed in chapter 4), projects addressing the topic of “effective systems of support” might have been rated higher than others with respect to relevance or usefulness. And because it was an area of considerable Center activity, the Centers’ depth of experience with the topic might have helped these projects gain relatively high ratings for quality. However, no differences were found (exhibit 5.5).

⁷⁰ For each sampled project, the Center furnished the team with a cover sheet intended to inform the expert reviewers about the project context, purpose, activities, and products. As described in chapter 2 and appendix C, the team coded the content of each project cover sheet to describe the activities and resources offered as part of the project. When a cover sheet indicated that the project had multiple components, multiple codes were assigned. Chapter 3 presents findings on the frequency with which each year’s sampled projects from RCCs and CCs respectively included each activity.

Exhibit 5.5. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of SOS projects vs. all other projects in the study sample, by year

| Project Topic | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|-------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|------------|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| SOS projects (2006-07 n=36, 2007-08 n=39, 2008-09 n=33) | 3.41 | 3.51 | 3.62 | 4.00 | 4.18 | 4.19 | 3.71 | 3.93 | 3.98 |
| All other projects (2006-07 n=87, 2007-08 n=82, 2008-09 n=86) | 3.32 | 3.54 | 3.58 | 3.94 | 4.12 | 4.15 | 3.69 | 3.94 | 3.97 |
| Difference in means | 0.09 | -0.03 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.02 | -0.01 | 0.01 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.69 | 0.65 | 0.61 | 0.52 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.54 | 0.48 | 0.48 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.13 | -0.05 | 0.07 | 0.13 | 0.15 | 0.09 | 0.03 | -0.02 | 0.02 |

[†] The difference in the mean ratings within that year of SOS projects and all other projects exceeds one-half of the pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean technical quality rating for SOS projects was 3.41 while the mean technical quality rating for all other projects in the study sample was 3.32.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Ratings for RCC Projects by Whether They Drew on CC Contributions

Cooperation between CCs and RCCs was one element of the design of the Center program, as discussed throughout this report. Thus, among the types of resources that RCC projects might offer to their participants were materials developed by CCs, activities developed with advice from CCs, or technical assistance from CC staff members. One hypothesis for the evaluation was that the RCC projects incorporating CC contributions would be rated higher for technical quality than RCC projects that were developed without CC input, since the CCs were specifically charged with synthesizing the knowledge base in their areas of focus, and since in each year the CCs had a higher mean rating of technical quality than the RCCs.

- ***Compared with other RCC projects, the ones that included CC contributions were rated higher for technical quality in one of three years studied.*** In 2008-09 the sampled RCC projects that included one or more types of contributions from a CC were rated more than one-half of a standard deviation higher than those that did not (exhibit 5.6). No differences greater than one-half of a standard deviation were found for earlier years.

Exhibit 5.6. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of RCC projects, by presence or absence of CC contributions, by year

| CC contribution or no CC contribution | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|------------|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| CC contribution (2006-07 n=46, 2007-08 n=32, 2008-09 n=45) | 3.40 | 3.59 | 3.72 | 3.92 | 4.23 | 4.13 | 3.63 | 3.99 | 3.97 |
| No CC contribution (2006-07 n=50, 2007-08 n=63, 2008-09 n=48) | 3.09 | 3.36 | 3.39 | 4.09 | 4.18 | 4.19 | 3.78 | 3.97 | 3.94 |
| Difference in means | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.33[†] | -0.17 | 0.05 | -0.05 | -0.15 | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.67 | 0.63 | 0.61 | 0.53 | 0.42 | 0.43 | 0.56 | 0.48 | 0.47 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.47 | 0.35 | 0.54 | -0.32 | 0.12 | -0.12 | -0.27 | 0.05 | 0.05 |

[†] The difference in the mean ratings within that year between the RCC projects with and without CC contributions exceeds one-half of the pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean technical quality rating for RCC projects with a CC contribution was 3.40 while the mean technical quality rating for RCC projects with no CC contribution was 3.09.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Ratings for CC Projects by Whether They Drew on RCC Contributions

Also as a part of the cooperation that was expected within the overall Center program, some CC projects drew on the RCCs to help engage participants or to provide substantive help with technical assistance (as described in chapter 3). The evaluation team hypothesized that the CC projects that had RCC involvement might have been rated higher for relevance than other CC projects since the RCCs were charged with knowing the specific purposes and priorities of states in their regions, and since their projects received higher average ratings for relevance than CC projects in 2006-07 and 2007-08. However, the ratings of sampled projects did not show such a difference.

- ***CC projects with RCC contributions were not rated differently than other CC projects for relevance or usefulness; they were rated lower than other CC projects for quality in one year.*** Across years, participants' ratings of CC projects with and without RCC contributions showed no differences greater than one-half of a standard deviation in relevance or usefulness (exhibit 5.7). CC projects with RCC contributions had quality ratings from experts that were more than one-half a standard deviation lower in 2007-08 but not in the years before or after.

Exhibit 5.7. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of CC projects, by presence or absence of RCC contribution, by year

| RCC contribution or no RCC contribution | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2006- 07 | 2007- 08 | 2008- 09 | 2006- 07 | 2007- 08 | 2008- 09 | 2006- 07 | 2007- 08 | 2008- 09 |
| RCC contribution (2006-07 n=17, 2007-08 n=10, 2008-09 n=11) | 3.84 | 3.59 | 3.76 | 3.72 | 4.01 | 4.16 | 3.58 | 3.87 | 4.00 |
| No RCC contribution (2006-07 n=10, 2007-08 n=16, 2008-09 n=15) | 3.54 | 4.06 | 3.69 | 3.88 | 3.87 | 4.18 | 3.75 | 3.73 | 4.09 |
| Difference in means | 0.30 | -0.47[†] | 0.07 | -0.17 | 0.15 | -0.02 | -0.17 | 0.14 | -0.09 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.62 | 0.62 | 0.44 | 0.46 | 0.40 | 0.44 | 0.47 | 0.44 | 0.50 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.49 | -0.77 | -0.04 | -0.36 | 0.37 | -0.04 | -0.36 | 0.32 | -0.18 |

[†] The difference in the mean ratings within that year between the CC projects with and without RCC contribution exceeds one-half of the pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean technical quality rating for CC projects with a RCC contribution was 3.84 while the mean technical quality rating for CC projects with no RCC contribution was 3.54.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Ratings by Source of Quality Assurance

For 2008-09, the evaluation gathered Centers' reports on the sources that they used for quality assurance on each sampled project. Possible sources of expertise in quality assurance, as discussed in chapter 3, included several that were essentially "in-house": Center staff, other staff in the grantee organization, and other staff in subgrantee organizations. The external sources included outside experts retained to review drafts, CCs (in the case of a CC project, this would be a Center other than the one conducting the project), and the U.S. Department of Education. It seemed possible that projects that had undergone external review would receive relatively higher ratings for quality from the expert panelists who rated projects for this evaluation.

- ***Projects that had been reviewed for quality assurance by outside experts or by a CC were rated higher for quality than other projects.*** The mean quality rating for projects reported to have been reviewed by experts was 3.73, compared with 3.42 for other projects (exhibit 5.8). For projects reportedly reviewed by CCs, the mean was 3.83, compared with 3.46 for other projects. No differences greater than one-half of a standard deviation were found for quality assurance by other

sources, including sources closely associated with the Center conducting the project (i.e., Center staff or other staff of the grantee or subgrantee organization).

Exhibit 5.8. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings by source of quality assurance, 2008-09

| Source of quality assurance | Technical Quality | Relevance | Usefulness |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Outside experts (<i>n</i> =63) | 3.73 | 4.12 | 3.94 |
| No outside experts (<i>n</i> =55) | 3.42 | 4.21 | 4.02 |
| Difference in means | 0.31[†] | -0.09 | -0.08 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.61 | 0.43 | 0.47 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.51 | -0.21 | -0.16 |
| Content Centers (<i>n</i> =39) | 3.83 | 4.14 | 3.92 |
| No Content Centers (<i>n</i> =79) | 3.46 | 4.18 | 4.01 |
| Difference in means | 0.37[†] | -0.04 | -0.08 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.61 | 0.43 | 0.47 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | 0.60 | -0.09 | -0.18 |

[†] The difference in the mean ratings exceeds one-half of the pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, the mean technical quality rating for projects that used outside experts was 3.73 while the mean technical quality rating for projects that did not use outside experts was 3.42.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Relationships between the Relevance, Usefulness, and Quality of Center Projects

In our analysis of the relevance, usefulness, and quality of Center technical assistance, we observed that some types of Centers, individual Centers, or groups of projects that received relatively high ratings for quality received relatively low ratings for relevance and usefulness, and vice versa. We hypothesized that differences in the rating and rankings (the rating relative to other groups of projects) could be due to the differences in the types of individuals who reviewed and scored projects for quality—content experts—and those who scored the relevance and usefulness—project participants. It was expected that these two groups might value and be better able to judge different qualities in a Center project, which is why we did not have content experts evaluate the projects for their utility or the participants assess the technical quality.

We examined the associations among the three dimensions more systematically by calculating correlation coefficients.⁷¹ These statistics indicate the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two factors. A correlation coefficient can vary from positive 1.00 (indicating a perfect positive relationship), through zero (indicating the absence of a relationship), to negative 1.00 (indicating a perfect negative relationship). If the correlation is statistically significant ($p < .05$), we can have strong (95 percent) confidence that the level of association we calculated is not due to chance.

- ***Participants' ratings of relevance and usefulness were closely related*** (exhibit 5.9). The correlation coefficient was +0.84 for 2006-07, +0.79 for 2007-08, and +0.83 for 2008-09. This indicates that the extent to which participants rated the projects as relevant was associated with how they deemed the project to be useful to their agency. These coefficients were all statistically significant at $p < .05$.
- ***There was no statistically significant relationship between ratings for the quality of Center projects and ratings for their relevance or usefulness*** (exhibit 5.9). The results indicated correlations ranging from -0.12 to +0.04 between quality and relevance, and from -0.09 to +0.07 between quality and usefulness. Because the coefficients are not statistically significant we cannot be sure that they are different from zero (no relationship). Thus the correlations suggest that the expert rating of technical quality was not related to the extent to which participants deemed the projects to be relevant or useful.

Exhibit 5.9. Correlations between project-level technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings, by year

| Combination | Spearman's Rho | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Quality and relevance | -0.12 | -0.04 | +0.04 |
| Quality and usefulness | -0.04 | -0.09 | +0.07 |
| Relevance and usefulness | +0.84* | +0.79* | +0.83* |

* The correlation is statistically significant at $p < .05$.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the correlation between project-level ratings of technical quality and relevance was a negative 0.12.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating.

⁷¹ For this analysis, the evaluation team used Spearman's rank order correlation because this non-parametric rating is the appropriate statistical function to describe correlations between two variables where the values of the variables are not normally distributed and are on an ordinal, but not interval scale (such as ratings).

Variation by Participant Experiences and Roles

The analyses by subgroups of projects, reported above, brought to light few types of projects that had consistently higher or lower ratings than other projects. However, it is possible that the targeting, tailoring, and engagement in technical assistance experienced by a particular participant would affect how he or she regarded it. In other words, the particular way in which the Centers delivered assistance to individuals—and the professional roles of the individuals on whom assistance focused—might account for differing perceptions of relevance and usefulness. If so, a project might have relevance and usefulness similar to those of other projects when the ratings are averaged across all participants in that project, but individual participants might give it systematically different ratings compared with other participants.

Thus the team examined whether the rating of relevance or usefulness given by a participant was related to that participant's experience in the project or to his or her job responsibilities. These analyses provided an opportunity to follow up on findings from the prior evaluation conducted on the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers established under the 1994 ESEA reauthorization (described in chapter 1 of this report).⁷² As some of the participant survey questions changed from the first to the second survey administration, examination of participant ratings based on those particular items are presented only for 2007-08 and 2008-09 when the survey items remained the same. For survey questions that remained the same, all three years (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09) are presented. The specific participant characteristics examined included:

- Whether the participant contributed to the design of the project
- How much time the participant spent with project activities or resources
- The participant's place of employment, and the extent to which the job focused on NCLB

In the following discussion, the unit of analysis is the participant, not the project. The mean ratings are those provided by a group of participants, across all projects, who had a particular type of experience or background; within the same project there could be participants with different experiences and backgrounds.⁷³ We first describe the variation found in each of these participant characteristics and the ways in which ratings did or did not differ according to

⁷² U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division. (2000). *Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers Program: Final Report on the Evaluation* (Volume I). Washington, DC: Author.

⁷³ It is important to note that these participant-level analyses are exploratory, and the relationships described between participant characteristics and their ratings are correlational, not causal. The participant responses were weighted to represent all project participants in the sample frame for each project. The weights were calculated by dividing the total number of sample-eligible participants by the number of respondents completing a survey who participated in that project. The weighted figures shown in the tables in this section approach but never exceed the sample frame figures shown in appendix exhibit B.4, depending on the number of survey respondents who provided valid responses to the specific question(s) comprising each table. See chapter 2 and appendix B for more information on survey administration and the process used to weight responses.

each characteristic individually. The section concludes with a multivariate analysis examining each participant characteristic while controlling for the presence of the other characteristics.

Ratings by Participants' Involvement in Project Design

An aspect of participation that was of particular interest, given the Centers' charge to work closely with their clients, was the extent to which participants were involved in the projects' design stages and, then, whether perceptions of relevance and usefulness might vary with a participant's involvement. The evaluation of the earlier program of Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers, based on survey results from a sample of participants, concluded: "Comprehensive Center technical assistance is more useful to customers if it is tailored to address their needs and interests."⁷⁴ For the current evaluation, the team analyzed participant responses to a question asking respondents whether they were personally involved in determining the goals or designing the content or format of the project.

- ***A higher proportion of participants in the sampled RCC projects reported being involved in some aspect of determining project goals or designing the project, compared with participants in the CC projects.*** For 2007-08 the figures were 39 percent of participants in RCC projects and 20 percent of those in CC projects; for 2008-09, 42 percent of participants in RCC projects and 16 percent of those in CC projects were involved either in determining goals or designing the projects (exhibit 5.10). In 2006-07, when this survey question included a 9-item list of ways in which a respondent might have been involved in determining goals or designing the project, more respondents indicated that they had been involved (57 percent for participants in RCC projects and 42 percent for those in CC projects), but the relatively higher rate of involvement in RCC projects was observed in that year as well (appendix exhibit H.9). In each of the three years, a chi square test found the difference across types of Centers to be statistically significant ($p < .01$).⁷⁵

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Education, 2000, op cit.

⁷⁵ For the analysis of responses of project participants, inferential statistics were used to identify differences in responses among groups of participants that were greater than would be expected by chance alone. Because the sample of project participants were selected through a random sample of all project participants, the evaluators judged it appropriate to use test of statistical significance for these analyses. However, we would caution the reader not to generalize the results beyond the sample of projects selected for each year of the study, because the specific projects were selected on a non-probability basis.

Exhibit 5.10. Participants' involvement in determining project goals or design, by type of Center and by year

| Involved in determining the goals or content of the project | Percent of participants | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | RCC projects | | CC projects | |
| | 2007-08 (n=1,722) | 2008-09 (n=1,701) | 2007-08 (n=2,131) | 2008-09 (n=1,506) |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Yes | 39 | 42 | 20 | 16 |
| No | 61 | 58 | 80 | 84 |

NOTE: Difference in the proportion of participants involved in design by type of Center is statistically significant ($p < .05$, Chi Square) in each year.

EXHIBIT READS: for the 2007-08 program year, 39 percent of participants in projects conducted by RCCs reported they were involved in the design of the technical assistance.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

- ***Participants who reported being involved in determining the goals or designing the content of the project provided higher relevance and usefulness ratings in all years than did other participants.*** The average ratings in projects sampled for the current study corroborate the survey findings from the prior evaluation of the Centers. Participants who reported involvement in project design gave the projects a 4.06 average score for relevance and a 3.83 score for usefulness in 2006-07 (exhibit 5.11). In contrast, average scores for participants not involved in project design were 3.81 and 3.56, respectively. These differences were statistically significant (with $p < .01$ for differences in both relevance and usefulness).
- ***While the participants who were involved in planning gave higher ratings than those who were not, no difference in ratings was found between the projects that did or did not offer opportunities for involvement when analyzed at the project level.*** Comparing mean ratings at the project level, as reported earlier in this chapter, we did not find a difference greater than one-half of a standard deviation in relevance or usefulness ratings among projects that engaged participants in planning as opposed to those that did not (appendix exhibits H.6-H.8). This suggests that involving some participants in the design phase may make a difference in the ratings provided by those particular participants, but not in the ratings provided by all participants in the project.

Exhibit 5.11. Mean relevance and usefulness ratings, by respondent involvement in determining project goals or design, by year

| Involvement in project design | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Involved in project design (2006-07 n=1,802, 2007-08 n=1,092, 2008-09 n=943) | 4.06 | 4.27 | 4.37 | 3.84 | 4.14 | 4.20 |
| Not involved in project design (2006-07 n=1,638, 2007-08 n=2,716, 2008-09 n=2,134) | 3.81 | 3.89 | 3.90 | 3.56 | 3.77 | 3.80 |
| Difference | 0.25* | 0.38* | 0.47* | 0.28* | 0.37* | 0.40* |
| Significance | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 |

* Difference statistically significant within each year at p<.05 using a one-way ANOVA.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, participants who indicated that they were involved determining the goals or design of the project provided a relevance rating of 4.06 while project participants not involved in determining the goals or design of the project provided a relevance rating of 3.81.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Ratings by Time Spent on Project Activities

The literature on professional development suggests that the duration of training is associated with better outcomes.⁷⁶ Similarly, the previous evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers program, based on survey data from participants, concluded: “Comprehensive Center technical assistance is more useful to customers if it is intensive and if it extends over time.”⁷⁷ Therefore, this study explored the possibility of a relationship between the time an individual spent in project activities and the ratings he or she provided, assessing whether the same relationship persisted.

- ***Participants who spent more time on project activities tended to give higher ratings of relevance and usefulness in 2007-08 and 2008-09.*** Among all participants, those who spent five days or less carrying out activities related to the project gave ratings for relevance and usefulness near the halfway point between “moderate” and “high”: for relevance, the mean rating given by this group was 3.59 in 2007-08 and 3.58 in 2008-09; for usefulness the means were 3.46 and 3.42 (exhibit 5.12). Those who spent more time (i.e., 6 or more days) gave mean ratings in the “high” range (near or above 4.0) that were significantly higher than ratings by participants who spent 5 days or less ($p < .01$ for differences). For each type of rating in each year, the highest ratings were given by participants who had spent more than 10 days on the project.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Desimone, L., Porter, A.C., Garet, M., Yoon, K.S., and Birman, B. (2002). “Does Professional Development Change Teachers’ Instruction? Results from a Three-Year Study.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81-112; Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Birman, B., and Yoon, K.S. (2001). “What Makes Professional Development Effective? Results from a National Sample of Teachers.” *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915-945.

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of Education, 2000, op cit., p. 9.

⁷⁸ For 2006-07, respondents indicated the amount of time spent in each of eight activities by selecting from the following five options: “More than 5 days,” “3-5 days,” “1-2 days,” “Less than 1 day,” and “Not applicable.” Thus the findings are not directly comparable across years. However, a relationship between time spent and ratings of relevance and usefulness was found for that year as well. For each of eight project-related activities addressed in the survey for 2006-07, participants who reported spending at least three days in the activity rated the project higher on both relevance and usefulness than did participants who spent less time in that activity (appendix exhibit H.10). All of the differences were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level using a one-way ANOVA. In addition, there was a statistically significant relationship between the number of activities in which the participant spent three or more days and the rating of project relevance. The correlation between the number of different project activities in which the respondent participated for three or more days and the rating of relevance was +0.41, while the correlation with the rating of usefulness was +0.34. These correlation coefficients were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Exhibit 5.12. Relevance and usefulness ratings, by amount of time participants spent on project activities, by year

| Time Spent on Project Activities | Relevance | | Usefulness | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2007-08 (n=3,820) | 2008-09 (n=3,045) | 2007-08 (n=3,791) | 2008-09 (n=3,029) |
| More than 30 days (2007-08 n=620, 2008-09 n=400) | 4.46 | 4.35 | 4.28 | 4.20 |
| 21 to 30 days (2007-08 n=241, 2008-09 n=223) | 4.07 | 4.50 | 3.89 | 4.32 |
| 11 to 20 days (2007-08 n=690, 2008-09 n=665) | 4.33 | 4.35 | 4.29 | 4.24 |
| 6 to 10 days (2007-08 n=840, 2008-09 n=736) | 4.06 | 4.13 | 3.97 | 4.05 |
| 5 days or less (2007-08 n=1,429, 2008-09 n=1,021) | 3.59 | 3.58 | 3.46 | 3.42 |
| Range (Difference between highest and lowest rating) | 0.87* | 0.92* | 0.83* | 0.90* |
| Significance | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p<.01 |

* Within each scale and each year, the difference in ratings by time spent on project activities is statistically significant (p<.05, ANOVA).

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, project participants involved in project activities for more than 30 days had an average relevance rating of 4.46.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Ratings by Participant Roles

Were the sampled projects rated differently by participants who occupied different roles in their day-to-day jobs? The team investigated the possibility of a relationship between the participant's place of employment or job responsibilities and the ratings he or she provided for a project's relevance or usefulness.

Given the intended emphasis of the Center technical assistance on building capacity at the state level, it is important to understand the extent to which the views of participants from state agencies might have differed from those of other participants. Of the sampled participants in RCC projects, the percent employed by SEAs was 41 percent in 2006-07, 54 percent in 2007-08, and 56 percent in 2008-09 (exhibit 5.13). The percent employed by other agencies

varied across years.⁷⁹ In addition to intermediate agencies, local education agencies, and schools, other employers included institutions of higher education, nonprofits working with the state, and other RCCs.

