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Evaluation of the Regional Educational Laboratories Final Report

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EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATION EVALUATION
AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not reflect the policies or opinions of the U.S. Department of Education. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors and not the Department of Education or any consultants or members of the Technical Working Group for this evaluation.

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The study team conducting this evaluation consists of staff from Westat and its subcontractor, Policy Studies Associates. The organizations and their staff do not have financial interests that could be affected by findings from the study. None of the members of the Technical Working Group for this evaluation, convened by the study team to provide advice and guidance, have financial interests that could be affected by findings from the study. The members of expert review panels, who rated proposals and reports for Impact Studies of the Regional Educational Laboratories, do not have financial interests that could be affected by this study's findings.

Before joining the Institute of Education Sciences, Ruth Curran Neild, current commissioner of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, served as a review panelist for the rating of Fast Response Projects of the Regional Educational Laboratories. Dr. Neild was not otherwise involved in the preparation of this final evaluation report.

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	Acknowledgments	i
	Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest.....	ii
	Executive Summary.....	iv
	Research Questions and Key Findings.....	v
1	Introduction	1
2	Evaluation Design and Methods	13
3	Cross-REL Findings on the Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness of Research and Technical Assistance Products	24
4	REL: Appalachia.....	44
5	REL: Central.....	56
6	REL: Mid-Atlantic.....	69
7	REL: Midwest	83
8	REL: Northeast and Islands.....	96
9	REL: Northwest.....	111
10	REL: Pacific.....	125
11	REL: Southeast	137
12	REL: Southwest.....	151
13	REL: West.....	165

Appendix

A	Rubrics for Expert Panel Review of Impact Studies.....	A-1
B	Inter-rater Agreement	B-1
C	Distribution of Indicator-Level Expert Panelist Ratings.....	C-1
D	Summary of Impact Studies Reviewed.....	D-1
E	Sample and Weights for the REL Customer Survey	E-1
F	REL Customer Survey	F-1
G	Technical Working Group Members.....	G-1

Table

ES-1	REL regions and prime contractors, 2006 – 2011	vii
1-1	States and territories served by each REL	2
1-2	REL prime contractors, 2006–2011.....	2
1-3	Alignment of REL statement of work tasks with statutory missions for the RELs	5
1-4	Number of IES-published FRP reports and impact studies and total amount obligated for the 2006-2011 contract, by REL.....	7
2-1	Impact study proposals and reports by REL.....	15
2-2	Dimensions and indicators from the rubric used in the expert panel review of IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals	16
2-3	Rwg(j) statistics for reviews of IES-published impact studies and corresponding proposals	19
2-4	Results for state and district administrators on the REL customer survey, by response status	23
2-5	Survey sample sizes and response rates by REL.....	23

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
3-1	Mean ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) from expert panel review of REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports, by rating indicator.....	25
3-2	Percentage of state and district administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and/or technical assistance: Top five needs—National: School year 2011-12.....	28
3-3	Percentage of state and district administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and/or technical assistance—National: School year 2011-12.....	29
3-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed, by region: School year 2011–12	34
3-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—National: School year 2011-12	35
3-6	Percentage of state and district administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who had used one or more REL services in the past 12 months: School year 2011-2012.....	37
3-7	Percentage of state and district administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who used various REL services in the past 12 months—National: School year 2011-12	38
3-8	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—National: School year 2011-12.....	38
3-9	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—National: School year 2011-12	39
3-10	Percentage of state and district administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied” with it, by region: School year 2011-12.....	42

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
4-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Appalachia (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	45
4-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of the impact study proposal for REL Appalachia, by rating indicator.....	46
4-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	49
4-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	50
4-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Appalachia: School year 2011-12	51
4-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Appalachia: School year 2011-12	52
4-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL Program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	54
4-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	54
4-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Appalachia: School year 2011-12	55
5-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Central (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	57

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
5-2 Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Central, by rating indicator.....	58
5-3 Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance— Central: School year 2011-12	62
5-4 Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Central: School year 2011-12.....	63
5-5 Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Central: School year 2011-12	65
5-6 Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Central: School year 2011-12	65
5-7 Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Central: School year 2011-12	67
5-8 Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Central: School year 2011-12.....	68
5-9 Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Central: School year 2011-12.....	68
6-1 Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Mid-Atlantic (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	70
6-2 Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Mid-Atlantic, by rating indicator	71

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
6-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	75
6-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	76
6-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	79
6-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	79
6-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12.....	81
6-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	82
6-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	82
7-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Midwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	84
7-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Midwest, by rating indicator.....	85
7-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Midwest: School year 2011-12	88