Exhibit 5.13. Where participants in RCC projects were employed, by year

| Employed by: | Percent of participants | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=2,415) | 2007-08 (n=1,603) | 2008-09 (n=1,474) |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| State education agency (SEA) | 41 | 54 | 56 |
| Intermediate education agency | 14 | 21 | 21 |
| Local education agency (LEA) | 15 | 7 | 10 |
| School | 20 | 11 | 7 |
| Other | 10 | 7 | 5 |

EXHIBIT READS: Among the surveys completed by participants in RCC projects, 41 percent were completed by respondents who were employed in a state education agency for the 2006-07 program year.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

- ***In both 2007-08 and 2008-09, participants employed in SEAs gave higher ratings for relevance and usefulness to RCC projects than participants employed in other agencies.*** The SEA employees gave relevance ratings averaging 4.13 in 2007-08 and 4.16 in 2008-09; other participants' relevance ratings averaged 3.95 in each of those years (exhibit 5.14). For usefulness, the SEA employees' ratings averaged 3.92 in 2007-08 and 4.01 in 2008-09, compared with 3.78 and 3.65 for other participants. These differences were statistically significant ($p < .01$) in 2007-08 and 2008-09 for both relevance and usefulness. SEA employees' ratings of relevance and usefulness did not differ significantly from those of other participants in 2006-07.

⁷⁹ Participants who were employed by agencies other than the SEA were considered "state-level" participants because they carried out state-level responsibilities such as membership in a school support team or state-level task force (see chapter 2 for more discussion of the definition of "state-level" participants). For this analysis, however, we differentiate among participants by their place of employment.

Exhibit 5.14. Mean relevance and usefulness ratings for RCC projects, by agency where respondent worked, by year

| Agency where respondent worked | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| State education agency (SEA) (2006-07 n=977, 2007-08 n=909, 2008-09 n=826) | 3.99 | 4.13 | 4.16 | 3.68 | 3.92 | 4.01 |
| All other agencies (2006-07 n=1,409, 2007-08 n=850, 2008-09 n=632) | 3.94 | 3.95 | 3.95 | 3.68 | 3.78 | 3.65 |
| Difference | 0.05 | 0.19* | 0.21* | 0.00 | 0.14* | 0.36* |
| Significance | p=.13 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p=.93 | p<.01 | p<.01 |

* Difference statistically significant within each year at p<.05 using a one-way ANOVA.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean relevance rating of RCC projects provided by participants in SEAs was 3.99 while the mean relevance rating by participants working at all other agencies was 3.94.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

In CC projects, most participants were employees of either an RCC or an SEA; no more than 2 percent were employed by any one other type of agency in any year (exhibit 5.15). The relative proportion of RCC and SEA staff participating in CC projects fluctuated, with more coming from RCCs in 2006-07 (59 percent RCC), more from SEAs in 2007-08 (54 percent), and similar proportions in 2008-09 (52 percent RCC, 48 percent SEA).

- ***In both 2007-08 and 2008-09, CC projects were deemed more relevant and useful by RCC staff than by SEA staff.*** RCC and SEA staff gave similar relevance and usefulness ratings to CC projects in 2006-07, but in each of the following years the RCC staff ratings rose while the SEA staff ratings changed little (exhibit 5.16). For 2008-09 RCC staff gave mean ratings of 4.17 and 4.14 for the relevance and usefulness of CC projects, compared with the 3.87 and 3.76 ratings given by SEA staff.

Exhibit 5.15. Where participants in CC projects were employed, by year

| Employed by: | Percent of participants | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2006-07 (n=1,141) | 2007-08 (n=2,135) | 2008-09 (n=1,379) |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| RCCs | 59 | 41 | 52 |
| State education agency (SEA) | 38 | 54 | 48 |
| Intermediate education agency | * | 0 | * |
| Local education agency (LEA) | 1 | * | 0 |
| School | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Other | * | 3 | 0 |

* Less than 0.5 percent.

EXHIBIT READS: Among the surveys completed by participants in CC projects, 59 percent were completed by respondents who were employed by RCCs for the 2006-07 program year.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Exhibit 5.16. Mean relevance and usefulness ratings for CC projects, RCC staff vs. state-level staff, by year

| RCC or state-level staff | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| RCC Staff (2006-07 n=661, 2007-08 n=842, 2008-09 n=712) | 3.92 | 4.07 | 4.17 | 3.81 | 3.95 | 4.14 |
| State-level staff (2006-07 n=484, 2007-08 n=1,288, 2008-09 n=712) | 3.91 | 3.89 | 3.87 | 3.73 | 3.87 | 3.76 |
| Difference | -0.01 | 0.18* | 0.30* | 0.08 | 0.08* | 0.38* |
| Significance | p=.83 | p<.01 | p<.01 | p=.12 | p=.03 | p<.01 |

* Difference statistically significant within each year at p<.05 using a one-way ANOVA.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean relevance rating of CC projects provided by RCC staff was 3.92 while the mean relevance rating of CC projects by state-level staff was 3.91.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Finally, because the Centers' charge focused on assistance related to NCLB, the team hypothesized that participants whose regular job responsibilities focused most heavily on that law might give relatively higher ratings for relevance and usefulness of the sampled projects.

- *Participants who, in their regular jobs, spent more than 25 percent of their time on NCLB-related state responsibilities gave higher ratings to Center projects than participants whose jobs focused less on NCLB.* We found that those who spent more than one quarter of their time at work on NCLB gave significantly higher relevance and usefulness ratings, compared with those who spent 25 percent of their time or less on NCLB ($p < .01$ for differences in both relevance and usefulness using ANOVA) (exhibit 5.17).⁸⁰

Exhibit 5.17. Mean relevance and usefulness ratings, by percent of time respondent spent on NCLB-related tasks in his/ her job and by year

| Percent of time spent on NCLB-related tasks | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| More than 75 percent (2006-07 $n=908$, 2007-08 $n=738$, 2008-09 $n=924$) | 4.05 | 3.97 | 4.17 | 3.87 | 3.84 | 4.02 |
| 51 to 75 percent (2006-07 $n=541$, 2007-08 $n=613$, 2008-09 $n=587$) | 3.98 | 4.20 | 4.13 | 3.78 | 4.07 | 4.12 |
| 26 to 50 percent (2006-07 $n=493$, 2007-08 $n=366$, 2008-09 $n=549$) | 3.94 | 3.92 | 4.26 | 3.72 | 3.88 | 4.00 |
| 25 percent or less (2006-07 $n=476$, 2007-08 $n=478$, 2008-09 $n=763$) | 3.72 | 3.62 | 3.74 | 3.47 | 3.75 | 3.59 |
| Range (Difference between highest and lowest rating) | 0.33* | 0.58* | 0.51* | 0.40* | 0.32* | 0.53* |
| Significance | $p < .01$ | $p < .01$ | $p < .01$ | $p < .01$ | $p < .01$ | $p < .01$ |

* Difference statistically significant within each year at $p < .05$ using a one-way ANOVA.

NOTE: The survey question for this item differed slightly from the 2006-07 administration to the form used for 2007-08 and 2008-09 in that in the first administration, respondents were first asked to describe the specific aspects of NCLB implementation that were included in their job responsibilities and were then asked to describe the percent of time they spent on all of those tasks. For the subsequent administrations of the survey respondents were asked just to describe the percent of their time was spent on responsibilities related to NCLB.

EXHIBIT READS: Among project participants for the 2006-07 program year, those whose job responsibilities included NCLB-related tasks more than 75 percent of the time provided a relevance rating of 4.05 while participants whose job responsibilities included NCLB-related tasks from 51 to 75 percent of the time provided a relevance rating of 3.98.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

⁸⁰ The form of the question changed across years. For 2006-07, participants were asked in the survey to indicate what percentage of their hours on the job, in total, they spent working on any of the specific state-level responsibilities related to NCLB. In the subsequent years they were simply asked how much time they spent working on responsibilities related to NCLB. In each year they were given a choice of four percentage ranges: 0-25 percent, 26-50 percent, 51-75 percent, and 76-100 percent.

Because participant characteristics may be interrelated, we conducted multivariate analyses to examine the associations of participant characteristics with project ratings of relevance and usefulness when holding the other participant characteristics constant. Multiple regressions of the four participant characteristics on ratings of project relevance and on ratings of project usefulness were consistent with analyses of individual participant characteristics. Each of the project characteristics was shown to have a statistically significant relationship with ratings of relevance and ratings of usefulness after controlling for the other three predictors (see appendix exhibits H.11 and H.12).

Appendix A
Center Lead Grantee
and Subgrantee Organizations

Center Lead Grantee and Subgrantee Organizations

| Center name | Lead grantee and subgrantees |
|--|--|
| Alaska Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC of Alaska) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) |
| Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Edvantia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ George Washington University - Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE) ○ Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) ○ National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) ○ University of North Carolina at Greensboro - SERVE Center ○ Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) |
| California Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WestEd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American Institutes for Research (AIR) ○ School Services of California |
| Florida and Islands Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Educational Testing Service (ETS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of South Florida - David C. Anchin Center ○ Edvantia ○ Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) ○ Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA) ○ International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) ○ JLM Professional Education Services ○ Robin Wheeler, LLC |
| Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning Point Associates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RMC Research Corporation ○ American Institutes for Research (AIR) ○ Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) ○ University of Michigan - Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) |
| Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning Point Associates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American Institutes for Research (AIR) ○ Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) ○ University of Wisconsin - Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER) ○ University of Michigan - Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) |
| Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ George Washington University - Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edvantia ○ Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) ○ Group Jazz ○ Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) |
| Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ University of Oklahoma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northrop Grumman Information Tech ○ Accion Social Comunitaria ○ Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRRC) ○ North Central Regional Resource Center (NCRRC) ○ Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC of Alabama) |
| New England Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ RMC Research Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Development Center (EDC) ○ WestEd ○ Education Alliance at Brown University |

Center Lead Grantee and Subgrantee Organizations (continued)

| Center name | Lead grantee and subgrantees |
|--|--|
| New York Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ RMC Research Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Development Center (EDC) ○ WestEd ○ Education Alliance at Brown University ○ United Federation of Teachers Teacher Center (UFTTC) |
| North Central Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) |
| Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RMC Research Corporation |
| Pacific Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) |
| Southeast Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) |
| Southwest Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WestEd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RMC Research Corporation ○ American Institutes for Research (AIR) |
| Texas Comprehensive Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) |
| Assessment and Accountability Content Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ WestEd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Center for Research on Evaluation Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) |
| Center for Innovation and Improvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Academic Development Institute (ADI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temple University - Center for Research in Human Development and Education (CRHDE) ○ Little Planet Learning |
| Center on Instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ RMC Research Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) ○ RG Research Group ○ Horizon Research ○ Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics (TIMES) ○ University of Texas at Austin - Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts |
| National Comprehensive Center on Teacher Quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learning Point Associates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Commission of the States (ECS) ○ Educational Testing Service (ETS) ○ Vanderbilt University |
| National High School Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ American Institutes for Research (AIR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning Point Associates ○ MDRC ○ National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) ○ WestEd |

EXHIBIT READS: The Alaska Comprehensive Center was operated by the lead grantee organization named the Southeast Regional Resource Center (of Alaska) with support from the subgrantee organization named the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Source: U.S. Department of Education; individual RCC and CC websites

Appendix B
Study Sample:
Center Projects and Project Participants

Study Sample

This appendix section presents the Project Inventory Forms (PIFs) that were collected to identify the sample of projects to be included in the study as well as the documents sent to Centers requesting materials for expert panel review of sampled projects. The appendix concludes with historical tables showing the number of projects in the study sample for 2006-07 and 2007-08 by topic and detailed information describing the administration of the participant surveys across all three years.

Project Inventory Form

The PIF was developed by the study team as a standard way for Centers to provide an inventory of their work for each program year. When asked to complete the inventory forms, Center Directors were informed about the specific project year for which information was being gathered as well as the purpose of this information to be used in the selection of a sample of projects for review of quality by expert panels to be conducted for the national evaluation. When completing the PIF, each Center was asked to nominate several projects that they believed best represented the work undertaken by that Center. Additional projects were purposefully sampled from the remaining projects on each center's inventory to reflect each center's overall portfolio of work, as well as the work of all regional or content centers in key topic areas. A sample PIF was provided including examples of the kinds of projects that should be listed by the centers and examples of activities and resources defining each project level of effort – major, moderate, minor. Examples of some projects, activities, and deliverables that should *not* be included on the inventory form were also provided, including the following:

- Training or professional development for Center staff
- Work on coordinating committees within the Centers
- Annual needs assessment activity or negotiations with states, unrelated to specific projects
- Other internal working meetings or documents

When completing the PIF, each center provided a list of each project under the appropriate topic heading. While the Centers submitted PIFs using 14 topic areas for the 2006-07 data collection, the evaluation team used the coding process described in appendix C to recode the substantive knowledge base of the project into a more detailed set of 22 topics. For the 2007-08 and 2008-09 PIF submissions, the Centers assigned one of the 22 topic areas to each project themselves as part of the submission.

This appendix includes copies of the materials sent to the Centers to help them complete their PIFs including the instructions for completion (page B-6), the list of topic areas used for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 data collections (page B-14), and a sample section of a PIF (page B-16).

Letters Requesting Materials for Expert Panel Review from Centers

For each data collection cycle, each Center received a notification letter from the evaluation team that listed the projects from their PIF that had been selected for expert panel review followed by guidance in assembling the materials for panel review, compiling lists of project participants for the participant survey, and completion of the cover sheet for each sampled project. The initial request for materials letter and supporting information starts on page B-22. The evaluation team reviewed the materials submitted by the Centers for accuracy and completeness and in cases where there were missing or incomplete materials or where further explanation was needed, followed up with Centers using the follow-up memo provided later in this appendix starting on page B-29.

Decision rules for sampling projects from the PIFs

Exhibit B.1 below shows the decision rules the evaluation team applied in selecting the sample of projects for the evaluation sample. This six-step process was used to draw the evaluation in each of the three evaluation cycles.

Exhibit B.1. Decision rules for sampling projects within each center

- Step 1.** Determine the total number of projects to be sampled for that center

Step 2. Identify the designated number of center-nominated projects, selected with certainty

Step 3. Determine the number of additional projects to be sampled

Step 4. Sample Major projects

 - If the number of major projects was less than or equal to number of additional projects needed, sample all major projects and go to **step 5**
 - If the number of major projects is greater than the number of additional projects needed, randomly select projects while controlling for topic and state (i.e., do not select multiple projects from any given topic or state [for centers serving multiple states] until all topics and states have at least one project sampled) – repeat until the sample size is met

Step 5 Determine the number of additional projects to be sampled (if any)

Step 6. Sample Moderate projects

 - If the number of moderate projects is less than or equal to number of additional projects needed, sample all moderate projects
 - If the number of moderate projects is greater than the number of additional projects needed, randomly select projects while controlling for topic and state (i.e., do not select multiple projects from any given topic or state [for centers serving multiple states] until all topics and topics have at least one project sampled) – repeat until sample size is met

Distribution of projects and projects in the evaluation sample

Exhibits B.2 and B.3 included in this appendix (starting on page B-30), show the distribution of all major and moderate projects on the project inventory forms and projects in the sample by topic for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 data collection cycles. These tables are parallel to a similar table in the report for 2008-09 (exhibit 2.5).

Administration of the Participant Survey

As described in Chapter 2, the participant survey was administered to project participants. This included state-level staff for RCC projects and a combination of state-level and RCC staff for CC projects. Exhibit B.4 on page B-32 shows the number of participants at each stage of the data collection. Sampled respondents who indicated in their response to the first survey item that they did not participate in the project were excluded from analysis.

For each of the three data collection cycles, the evaluation team analyzed the properties of the items included in the participant survey for constructing indices of relevance and usefulness.

Principal components analysis with no rotation was conducted on each set of items in the relevance and usefulness scales to determine the underlying dimensions represented by these items. For each scale, analyses of each year of data resulted in a one-factor solution comprised of the same items and with comparable levels of reliability. For the relevance scale, the Cronbach alpha was 0.93 in 2006-07 and 0.94 in 2007-08 and 2008-09, and 0.95 for the usefulness scale in all three years. Additional information on the factor loadings and psychometric properties for the three years of data collection is provided in exhibits B.5 and B.6 starting on page B-33.

Units of analysis and weighting for quality, relevance, and usefulness data

The quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of the sampled projects were presented in chapter 5 using several different units of analysis: the projects sampled from the program as a whole (all 21 Centers), the projects sampled for the 16 RCCs and the 5 CCs respectively, subgroups of the projects, and (for relevance and usefulness) subgroups of the participants.

- **Program-wide and by Center type.** The team weighted the mean center-level quality, relevance, or usefulness results equally so that each Center contributed equally to the mean for the entire program or for a set of Centers.
- **Center-level.** For a Center's mean rating on quality, relevance, or usefulness, the team weighted each sampled project from that Center equally.
- **Project-level.** Several analyses were conducted for subgroups of projects across Centers—e.g., those projects that included a research synthesis among their products, or included training among their services. Each rater (an expert or

survey respondent) had equal weight in the individual project's rating, and each project had equal weight in the subgroup mean rating.

- **Participant-level.** For some analyses of subgroups of participants across projects, the unit was the participant, not the project, and the weighting was designed to permit generalization to all the participants across all the sampled projects. Thus the weight for each participant's response was the inverse proportion of the number of respondents compared with the total number of participants in the population for that project. The n's shown in the participant-level tables in chapter 5 reflect the weighted figures. The maximum number is the total number in the sample frame shown in exhibit B.4 in this appendix but the actual weighted n's are often somewhat lower because the figures in the table represent a subset of participants or because some participants failed to respond to that survey item.

Center Project Inventory Form

Dear Center Director,

Enclosed are a Project Inventory Form and instructions to be used to compile a complete list of your Center's projects during the current project year (July 1, 200X–June 30, 200X).

The national evaluation will use the completed project inventories to select a sample of projects for review by expert panels. Please designate several projects that you believe best represent the work of your Center; these projects will be included among the sample of projects to be reviewed by expert panels. These panels will rate nominated and sampled projects for their quality.

Please complete a **draft inventory to review** with a member of the national evaluation team **during the site visit for the evaluation**, scheduled to take place between April and June 200X when [EVALUATION STAFF MEMBER] visits your Center. A final version of the project inventory should be completed **as soon as possible after the site visit, but no later than June 30, 200X**. Please return the completed inventory form to your evaluation liaison, [name] at _____@_____.

If you have any questions about the inventory or the instructions for completing it, please contact _____ at 1-xxx-xxxx or by email at _____@_____.

Thank you for your continued support of the national evaluation of the comprehensive center program.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this data collection instrument is 1850-8023. The time required to complete these worksheets is estimated to average 16 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and fill in the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

Instructions for Completing an Inventory of Projects

Each Comprehensive Center will prepare an inventory of all of the projects that were active during the current grant period. The first inventory will cover the period from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. The second inventory will cover materials from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, and the third inventory will cover July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009.

Projects that began in the current project year but will not be complete by June 30 should be entered in the inventory and noted as “ongoing.”

Purpose

This inventory will serve as the sampling frame for the expert panel reviews to be conducted for the national evaluation. A sample of projects will be selected in two ways. Each Center will nominate several projects that they believe best represents the work undertaken by that Center. The remaining projects will be purposefully sampled from the remaining projects on each Center’s inventory. Samples will be drawn to reflect each Center’s overall portfolio of work, as well as the work of all Regional or Content Centers in key topic areas. Items selected for review will be rated by an expert panel for their quality.

If a project is nominated or sampled for expert panel review and rating, the evaluation team will ask your Center to collect and transmit all of the documents and other artifacts associated with that project (meeting agendas, briefing books, meeting summaries, training materials, white papers, web resources, etc.) for the expert panel to review.

Identifying Projects for Inclusion in the Inventory

The unit of analysis for the expert review panels will be the **project**. For the purposes of this inventory, a “project” will ordinarily comprise **a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience**. The Content Centers have some projects that consist of the development of a single product or deliverable, rather than a group of deliverables, but a project that comprises only a single product or deliverable will be the exception rather than the rule. The inventory should include *all* of the projects developed or delivered by the Center, including those developed or delivered in collaboration with other Centers, during the reporting period.

Because each project listed in the inventory could potentially be sampled for expert panel review, each project shown as an entry (or row) in the inventory form should be a relatively complete project that can be understood and rated on its own by expert panel members who may not know anything about other aspects of the Center’s work. Although a single project may include a number of deliverables and activities, it will be designed to achieve a specific outcome and address (in almost all cases) a single topic. Where a group of activities and deliverables can be divided up into separate projects, each constituting a complete and coherent whole, the Center should list these as separate projects in the inventory.

The following criteria should guide the Centers as they identify projects (and their associated activities and deliverables) for recording in the inventory form. They have been

developed to ensure that projects constitute units that are large enough for review and rating, but focused enough for coherence. Each project entered in the inventory should satisfy *all three* of the following criteria:

- **Complete and coherent whole.** Each project listed in the inventory should be able to stand on its own in an expert panel review. Avoid listing activities and deliverables as separate projects in the inventory if they cannot be understood or evaluated without information about related activities and deliverables. For example, a training event may require extensive planning (e.g., needs assessment, materials development) and follow-up activities (e.g., evaluation of the training, consultation on action plans). These planning and follow-up activities would be very difficult for a panel to rate in the absence of information about the event itself. Therefore the Center should list these planning and follow-up activities and the event itself as a single project (one row) on the inventory form. Each phase of the project—planning, the event itself, and follow-up—will be described briefly in the “activities and deliverables” column. Similarly, ongoing work with a state-level task force should be listed as a single project rather than each meeting of the task force being listed as a project.
- **Common intended outcome.** Where a cluster of activities and deliverables is designed by the Center to lead to the same outcome for the same audience(s), those activities and deliverables should be grouped as one project in the inventory form. On the other hand, where a set of activities is intended to produce more than one distinct outcome—for example, helping the state to develop a strategic plan for improving reading instruction, and helping the same state recruit and train literacy coaches—those two activities should be listed as separate projects. Where the Center replicates the same set of activities in each of several different states, that set of activities should be listed as a single project if the intended outcomes and processes do not differ materially from one state to another. Where the intended outcomes do differ substantially from state to state, the work in each state should be listed as a separate project.
- **Topic area focus.** With few exceptions, a project addresses just one of the 14 topic areas described in Exhibit A at the end of this document (e.g., state systems of support, reading/language arts). Where it is possible to divide a group of related activities into two different projects according to the topic area addressed, Centers should do so. For example, a regional forum on interventions for low-performing students in reading and mathematics that offers separate strands of sessions in each subject area should be listed as two different projects, one under reading/language arts and one under mathematics. In this case, all of the sessions on reading interventions would stand on their own as a complete and coherent whole for rating by an expert panel and should be listed as a separate project; the same would be true for the sessions on mathematics. (If a project cuts across topic areas and the activities and deliverables which it comprises cannot be divided up by topic area into complete and coherent units that would make sense to a review panel, the

project should be listed under the most relevant topic area with a note cross-referencing other topics, following the instructions for column IV below.)