Table		Page
7-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Midwest: School year 2011-12	89
7-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Midwest: School year 2011-12	90
7-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Midwest: School year 2011-12	91
7-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Midwest: School year 2011-12	93
7-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Midwest: School year 2011-12.....	94
7-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Midwest: School year 2011-12.....	95
8-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Northeast and Islands (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	98
8-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northeast, by rating indicator	99
8-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12	103
8-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12.....	104

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
8-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12	106
8-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12.....	106
8-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12	108
8-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12.....	109
8-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12	109
9-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Northwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	112
9-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northwest, by rating indicator.....	113
9-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Northwest: School year 2011-12	117
9-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Northwest: School year 2011-12.....	118
9-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Northwest: School year 2011-12	120

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
9-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Northwest: School year 2011-12	120
9-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Northwest: School year 2011-12	122
9-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Northwest: School year 2011-12.....	123
9-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Northwest: School year 2011-12	123
10-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Pacific (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	126
10-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of the impact study proposal for REL Pacific, by rating indicator	127
10-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Pacific: School year 2011-12	130
10-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Pacific: School year 2011-12.....	131
10-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Pacific: School year 2011-12	132
10-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Pacific: School year 2011-12	132

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
10-7	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Pacific: School year 2011-12.....	134
10-8	Percentage of the region’s administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Pacific: School year 2011-12	136
10-7	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Pacific: School year 2011-12.....	134
10-8	Percentage of the region’s administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Pacific: School year 2011-12	136
11-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Southeast (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest).....	138
11-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southeast, by rating indicator.....	139
11-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Southeast: School year 2011-12	143
11-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Southeast: School year 2011-12	144
11-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research or technical assistance when needed—Southeast: School year 2011-12	146
11-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Southeast: School year 2011-12	146

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
11-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Southeast: School year 2011-12	148
11-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Southeast: School year 2011-12	149
11-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Southeast: School year 2011-12	149
12-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Southwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest).....	152
12-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southwest, by rating indicator	153
12-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Southwest: School year 2011-12.....	157
12-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Southwest: School year 2011-12	158
12-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Southwest: School year 2011-12	160
12-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Southwest: School year 2011-12	160
12-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Southwest: School year 2011-12.....	162

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
12-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Southwest: School year 2011-12	163
12-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Southwest: School year 2011-12	164
13-1	Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL West (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)	167
13-2	Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL West, by rating indicator.....	168
13-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—West: School year 2011-12	172
13-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—West: School year 2011-12.....	173
13-5	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—West: School year 2011-12	175
13-6	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —West: School year 2011-12	175
13-7	Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—West: School year 2011-12	178
13-8	Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—West: School year 2011-12.....	179

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
13-9	Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—West: School year 2011-12.....	179
C-1	Distribution of indicator-level expert panelist ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) for REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports on quality and relevance.....	C-1
C-2	Distribution of indicator-level expert panelist ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) for REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports on quality and relevance, by REL.....	C-2
E-1	SEA user frame size, sample size, and sampling rate.....	E-2
E-2	The sample sizes for the revised LEA design by REL.....	E-4
E-3	Selected SEA and LEA sample sizes by REL.....	E-4
<u>Figure</u>		
ES-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—National: School year 2011-12.....	xii
ES-2	Percentage of administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12.....	xiv
1-1	Distribution of expert panelist indicator-level quality and relevance ratings for IES-published Fast Response Project reports and corresponding proposals from all 10 RELs combined.....	11
3-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, by region: School year 2011-12.....	30

Figure		Page
3-2	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—National: School year 2011-12.....	31
3-3	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on the national REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent,” by region: School year 2011-12.....	32
3-4	Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—National: School year 2011-12	33
3-5	Percentage of all state and district administrators who reported they were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program, by region: School year 2011-12	36
3-6	Percentage of administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program and were “very satisfied,” or “somewhat or not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12.....	40
3-7	Percentage of administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program and were “very satisfied,” or “somewhat or not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12.....	41
4-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	51
4-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Appalachia: School year 2011-12.....	53
5-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Central: School year 2011-12	64

Figure		Page
5-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Central: School year 2011-12.....	66
6-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12	78
6-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12.....	80
7-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Midwest: School year 2011-12	90
7-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Midwest: School year 2011-12	92
8-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Northeast & Islands: School year 2011-2012	105
8-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12	107
9-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Northwest: School year 2011-12	119
9-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Northwest: School year 2011-12.....	121

Figure		Page
10-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Pacific: School year 2011-2012	131
10-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Pacific: School year 2011-12.....	133
11-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Southeast: School year 2011-12	145
11-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Southeast: School year 2011-12	147
12-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Southwest: School year 2011-12.....	159
12-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Southwest: School year 2011-12	162
13-1	Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—West: School year 2011-12	174
13-2	Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—West: School year 2011-12.....	177

Executive Summary

The Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) are a networked system of 10 organizations that serve the educational needs of designated regions across the United States and its territories. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) to award contracts to 10 RELs to support applied research, development, wide dissemination, and technical assistance activities.² The REL program is administered by the Knowledge Utilization Division of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEERA) within ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which was established by ESRA in 2002.