The sample inventory form at the end of this packet includes examples of the kinds of projects that should be listed by the Centers.

Some projects, activities, and deliverables should *not* be included on the inventory form at all. These include:

- Training or professional development for Comprehensive Center staff
- Work on coordinating committees within the Comprehensive Center network
- Annual needs assessment activity or negotiations with states, unrelated to specific projects
- Other internal working meetings or documents

Completing the Inventory Form

Centers should use the attached form to complete their inventory of projects. Sample projects and examples of entries can be found in Exhibit B.

Centers might find it useful to review their annual project plans, technical assistance plans, management plans or technical assistance logs as a starting point since those documents typically provide an overview of the various projects and activities that were planned for or conducted during the year.

Once the inventory form is complete, Centers should designate which projects they would like to nominate for inclusion in the sample of projects reviewed by the expert panels, by inserting ** after the name of the project in Column II. Centers should designate several projects.

List each project under the appropriate topic heading. A list of topic headings, with definitions, is attached at the end of this document in Exhibit A.

Directions for completing each column are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Topic Area Headings | List items under the appropriate topic area heading. Where a project fits under more than one topic heading, list it once, under the topic heading that is most relevant. Note the project's relevance to other topics in Column IV. Add rows to the table as needed. Leave rows blank if your Center does no work in a particular topic area. |
| I. Project number | Assign consecutive numbers to each item listed in the inventory. (Centers may want to complete this column as a final step, after all of the items have been entered in the inventory.) |
| II. Name | Enter the name of the project. Projects nominated by Center staff for review should be followed by ** in this column. |
| III. Description | Provide a concise description of the project. (See examples for appropriate level of detail.) |
| IV. Additional topics addressed? | If the project addresses more than one topic area, note that here. Use the list of topic areas provided in the appendix (this list corresponds with the row headings in the inventory). Entering the appropriate number from the list will save space. |
| V. Activities and Deliverables | <p>List all of the activities and deliverables associated with the project. (For products, include exact title, if applicable. For services, include location and type of participant.) Specific activities and deliverables may include:</p> <p>Meetings/conferences (includes items such as workshops, conferences, institutes, forums, webinars)</p> <p>Expert consultation/technical assistance (includes items such as assistance completing reports or applications, review of state plans, needs assessments, audits)</p> <p>Facilitation/support of working groups or teams (includes items such as planning meetings, participation in meetings, drafting summary documents)</p> <p>Guidance/information resources (includes items such as policy or issue briefs, fact sheets, congressional testimony, resource guides, planning tools, field guides, benchmarking rubrics, handbooks, exemplars, literature reviews/summaries, annotated bibliographies, case studies, websites)</p> <p>Training (includes items such as professional development materials/services, software, training materials)</p> <p>Other, specify _____</p> |
| VI. Start Date | Enter the start date for the project, including month and year. |
| VII. End Date | <p>Enter the end date for the project, including month and year.</p> <p>If the project is currently ongoing, enter the note "ongoing."</p> |

VIII: Major, Moderate or Minor Project

Indicate whether you consider this a major, moderate or minor project in terms of the relative level of effort and/or resources devoted to it.

IX: Target state(s), region(s), or regional center (s)

Regional Comprehensive Centers serving multiple states should note which state(s) participated in each project. Regional Centers serving a single state (Alaska, California, New York, and Texas) should note which region(s) within the state participated (e.g., New York City vs. rest of state). Content Centers should specify which Regional Centers participated in the project.

X: Collaborations and Sources: Other CCs

If the Center used materials developed by one of the Content Centers in the course of designing or delivering its own services, list this Content Center as a **source**.

If the Center collaborated with another Regional Center or Content Center on the design, development and/or delivery of products and services, list this Center as a **collaborator**.

Note collaborations with other Comprehensive Centers only in this column.

XI: Collaborations and Sources: Other TA Providers

Note collaborations with other technical assistance providers, such as Regional Educational Laboratories or universities, in this column.

If the Center used materials developed by another TA provider in the course of designing or delivering its own services, list this provider as a **source**.

If the Center collaborated with another TA provider on the design, development and/or delivery of products and services, list this provider as a **collaborator**.

National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers Inventory of Projects

Center Name: _____

| I. No. | II. Name | III. Description | IV. Additional topics addressed? (From list in Exhibit A—enter appropriate number) | V. Activities and Deliverables | VI. Start Date | VII. End Date (enter “ongoing” if project is not complete) | VIII. Major, moderate or minor project | IX. Target state(s), region(s) within a state, or regional centers(s) | X. Collaborations and Sources: Other CC’s | XI. Collaborations and Sources: Other TA Providers |
|--|----------|------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| 1. Components of Effective Systems of Support (State, District, School) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Data Use / Data-driven Decision Making | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Formative Assessment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Reading | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Adolescent Literacy | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Mathematics | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Drop Out Prevention | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. High School Redesign/Reform | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Transition to High School | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

B-11

Project Inventory Form

| I. No. | II. Name | III. Description | IV. Additional topics addressed? (From list in Exhibit A—enter appropriate number) | V. Activities and Deliverables | VI. Start Date | VII. End Date (enter “ongoing” if project is not complete) | VIII. Major, moderate or minor project | IX. Target state(s), region(s) within a state, or regional centers(s) | X. Collaborations and Sources: Other CC’s | XI. Collaborations and Sources: Other TA Providers |
|--|----------|------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| 10. Special Education – curriculum, instruction, and professional development | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Special Education - assessment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. English Language learners | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Highly Qualified Teacher Provisions of NCLB | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Teacher Preparation and Induction | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Teacher Professional Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Supplemental Education Services (SES) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Response to Intervention (RtI) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Migrant Education | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Indian / Native American Education | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. Data Management Compliance | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
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| I. No. | II. Name | III. Description | IV. Additional topics addressed? (From list in Exhibit A—enter appropriate number) | V. Activities and Deliverables | VI. Start Date | VII. End Date (enter “ongoing” if project is not complete) | VIII. Major, moderate or minor project | IX. Target state(s), region(s) within a state, or regional centers(s) | X. Collaborations and Sources: Other CC’s | XI. Collaborations and Sources: Other TA Providers |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| 21. Assessment Design | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 22. Parent Involvement | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 23. Other | | | | | | | | | | |
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**Projects nominated by the Center for review by expert panels

Exhibit A

Topic Areas and Definitions

| Topic | Definition |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school.</i> | This category included: (1) Design of state systems to meet NCLB requirements for statewide systems of support for districts and schools in corrective action or identified as in need of improvement [Sec. 1117(a)]; (2) Interventions for schools or districts in need of improvement or corrective action; (3) For schools, Centers' projects addressed a range of options for school leadership and organization, professional development and classroom practice, and development and implementation of school improvement plans. For districts, Centers' projects typically addressed district leadership and development as well as implementation of district improvement plans. |
| 2. <i>Data use/Data-driven decisionmaking.</i> | Use of data for educational program improvement. |
| 3. <i>Formative assessment.</i> | Guidelines for implementing formative or benchmark assessment, comprehensive formative assessment systems. |
| 4. <i>Reading.</i> | Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments with state standards in reading; teacher professional development in reading (not specific to adolescent literacy). |
| 5. <i>Adolescent literacy.</i> | Policy and practices relevant to literacy at middle school and high school levels. |
| 6. <i>Mathematics.</i> | Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments with state standards in mathematics as well as teacher professional development in mathematics. |
| 7. <i>Dropout prevention.</i> | Policies and practices specifically designed to keep high school students in school through graduation. |
| 8. <i>High school redesign/reform.</i> | High school renewal, school organization, curriculum, and instructional practice. |
| 9. <i>Transition to high school.</i> | Policies and practices designed to improve the preparation of middle-school students for success in high school. |
| 10. <i>Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development.</i> | Curriculum, instruction, and professional development for service to students with disabilities. |
| 11. <i>Special education—assessment.</i> | Implementation and interpretation of assessments for students with disabilities, including alternate assessments. |
| 12. <i>English Language Learners.</i> | Curriculum, instruction, and professional development for service to ELL students; Title III improvement plans. This category also includes determination of ELLs' achievement of AYP through assessment of Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives; implementation and interpretation of ELL assessments. |
| 13. <i>Highly Qualified Teacher provisions of NCLB.</i> | State plans and policies required in connection with the HQT provisions of NCLB, including HOUSSE and equitable distribution. |
| 14. <i>Teacher preparation and induction.</i> | State policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation and induction of novice teachers as well as activities targeting teacher retention. |

| Topic | Definition |
|--|--|
| 15. <i>Teacher professional development.</i> | State policies and local practices for the planning and delivery of professional development for teachers (not specific to reading, mathematics, high schools, ELLs, or special education). Activities in the area of effective teaching are included in this category. |
| 16. <i>Supplemental Educational Services (SES).</i> | Application process to select vendors, monitoring services, and evaluating performance of providers. |
| 17. <i>Response to Intervention (RtI).</i> | RtI implementation, moving RtI into general education, RtI as a strategy for school improvement. |
| 18. <i>Migrant education.</i> | Statutorily required state Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) process for migrant education. |
| 19. <i>Indian/Native American education.</i> | Policies and practices to support the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; includes support of and compliance with ESEA Title VII. |
| 20. <i>Data management compliance.</i> | Title I compliance, EDEN/EDFacts reporting requirements. |
| 21. <i>Assessment design.</i> | Developing new assessments for use by clients; includes classroom, benchmark, and state grade-level assessments for federal accountability; activities may include design, item development, validation, reliability testing, alignment studies. |
| 22. <i>Parent involvement.</i> | Title I and other parent involvement activities. |
| 23. <i>Other</i> | Includes projects that do not fit under any other topic area, including websites, membership on SEA committees, and ongoing phone support. Includes projects building general skills and knowledge of leaders at all levels. Includes projects that assist clients with the review, collection, and translation of research, where there is no specific topic. If the research addresses a specific topic area, put the project in the appropriate row. Does not include internal or network meetings—these types of activities should not be included in the project inventory. |

Sample Completed Project Inventory

Center Name: _____

Note: All examples in the table were taken from Year 2 baseline management plans.

| I. No. | II. Name | III. Description | IV. Additional topics addressed? | V. Activities and Deliverables | VI. Start Date | VII. End Date | VIII. Major, moderate or minor project | IX. Target state(s), region(s), or centers(s) | X. Collaborations and Sources: Other CCs | XI. Collaborations and Sources: Other TA Providers |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1. State Systems of Support for Schools Identified for Improvement | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | State TA system for PI districts and schools | Designed an integrated SEA TA system that reaches “program improvement” districts and schools | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened coordinating council; Created inventory of existing TA efforts; Helped create TA plan; Gave PD and TA to school support teams | 7/2006 | Ongoing | Moderate | | | |
| 2. | Statewide system of support** | Supported development of Regional School Service Centers as a system of support for addressing NCLB | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped create a plan to guide the Regional Network Strategy for the next five to seven years; Developed the next RFP for the RSSCs; Supported RSSC implementation; Developed and helped deliver PD; Developed a protocol for collecting information on implementation | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A | | |
| 3. | “Significant Change in School Improvement and Restructuring” | Developed a modular handbook and workshop on implementation of fast-paced significant school improvement, including restructuring | 2 (Local capacity) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafted 8 modules for handbook to be used with SEA systems of support; Presented at institute; Revised and added workshop materials; Consulted at CC A regional meeting | | | Major | All Regional CCs | Regional CC A | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--------|---------|----------|----------------------|--|--|
| 4. | Support to School Improvement Team | Helped the SEA School Improvement Team to identify resource and design training for schools in “monitored” and “priority” statuses | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended meetings organized by SIP team and provided reflective syntheses; • Brokered resources and services available through RRC and CC networks | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Minor | State A | | |
| 2. Building District/Local Capacity to Support School improvement, or Address Corrective Action and Restructuring | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. | District tools for monitoring schools | Helped the SEA develop processes and tools for districts to use in monitoring the implementation of school restructuring plans | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared draft processes and tools for monitoring; • Met with SEA school improvement staff to review/revise tools | 7/2006 | 10/2006 | Minor | State A | | |
| 6. | Leadership Institute on Helping Districts Assist Low-Performing Schools | Designed and implemented a PD plan to support the Local Education Agency Assistance Program | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened planning team to design the Leadership Institute; • Helped conduct institute; • Provided ongoing support to participants as they work with districts and schools | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Moderate | | | |
| 7. | Guidance to districts on restructuring schools | Assisted SEA in developing guidance for districts with schools in restructuring | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted state in writing guidance protocol; • Piloted guidance; • Collected and prepared research; • Provided initial training to districts with schools in restructuring | 7/2006 | 12/2006 | Moderate | State A | | |
| 3. Assessment (excluding assessment of special education students or ELL students) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. | Growth models | Built SEA understanding of assessment to help in decision making about accountability growth models | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified state needs and create plan for growth model; • Assisted states accepted as pilot states; • Assisted ongoing development for other states | 7/2006 | Ongoing | Major | All states in region | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---------|--------|----------|----------------------|--|--|
| 9. | Assessment data analysis** | Built SEA and other staff capacity by helping them train districts and schools in analyzing state assessment results and using them for instructional planning | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with SEA staff to plan PD; Helped host Statewide Assessment Conference; Continued to plan and offered training in assessment analysis; Established a cadre of educators to provide PD to districts | 5/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A | Content CC A | |
| 4. Reading/Language Arts Curriculum, Instruction, and/or Professional Development (includes Adolescent Literacy) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. | Adolescent Literacy Cadres | Organized and delivered training of adolescent literacy cadres made up of SEA staff | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened SEA work teams to analyze research; Reviewed literacy diagnostic tools; Customized a literacy assessment; Conducted PD for SEA work teams on customized assessments | 10/2006 | 6/2007 | Moderate | All states in region | Content CC A; Content CC B; Content CC C | |
| 11. | Effective Leadership in Literacy | Built SEA capacity to support “effective leadership in literacy for grades 6-12” | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened work group to discuss research; Provided SEA with PD on Strategic Instruction Model; Developed state literacy plan | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A; State B | Content CC A | |
| 5. Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction, and/or Professional Development | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. | K-2 Mathematics Inventory | Developed and provided PD to a cadre of educators to help schools implement the state K-2 Mathematics Inventory | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped SEA design PD; Helped design team pilot workshop; Revised PD; Helped deliver regional trainings prioritized for schools in improvement; Reviewed feedback to redesign PD | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A | Content CC A | |

| 7. High School Reform | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|----------------|---|--------|---------|----------|----------------------|--------------|--|
| 13. | Implementing High School Task Force Report | Developed capacity of SEA to implement recommendations of HS Task Force Report related to high school redesign | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work group and Steering Committee met to consider task force recommendations, research, best practice, and review of prior initiatives; • Identified “knowledge management” components needed to support state implementation; • Identified policies and practices needed to promote redesign; • Developed multi-year implementation plan. | 9/2006 | 4/2007 | Moderate | | | |
| 8. Special Education | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. | Assessing special needs students | Supported SEAs in establishing assessment and accountability systems that include and support special education, ELL, and low-income students | 10 (ELL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected information from Content CC A on research- based practices; • Conducted SEA Needs Assessment; • Provided regional training(s) on Scientifically Based Research on assessment and accountability systems for special needs students | 7/2006 | Ongoing | Major | All states in region | Content CC A | |
| 15. | Developing an Alternate Assessment | Assisted SEAs in developing Alternate Academic Assessments for the “1” of students who have significant cognitive disabilities | 3 (Assessment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified needs and broker assistance in developing assessment; • Provided TA on development of assessment; • Provided ongoing TA on implementation | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Moderate | State A; State B | Content CC A | |
| 16. | Research Synthesis on Special Needs Students | Published Research Synthesis 1 focusing on teaching special-needs students | 12 (HQT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified and evaluated existing research and syntheses; • Conducted gap analysis to identify research synthesis needs; • Wrote synthesis (50-60 pages); • Posted on on-line resource forum. | 7/2006 | 9/2007 | Major | All Regional CCs | | |

| 9. English Language learners | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--------------|---|--------|---------|-------|---------------------------------|--------------|--|
| 17. | District guidance on the education of ELL students | Helped develop a comprehensive framework for educating English Language Learners to guide district work, including guidance on the use of formative assessments to improve instruction and on family and community engagement | 13 (Parents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated meetings of the SEA task force responsible for developing and disseminating a comprehensive framework for the education of ELLs; Assisted in integrating effective formative assessment practices for ELL students; Assisted in formulating guidance on ELL family and community engagement strategies; Provided consultation and resources from Content CC A | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A | Content CC A | |
| 18. | Addressing AMAOs | Assisted SEA in aligning Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives, standards, and assessments for ELL students | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted a study on alignment of English Language Proficiency standards for grades K-12 with the state assessment for ELL students Helped state reconfigure AMAOs to align with state test | 8/2006 | 12/2006 | Minor | State A; State B; State C | | |
| 10. Highly Qualified Teachers | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. | “TQ Source Project” | Developed online resource clearinghouse that provides clients with policy and research data specifically related to teacher quality, as addressed in NCLB | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed “interactive data tool” based primarily on NCES data; Updated “policy database” for state-by-state policy areas, including policies related to PD and teacher prep, recruitment, retention, certification, etc.; Published next issue of “Tips and Tools: Emerging Strategies to Enhance Teacher Quality”; Enhanced “Publications database” focusing on teacher quality research | 7/2006 | Ongoing | Major | All Regional CCs | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|----------------------|---|---------|--------|-------|------------------|---------------|--|
| 20. | Teacher Preparation and Licensure in literacy | Assisted SEA in reviewing teacher preparation and licensure requirements related to literacy | 4 (Language arts) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted the Task Force on Licensure/Professional Development in revisiting preparation and licensure requirements related to literacy instruction for school leaders and teachers; Discussed findings and possible next steps related to engagements with representatives from institutes of higher education | 10/2006 | 2/2007 | Minor | State A | | |
| 12. Supplemental Educational Services | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21. | “State Evaluation of Supplemental Educational Services” Manual | Updated “State Evaluation of SES” manual and assist with its use by Regional CCs | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafted updates to SES evaluation manual Presented at September 2006 Institute Revised based on evaluations and usage Submitted evaluation report to ED | 9/2006 | 4/2007 | Major | All Regional CCs | Regional CC A | |
| 13. Other NCLB-related TA | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22. | Enhancing Schoolwide Planning Materials | Assisted SEA in updating resources and training for district Title I directors on the topics of schoolwide planning, plan implementation, and district monitoring of school plans | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped update T1 schoolwide application and evaluation rubric; Ensured that North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement school improvement processes include schoolwide plan components; Reviewed need assessment results from district/schools; Updated materials based on needs | 7/2006 | 6/2007 | Major | State A | | |

**Projects nominated by the Center for review by expert panels



DECISION INFORMATION RESOURCES, INC.

REQUEST FOR MATERIALS FOR EXPERT PANEL REVIEWS

[Date]

Dear [Center Director]:

I am happy to report that we have completed the sampling process for your site and have selected the following (n) projects for review:

| Project Name | Project Description |
|--------------|---------------------|
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These projects will be rated for *technical quality* by panels of expert reviewers, and for *relevance* and *usefulness* through surveys of project participants.

Assembling Panel Review Materials

Attached you will find a Request for Materials form that includes some basic guidance for assembling materials for the panel review process. This form also includes the project cover sheet, which should be completed for each project. This cover sheet will be provided to the review panelists and is an important source of background and contextual information about the project.

To facilitate the review process, we ask that you do the following:

- Submit 1 hard copy and 1 electronic version of all the materials that comprise the review packet for each project. The hard copy version will allow us to assess whether the volume of material is appropriate, and will serve as a quick reference source should questions arise about the review packet.

Request for Materials for Expert Panel Reviews

- If an item is not available in electronic format or if you would prefer the reviewers to have a hard copy version of a particular item (for example, a training binder with multiple tabs and color handouts included), please provide 3 additional hard copies of that item.
- Each review packet should include a cover sheet (using the attached template) that lists all of the materials included in the packet. Electronic versions of the materials should be filed together in a project folder that is clearly labeled with the project name. Feel free to use subfolders within the project folder if you think it will help reviewers organize the materials (for example, background/research base, meeting notes, training materials, etc.) in a more understandable way. You might also want to include the file name of each document referenced in question #5 of the cover sheet so that reviewers can easily sort through and match the documents on the cover sheet with the files they receive.
- Please send your hard copy materials (bundled by project with a cover sheet on each), along with a CD containing separate folders for each of the sampled projects to:

DIR
Attn: _____
[address]

Materials are due no later than [date].

I have attached a copy of the quality scoring rubric so that you can see what the panelists will be looking for in the review process. As you begin to assemble the materials for panel review, we offer the following guidance:

- With the exception of the cover sheet and the participant list, all materials provided in the review package should be materials that already exist. We do not expect you to create any new materials for the review process.
- Materials included in the packet should focus on work conducted between summer 200X and summer 200X. Materials developed before summer 200X can be included if they provide relevant contextual or background information. Materials developed after summer 200X will be considered in the next round of panel reviews (for the 200X-200X program year), if that particular project is sampled again for review.
- Make sure you have documented the “knowledge base” upon which the project was developed. As you can see in the attached rubric, this is a very important factor in the quality rating. Depending on the topic area and nature of the project, the knowledge

base might include empirical research, laws and regulations, or professional wisdom⁸¹.

- Provide enough materials to allow reviewers to understand the project substantively, with a particular focus on the work conducted in the 200X-200X program year. This does not mean sending everything ever done or developed in connection with the project. You want to provide reviewers with a sufficient basis for their ratings but at the same time, not overwhelm them with materials.
- Focus more on the substantive materials than on those dealing with process or administrative issues alone. You do not need to include every e-mail message or set of meeting notes on a project unless it provides critical contextual information or speaks directly to the technical quality of the project. For example, if you are assembling materials about an annual forum or institute, you should not include meeting notes about conference logistics or attendee evaluation results, but you should include notes relating to the development of the agenda and selection of presenters.

If you have any questions about what materials to include in the review packet or how to complete the cover sheet, please contact your site visitor.

Compiling Lists of Project Participants

For each project selected for the evaluation, a sample of participants will receive a short, web-based survey from the national evaluation. This is the reason we are asking each Regional Comprehensive Center (RCC) and each Content Center to compile a list of *all* state-level staff who have participated in each project sampled for the evaluation. Content Centers should also include all RCC-based staff, as well as all state-level staff, on their lists of project participants. Compile a separate list of participants for each project sampled, allowing duplication of names across lists.

Defining “participants.” “Project participants” include all those who have served on task forces and work groups associated with the project; state-level or RCC staff who have attended conferences, technical assistance retreats, consultations, and other meetings that are part of the project; and state-level or RCC staff who have received written materials or other resources disseminated under the project.

If the Comprehensive Center collaborated with state-level staff to provide a service to others, and that collaboration was intended to build the capacity of the state in some way, then all of the state-level staff who collaborated with the Center on the project should be

⁸¹ Professional wisdom is the judgment that individuals acquire through experience and is reflected through consensus views on decisions on implementation. Grover J. Whitehurst. *Evidence-Based Education*, 2002.

included on the list of project participants. These collaborators will be included in the pool of potential survey respondents.

The same logic applies to Content Center projects that involve collaborations with RCC staff. Again, if the collaboration was intended to build the capacity of the RCC in some way, then all RCC staff who collaborated on the project with the Content Center should be included on the list of project participants and will be included in the pool of potential survey respondents.

Defining “state-level.” For the purposes of this evaluation, “state-level” participants in Regional Center or Content Center projects may include the following:

- State education agency (SEA) employees and consultants
- Employees of other state agencies, such as governors’ offices
- Employees of intermediate education agencies⁸² who assist schools on behalf of the state
- Individuals who serve on school support teams as part of a statewide system of school support under NCLB, including local educators (school district administrators, principals, and teachers)
- Individuals who serve on state-level work groups or task forces, including local educators

Local educators who are not serving on school support teams and are not members of a state-level work group or task force should **not** be included in project participant lists.

RCC staff. Content Centers should include all RCC staff who have participated in each project, in addition to state-level project participants. Participant lists for some Content Center projects may include no RCC staff, some may include both RCC and state-level staff, and some may be made up entirely of RCC staff, depending on the nature of the project.

Contact information. For each project participant, please provide a name, title (if available), affiliation, email address, telephone number, and regular mail address. Because surveys will be administered via the web, with follow-up by regular mail and by telephone, all of this contact information is critical. Send a separate participant list for

⁸² Intermediate education agencies are usually established by state statute, but their governance structures and funding sources vary from state to state. Depending on the state, they are known as Area Education Agencies (AEA), Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESA), County Offices of Education (COE), Education Service Centers/Cooperatives (ESC), Education Service Districts (ESD), Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), or Regional Education Service Centers (RESC). Association of Educational Service Agencies, “Questions Asked About Educational Service Agencies,” downloaded from <http://www.aesa.us/Q&ABro04.pdf> on July 6, 2007.

Request for Materials for Expert Panel Reviews

each sampled project, following the template shown below (using either Word or Excel to create the file).

| Project name: Really Important Project | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------------|--|--|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|
| Last name | First name | Title (if available) | Affiliation/ Organization | Email address | Telephone number | Street address | City | State | ZIP |
| Doe | John | Title I Director | State Department of Public Instruction | jdoe@sea.k12.us | (101) 555-1234 | 99 State Street, Room 100 | State Capital | ST | 10001 |
| Etc. | | | | | | | | | |

Participant lists for each project should be included with your sample review materials and sent to DIR **no later than [date]**.

For additional information. If you have any questions about the participant lists, or if there are special circumstances pertaining to a project or to a group of participants that you would like to discuss, please contact _____ at Policy Studies Associates. _____ can be reached at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email at _____@_____.

Thank you for your continued cooperation. We look forward to receiving your materials.

Sincerely,

Vice President
Decision Information Resources

National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers Request for Materials for Expert Panel Review

The projects below have been sampled from the Project Inventory Form that your Center completed for the most recent project year. These projects will be rated for **quality** by expert review panelists for the national evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. Surveys of participants in these projects will collect client ratings of the projects' **relevance** and **usefulness**.

| <u>Project</u> | <u>Activities and Deliverables</u> |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

In order to facilitate this process, **for each project** please provide us with:

- (1) Copies of the materials that together fairly represent each of these items. This should include: documents (electronically, wherever possible) leading up to, or resulting from, these efforts—including plans, agendas, meeting notes, handouts, presentations, follow-up memos, resolutions, instruments, assessments, summaries, syntheses, papers, reports and memoranda of agreement. In other words, we are asking for materials that fully describe these products and services for the reviewers and give them a sufficient basis for rating their **quality**.
- (2) A cover sheet (one per project) that provides background and contextual information about the project. (See attached page for specific questions to be answered on the cover sheet.)
- (3) A list of the state-level participants in each project, including names, affiliations, and contact information.

Questions about what materials to provide and how to complete the cover sheet should be directed to your evaluation team liaison.

These materials will be the basis upon which the reviewers will make their ratings.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this data collection instrument is **1850-0823**. The time required to complete these worksheets is estimated to average four hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and respond to the questions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

Cover Sheet to Accompany Materials Sent to Review Panel for Sampled Projects

Name of Comprehensive Center _____

Name of person completing this form _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Information about Sampled Projects:

Project Name _____

Project Inventory # _____

1. Describe the purpose of this project and its intended outcome(s).
2. Who is the customer/client?
3. Describe the circumstances that led to the provision of this project. In this description, be sure to indicate whether it was initiated by the Center or requested by the client.
4. List the activities and deliverables associated with this project, and describe how they relate to the overall project.
5. Please provide a list of the materials and documents you are sending for the review panel. For each, describe the Comprehensive Center's role and contribution to the materials associated with this project (i.e., the materials sent to reviewers for rating the quality and relevance of this project.) Please let us know if you used materials developed by another source and, if so, provide information about that source.
6. What is the research basis for the product or service? Where appropriate, please provide a citation for the research or practice literature upon which it is based.

Sample Follow-Up Memo

Dear [Center Director]:

Members of the evaluation team met in Houston last week to look over the review materials submitted by the Centers. In our cursory review of the PCC projects, we had trouble locating certain items that were either described on the project cover sheet(s) or that one would expect to see in the project materials.

| Project Name | Issue Identified |
|--------------|------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

If these items were included in your review package, please let us know where in the materials we can locate them so that we can make sure that the peer review panelists will be able to find them.

If you didn't intend to include them in the package, please let us know.

If you would like to send new copies of these items or additional materials to address the issue(s) identified, please forward copies electronically to _____@_____ for hard copies to [name], DIR, [address] no later than [date].

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best,
[name]

Exhibit B.2. Distribution of all major and moderate projects and projects in the evaluation sample, by topic in 2006-07

| Project topic | Number of major and moderate projects on project inventories | Number of projects in the sample (all major or moderate) | Percent of all major and moderate projects in evaluation sample |
|---|---|---|--|
| Total | 216 | 122 | 56% |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 54 | 36 | 67 |
| Data use/data-driven decisionmaking | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| Formative assessment | 5 | 1 | 20 |
| Reading | 17 | 7 | 41 |
| Adolescent literacy | 11 | 5 | 45 |
| Mathematics | 11 | 6 | 55 |
| Dropout prevention | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| High school redesign/reform | 10 | 5 | 50 |
| Transition to high school | 4 | 3 | 75 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development | 5 | 3 | 60 |
| Special education—assessment | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| English language learners | 17 | 11 | 65 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 8 | 5 | 63 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 6 | 4 | 67 |
| Teacher professional development | 8 | 7 | 88 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 9 | 5 | 56 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 7 | 3 | 43 |
| Migrant education | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| Indian/native American education | 2 | 1 | 50 |
| Data management compliance | 8 | 5 | 63 |
| Assessment design | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| Parent involvement | 6 | 3 | 50 |
| Other | 12 | 3 | 25 |

EXHIBIT READS: For program year 2006-07, there were 54 major and moderate projects on the project inventories that focused on components of effective systems of support. Of these, 36 (or 67 percent) were in the project sample.

SOURCE: Project inventory forms submitted by the Centers.

Exhibit B.3. Distribution of all major and moderate projects and projects in the evaluation sample, by topic in 2007-08

| Project topic | Number of major and moderate projects on project inventories | Number of projects in the sample (all major or moderate) | Percent of all major and moderate projects in evaluation sample |
|---|---|---|--|
| Total | 222 | 122 | 55% |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 68 | 39 | 57 |
| Data use/data-driven decisionmaking | 4 | 3 | 75 |
| Formative assessment | 6 | 3 | 50 |
| Reading | 8 | 2 | 25 |
| Adolescent literacy | 15 | 6 | 40 |
| Mathematics | 8 | 4 | 50 |
| Dropout prevention | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| High school redesign/reform | 10 | 6 | 60 |
| Transition to high school | 3 | 3 | 100 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development | 3 | 1 | 33 |
| Special education—assessment | 2 | 2 | 100 |
| English language learners | 17 | 11 | 65 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 13 | 7 | 54 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 3 | 2 | 67 |
| Teacher professional development | 6 | 4 | 67 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 4 | 2 | 50 |
| Response to Intervention (Rtl) | 13 | 6 | 46 |
| Migrant education | 7 | 3 | 43 |
| Indian/native American education | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Data management compliance | 7 | 6 | 86 |
| Assessment design | 4 | 1 | 25 |
| Parent involvement | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| Other | 11 | 7 | 64 |

EXHIBIT READS: For program year 2007-08, there were 68 major and moderate projects on the project inventories that focused on components of effective systems of support. Of these, 39 (or 57 percent) were in the project sample.

SOURCE: Project inventory forms submitted by the Centers.

Exhibit B.4. Survey of project participants sampling and survey administration summary, by year

| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Sample frame (a) | 3,904 | 4,011 | 3,417 |
| Participants in RCC projects | 2,689 | 1,870 | 1,788 |
| Participants in CC projects | 1,215 | 2,141 | 1,629 |
| Study sample (b) | 1,658 | 1,710 | 1,364 |
| Sampled participants from RCC projects | | | |
| State-level participants | 1,166 | 1,087 | 957 |
| Sampled participants from CC projects | | | |
| State-level participants | 188 | 296 | 231 |
| RCC staff | 304 | 327 | 176 |
| Survey administration | | | |
| Completed surveys | 1,208 | 1,319 | 1,035 |
| Respondent participated in project (c) | 947 | 933 | 750 |
| Respondent did not participate in project | 261 | 386 | 285 |
| Refusals | 90 | 11 | 9 |
| No response | 360 | 380 | 320 |
| Response Rate | 73% (1,208/1,658) | 77% (1,310/1,710) | 76% (1,035/1,364) |

NOTES: Sampled respondents who indicated that they did not participate in the project were excluded from the analyses. To permit generalization to all participants, the survey responses were weighted for all the sampled projects in the following manner: total number participants for that project (a) divided by the number of respondents completing a survey who participated in the project (c). For project-level analyses, each respondent had equal weight in the individual project's rating, and for Center-level analysis, the team weighted each sampled project from that Center equally.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the sample frame included 3,904 participants of which 2,689 were participants in RCC projects and 1,215 were participants in CC projects.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants.

Exhibit B.5. Factor analysis of relevance and usefulness items from the project participant surveys, by year

| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Completed surveys (unweighted) | 1,208 | 1,319 | 1,035 |
| Relevance | | | |
| Eigenvalue | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.7 |
| Percent of variance explained | 67.6 | 69.8 | 72.1 |
| Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.94 |
| Usefulness | | | |
| Eigenvalue | 7.6 | 7.6 | 7.7 |
| Percent of variance explained | 69.2 | 69.3 | 69.5 |
| Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 |

EXHIBIT READS: Among the eight components of relevance, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 5.4 and explained 67.6 percent of the variance, for the program year 2006-07. Among the 11 usefulness items, one factor was extracted for 2006-07 with an eigenvalue of 7.6 and explained 69.2 percent of the variance. The reliability coefficient for the relevance scale was 0.93 and it was 0.95 for usefulness.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants.

Exhibit B.6. Loading factors for the relevance and usefulness items from the project participant surveys, by year

| Relevance items | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources relevant to your work, in each of the following respects? | | | |
| a. Addressed a need or problem that my organization faces | 0.83 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| b. Addressed an important priority of my organization | 0.82 | 0.84 | 0.86 |
| c. Addressed a challenge that my organization faces related to the implementation of NCLB | 0.82 | 0.78 | 0.82 |
| d. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be directly applied to my organization's work | 0.86 | 0.87 | 0.88 |
| e. Addressed our particular state context | 0.80 | 0.83 | 0.84 |
| f. Addressed my organization's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics) | 0.83 | 0.84 | 0.85 |
| g. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, or practices | 0.85 | 0.86 | 0.88 |
| h. Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for policies, programs, or practices | 0.78 | 0.77 | 0.78 |
| Usefulness items | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Based on <i>your</i> experience, to what degree was this set of activities and resources useful to you, in each of the following respects? | | | |
| a. Provided resources that were easy to understand and easy to use | 0.82 | 0.79 | 0.81 |
| b. Employed an appropriate format (e.g., a work group, a conference, individual consultation, written products) | 0.81 | 0.81 | 0.81 |
| c. Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states | 0.64 | 0.63 | 0.67 |
| d. Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources | 0.82 | 0.83 | 0.84 |
| e. Were timely | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.83 |
| f. Helped my organization solve a problem | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| g. Helped my organization maintain or change a policy or practice | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.87 |
| h. Helped my organization take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort | 0.85 | 0.88 | 0.85 |
| i. Provided my organization with information or resources that we will use again | 0.89 | 0.89 | 0.89 |
| j. Helped my organization develop a shared expertise or knowledge base | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| k. Helped individuals in my organization to develop skills that they will use again | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.85 |

Appendix C

Describing Center Operations

Describing Center Operations

This appendix contains a description of the process used to code the objectives within Center management plans, the project inventory forms (PIFs), and the project cover sheets. This appendix also includes the protocols used for the interviews with the Centers in person in the summers of 2007 and 2008 and by phone in Spring 2010.

Center Management Plan, Project Inventory, and Cover Sheet Coding and Intercoder Reliability

Data from the Center management plans, project inventory forms (PIFs), and the project cover sheets were coded by the evaluation team to build the sample frame and describe Center operations. Below is an explanation of the four-step coding process the evaluation team used—(1) establish the code sets, (2) train coders, (3) code management plans, PIFs, and cover sheets, (4) resolve coding disagreements—as well as a summary of the level of intercoder reliability achieved through this process.

Establish the Code Sets

Based on initial review of the project cover sheets, the PIFs, and the other materials from the Centers (such as the Center management plans), the evaluation team established code sets to use during the coding process. One set of codes was used to code the objectives stated in the Center management plans and the topics of the projects on the PIFs (for 2006-07). Another set of codes was used to code the project cover sheets and a third set of codes was used in a separate effort to recode the 33 project cover sheets for the 2008-09 state systems of support projects.

Center Management Plan and PIF Code Set

The team developed codes to summarize the primary topics in which Centers were doing their work based on a review of Center materials to identify categories of distinct domains or topics. These 22 specific topic codes are described below in terms of the substantive knowledge base the evaluation team determined would be covered by that topic.⁸³ In the coding process, this set of possible codes was used to code the topic areas for the Center objectives as stated in their management plans as well as to code the topic area of each project that Centers submitted on their PIFs for 2006-07.

- ***Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school.*** This category included: (1) Design of state systems to meet NCLB requirements for statewide systems of support for districts and schools in corrective action or identified as in

⁸³ Discussion in the report refers primarily to the 22 specific substantive topics. However, as a small number of sampled projects fell into the category of “other” topic area, description of all the projects in the study sample by topic as displayed in exhibit 2.5 includes the topic area of “other” as the 23rd category.

need of improvement [Sec. 1117(a)]; (2) Interventions for schools or districts in need of improvement or corrective action; (3) For schools, Centers' projects addressed a range of options for school leadership and organization, professional development and classroom practice, and development and implementation of school improvement plans. For districts, Centers' projects typically addressed district leadership and development as well as implementation of district improvement plans.

- ***Data use/data-driven decisionmaking.*** Use of data for educational program improvement.
- ***Formative assessment.*** Guidelines for implementing formative or benchmark assessment, comprehensive formative assessment systems.
- ***Reading.*** Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments with state standards in reading; teacher professional development in reading (not specific to adolescent literacy).
- ***Adolescent literacy.*** Policy and practices relevant to literacy at middle school and high school levels.
- ***Mathematics.*** Alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessments with state standards in mathematics as well as teacher professional development in mathematics.
- ***Dropout prevention.*** Policies and practices specifically designed to keep high school students in school through graduation.
- ***High school redesign/reform.*** High school renewal, school organization, curriculum, and instructional practice.
- ***Transition to high school.*** Policies and practices designed to improve the preparation of middle-school students for success in high school.
- ***Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development.*** Curriculum, instruction, and professional development for service to students with disabilities.
- ***Special education—assessment.*** Implementation and interpretation of assessments for students with disabilities, including alternate assessments.
- ***English language learners.*** Curriculum, instruction, and professional development for service to ELL students; Title III improvement plans. This category also includes determination of ELLs' achievement of AYP through assessment of Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives; implementation and interpretation of ELL assessments.
- ***Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB.*** State plans and policies required in connection with the HQT provisions of NCLB, including HOUSSE and equitable distribution.
- ***Teacher preparation and induction.*** State policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation and induction of novice teachers as well as activities targeting teacher retention.
- ***Teacher professional development.*** State policies and local practices for the planning and delivery of professional development for teachers (not specific to reading, mathematics, high schools, ELLs, or special education). Activities in the area of effective teaching are included in this category.

- ***Supplemental educational Services (SES).*** Application process to select vendors, monitoring services, and evaluating performance of providers.
- ***Response to Intervention (RtI).*** RtI implementation, moving RtI into general education, RtI as a strategy for school improvement.
- ***Migrant education.*** Statutorily required state Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) process for migrant education.
- ***Indian/native American education.*** Policies and practices to support the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; includes support of and compliance with ESEA Title VII.
- ***Data management compliance.*** Title I compliance, EDEN/EDFacts reporting requirements.
- ***Assessment design.*** Developing new assessments for use by clients; includes classroom, benchmark, and state grade-level assessments for federal accountability; activities may include design, item development, validation, reliability testing, alignment studies.
- ***Parent involvement.*** Title I and other parent involvement activities.

Cover Sheet Code Sets

The team used the information contained in the project cover sheets in two ways. First, in each of the three years, the team developed codes to describe project activities and resources, contributions CCs made to RCC projects, and contributions RCCs made to CC projects. The development of these codes was informed by the team's review of the Center management plans, the transcripts of the interviews conducted in 2007, and a preliminary review of all project cover sheets. The code sets used to code the project cover sheets for all three data collection cycles are shown below along with the criteria used to assign that code. The 15 possible codes for this effort are provided below in exhibit C.1.

Second, for 2008-09, the team conducted a supplemental analysis of the project cover sheets for the 33 sampled projects under the topic State Systems of Support. For these projects, the team went into greater depth regarding the components of the project to more closely examine their content and purpose. The five possible codes for this effort are provided in exhibit C.2.

Exhibit C.1. Project cover sheet codes used across the sampled projects in all three data collection cycles

Types of Project Activities and Resources

- **Engagement of participants in project planning** was coded for projects that offered some or all of their participants the opportunity to take part in designing the project. This involvement went beyond merely expressing a need for technical assistance; rather, it included participant involvement in shaping the specific assistance that was delivered (who did what, when, and why in technical assistance) at various stages of technical assistance delivery.

Project planning was different from “ongoing consultation and follow-up,” though the same project may have had both components. “Ongoing consultation and follow-up” occurred when the Center provided service to clients on multiple occasions, whereas “engagement of participants in project planning” was specific to the Center working with the client to plan later service.
 - **Research collections or syntheses** were research-based materials distributed to participants in a project. In some instances these products were developed by the Center conducting the project, but in others they were existing research materials that the Center collected and distributed.
 - **Training events** were designed to impart skills to participants, equipping them to carry out a particular program or strategy. The content of trainings was discrete and specialized, and participants attended trainings expecting to learn something specific and be able to do something differently afterward. Participants and trainers assumed that the primary purpose of the training was for the participant to learn something from the trainer. Projects with multiple trainings to the same participants over time were also coded as “ongoing consultation and follow-up.”
 - **Conferences** featured presentations of information to audiences from multiple speakers or discussants representing a range of perspectives. They focused on informing the participants, not training them, and they were single events rather than series of meetings. The conference scope was broader than trainings, in that presentations or discussions in a single conference could have addressed multiple issues, programs, or solutions; whereas a training focused on a single strategy or program. Conference participants varied in their type, interest, and expectation for what they wanted to learn at the conference. Conferences also included symposia and forums in which participants came at common questions with varying perspectives.
 - **Support for development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy** referred to instances in which Center technical assistance supported work by participants that led to a plan for implementing a program or policy. A formal state plan codified activities that were expected to occur in the state in order to serve state purposes with the intention to guide individuals and units toward a common goal. Formal plans may have been required by the federal or state government, or may have been initiated within the SEA to address a specific problem. This activity did not include service plans.
 - **Task force meetings and work** were engagements over multiple interactions in which a Center provided technical assistance to a work group who were themselves constituted as a task force to address a state problem. Center support of a task force meant that the Center was a regular participant in task force meetings, and Center support ranged from setting the agenda and facilitating meetings to providing input upon request. A project was coded as “task force meetings and work,” when there was a task force that was trying to accomplish some purpose—not just to plan or follow up on Center technical assistance, but to do something for its state (or, occasionally, a group of states). Center participation in a task force was also coded “ongoing consultation and follow-up” if the Center provided assistance on an ongoing basis over time. If the Center was working with the task force to plan service, the project was also coded “engagement of participants in project planning.”
-

Exhibit C.1. Project cover sheet codes used across the sampled projects in all three data collection cycles (continued)

-
- **Ongoing consultation and follow-up** was either a series of consultations (i.e., fulfilling repeated requests from participants for technical assistance) or sustained follow-up with individuals who had participated in some other kind of assistance (e.g., a conference or training). Ongoing consultation occurred when there were multiple service contacts over time, all related to the project goal or topic. The interactions focused on a client question or need. This code did not include projects with one-time contacts, such as projects that provided a large conference with no follow-up. It also did not include the production of publications that are not accompanied with follow-up assistance directly to the client.
-

RCC and CC Contributions to RCC and CC Projects

- ***RCC projects with CC contribution*** were projects in which the CC explicitly contributed a service or resource used by the RCC or its clients as part of RCC project activities. A CC could contribute to an RCC project in any of three ways:
 - ***CC provided materials used in this RCC project.*** The RCC must have used CC materials in specific delivery activities or in planning.
 - ***CC provided advice to the RCC on this project.*** The RCC consulted or collaborated with the CC when making decisions about what or how to deliver assistance to project participants. Participants may or may not have had direct interaction with the CC or CC materials.
 - ***CC delivered technical assistance to RCC project participants.*** The CC provided service directly to the participants, whether face-to-face, by phone, or virtually, regardless of what role RCC staff had in this RCC project activity.
 - ***CC projects with RCC contribution*** were projects in which the RCC explicitly contributed assistance used by the CC or its clients as part of CC project activities. An RCC could contribute to a CC project in either of two ways:
 - ***RCC recruited participants or brokered service.*** The RCC connected the CC and its clients for the purpose of participation in the project. The RCC may have been driven by the CC's need for participants who could benefit from a specific project, or by a client's need for specific services or products that a CC could deliver.
 - ***RCC delivered technical assistance to CC project participants.*** The RCC provided service directly to participants, whether face to face, by phone, or virtually, regardless of what role CC staff had in this CC project activity.
-

Exhibit C.2. Project cover sheet codes for the 33 state systems of support projects in 2008-09

Purposes of State Systems of Support Projects

- ***Redesign state SSOS infrastructure or strategies for improvement*** included projects in which the Center worked with SEA leaders who were making decisions about revising design features of the state's SSOS. These projects may have assisted the SEA in making changes to structural aspects of the SSOS, such as reorganizing units within the SEA, redefining the responsibilities of specific SSOS support agents, and clarifying the processes and timelines associated with delivery. These projects also may have assisted the SEA in making changes to the strategies the SSOS and its agents deliver to districts and schools to guide their improvement, such as intervention models, promising practices based on research, steps for improvement planning, indicators of improvement, and other content delivered by school support teams.
 - Review of the state's current SSOS*** included projects in which the Center helped the SEA review or assess the existing system as a step in a plan for its improvement. These projects could include a variety of approaches for reviewing SSOS systems, including strategic reviews with SEA task forces, needs sensing interviews with SEA leaders and support agents, surveys of districts and schools, development of indicators of system functioning, and a formal CC-developed process for evaluating the SSOS.
 - Deliver a formal SSOS needs assessment report to the SEA*** was coded when there was evidence that the Center, after conducting a needs assessment of evaluation of the SSOS, provided SEA leaders with a formal, state-specific, report including what was learned and implications for system redesign.
 - Develop state-specific SSOS materials*** included projects in which the Center assisted SEAs in developing their own materials for use in SSOS implementation. These materials included protocols for SSOS agents to use in the field, tools for monitoring programs, SSOS training and communication resources, tools for improvement planning, and state plans and policy documents
 - ***Train SSOS support providers*** included projects in which the Center assisted the state in training, informing, or coaching school support teams or other SSOS agents on how to carry out their functions in supporting low-performing districts and schools. These projects may have provided training on improvement strategies and models endorsed by the state, as well as on how providers might best deliver these strategies and models. For instance, trainings may review templates and guidance documents for local improvement planning and implementation. Trainings may have also delineated the responsibilities and procedures of support providers and how various SSOS components fit together as a system.
-

Train Coders

For each data collection and reporting cycle, all coders were senior members of the evaluation team and were trained to use the established code sets. As part of the training, coders discussed each of the codes in the code set to ensure all coders had a shared understanding of their meaning. They also coded sample items and reviewed, coded, and discussed the final codes using representative sample text. The evaluation team used the discussions in the coder training to verify that the established codes were clear and well understood.

Code Center Management Plans, PIFs, and Cover Sheets

All of the objectives in the Center management plans, the PIFs, and cover sheets were independently coded by two coders. For all three years, to code the Center management plans, each coder reviewed the objectives section of the plan and determined the topic(s) in which the Center indicated they planned to work. For the PIFs in 2006-07, each coder reviewed the project description and assigned the project subject code for each of the projects (364 projects total). For all three years, in order to code the cover sheets, each coder categorized the project information submitted by Centers (i.e., project purpose, customer/client, project activities and deliverables, roles and contributions of Centers, research basis for products and services) and to assign codes according to the coding criteria described earlier (see exhibit C.1 starting on page C-4) for identifying the various types of project activities and resources and the ways Centers contributed to projects. For the 2008-09 program year, the evaluation team executed a second coding effort of the project cover sheets for the 33 projects classified in the topic area state systems of support in the general areas of Center activities on SSOS projects to more closely define the purpose of this subset of projects (see exhibit C.2 on page C-6).

Resolve Coding Disagreements

Members of the evaluation team compared the coding worksheets from each coder to determine the final coded responses for each item. In cases where the coders agreed, the final response was clear. In cases where the first and second coders did not arrive at the same code, they met to review evidence for the codes and choose a final code. If the first and second coder were unable to reconcile their codes, a third senior study team member worked with the coders to determine the final code for that item. Each year, the product of this step was the final codes for the topic areas included in the Center management plan objectives, the topic areas for the all projects on the PIFs, and the three areas described above for the project cover sheets.

Analysis of Inter-coder Reliability

The evaluation team calculated the percent agreement between the first and second coder as well as Cohen's Kappa analysis. The percent agreement calculation used the number of agreements divided by total number of possible responses. The Cohen's Kappa calculation used the number observed to agree minus the number expected to agree by chance divided by the number of items minus the number expected to agree. The exhibit below shows the results of these analyses.

Exhibit C.3. Summary of intercoder reliability for coding, by year

| Coding effort | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|
| Center management plans | | | |
| Possible topic area assignments | 462 | 462 | 462 |
| Number of agreements | 452 | 433 | 449 |
| Cohen's Kappa | .96 | .91 | .93 |
| Project inventory forms (PIFs) | | | |
| Possible topic area assignments | 364 | NA | NA |
| Number of agreements | 318 | | |
| Cohen's Kappa | .92 | | |
| Project cover sheets | | | |
| Possible topic area assignments | 1,830 | 1,830 | 1,770 |
| Number of agreements | 1,590 | 1,473 | 1,451 |
| Cohen's Kappa | .89 | .79 | .81 |
| Supplemental SSOS coding for 2008-09 | | | |
| Possible topic area assignments | NA | NA | 165 |
| Number of agreements | | | 136 |
| Cohen's Kappa | | | .84 |

NOTE: The evaluation team only coded the topics for the project inventory forms for the 2006-07 projects. For the subsequent data collection cycles, the Centers submitted their PIFs with the projects already coded by topic. The additional coding effort for the SSOS projects was done only for the 2008-09 projects.

EXHIBIT READS: Across all three data collection cycles, there were a total of 462 possible topic area assignments. In 2006-07, the first and second coder agreed in 452 of those cases with a Cohen's Kappa of .96.

Center Interviews

The evaluation team conducted three rounds of interviews with the Center Director and other senior Center staff to gather information about the Center operations. The first round of interviews covered the 2006-07 program year and took place in summer 2007. These interviews were based on open-ended questions posed to RCC and CC staff about Center organization, major areas of focus, communication with client organizations, sources of knowledge used, approaches taken in quality assurance, modes of delivering technical assistance, and barriers they encountered. The second round of interviews took place in summer 2008 and used a protocol that included closed-ended, binary questions to follow up specifically about activities that had occurred in 2006-07, topics that had been addressed, and work requests that had fallen outside their planned scope of work. Additional questions targeted the strategies that Centers had used for planning work and engaging clients, the sources for content expertise, and sources they used for vetting their products and services. For the third round of interviews, the team asked the

Centers to provide information on Center operations for 2008-09 on their strategies and processes for planning and negotiating work with clients, the types of activities most frequently requested by their clients, quality assurance, coordination with other Centers, and the evolution of their work from 2006 through 2009. The protocol used to interview CC staff for the third round of data collection starts on page C-10 of this appendix, the protocol used to interview RCC staff starts on page C-15.

Content Center Interview Protocol, 2008-09

For these questions, please refer to the Project Inventory Form for 2008-09 as necessary to refresh your memory on the full scope of work delivered by your Center in that year.

Planning and Negotiating Work

1. Which of the following were part of the process of planning your work for the 2008-09 year:
 - a. Assessment of state needs
 - i. Through formal needs assessment, such as a survey
 - ii. Through ongoing interaction with states
 - iii. Through communication with RCCs about state needs
 - b. Assessment of RCC needs
 - i. Through formal needs assessment, such as a survey
 - ii. Through ongoing interaction with RCCs
 - c. Communication with RCC directors
 - d. Receiving requests from ED
 - e. Other source(s) of input, please describe:
2. What were your top strategies for building or maintaining working relationships with RCCs and/or with state(s) for the 2008-09 year, so that your Center could meet its technical assistance objectives? Please describe specifically how you carried out these strategies.
3. Were there instances of your Center receiving a technical-assistance request for 2008-09 from an RCC or a state that the Center did not carry out? Please describe the types of request(s). If there were multiple instances, describe one that was most typical of your experience.
4. For 2008-09, did the reasons for not carrying out technical-assistance requests ever include the following:
 - a. A request fell outside the legitimate scope of work for a Content Center
 - b. A request was potentially legitimate Content Center work but did not fit this Center's priorities for work with the client(s)
 - c. The Center did not have access to the needed expertise to carry out the request
 - d. Staff time and resources were already fully committed to other work
 - e. The request became moot because the Center and the client instead agreed on a plan for related, but different, technical assistance
 - f. Other reason(s), please describe
5. Of the reasons you've just identified, which was the *one* most frequent reason requests were not carried out?
6. Were there instances of your Center proposing technical-assistance activities for 2008-09 that RCCs, states, or ED declined to accept? Please describe the proposed technical assistance

and why it was not carried out. If there were multiple instances, describe one that was most typical of your experience.

7. Were any of the following a barrier to delivering technical assistance that met your Center's objectives *for work with RCCs* during 2008-09?
 - a. The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long
 - b. RCCs' most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center's scope of work
 - c. RCCs secured most of the technical assistance they needed from other sources
 - d. RCCs would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with the Content Center
 - e. A policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center's assistance to an RCC to be less helpful than it might
 - f. Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with an RCC as the RCC would have liked
 - g. The Center did not have the expertise an RCC needed
 - h. The Center was unable to develop a productive working relationship with an RCC
 - i. An RCC experienced turnover in leadership
 - j. An RCC experienced turnover in staffing
 - k. RCCs placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes
 - l. RCC staff did not have time to work with the Center
 - m. There was a lack of coordination or communication within an RCC
 - n. Other(s), specify:

8. Now, using the same list including any other items that you added, please identify the *one* barrier in working with RCCs that most impeded the achievement of your Center's objectives, and describe an example.

9. Were any of the following a barrier to delivering technical assistance that met your Center's objectives *for work with states* during 2008-09?
 - a. The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long
 - b. States' most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center's scope of work
 - c. States secured most of the technical assistance they needed from other sources
 - d. States would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with the Content Center
 - e. A policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center's assistance to a state to be less helpful than it might
 - f. Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with a state as the state would have liked
 - g. The Center did not have the expertise a state needed
 - h. The Center was unable to develop a productive working relationship with a state
 - i. A state agency experienced turnover in leadership
 - j. A state office, division, or intermediary unit experienced turnover in staffing
 - k. States placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes
 - l. State staff did not have time to work with the Center
 - m. There was a lack of coordination or communication within a state
 - n. Other(s), specify:
10. Now, using the same list including any other items that you added, please identify the *one* barrier in working with states that most impeded the achievement of your Center's objectives, and describe an example.

The Center's Work During 2008-09

11. First, I'd like to know about the types of activities and products that your clients asked for and that your Center provided during the program year from July 2008 through June 2009. Looking at the following types of activities and products, please identify the *one* type that was most requested by RCCs and states during that year. Which *one* type represented the largest investment of Center resources? Which *one* was most important for achieving your Center's objectives? Were there changes between 2006-07 and 2008-09 in which type was most requested, or your largest investment, or the most important type? [If yes,] Please describe.
- Engagement of participants in project planning (more than needs assessment or identifying participants)
 - Research collections and syntheses
 - Conferences (also called symposiums, forums, institutes; highlight a range of perspectives, strategies, or programs)
 - Training events (focused on implementing a specific program or strategy)
 - Task force meetings and work (focused on addressing a specific problem, program or policy)
 - Support for development of a formal state plan to implement a program or policy
 - Ongoing consultation and follow-up (multiple contacts with the same participants, that were part of a coherent and purposeful whole)
12. Now I'd like to know about continuity and change in your technical assistance activities over the years. Considering all of your Center's work in 2008-09, which *one* of the following descriptions would characterize the largest share of the total investment of Center resources? Please describe an example of this type of work. Was there a change between 2006-07 and 2008-09 in which type was the largest investment? [If yes,] Please describe.
- Multi-year project(s) that followed a long-term plan for participants, activities, and purposes
 - Multi-year project(s) with substantial shifts from the originally planned participants, activities, or purposes
 - Projects that were self-contained within a single year rather than extending across years

Quality Assurance

13. For quality assurance in technical assistance during 2008-09, did your Center have a formal process? [If yes,] Please describe that process.

Coordination with Regional Centers

14. In which of the following ways did your Center work with at least some of the Regional Centers during 2008-09:
- a. Maintained communication with liaisons at least monthly
 - b. Provided knowledge resources (materials or experts) as requested
 - c. Teamed up to work with one or more states in a region
 - d. Sought information from Regional Centers about promising practices in their regions
15. I would like know what strengths and weaknesses you observed in the two-tier system of technical assistance from Regional Centers and Content Centers as of the 2008-09 program year. Below are possible areas of strength or weakness, and others may come to mind. Please identify any of these that were areas of strength in the two-tier Comprehensive Center network. Were any of them areas of weakness of the network? Please give examples that illustrate strengths and weaknesses.
- a. Clarity in the role of Regional Centers
 - b. Clarity in the role of Content Centers
 - c. Coordination across Regional and Content Centers
 - d. Other area(s) of strength or weakness, please describe:

Evolution of the Center's Work

16. Looking back, what would you describe as the most significant ways in which your Center's work evolved from 2006 through 2009?

RCC Interview Protocol, 2008-09

For these questions, please refer to the Project Inventory Form for 2008-09 as necessary to refresh your memory on the full scope of work delivered by your Center in that year.

Planning and Negotiating Work with State Agencies

17. Did your Center have one or more staff positions designated for serving as the Center's liaison to specific SEAs for the 2008-09 year? If so, did any of them maintain office space within an SEA building?
18. Which of the following were part of the process of planning your work for the 2008-09 year:
 - a. Formal needs assessment, such as a survey of client staff
 - b. Informal needs assessment through communication with client staff
 - c. Communication with chief state school officer(s)
 - d. Other source(s) of input, please describe:
19. What were your top strategies for building or maintaining working relationships with state(s) in your region for the 2008-09 year, so that your Center could achieve its technical assistance objectives? Please describe specifically how you carried out these strategies.
20. Were there instances of an SEA making a technical assistance request for 2008-09 that the Center did not carry out? Please describe the requests that were not carried out, state by state. What types of requests were most common, if any?
21. For 2008-09, did the Center's reasons for not carrying out SEA technical assistance requests ever include the following:
 - a. A request fell outside the legitimate scope of work for a Comprehensive Center
 - b. A request was potentially legitimate Comprehensive Center work but did not fit this Center's priorities for work with the state
 - c. The Center did not have access to the needed expertise to carry out the request
 - d. Staff time and resources were already fully committed to other work
 - e. An SEA request became moot because the Center and SEA instead agreed on a plan for related, but different, technical assistance
 - f. Other reason(s), please describe:
22. Of the reasons you've just identified, which was the *one* most frequent reason SEA requests were not carried out?
23. Were there instances of the Center proposing technical assistance activities for 2008-09 that an SEA declined to accept? Please describe the proposed technical assistance and why it was not carried out, state by state.
24. Were any of the following a barrier to delivering technical assistance that met your Center's objectives during 2008-09?

- a. The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long
 - b. A state's most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Center's scope of work
 - c. A state secured most of the technical assistance it needed from other sources
 - d. A state would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with the Comprehensive Centers
 - e. A policy or priority shift at the state level caused the Center's assistance to be less helpful than it might
 - f. Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with a state as the state would have liked
 - g. The Center did not have the expertise a state needed
 - h. The Center was unable to develop a productive working relationship with a state
 - i. A state experienced turnover in leadership
 - j. A state office, division, or intermediary unit experienced turnover in staffing
 - k. State clients placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes
 - l. State staff did not have time to work with the Center
 - m. There was a lack of coordination or communication within a state agency
 - n. Other barrier(s), please describe:
25. Now, using the same list including any other items that you added, please identify the *one* barrier that most impeded the achievement of your Center's objectives, and describe an example of this barrier.

The Center's Work During 2008-09

26. First, I'd like to know about the types of activities and products that your clients asked for and that your Center provided during the program year from July 2008 through June 2009. Looking at the following types of activities and products, please identify the *one* type that was most requested by clients during that year. Which *one* type represented the largest investment of Center resources? Which *one* was most important for achieving your Center's objectives? Were there changes between 2006-07 and 2008-09 in which type was most requested, or your largest investment, or the most important type? [If yes,] Please describe.
- a. Engagement of participants in project planning (more than needs assessment or identifying participants)
 - b. Research collections and syntheses
 - c. Conferences (also called symposiums, forums, institutes; highlight a range of perspectives, strategies, or programs)
 - d. Training events (focused on implementing a specific program or strategy)
 - e. Task force meetings and work (focused on addressing a specific problem, program or policy)
 - f. Support for development of a formal state plan to implement a program or policy
 - g. Ongoing consultation and follow-up (multiple contacts with the same participants, that were part of a coherent and purposeful whole)
27. Now I'd like to know about continuity and change in your technical assistance over the years. Considering all of your Center's work in 2008-09, which *one* of the following descriptions would characterize the largest investment of Center resources? Please describe an example of

this type of work. Was there a change between 2006-07 and 2008-09 in which type was the largest investment? [If yes,] Please describe.

- a. Multi-year project(s) that followed a long-term plan for participants, activities, and purposes
- b. Multi-year project(s) with substantial shifts from the originally planned participants, activities, or purposes
- c. Projects that were self-contained within a single year rather than extending across years

Quality Assurance

28. For quality assurance in technical assistance during 2008-09, did your Center have a formal process? [If yes,] Please describe that process.

Coordination with Content Centers

29. With which of the Content Centers did your Center do each of the following during 2008-09:

- a. Maintained communication at least monthly through a liaison
 - i. AACC
 - ii. CII
 - iii. COI
 - iv. NCCTQ
 - v. NHSC
- b. Received knowledge resources (materials or experts) that your Center requested
 - i. AACC
 - ii. CII
 - iii. COI
 - iv. NCCTQ
 - v. NHSC
- c. Teamed up to work with one or more states in the region
 - i. AACC
 - ii. CII
 - iii. COI
 - iv. NCCTQ
 - v. NHSC
- d. Informed the Content Center about promising practices in the region
 - i. AACC
 - ii. CII
 - iii. COI
 - iv. NCCTQ
 - v. NHSC

30. Were any of the following a barrier to your Center receiving technical assistance from the Content Centers during 2008-09?
 - a. The process of negotiating a work scope and organizing projects took too long
 - b. Our most important priorities for assistance fell outside the Content Centers' scope of work
 - c. We secured most of the technical assistance we needed from other sources
 - d. We would have preferred to locate and contract directly with experts or consultants rather than working with Content Centers
 - e. A policy or priority shift at the state level caused Content Centers' assistance to us to be less helpful than it might
 - f. Content Center staff were not able to spend as much time working with us as we would have liked
 - g. Content Centers did not have the expertise we needed
 - h. Our Center was unable to develop a productive working relationship with a Content Center
 - i. We experienced turnover in leadership
 - j. We experienced turnover in staffing
 - k. We placed a higher priority on completing short-term work than on addressing long-term purposes
 - l. Our staff did not have time to work with a Content Center
 - m. There was a lack of coordination or communication within our Center
 - n. Other(s), specify:

31. Now, using the same list including any other items that you added, please identify the *one* barrier that most impeded your Center receiving technical assistance from Content Centers.

32. I would like know what strengths and weaknesses you observed in the two-tier system of technical assistance from Regional Centers and Content Centers as of the 2008-09 program year. Below are possible areas of strength or weakness, and others may come to mind. Please identify any of these that were areas of strength in the two-tier Comprehensive Center network. Were any of them areas of weakness of the network? Please give examples that illustrate strengths and weaknesses.
 - a. Clarity in the role of Regional Centers
 - b. Clarity in the role of Content Centers
 - c. Coordination across Regional and Content Centers
 - d. Other area(s) of strength or weakness, please describe:

Evolution of the Center's Work

33. Looking back, what would you describe as the most significant ways in which your Center's work evolved from 2006 through 2009?

Appendix D
Supplemental Tables – Center Operations

Center Operations – Supplemental Tables

This appendix serves as a supplement to the information presented in chapter 3 of the report and includes tables from the 2006-07 program year that parallel similar 2008-09 tables included in the report.

Exhibit D.1. Topics on which Centers stated objectives and/or delivered projects, 2006-07

| Topic | Number of Centers (N=21) | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Objective on topic was stated in management plan (1) | Objective on topic was stated in management plan AND at least one project on topic was reported on PIF (2) | At least one project on topic was reported on PIF (3) |
| Total cases of a Center setting an objective and/or reporting a project | 133 | 107 | 172 |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 15 | 15 | 17 |
| English language learners | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 8 | 5 | 10 |
| Teacher professional development | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Data use/data-driven decisionmaking | 8 | 4 | 7 |
| Assessment design | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Formative assessment | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Special education—curriculum, instruction, and professional development | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| Special education—assessment | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| High school redesign/reform | 8 | 7 | 10 |
| Transition to high school | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Dropout prevention | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| Adolescent literacy | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Reading | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 7 | 7 | 12 |
| Parent involvement | 7 | 7 | 11 |
| Migrant education | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| Data management compliance | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Indian/Native American education | 1 | 1 | 4 |

NOTE: Column (1) - column (2) =the number of Centers that deleted work in the topic area as indicated by number of Centers that had a topic-related objective in their management plan minus the number of Centers that had the topic area on their PIF and their management plan; column (3)- column (2) =the number of Centers that added work in the topic area as indicated by number of Centers that reported work on their PIF minus the number of Centers that had the topic area on their PIF and their management plan.

EXHIBIT READS: For the topic “Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school,” 15 Centers had a related objective in their respective annual management plans; of these, all 15 reported projects on the topic in their PIF; and a total of 17 Centers had projects on the topic, whether or not they had stated an objective related to it in their management plan.

SOURCES: Center management plans for 2006-07; PIFs prepared by Centers in consultation with evaluation team.

Exhibit D.2. Topics on which RCCs and CCs stated objectives and/or delivered projects, 2006-07

| | Number of RCCs (N=16) | | | Number of CCs (N=5) | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Objective on topic in management plan (1) | Objective on topic in plan AND project(s) on topic on PIF (2) | Project(s) on topic on PIF (3) | Objective on topic in management plan (4) | Objective on topic in plan AND project(s) on topic on PIF (5) | Project(s) on topic on PIF (6) |
| Total cases | 112 | 89 | 146 | 21 | 18 | 26 |
| Components of effective systems of support—state, district, school | 14 | 14 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| English language learners | 8 | 8 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB | 7 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher professional development | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Teacher preparation and induction | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Data use/data-driven decisionmaking | 7 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Assessment design | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Formative assessment | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Special education – curriculum, instruction, professional development | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 3 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Special education—assessment | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| High school redesign/reform | 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Transition to high school | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Dropout prevention | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Adolescent literacy | 5 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Reading | 5 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Supplemental educational services (SES) | 6 | 6 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Parent involvement | 6 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Migrant education | 5 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Data management compliance | 5 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indian/Native American education | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

NOTE: column (1)-column (2) =the number of RCCs that deleted work in the topic area as indicated by number of Centers that reported work on their management plan minus the number of Centers that had the topic area on their PIF and their management plan ; column (3)- column (2) =the number of RCCs that added work in the topic area as indicated by number of Centers that reported work on their PIF minus the number of Centers that had the topic area on their PIF and their management plan. These calculations are analogous for the CCs.

EXHIBIT READS: For the topic “Components of Effective Systems of Support—State, District, School,” 14 RCCs reported a related objective in their management plans; of these, all 14 reported projects on the topic; and a total of 15 RCCs had projects on the topic, whether or not they had originally stated an objective related to it.

SOURCES: Center management plans for 2006-07; PIFs prepared by Centers in consultation with evaluation team.

Appendix E
Survey of State Managers and Case Study Visits to 10 States

Survey of State Managers and Case Study Visits to 10 States

Survey of State Managers

This appendix describes the survey that was administered to senior state managers serving as RCC's main points of contacts. The survey was developed in the first year of data collection to obtain information from state managers about state-level needs and priorities for technical assistance, state perspectives of Center technical assistance, and comparative judgment of Center assistance in relation to assistance available through other sources.

After reviewing the responses to the 2006-07 administration of the state manager survey, the evaluation team made several revisions to the survey for its administration in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Exhibit E.1 lists each question that was revised, showing both the 2006-07 question and the revised version administered in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Questions that remained unchanged from the first year of survey administration are not included in the exhibit. The version of the survey used in 2006-07 is included in appendix D of the interim report for this study.

For several of the survey items, the list of NCLB responsibility areas was revised following the 2006-07 survey administration cycle. Exhibit E.2 provides a crosswalk between the original list of NCLB responsibility areas used for the 2006-07 administration and the similar list used for subsequent survey administration years.

Case Study Visits to 10 States

Following the 2007-08 administration of the state manager surveys, ten states were selected for site visit interviews to gather information about Center technical assistance provided on statewide systems of support (SSOS). The states were selected to maximize the number of Centers included (a total of 10 RCCs and 3 CCs). Given that SSOS was reported to be the most widespread state priority of NCLB and a major focus of Center assistance in each year, the selected 10 states represented the full range of state-reported experience in this topic area. Of the 10 states selected, state managers reported on their 2007-08 surveys that Center assistance expanded state capacity in SSOS "to a great extent" in 5 states, "to a moderate extent" in 1 state, "to a small extent" in 3 states, and "does not apply or unable to judge" in 1 state. For the site visits, interviews were conducted in each state with SEA administrators (e.g., commissioner, deputy commissioner, director) and staff involved in projects focused on SSOS (e.g., senior state managers), as well as with RCC leadership and staff (e.g., center director, state liaison, staff responsible for SSOS projects). In states that had CC involvement in SSOS projects, the CC director and staff working with the RCC were also interviewed. The interviews gathered information on the state capacity building support provided by Centers (i.e., Center approaches to capacity building, activities and resources for capacity building, evidence of SEA capacity built). The code sets used to code the interview data are presented in Exhibit E.3 (page E-10). Coding was conducted in pairs with 100 percent consensus established on all coding.

Exhibit E.1. Revisions to State Manager Survey from 2006-07 to 2007-08

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|--|---|--|
| Priorities for technical assistance: | Reporting categories: | Reporting categories: |
| When your state requests technical assistance from outside sources from July XXXX to June XXXX, what are its priorities? To what extent is each of the following state responsibilities related to NCLB implementation a priority for the technical assistance the state requests? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major priority • Moderate priority • Minor Priority • Not at all a priority <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements b. Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB c. Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB d. Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems e. Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems f. Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts g. Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools h. Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs i. Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) j. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools k. Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards l. Other (Specify: _____) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major priority • Moderate priority • Minor Priority • Not at all a priority <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Statewide systems of support or school support teams b. State assessment and accountability systems c. Assistance with educators' use of assessment data d. Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, e. or professional development programs in academic subject(s) f. Policies and practices for English language learners g. Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions h. Communication with parents or the public i. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements j. State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above k. Other (Specify _____) |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|--|---|--|
| Sources of technical assistance: During the XXXX-XX school year (beginning July XXXX and ending June XXXX), to what extent has your state relied on each of the following sources of technical assistance? (Select one response in each row:) | Reporting categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the state's most important resources • To a great extent but not one of the state's most important resources • To a moderate extent • Minimally • No contact. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Department of Education (Specify office:_____) Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) Colleges and universities Consulting firms or private contractors Your counterparts in other SEAs Comprehensive Center network Regional Educational Laboratory Other federally funded technical assistance providers (Specify:_____) Other (Specify _____) | Reporting categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a great extent, • To a moderate extent, • To a small extent, and • No contact <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Center network U.S. Department of Education (Specify Office:_____) Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) Colleges and universities Consulting firms or private contractors Your counterparts in other SEAs Regional Educational Laboratory Other federally funded technical assistance providers (Specify:_____) Other (Specify _____) |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Technical assistance received by area of state NCLB responsibility</p> <p>During the XXXX-XX school year (beginning July XXXX and ending June XXXX), with which areas of state responsibility related to NCLB implementation did your state receive assistance from the Comprehensive Center network (your regional center and any content centers with whom your state has worked)?</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major assistance • Moderate assistance • Minimal assistance • No assistance at all • NA, technical assistance not sought by the SEA • NA, this task is not relevant to my unit's work <p>■</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements b. Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB c. Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB d. Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems e. Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems f. Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts g. Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools h. Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs i. Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) j. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools k. Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards l. Other (Specify: _____) | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I don't know • NA, technical assistance not sought by the SEA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Statewide systems of support or school support teams b. State assessment and accountability systems c. Assistance with educators' use of assessment data d. Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, e. or professional development programs in academic subject(s) f. Policies and practices for English language learners g. Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions h. Communication with parents or the public i. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements j. State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above k. Other (Specify _____) |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Relevance of technical assistance received</p> <p>Please consider all of the technical assistance that your state has received from the Comprehensive Center network from July XXXX through June XXXX. To what degree were the activities and resources relevant to your state, in each of the following respects? (Circle one response in each row.)</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a very high degree • To a high degree • To a moderate degree • To a low degree • To a very low degree • Not able to judge <p>a. Addressed a need or problem that the state faces</p> <p>b. Addressed an important state priority</p> <p>c. Addressed a challenge that the state faces related to the implementation of NCLB</p> <p>d. Responded flexibly to our state's changing needs</p> <p>e. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be applied to the state's work</p> <p>f. Addressed the particular context in which our state operates</p> <p>g. Addressed the state's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics)</p> <p>h. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, and practices</p> <p>i. Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for policies, programs, or practices</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a very high degree • To a high degree • To a moderate degree • To a low degree • To a very low degree • Not able to judge <p>a. Addressed a need or problem that the state faces</p> <p>b. Addressed an important state priority</p> <p>c. Addressed a challenge that the state faces related to the implementation of NCLB</p> <p>d. Addressed the state's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics)</p> <p>e. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, and practices</p> |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Usefulness of technical assistance received</p> <p>Please consider all of the technical assistance that your state has received from the Comprehensive Center network from July XXXX through June XXXX. Considering just this set of products and services, to what degree were the activities and resources useful to your state, in each of the following respects? (Circle one response in each row.)</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a very high degree • To a high degree • To a moderate degree • To a low degree • To a very low degree • Not able to judge <p>a. Provided state staff with resources that were easy to understand and easy to use</p> <p>b. Employed appropriate formats (e.g., work groups, conferences, individual consultation, written products)</p> <p>c. Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states</p> <p>d. Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources</p> <p>e. Was timely</p> <p>f. Helped the state to solve a problem</p> <p>g. Helped the state to maintain or change a policy or practice</p> <p>h. Helped the state take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort</p> <p>i. Provided state staff with information or resources that they will use again</p> <p>j. Helped state staff to develop skills that they will be able to exercise again</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To a very high degree • To a high degree • To a moderate degree • To a low degree • To a very low degree • Not able to judge <p>a. Was timely</p> <p>b. Helped the state to solve a problem</p> <p>c. Helped the state to maintain or change a policy or practice</p> <p>d. Provided state staff with information or resources that they will use again</p> <p>e. Helped state staff to develop skills that they will be able to exercise again</p> |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Center technical assistance received compared to other sources</p> <p>Compared with the technical assistance your state has received from other sources, (see list of sources in question 2) how would you rate the usefulness of the technical assistance your state received during from July XXXX through June XXXX from the Comprehensive Center network for each of the following purposes? (Circle one response in each row.)</p> | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much more useful than assistance from other resources • Somewhat more useful • About the same • Somewhat less useful • Much less useful than assistance from other sources • Not able to judge • NA, the state has not sought assistance for this purpose <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements b. Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB c. Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB d. Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems e. Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems f. Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts g. Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools h. Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs i. Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) j. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools k. Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards l. Other (Specify: _____) | <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More useful than assistance from other resources • About the same • Less useful than assistance from other sources • Not able to judge • NA, the state has not sought assistance for this purpose <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Statewide systems of support or school support teams b. State assessment and accountability systems c. Assistance with educators' use of assessment data d. Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, e. or professional development programs in academic subject(s) f. Policies and practices for English language learners g. Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions h. Communication with parents or the public i. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements j. State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above k. Other (Specify _____) |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|---|--|--|
| State capacity to carry out NCLB responsibilities | Reporting categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a very great extent To a great extent To a moderate extent To a small extent To a very small extent Too soon to tell NA, state has not sought assistance for this purpose | Reporting categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a great extent To a moderate extent To a small extent Not at all Does not apply or not able to judge |
| From July XXXX through June XXXX, to what extent has assistance from the Comprehensive Center network (your regional center and any of the five content centers)? expanded your state's capacity to carry out state responsibilities related to NCLB? (Circle one response in each row.) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards Other (Specify: _____) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide systems of support or school support teams State assessment and accountability systems Assistance with educators' use of assessment data Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) Policies and practices for English language learners Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions Communication with parents or the public Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above Other (Specify _____) |

Exhibit E.2. Crosswalk between NCLB state responsibilities used in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 state manager and participant surveys

| Used in 2006-07 | Summary of change | Used in 2007-08 and 2008-09 |
|---|---|---|
| Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB | Collapsed two tasks that were not mutually exclusive | a. Statewide systems of support or school support teams |
| Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB | | |
| Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems | Collapsed two tasks that were not mutually exclusive | b. State assessment and accountability systems |
| Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems | | |
| Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts | Simplified text | c. Assistance with educators' use of assessment data |
| Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools | Collapsed three tasks that were not mutually exclusive | d. Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instructional or professional development programs in academic subject(s) |
| Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs | | |
| Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) | | |
| | Added to reflect an area of state and Center activity | e. Policies and practices for English language learners |
| | Added to reflect an area of state and Center activity | f. Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions |
| Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards | Simplified text | g. Communication with parents or the public |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools | Simplified text | h. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements |
| Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements | Reworded to eliminate overlap with other responsibilities | i. State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above |
| Other (Specify: _____) | No change | j. Other (Specify _____) |

Exhibit E.3. Codes used for the interviews conducted on state capacity building

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- 1. RCC and CCC Approaches to Capacity Building with SEAs**
 - Approaches/philosophies for capacity building with SEAs
 - Approaches described as most useful for building capacity with SEAs
 - 2. Activities and Resources for SEA Capacity Building**
 - Activities and resources provided to SEAs by RCCs or CCCs
 - Activities and resources provided by RCCs or CCs described as most useful for building capacity with SEAs
 - 3. Evidence of SEA Capacity Built by RCCs and CCCs in 3 Dimensions**
 - Systems, infrastructure and technology [including indicators/measurements of SEA capacity]
 - Staff expertise [including indicators/measurements of SEA capacity]
 - Access to expertise [including indicators/measurements of SEA capacity]
 - 4. SEA Long-term Capacity**
 - Evidence/discussions explicitly stating long-term SEA capacity was built by RCCs and CCCs
 - Evidence/discussions explicitly stating long-term SEA capacity was not built by RCCs and CCCs
-

Appendix F
Supplemental Tables – State Manager Survey Results

Survey of State Managers Results – Supplemental Tables

This appendix serves as a supplement to the information presented in chapter 4 of the report. It includes survey tabulations from the 2006-07 and 2007-08 administrations of the state manager survey as well as more detailed versions of some exhibits provided in the report for all three years.

Exhibit F.1. State priorities for technical assistance and assistance received from Centers, 2006-07

| Priority area of state responsibility under NCLB | Among state managers reporting the responsibility as a major or moderate priority, the percent reporting they received: | |
|---|---|---|
| | Any assistance from the Centers related to the responsibility | Major or moderate assistance from the Centers related to the responsibility |
| Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =46) | 98% | 80% |
| Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =41) | 90 | 78 |
| Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs (<i>n</i> =38) | 95 | 79 |
| Disseminating information on scientifically based research to districts and schools (<i>n</i> =36) | 97 | 74 |
| Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts (<i>n</i> =36) | 86 | 66 |
| Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =34) | 94 | 74 |
| Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) (<i>n</i> =29) | 79 | 59 |
| Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =25) | 80 | 65 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools (<i>n</i> =24) | 71 | 50 |
| Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems (<i>n</i> =21) | 81 | 62 |
| Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards (<i>n</i> =16) | 69 | 33 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 46 state managers (weighted) reported a major or moderate priority for technical assistance with building or managing a statewide system of support. Of those state managers, 98 percent reported receiving technical assistance from the Centers related to that responsibility and 80 percent reported that the technical assistance was major or moderate in scope.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.2. Extent to which Center Assistance expanded state capacity for NCLB implementation, as judged by senior state managers, 2006-07

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of the state managers (weighted) who rated the area as a major or moderate technical assistance priority | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--|
| | Reporting capacity building in this area | | | | NA, state has not sought assistance for this purpose |
| | To a very great or great extent | To a moderate extent | To a small or very small extent | Too soon to tell | |
| Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =53) | 53% | 14% | 18% | 8% | 7% |
| Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =46) | 51 | 20 | 12 | 7 | 10 |
| Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs (<i>n</i> =42) | 47 | 24 | 8 | 11 | 10 |
| Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =40) | 43 | 14 | 14 | 11 | 18 |
| Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts (<i>n</i> =40) | 42 | 16 | 11 | 2 | 29 |
| Disseminating information on scientifically based research to districts and schools (<i>n</i> =38) | 39 | 38 | 10 | 5 | 8 |
| Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) (<i>n</i> =38) | 33 | 17 | 11 | 9 | 30 |
| Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =35) | 33 | 25 | 5 | 4 | 33 |
| Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems (<i>n</i> =28) | 34 | 24 | 6 | 9 | 27 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools (<i>n</i> =25) | 34 | 22 | 21 | 8 | 15 |
| Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards (<i>n</i> =19) | 26 | 23 | 7 | 10 | 34 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the 53 state managers (weighted) reported that technical assistance in building or managing a statewide system of support was a major or moderate priority for their state. Of those state managers, 53 percent reported that technical assistance received from the Centers expanded the state's capacity in this area to a great or very great extent.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.3. Extent to which Center assistance expanded state capacity in priority areas, as judged by senior state managers, 2007-08

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of the state managers (weighted) who rated the area as a major or moderate technical assistance priority | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Reporting capacity building in this area | | | | Does not apply or not able to judge |
| | To a great extent | To a moderate extent | To a small extent | Not at all | |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (<i>n</i> =56) | 45% | 27% | 13% | 7% | 9% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (<i>n</i> =43) | 26 | 33 | 23 | 5 | 14 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =42) | 26 | 31 | 17 | 10 | 14 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (<i>n</i> =41) | 37 | 27 | 20 | 2 | 15 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (<i>n</i> =37) | 24 | 38 | 22 | 5 | 11 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =35) | 31 | 26 | 9 | 9 | 26 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (<i>n</i> =25) | 24 | 20 | 16 | 8 | 32 |
| Communication with parents or the public (<i>n</i> =25) | 20 | 28 | 28 | 0 | 24 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, 56 state managers (weighted) reported that technical assistance in building or managing a statewide system of support was a major or moderate priority for their state. Of those, 45 percent reported that technical assistance received from the Centers expanded the state's capacity in this area to a great extent.

Exhibit F.4. Extent to which Center assistance expanded state capacity in priority areas, as judged by senior state managers, 2008-09

| Area of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of the state managers (weighted) who rated the area as a major or moderate technical assistance priority | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Reporting capacity building in this area | | | | Does not apply or not able to judge |
| | To a great extent | To a moderate extent | To a small extent | Not at all | |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (<i>n</i> =50) | 56% | 26% | 14% | 0% | 4% |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (<i>n</i> =40) | 33 | 40 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| State assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =39) | 31 | 28 | 18 | 3 | 21 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (<i>n</i> =39) | 36 | 41 | 10 | 0 | 13 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (<i>n</i> =36) | 22 | 39 | 17 | 3 | 19 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =30) | 30 | 27 | 17 | 3 | 23 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (<i>n</i> =26) | 12 | 27 | 23 | 15 | 23 |
| Communication with parents or the public (<i>n</i> =26) | 19 | 31 | 19 | 12 | 19 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, 50 state managers (weighted) reported that technical assistance in building or managing a statewide system of support was a major or moderate priority for their state. Of those, 56 percent reported that technical assistance received from the Centers expanded the state's capacity in this area to a great extent.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.5. States' use of external sources of technical assistance, 2006-07

| External source | Percent of state managers (weighted) reporting: | | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| | One of the state's most important resources | To a great extent, but not one of the state's most important resources | To a moderate extent | Minimally | No contact |
| Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) (<i>n</i> =54) | 37% | 24% | 28% | 9% | 2% |
| Comprehensive Center network (<i>n</i> =54) | 35 | 37 | 14 | 12 | 2 |
| Regional Educational Laboratory (<i>n</i> =53) | 33 | 29 | 21 | 12 | 5 |
| U.S. Department of Education (<i>n</i> =52) | 29 | 16 | 35 | 19 | 1 |
| Colleges and universities (<i>n</i> =54) | 18 | 15 | 34 | 30 | 3 |
| Consulting firms or private contractors (<i>n</i> =54) | 13 | 29 | 33 | 19 | 6 |
| Senior managers in other SEAs (<i>n</i> =54) | 9 | 29 | 37 | 23 | 2 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 37 percent of state managers (weighted) said that professional associations were one of the state's most important technical-assistance resources.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.6. Purposes for which states used external sources of technical assistance, 2006-07

| Purpose in seeking technical assistance (percent of state managers) (n=54) | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| External Source | To gather information or to keep current with new ideas | To plan the initial steps in solving a problem | To complete tasks that the state could do itself if it had more staff or resources | SEA or intermediate education agency staff | To complete tasks for which the state lacks expertise | To develop the skills of agency staff | To work directly with districts and schools |
| Comprehensive Center network (n=54) | 87% | 66% | 59% | 54% | 61% | 22% | 4% |
| Regional Educational Laboratory (n=55) | 84 | 57 | 45 | 54 | 47 | 20 | 4 |
| U.S. Department of Education (n=52) | 85 | 40 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 12 | 7 |
| Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) (n=52) | 96 | 51 | 43 | 36 | 57 | 14 | 5 |
| Senior managers in other SEAs (n=54) | 88 | 54 | 10 | 12 | 30 | 3 | 8 |
| Consulting firms or private contractors (n=54) | 30 | 35 | 63 | 47 | 30 | 37 | 15 |
| Colleges and universities (n=54) | 43 | 31 | 48 | 40 | 30 | 37 | 12 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 87 percent of state managers (weighted) said that they turned to the Centers to gather information or to keep current with new ideas.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.7. Purposes for which states used external sources of technical assistance, 2007-08

| External Source | Purpose in seeking technical assistance (percent of state managers) (n=57) | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| | To gather information or to keep current with new ideas | To complete tasks that the state could do itself if it had more staff or resources | To complete tasks that the state lacks expertise | To complete tasks for SEA or intermediate education agency staff | To develop the skills of districts and schools | To work directly with assistance from this source | Our state doesn't seek assistance from this source |
| Comprehensive Center network | 65% | 60% | 58% | 49% | 59% | 16% | 3% |
| Regional Educational Laboratory | 66 | 39 | 41 | 36 | 29 | 13 | 9 |
| U.S. Department of Education | 61 | 34 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 16 |
| Professional associations (e.g., CCSSO, ASCD) | 67 | 19 | 11 | 16 | 32 | 6 | 16 |
| Senior managers in other SEAs | 71 | 32 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 2 | 8 |
| Consulting firms or private contractors | 30 | 26 | 46 | 41 | 23 | 21 | 13 |
| Colleges and universities | 35 | 28 | 36 | 29 | 19 | 23 | 18 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, 65 percent of state managers (weighted) said that they turned to the Centers to gather information or to keep current with new ideas.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.8. Usefulness of Center assistance compared with assistance from other sources, 2006-07

| Areas of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of state managers (weighted) rating Center technical assistance | | | |
|---|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Much more or somewhat more useful | About the same | Much less or somewhat less useful | Not able to judge |
| Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =54) | 58% | 16% | 14% | 12% |
| Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs (<i>n</i> =48) | 57 | 15 | 14 | 14 |
| Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB (<i>n</i> =49) | 55 | 17 | 11 | 17 |
| Disseminating information on scientifically based research to districts and schools (<i>n</i> =51) | 50 | 23 | 12 | 15 |
| Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) (<i>n</i> =40) | 45 | 19 | 16 | 20 |
| Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements (<i>n</i> =49) | 44 | 20 | 12 | 24 |
| Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts (<i>n</i> =46) | 37 | 21 | 21 | 21 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools (<i>n</i> =39) | 33 | 22 | 18 | 27 |
| Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems (<i>n</i> =39) | 29 | 22 | 22 | 27 |
| Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems (<i>n</i> =39) | 27 | 27 | 17 | 29 |
| Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards (<i>n</i> =32) | 22 | 26 | 15 | 37 |

NOTE: States that chose the response, "not applicable, state has not sought assistance for this purpose," were excluded from the analysis.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 58 percent of state managers (weighted) reported that Centers were much more or somewhat more useful than other sources of technical assistance for the state responsibility of building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.9. Usefulness of Center assistance compared with assistance from other sources, 2007-08

| Areas of state responsibility under NCLB | Percent of state managers, weighted, rating Center technical assistance as: | | | |
|---|---|----------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | More useful | About the same | Less useful | Not able to judge |
| Statewide systems of support or school support teams (<i>n=54</i>) | 60% | 19% | 10% | 11% |
| State assessment and accountability systems (<i>n=41</i>) | 32 | 36 | 11 | 21 |
| Assistance with educators' use of assessment data (<i>n=46</i>) | 31 | 36 | 14 | 19 |
| Development or dissemination of research-based curriculum, instruction, or professional development programs in academic subject(s) (<i>n=48</i>) | 41 | 34 | 8 | 16 |
| Policies and practices for English language learners (<i>n=48</i>) | 42 | 22 | 10 | 26 |
| Administering supplemental educational services (SES) and choice provisions (<i>n=34</i>) | 29 | 19 | 18 | 34 |
| Communication with parents or the public (<i>n=38</i>) | 18 | 37 | 19 | 26 |
| Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements (<i>n=35</i>) | 41 | 21 | 12 | 25 |
| State planning or reporting requirements of NCLB not covered above (<i>n=34</i>) | 34 | 34 | 10 | 22 |

NOTE: States that chose the response, "not applicable, state has not sought assistance for this purpose," were excluded from the analysis.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, 60 percent of state managers, weighted, reported that Centers were more useful than other sources of technical assistance for the state NCLB responsibility of statewide systems of support or school support teams.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.10. Relevance and usefulness items from the 2006-07 state manager survey

| Relevance | Usefulness |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Addressed a need or problem that the state faces b. Addressed an important state priority c. Addressed a challenge that the state faces related to the implementation of NCLB d. Responded flexibly to our state's changing needs e. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be applied to the state's work f. Addressed the particular context in which our state operates g. Addressed the state's specific challenges (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics) h. Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, and practices i. Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for state-level clients' policies, programs, or practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provided state staff with resources that were easy to understand and easy to use b. Employed appropriate formats (e.g., work groups, conferences, individual consultation, written products) c. Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states d. Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources e. Were timely f. Helped the state to solve a problem g. Helped the state to maintain or change a policy or practice h. Helped the state take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort i. Provided state staff with information or resources that they will use again j. Helped state staff to develop skills that they will be able to exercise again |

Exhibit F.11. Mean ratings of the relevance and usefulness of Center assistance, as judged by state managers, 2006-07

| | Mean relevance rating (n=54) | Mean usefulness rating (n=53) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Center program | 3.94 | 3.86 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 54 state managers (weighted) gave the Center program a mean relevance rating of 3.94.

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Exhibit F.12. Breakout of ratings of the relevance and usefulness of Center assistance, as judged by state managers, 2006-07

| | Relevance | | | | Usefulness | | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Percent of state managers (weighted) giving overall ratings in the following ranges: | | | | Percent of state managers (weighted) giving overall ratings in the following ranges: | | | |
| | Very low to low (1.0-1.9) | Low to moderate (2.0-2.9) | Moderate to high (3.0-3.9) | High to very high (4.0-5.0) | Very low to low (1.0-1.9) | Low to moderate (2.0-2.9) | Moderate to high (3.0-3.9) | High to very high (4.0-5.0) |
| Center program | 3 | 9 | 31 | 57 | 4 | 8 | 38 | 50 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 3 percent of state managers (weighted) gave the Center program an overall relevance rating in the very low to low range (1.0-1.9).

SOURCE: Survey of State Managers. Responses weighted so that each state was equally represented in instances where more than one manager from a state responded.

Appendix G
Ratings of Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness

Ratings of Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness

This appendix section presents the expert panel review rating materials and the participant surveys that were collected to determine ratings of technical quality, relevance, and usefulness.

Expert Panel Reviewer Scoring Booklet Used for Quality Ratings

This appendix section presents the Scoring Booklet that was used by the expert panel reviewers for all three cycles of quality ratings. The goal in developing the scoring rubric was to provide uniform, objective criteria for rating technical quality. Because the evaluation of each project was based on the professional judgment of three panelists, differences among raters were inevitable. Providing a well-developed scoring rubric and training the panelists on the use of the scoring criteria was intended to maximize interrater agreement and reduce bias.

For the purposes of this evaluation, technical quality of Center projects was demonstrated through the comprehensive and balanced use of scientifically based research and the applicable nonresearch knowledge base. The best available research or knowledge base was expected to inform the delivery of technical assistance. Where rigorous and consistent evidence was lacking, there had to be an acknowledgment in the technical assistance provided of the lack of conclusive evidence and advice, and recommendations had to be appropriately tempered. Professional wisdom was expected to be integrated with the best available empirical evidence in planning for and delivering products and services. To be rated high quality, the materials were expected to be accurate, complete, and clear and should support use and implementation of the content.

Relevance and Usefulness Ratings from RCC and State-Level Participant Surveys

This appendix section presents the sets of participant surveys that were administered to RCC and state-level staff to obtain client views of technical assistance from the Centers, particularly in the areas of the relevance and usefulness of Center products.

In the first year of data collection, the evaluation team developed the two parallel survey forms. One version of the survey was written using text appropriate for state-level staff who participated in any Center's project. The second, similar version of the survey was written with wording appropriate for RCC staff who participated in a CC project. Both surveys asked questions in each of the following areas:

- Project Participation;
- Relevance and Usefulness;
- Priorities for Technical Assistance;
- Capacity to Carry out Responsibilities Related to NCLB, and
- Job Responsibilities.

After reviewing the responses to the 2006-07 administration of the participant survey, the evaluation team made several revisions to the survey instrument that remained in place for both

the 2007-08 and 2008-09 survey administration cycles (described in exhibit G.1 below). Questions that remained unchanged from the first year of survey administration are not included in the exhibit.

Exhibit G.1. Revisions to the participant survey from 2006-07 to 2007-08

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2006-07 to 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|---|--|--|
| Time spent on project by type of activity | <p>Of this set of activities and resources (described at the beginning of this survey), how much time did you spend participating in each of the following types of activities or making use of each of the following types of resources? (Circle one response in each row.)</p> <p>Reporting categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 5 days • 3-5 days • 1-2 days • Less than 1 day • Not applicable; not part of this set of activities and resources <p>Types of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • Training • Task force meetings • Reviewing general or background information provided by the Center • Using tools and other resources provided by the Content Center • Advance planning • Ongoing consultation on this topic • Follow-up and action plans | <p>During the period from July XXXX through June XXXX, how much time (in days) did you spend with the activities and resources described? Include time spent at conferences or trainings, in task force meetings, in advance planning or follow-up, and reading or using print or electronic materials. (Circle one response.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 30 days • 21-30 days • 11-20 days • 6-10 days • 5 days or less <p>In your experience with this set of activities and resources, in which of the following possible components did you participate? (Circle Yes or No on each row.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance planning • Conferences • Training • Task force meetings • Reviewing general or background information provided by the Center • Using tools and other resources provided by the Center • Ongoing consultation on this topic |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2006-07 to 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|--|---|---|
| Respondent involvement in project planning | <p data-bbox="478 256 1245 440">Were you <i>personally</i> involved in determining the goals or designing the content or format of this set of activities and resources (described at the beginning of this survey)? In what ways? (Circle all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 472 1094 500">a. Identifying the problem or need to be addressed <li data-bbox="478 505 905 532">b. Selecting or framing the content <li data-bbox="478 537 1205 594">c. Providing data or other background information during the planning phase <li data-bbox="478 599 1026 626">d. Identifying or recruiting project participants <li data-bbox="478 631 1083 659">e. Identifying or recruiting presenters or resources <li data-bbox="478 664 758 691">f. Designing activities <li data-bbox="478 696 1171 753">g. Planning for or leading dissemination of new ideas and information <li data-bbox="478 758 1188 815">h. Coordinating this set of activities with other work that my organization does <li data-bbox="478 820 737 847">i. Planning logistics <li data-bbox="478 852 1094 906">j. Other (Specify: _____) <li data-bbox="478 911 1230 959">k. I did not contribute at all to the design of this set of activities and resources | <p data-bbox="1293 256 1934 378">Were you <i>personally</i> involved in determining the goals or designing the content or format of this set of activities and resources (described at the beginning of this survey)? (Circle Yes or No.)</p> |

| Question | 2006-07 administration | 2006-07 to 2007-08/2008-09 administration |
|---|--|--|
| Respondent's job responsibilities related to NCLB | <p data-bbox="464 256 1260 342">During the period from July 2006 through June 2007, which of the following statements best describes your job responsibilities related to NCLB implementation? (Circle all that apply.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 383 1178 435">a. Formulating or refining state policies to respond to NCLB requirements <li data-bbox="464 440 1260 492">b. Building or managing a statewide system of support for districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB <li data-bbox="464 496 1260 583">c. Training or managing the state-level staff or school support teams who provide support to districts and schools identified for improvement under NCLB <li data-bbox="464 587 1260 639">d. Designing or implementing state assessment and accountability systems <li data-bbox="464 644 1247 696">e. Aligning state accountability systems with NCLB accountability systems <li data-bbox="464 701 1209 735">f. Supporting use of assessment data by schools and districts <li data-bbox="464 740 1224 792">g. Disseminating information on scientifically-based research to districts and schools <li data-bbox="464 797 1251 849">h. Identifying and/or developing programs or models that address district and/or school needs <li data-bbox="464 854 1241 940">i. Providing training and other professional development to local educators in academic subjects (reading language arts, mathematics, science) <li data-bbox="464 945 1251 997">j. Monitoring compliance with NCLB requirements in districts and schools <li data-bbox="464 1002 1220 1053">k. Communicating with the public about NCLB requirements or report cards <li data-bbox="464 1058 940 1092">l. Other (Specify: _____) <p data-bbox="464 1127 1276 1213">During the period from July 2006 through June 2007, what percent of your time was spent on all the tasks you selected in Question 13 above, combined? (Circle one.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="512 1250 714 1276">• 0-25 percent <li data-bbox="512 1282 726 1308">• 26-50 percent <li data-bbox="512 1315 726 1341">• 51-75 percent <li data-bbox="512 1347 743 1373">• 76-100 percent | <p data-bbox="1295 256 1940 375">During the period from July XXXX through June XXXX, what percent of your time was spent providing technical assistance to state clients on their responsibilities related to NCLB? (Circle one.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1344 412 1541 438">• 0-25 percent <li data-bbox="1344 444 1556 470">• 26-50 percent <li data-bbox="1344 477 1556 503">• 51-75 percent <li data-bbox="1344 509 1570 537">• 76-100 percent |

National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers Scoring Booklet for Expert Reviewers

[Date]



Policy Studies Associates



Dimension 1: Demonstrated Use of Appropriate Knowledge Base

| Indicators | Definitions for Indicators | Evidence and Applicability to Project |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1A. The knowledge base used is appropriately comprehensive, given the project's purpose. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most important research and knowledge are used when applicable and appropriate for the project.• Appropriate legal and regulatory guidelines are used when applicable for the project. | |
| 1B. The knowledge base used is accurately described. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicable knowledge base is accurately described in the project's materials.• Research findings, regulatory guidelines, or professional wisdom used in the project materials are accurately described. | |
| 1C. The knowledge base used for the project is relevant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The research/knowledge base used is relevant to the topic.• Legal and regulatory guidelines that are presented are relevant to the topic. | |

Dimension 1: Demonstrated Use of Appropriate Knowledge Base (Continued)

| Indicators | Definitions for Indicators | Evidence and Applicability to Project |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1D. The knowledge base represented in the project is balanced, when appropriate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one point of view is presented in the knowledge base used, if it is applicable and important. • Where the level of evidence warrants, the knowledge base used reflects the variety of valid perspectives appropriate for consideration in the field. | |
| 1E. Prominence in findings and recommendations is given to current and best available scientifically based research, knowledge base, and professional wisdom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where available, prominence is given to research that is scientifically based. • Research and knowledge base used and reflected in the project represent the latest generation of findings. • Research studies that used appropriate designs, methodologies, and measures are given prominence over those with weaker designs, when available. | |
| 1F. Limitations in the knowledge base are acknowledged in the project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials clearly note the strength (or limitations) of the knowledge or research base. • Findings or recommendations based on best practice only (rather than more empirical evidence) are accurately identified as such in the materials. | |

Criteria for Scoring—Demonstrated Use of Appropriate Knowledge Base

Directions: Circle the number that best describes the demonstrated use of the appropriate knowledge base in the project, considering the project's performance on the various indicators identified.

| | Very High Quality | High Quality | Moderate Quality | Low Quality | Very Low Quality |
|-----------|---|---------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1A | The research/knowledge base used or referenced in project materials includes an appropriate set of important sources in this field, pertinent to the project's purpose. | | There is a research/knowledge base used or referenced in project materials, pertinent to the project's purpose, but some important sources are not included. | | There is no research/knowledge base used or referenced in project materials, or the research/knowledge base used or referenced in project materials includes none of the important source materials in the field pertinent to the project's purpose. |
| 1B | All of the research findings, legal and regulatory guidelines, or professional wisdom used in the project's materials is accurately described. | | Some inaccuracies exist in the description of the research/knowledge base in the project's materials. | | Inaccuracies exist throughout the project in describing the research/knowledge base. |
| 1C | All of the information presented about the research/ knowledge base in project materials is relevant to the topic. | | Some of the research and/or knowledge base reflected in the materials is relevant; however, some of the material presented is not relevant. | | Most of the information presented for the research/knowledge base is not relevant to the topic. |
| 1D | The research/ knowledge base used or referenced contains a balanced variety of valid perspectives in this field. | | Some balance is provided in presenting the variety of valid perspectives in the field; however, some imbalance is evident. | | No balance is provided in presenting the various valid perspectives in the field. |
| 1E | The most current and rigorous research and knowledge available is given the most prominence in project materials. | | The most current and rigorous research/knowledge base available is only partially reflected and given prominence in the project. | | The most current and rigorous research/knowledge base available is minimally reflected and given little or no prominence in the project. |
| 1F | Limitations in the available research/knowledge base are clearly described and acknowledged in project materials. | | Limitations in the available research/knowledge base are only partially described and acknowledged in the project materials, although they exist. | | No limitations in the available research/knowledge base are acknowledged in the project materials, although they exist. |

Dimension 2: Fidelity of Application of the Knowledge Base to the Products and Services Provided

| Indicators | Definitions for Indicators | Evidence and Applicability to Project |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2A. The application of the research/ knowledge base is clear and accurate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate application of the core findings from the available knowledge base is evident in the project's products, assistance, or advice. • The project's products, assistance, and advice clearly interpret and apply the research and/or knowledge base. | |
| 2B. There is consistency between the strength of the research/knowledge base and its proposed application. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The certainty and strength of recommendations in the project's products, assistance, and advice are consistent with and appropriate for the level of rigor and certainty in the available research/knowledge base. | |
| 2C. Appropriate emphasis is given in application of the most rigorous and consistent research and knowledge base. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominence is given to products, assistance, and advice derived from the most <i>rigorous</i> research and knowledge base. • Prominence is given to products, services, and advice derived from the most <i>consistent</i> research and knowledge base. | |
| 2D. Application of nonempirical research and professional wisdom only are appropriately tempered. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products, assistance, and advice based on a weak research base, limited legal or regulatory guidance, or primarily nonempirical professional wisdom are appropriately tempered. | |

Criteria for Scoring—Fidelity of Application of the Knowledge Base to the Products and Services Provided

Directions: Circle the number that best describes the fidelity of application of the knowledge base to the products and services provided, considering the project's performance on the various indicators identified.

| | Very High Quality | High Quality | Moderate Quality | Low Quality | Very Low Quality |
|-----------|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2A | The products, assistance and advice provided through this project are consistently accurate and clear in interpreting and applying the available research and knowledge base used in the project. | | The products, assistance, and advice provided through this project are accurate and clear in interpreting and applying the available research and knowledge base in the project used in some respects but not others. | | The products, assistance and advice provided through this project are consistently inaccurate and unclear in interpreting and applying the available research and/or knowledge base used in the project. |
| 2B | The products, advice, and assistance provided through this project are fully consistent with the available research and knowledge base. | | The products, advice, and assistance provided through this project are partially consistent with the available research and knowledge. | | The products, advice, and assistance provided through this project are not consistent and for the most part conflicts with the available research and knowledge base. |
| 2C | The products, assistance, and advice provided through this project completely and consistently emphasize the application of findings derived from rigorous and consistent research and knowledge over the application of findings from less rigorous or consistent research or knowledge. | | Some of the products, assistance, and advice provided through this project emphasize the application of findings derived from rigorous and consistent research and knowledge over the application of findings from less rigorous or less consistent research or knowledge in some instances, but some products, assistance, and advice provided emphasize less rigorous or consistent research and knowledge. | | The products, assistance and advice provided through this project consistently emphasize the application of findings derived from less rigorous and less consistent research and knowledge over the application of findings from more rigorous or consistent research or knowledge. |
| 2D | Products, assistance, and advice provided through this project that are based on weak research or knowledge base are consistently acknowledged and appropriately tempered. | | Products, assistance, and advice provided through this project that are based on weak research or knowledge base are partially acknowledged and are tempered only in part. | | Products, assistance, and advice provided through this project that are based on weak research or knowledge base are never acknowledged as such and are rarely if ever tempered. |

Dimension 3: Clear and Effective Delivery

| Indicators | Definitions for Indicators | Evidence and Applicability to Project |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 3A. Information communicated in the project products and services meets the project's purpose. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information contained in the project materials is clear in meeting the purpose of the project. Information contained in the project materials is complete and applicable in meeting the purpose of the project. | |
| 3B. The project contains meaningful learning experiences, appropriate for the intended audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate, products and services are designed to engage participants in effective learning experiences. In the opinion of the reviewer, the audience should be interested in the information and recommendations because of the way in which they are delivered. | |
| 3C. The products and services in the project are appropriate for the intended audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The products and services as presented are relevant and well-suited for the intended audience. The products and services as presented appear to be useful for the intended audience. | |
| 3D. Ideas are effectively communicated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and accessible language is used in project materials. Project materials are well-written. Information conveyed will be understood by intended audience. | |

Criteria for Scoring—Clear and Effective Delivery

Directions: Circle the number that best describes clear and effective delivery considering the project's performance on the various indicators identified.

| | Very High Quality | High Quality | Moderate Quality | Low Quality | Very Low Quality |
|-----------|--|--------------|--|-------------|--|
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3A | Project materials and the information presented are complete and applicable for meeting the project's purpose. | | Project materials and information are partially incomplete or not applicable for meeting the project's purpose. | | Project materials and information is incomplete or not at all applicable to the purpose of the project. |
| 3B | The project materials will engage participants or users in meaningful learning experiences or will be of interest to them because of the way in which materials are delivered or packaged. | | Some of the project materials will engage participants in learning experiences or will be of interest to them, but some of the materials will not because of the way they are delivered or packaged. | | The project materials lack meaningful learning experiences and are very unlikely to engage or interest participants or users because of the way in which they are delivered or packaged. |
| 3C | The products and services produced for this project are very appropriate for the intended audience. | | A portion of the products and services produced for this project are not appropriate or relevant for the intended audience. | | The products and services produced for this project are not well-suited (neither appropriate nor relevant) for the intended audience. |
| 3D | Ideas and information are effectively communicated throughout all of the materials in the project. | | The ideas and information in the project materials are not effectively communicated and are confusing in some instances. | | The ideas and information are not effectively communicated throughout the project materials. |

National Evaluation of Comprehensive Centers
[date]

Score Reporting Form for Expert Reviews

Project Title: _____

Comprehensive Center
Name: _____

Please list your scores below:

Dimension 1 Score: _____

Dimension 2 Score: _____

Dimension 3 Score: _____

I attest that the scores listed on this scoring sheet are based on my thorough review and objective assessment of the project cover sheet and project artifacts based on the scoring guidance and rubric provided by the evaluation contractor. I attest that I have not discussed these materials or this review with anyone other than the designated evaluation team contact prior to submission.

I have also provided a bulleted summary of this project's strengths and weaknesses.

I further attest that I do not have any undisclosed conflict of interest for this particular project.

Your Name
(Print): _____

Your Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H
Supplemental Tables – Quality, Relevance,
and Usefulness Ratings

Quality Relevance and Usefulness Ratings – Supplemental Tables

This appendix serves as a supplement to the information presented in chapter 5 of the report. It includes the quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 data collection cycles as well as more detailed versions of some exhibits provided in the report for all three years.

Exhibit H.1. Mean ratings on dimensions of technical quality, 2006-07, by center type

| | Technical quality | Quality dimensions: | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Dimension 1 (use of knowledge base) | Dimension 2 (fidelity of application) | Dimension 3 (clear and effective delivery) |
| All Centers (N=21) | 3.34 | 3.22 | 3.20 | 3.60 |
| All RCCs (N=16) | 3.21 | 3.05 | 3.07 | 3.52 |
| All CCs (N=5) | 3.73 | 3.75 | 3.59 | 3.85 |
| Difference of RCC and CC means | -0.52[†] | -0.70[†] | -0.52[†] | -0.33[†] |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation(all Centers)</i> | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0.44 | 0.35 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | -1.28 | -1.42 | -1.18 | -0.95 |

NOTE: All ratings were on a 5-point scale, with 5 as the high value. The “technical quality” rating is the mean of the ratings for the three quality dimensions. A notation of [†] indicates that the difference in the mean ratings between the CCs and RCCs is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: Among the 21 Centers, the mean technical quality rating was 3.34 for the program year 2006-07.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings; each project contributed equally to Center ratings; and each Center contributed equally to cross-Center ratings.

Exhibit H.2. Mean ratings on dimensions of technical quality, 2007-08, by center type

| | Technical quality | Quality dimensions: | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Dimension 1 (use of knowledge base) | Dimension 2 (fidelity of application) | Dimension 3 (clear and effective delivery) |
| All Centers (N=21) | 3.51 | 3.39 | 3.44 | 3.71 |
| All RCCs (N=16) | 3.41 | 3.25 | 3.32 | 3.64 |
| All CCs (N=5) | 3.86 | 3.83 | 3.83 | 3.94 |
| Difference of RCC and CC means | -0.45[†] | -0.58[†] | -0.51[†] | -0.30[†] |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation(all Centers)</i> | 0.41 | 0.53 | 0.43 | 0.35 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | -1.09 | -1.09 | -1.19 | -0.85 |

NOTE: All ratings were on a 5-point scale, with 5 as the high value. The "technical quality" rating is the mean of the ratings for the three quality dimensions. A notation of † indicates that the difference in the mean ratings between the CCs and RCCs is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: Among the 21 Centers, the mean technical quality rating was 3.51 for the program year 2007-08.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings; each project contributed equally to Center ratings; and each Center contributed equally to cross-Center ratings.

Exhibit H.3. Mean ratings on dimensions of technical quality, 2008-09, by center type

| | Technical quality | Quality dimensions: | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Dimension 1 (use of knowledge base) | Dimension 2 (fidelity of application) | Dimension 3 (clear and effective delivery) |
| All Centers (N=21) | 3.57 | 3.45 | 3.54 | 3.72 |
| All RCCs (N=16) | 3.52 | 3.40 | 3.47 | 3.70 |
| All CCs (N=5) | 3.72 | 3.63 | 3.73 | 3.81 |
| Difference of RCC and CC means | -0.20[†] | -0.23[†] | -0.26[†] | -0.11 |
| <i>Pooled standard deviation(all Centers)</i> | 0.37 | 0.43 | 0.37 | 0.36 |
| <i>Ratio of difference in means to pooled standard deviation</i> | -0.55 | -0.54 | -0.71 | -0.31 |

NOTE: All ratings were on a 5-point scale, with 5 as the high value. The "technical quality" rating is the mean of the ratings for the three quality dimensions. A notation of † indicates that the difference in the mean ratings between the CCs and RCCs is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation in the rating.

EXHIBIT READS: Among the 21 Centers, the mean technical quality rating was 3.57 for the program year 2008-09.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to project ratings; each project contributed equally to Center ratings; and each Center contributed equally to cross-Center ratings.

Exhibit H.4. Mean relevance ratings, by components of relevance, by year

| Components of relevance: | Mean relevance component rating | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Addressed a need or problem that my organization faces | 4.11 | 4.25 | 4.26 |
| Addressed an important priority of my organization | 4.07 | 4.19 | 4.23 |
| Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be applied to the work of my organization | 4.07 | 4.26 | 4.27 |
| Addressed a challenge that my organization faces related to the implementation of NCLB | 3.99 | 4.11 | 4.07 |
| Provided information, advice, and/or resources that could be used to guide decisions about policies, programs, and practices | 3.92 | 4.15 | 4.18 |
| Highlighted the implications of research findings (or information about best practice) for policies, programs, or practices | 3.89 | 4.14 | 4.13 |
| Addressed our particular state context | 3.87 | 4.05 | 4.16 |
| Addressed the specific challenges facing my organization (e.g., policy environment, leadership capacity, budget pressures, local politics) | 3.63 | 3.94 | 3.97 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the project-level relevance rating was 4.11 for the relevance component “addressed a need or problem that their organization faced.”

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist contributed equally to the project rating and each project contributed equally to Center ratings.

Exhibit H.5. Mean usefulness ratings, by components of usefulness, by year

| Components of usefulness: | Mean usefulness component rating | | |
|--|---|----------------|----------------|
| | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 |
| Provided resources that were easy to understand and easy to use | 4.05 | 4.18 | 4.15 |
| Employed an appropriate format (e.g., a work group, a conference, individual consultation, written products) | 4.04 | 4.19 | 4.23 |
| Were timely | 3.94 | 4.12 | 4.13 |
| Provided my organization with information or resources that we will use again | 3.92 | 4.17 | 4.13 |
| Helped my organization to develop a shared expertise or knowledge-base | 3.75 | 4.05 | 3.98 |
| Helped individuals in my organization develop skills that they will use again | 3.65 | 3.93 | 3.87 |
| Helped my organization take the next step in a longer-term improvement effort | 3.53 | 3.89 | 3.95 |
| Provided adequate opportunity to learn from colleagues in other states | 3.48 | 3.54 | 3.61 |
| Helped my organization to solve a problem | 3.47 | 3.83 | 3.88 |
| Included adequate follow-up to support the use of new information and resources | 3.46 | 3.80 | 3.86 |
| Helped my organization to maintain or change a policy or practice | 3.24 | 3.73 | 3.74 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the project-level usefulness rating was 4.05 for the usefulness component "Provided resources that were easy to understand and easy to use."

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist contributed equally to the project rating and each project contributed equally to Center ratings.

Exhibit H.6. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of projects, by type of activity offered in the projects, 2006-07

| Type of assistance activity offered | | | | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|---------------|----|-------|--------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|------------|------|-------|
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | Yes (n=84) | | | 3.25 | | | 4.03 | | | 3.74 | | |
| | No (n=38) | | | 3.59 | | | 3.79 | | | 3.60 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.34 [†] | 0.50 | -0.68 | 0.24 [†] | 0.46 | -0.52 | 0.14 | 0.54 | 0.26 |
| Research collections and syntheses | Yes (n=71) | | | 3.50 | | | 3.94 | | | 3.67 | | |
| | No (n=51) | | | 3.17 | | | 3.98 | | | 3.73 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.49 | -0.04 | 0.52 | -0.08 | -0.06 | 0.54 | -0.11 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | Yes (n=50) | | | 3.24 | | | 4.00 | | | 3.73 | | |
| | No (n=72) | | | 3.44 | | | 3.93 | | | 3.67 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.20 | 0.67 | -0.30 | 0.07 | 0.52 | 0.14 | 0.06 | 0.54 | 0.11 |
| Training events | Yes (n=50) | | | 3.34 | | | 4.09 | | | 3.83 | | |
| | No (n=72) | | | 3.37 | | | 3.86 | | | 3.60 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.03 | 0.67 | -0.05 | 0.23 | 0.52 | 0.44 | 0.23 | 0.54 | 0.43 |
| Task force meetings and work | Yes (n=50) | | | 3.23 | | | 4.05 | | | 3.71 | | |
| | No (n=72) | | | 3.45 | | | 3.89 | | | 3.68 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.22 | 0.52 | -0.42 | 0.16 | 0.54 | 0.30 | 0.03 | 0.67 | 0.04 |
| Conference | Yes (n=43) | | | 3.60 | | | 3.83 | | | 3.61 | | |
| | No (n=79) | | | 3.21 | | | 4.03 | | | 3.74 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.39 [†] | 0.67 | 0.58 | -0.20 | 0.52 | -0.40 | -0.13 | 0.54 | -0.24 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | Yes (n=20) | | | 3.38 | | | 4.02 | | | 3.63 | | |
| | No (n=102) | | | 3.35 | | | 3.94 | | | 3.71 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.03 | 0.67 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 0.54 | 0.15 | -0.08 | 0.54 | -0.15 |

NOTE: For each type of assistance, the first two rows show the mean ratings and the number of projects in the sample for Yes (the activity or resource was offered) and No (not offered). The third row shows the difference in the means, the pooled standard deviation, and the calculated ratio of the difference in means to the pooled standard deviation. A notation of † indicates that the difference in the mean ratings is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the mean quality rating of projects that offered ongoing consultation and follow-up was 3.25, while the mean quality rating of projects that did not offer this was 3.59.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Exhibit H.7. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of projects, by type of activity offered in the projects, 2007-08

| Type of assistance activity offered | | | | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|---------------|----|-------|-------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | Yes (n=92) | | | 3.47 | | | 4.19 | | | 3.97 | | |
| | No (n=29) | | | 3.74 | | | 3.96 | | | 3.82 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.27 | 0.65 | -0.41 | 0.23 [†] | 0.43 | 0.53 | 0.15 | 0.48 | 0.32 |
| Research collections and syntheses | Yes (n=73) | | | 3.58 | | | 4.11 | | | 3.88 | | |
| | No (n=47) | | | 3.46 | | | 4.18 | | | 4.02 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.12 | 0.65 | 0.19 | -0.08 | 0.43 | -0.18 | -0.14 | 0.48 | -0.29 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | Yes (n=67) | | | 3.59 | | | 4.14 | | | 3.88 | | |
| | No (n=54) | | | 3.46 | | | 4.13 | | | 4.00 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.13 | 0.65 | 0.20 | 0.01 | 0.43 | 0.02 | -0.11 | 0.48 | -0.24 |
| Training events | Yes (n=65) | | | 3.51 | | | 4.10 | | | 3.92 | | |
| | No (n=56) | | | 3.56 | | | 4.18 | | | 3.96 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.05 | 0.65 | -0.07 | -0.08 | 0.43 | -0.19 | -0.04 | 0.48 | -0.08 |
| Task force meetings and work | Yes (n=57) | | | 3.45 | | | 4.21 | | | 3.96 | | |
| | No (n=64) | | | 3.61 | | | 4.07 | | | 3.91 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.16 | 0.65 | -0.25 | 0.14 | 0.43 | 0.33 | 0.05 | 0.48 | 0.11 |
| Conferences | Yes (n=45) | | | 3.56 | | | 4.08 | | | 3.89 | | |
| | No (n=76) | | | 3.52 | | | 4.17 | | | 3.96 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.05 | 0.65 | 0.07 | -0.10 | 0.43 | -0.22 | -0.07 | 0.48 | -0.15 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | Yes (n=34) | | | 3.50 | | | 4.30 | | | 4.11 | | |
| | No (n=87) | | | 3.55 | | | 4.07 | | | 3.87 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.04 | 0.65 | -0.07 | 0.23 [†] | 0.43 | 0.52 | 0.24 [†] | 0.48 | 0.51 |

NOTE: For each type of assistance, the first two rows show the mean ratings and the number of projects in the sample for Yes (the activity or resource was offered) and No (not offered). The third row shows the difference in the means, the pooled standard deviation, and the calculated ratio of the difference in means to the pooled standard deviation. A notation of † indicates that the difference in the mean ratings is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, the mean quality rating of projects that included ongoing consultation and follow-up was 3.47 while the mean quality rating of projects that did not offer this 3.74.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Exhibit H.8. Technical quality, relevance, and usefulness ratings of projects, by type of activity offered in the projects, 2008-09

| Type of assistance activity offered | | | | Technical quality | | | Relevance | | | Usefulness | | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|-------------------|------|-------|--------------------|------|-------|--------------------|------|-------|
| Ongoing consultation and follow-up | Yes (n=100) | | | 3.60 | | | 4.18 | | | 4.01 | | |
| | No (n=18) | | | 3.50 | | | 4.03 | | | 3.81 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.10 | 0.61 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.43 | 0.35 | 0.19 | 0.47 | 0.41 |
| Research collections and syntheses | Yes (n=68) | | | 3.72 | | | 4.14 | | | 3.98 | | |
| | No (n=50) | | | 3.04 | | | 4.19 | | | 3.99 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.68 [†] | 0.61 | 1.11 | -0.05 | 0.43 | -0.12 | -0.01 | 0.47 | -0.02 |
| Engagement of participants in project planning | Yes (n=61) | | | 3.62 | | | 4.13 | | | 3.93 | | |
| | No (n=57) | | | 3.54 | | | 4.16 | | | 4.04 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.08 | 0.61 | 0.13 | -0.03 | 0.43 | -0.07 | -0.11 | 0.47 | -0.24 |
| Training events | Yes (n=67) | | | 3.59 | | | 4.23 | | | 4.04 | | |
| | No (n=51) | | | 3.58 | | | 4.08 | | | 3.90 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.00 | 0.61 | 0.01 | 0.16 | 0.43 | 0.36 | 0.15 | 0.47 | 0.31 |
| Task force meetings and work | Yes (n=54) | | | 3.58 | | | 4.20 | | | 3.98 | | |
| | No (n=64) | | | 3.59 | | | 4.13 | | | 3.98 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | -0.02 | 0.61 | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.43 | 0.17 | 0.00 | 0.47 | 0.00 |
| Conference | Yes (n=47) | | | 3.68 | | | 3.97 | | | 3.81 | | |
| | No (n=71) | | | 3.53 | | | 4.29 | | | 4.09 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.15 | 0.61 | 0.25 | -0.32 [†] | 0.43 | -0.73 | -0.27 [†] | 0.47 | -0.58 |
| Support development of a formal plan to implement a program or policy | Yes (n=35) | | | 3.60 | | | 4.25 | | | 4.09 | | |
| | No (n=83) | | | 3.58 | | | 4.12 | | | 3.93 | | |
| | Diff | SD | Ratio | 0.03 | 0.61 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 0.43 | 0.30 | 0.16 | 0.47 | 0.34 |

NOTE: For each type of assistance, the first two rows show the mean ratings and the number of projects in the sample for Yes (the activity or resource was offered) and No (not offered). The third row shows the difference in the means, the pooled standard deviation, and the calculated ratio of the difference in means to the pooled standard deviation. The standard deviation was calculated across all projects for technical quality, relevance and usefulness and therefore the same standard deviation was used in the calculations for each type of assistance offered. A notation of [†] indicates that the difference in the mean ratings is at least one-half of one pooled standard deviation.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2008-09 program year, the mean quality rating of projects that ongoing consultation and follow-up was 3.60, while the mean quality rating of projects that did not offer this was 3.50.

SOURCE: Expert panel ratings of sampled projects for technical quality and surveys of project participants for relevance and usefulness. Responses weighted so that each panelist or participant contributed equally to the project rating, and each project contributed equally to the mean rating for its category.

Exhibit H.9. Participants' involvement in determining project goals or design, by type of Center, 2006-07

| Involved in determining the goals or design of the project | Percent of participants | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | RCC projects (n=2,355) | CC projects (n=1,116) |
| Total | 100% | 100% |
| Yes | 57 | 42 |
| No | 43 | 58 |

NOTE: Difference in the proportion of participants involved in design by type of Center is statistically significant ($p < .01$, Chi Square).

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, 57 percent of participants in projects conducted by RCCs reported they were involved in determining the goals or design of the project.

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Exhibit H.10. Mean relevance and usefulness ratings, by time respondents spent in each activity, 2006-07

| Type of activity or resource | Time spent | Relevance | Usefulness |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Ongoing consultation on this topic | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,156) | 4.35 | 4.06 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,115) | 3.81 | 3.59 |
| | Difference | 0.54* | 0.47* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Reviewing general or background materials provided by the Center | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,105) | 4.32 | 4.07 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,534) | 3.78 | 3.53 |
| | Difference | 0.54* | 0.54* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Advance planning | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =731) | 4.37 | 4.08 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,311) | 3.91 | 3.65 |
| | Difference | 0.46* | 0.40* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Training | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,136) | 4.13 | 3.93 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,219) | 3.94 | 3.72 |
| | Difference | 0.19* | 0.21* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Task force meetings | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =581) | 4.29 | 3.94 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,061) | 3.86 | 3.61 |
| | Difference | 0.43* | 0.33* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Conferences | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,219) | 4.15 | 3.87 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,556) | 3.82 | 3.63 |
| | Difference | 0.33* | 0.24* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Follow-up and action plans | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,138) | 4.38 | 4.04 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,307) | 3.81 | 3.57 |
| | Difference | 0.57* | 0.47* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |
| Using tools and other resources provided by the Center | 3+ days (<i>n</i> =1,450) | 4.34 | 4.10 |
| | <3 days (<i>n</i> =1,305) | 3.68 | 3.42 |
| | Difference | 0.66* | 0.68* |
| | Significance | <i>p</i> <.01 | <i>p</i> <.01 |

* Difference statistically significant at *p*<.05 using a one-way ANOVA.

NOTE: The types of activities and resources shown in this table are based on the types of activities presented in the participant survey and do not match categories presented in chapter 3 exhibits and exhibit 5.8, which were coded categories from the project cover sheets.

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2006-07 program year, the relevance ratings among project participants who indicated that they spent 3 or more days receiving ongoing consultation or support was 4.35 and statistically significantly higher than the ratings from project participants who spent less time receiving ongoing consultation or support (3.81).

SOURCE: Surveys of project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Exhibit H.11. Multiple regression of participant characteristics and ratings of relevance, by year

| 2007-08 | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Adjusted R-Square | .186 | | | |
| Coefficient | Beta | Standard Error of Beta | Standardized Beta | Significance |
| Constant | 2.98 | 0.05 | | <.01 |
| Involved in determining the goals or content of the project | 0.20 | 0.03 | 0.11 | <.01 |
| Time participants spent on project activities | 0.20 | 0.01 | 0.35 | <.01 |
| Agency where respondent worked | 0.18 | 0.03 | 0.09 | <.01 |
| Time spent on NCLB-related tasks | 0.10 | 0.01 | 0.14 | <.01 |
| 2008-09 | | | | |
| Adjusted R-Square | .187 | | | |
| Coefficient | Beta | Standard Error of Beta | Standardized Beta | Significance |
| Constant | 3.04 | 0.06 | | <.01 |
| Involved in determining the goals or content of the project | 0.29 | 0.03 | 0.17 | <.01 |
| Time participants spent on project activities | 0.17 | 0.01 | 0.29 | <.01 |
| Agency where respondent worked | 0.25 | 0.03 | 0.14 | <.01 |
| Time spent on NCLB-related tasks | 0.09 | 0.01 | 0.14 | <.01 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, the adjusted R-Square for a multiple regression model with these four predictors was .186, indicating the model explained nearly 19 percent of the variance in the ratings of project relevance. All four variables were found to be significant predictors of the rating of relevance after controlling for the other three factors. Overall, the amount of time a participant spent on project activities explained the largest portion of variance, and having a role in role in the design of the project the next largest.

SOURCE: Surveys of sample-eligible project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

Exhibit H.12. Multiple regression of participant characteristics and ratings of usefulness, by year

| 2007-08 | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Adjusted R-Square | .134 | | | |
| Coefficient | Beta | Standard Error of Beta | Standardized Beta | Significance |
| Constant | 3.06 | 0.05 | | <.01 |
| Involved in determining the goals or content of the project | 0.22 | 0.03 | 0.12 | <.01 |
| Time participants spent on project activities | 0.18 | 0.01 | 0.31 | <.01 |
| Agency where respondent worked | 0.18 | 0.03 | 0.09 | <.01 |
| Time spent on NCLB-related tasks | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.06 | <.01 |
| 2008-09 | | | | |
| Adjusted R-Square | .185 | | | |
| Coefficient | Beta | Standard Error of Beta | Standardized Beta | Significance |
| Constant | 2.70 | 0.06 | | <.01 |
| Involved in determining the goals or content of the project | 0.24 | 0.03 | 0.13 | <.01 |
| Time participants spent on project activities | 0.16 | 0.01 | 0.27 | <.01 |
| Agency where respondent worked | 0.38 | 0.03 | 0.21 | <.01 |
| Time spent on NCLB-related tasks | 0.11 | 0.01 | 0.17 | <.01 |

EXHIBIT READS: For the 2007-08 program year, the adjusted R-Square for a multiple regression model with these four predictors was .134, indicating the model explained nearly 13 percent of the variance in the ratings of project usefulness. All four variables were found to be significant predictors of the rating of usefulness after controlling for the other three factors. Overall, the amount of time a participant spent on project activities explained the largest portion of variance, and having a role in role in the design of the project the next largest.

SOURCE: Surveys of sample-eligible project participants. Responses weighted so that respondents represented all participants for the project.