ESRA requires NCEERA to provide for independent evaluations of each of the RELs in carrying out their duties, and transmit these results to Congress, the National Board for Education Sciences, and the appropriate REL governing boards.³ In 2009, the Evaluation Division of the NCEERA contracted with Westat to conduct these evaluations of the 10 RELs that had 5-year contracts between 2006 and 2011, as well as an evaluation of the REL program as a whole. The evaluation addresses the following questions:

- What activities did the RELs undertake to fulfill the mission specified in ESRA?
- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Fast Response Project reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?
- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?
- How relevant and useful were REL technical assistance products to the needs of states and districts in their regions?

An interim report from the evaluation was released in September 2013, addressing the first two evaluation questions listed above.⁴ This final report addresses the remaining two questions for the evaluation, relying on expert panel review of REL impact study reports published by September 1, 2011, and impact study proposals submitted by that date, and on a survey of state education agency and local school district administrators conducted between the October 2011 and May 2012.

² The portion of ESRA pertaining to the Regional Educational Laboratories, Section 174 of P.L. 107-279, is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/pdf/PL107-279.pdf> [accessed April 19, 2013].

³ The evaluation requirement is specified in Section 174(j) of ESRA.

⁴ Carlson et al. 2013, available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134014>.

Research Questions and Key Findings⁵

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?

- Expert panelists rated 8 IES-published impact study reports as, on average, between “strong” and “very strong” in quality (4.10 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). They rated 11 selected impact study proposals, including the proposals for the 8 impact studies, as, on average, between “adequate” and “strong” in quality (3.59 on a 5-point scale).
- Expert panelists rated the 8 IES-published reports as, on average, between “relevant” and “very relevant” (4.06 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). They rated the 11 impact study proposals as, on average, between “adequate” in relevance and “relevant” (3.61 on a 5-point scale).

How relevant and useful were the REL technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in their regions?

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

- The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance (as opposed to “moderate need” or “low or no need”) among state administrators was teacher/staff evaluation (53 percent). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (37 percent).
- Twenty-nine percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of that assistance.

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

- The most commonly reported sources for education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators were professional associations (87 percent, versus 49 percent relying on the REL program). The most commonly reported sources for education research and/or technical assistance for district administrators were their

⁵ More detailed national findings from the expert panel review and survey of state and district administrators are provided in Chapter 3.

Executive Summary

counterparts at other LEAs or SEAs (82 percent, versus 18 percent relying on the REL program).

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

- Eighty-six percent of state administrators reported being “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program, and 14 percent reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program. In contrast, 52 percent of district administrators reported being “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program, and 48 percent reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

- Seventy-seven percent of state administrators and 46 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar”⁶ with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

- One-half (50 percent) of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program were “very satisfied” with it, 48 percent of these state administrators and 58 percent of these district administrators were “somewhat satisfied” with the REL program, and 3 percent of state administrators and 16 percent of district administrators were “not at all satisfied” with the REL program.

The sections below provide more background on the REL program and on the data collection and analysis conducted by the study team to answer the research questions for the final evaluation report. It is followed by a more extensive discussion of the evaluation findings.

Background on the REL Program

ED, through the Knowledge Utilization Division in NCEERA within IES, awarded 5-year contracts to ten RELs in FY 2006. These contracts were subsequently extended to December 31, 2011. Table ES-1 lists the states and territories in each region served by a Regional Educational Laboratory, as well as the organizations that held the REL contracts from 2006 to 2011. Annual appropriations for the REL program varied over the period of performance of the 2006-2011 REL contracts.

⁶ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” and “a little familiar.”

Executive Summary

Appropriations for the REL program in FY 2006 and under the FY 2007 continuing resolution equaled \$65.470 million each year. Over the following three years, appropriations rose to \$65.569 million in FY 2008, \$67.569 million in FY 2009, and \$70.650 million in FY 2010. For FY 2011 and FY 2012, appropriations fell to \$57.535 and \$57.426 million, respectively.

Table ES-1. REL regions and prime contractors, 2006 – 2011

Region	States and territories	Prime contractor, 2006-2011
Appalachia (AP)	Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia	CNA
Central (CE)	Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming	Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
Mid-Atlantic (MA)	Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C.	The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), with 4 primary subcontractors: Rutgers University, ICF International, ANALYTICA, and the Metiri Group
Midwest (MW)	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin	Learning Point Associates (LPA)
Northeast & Islands (NE & I)	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands	Education Development Center (EDC), with Learning Innovations at WestEd and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) as primary subcontractors.
Northwest (NW)	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington	Education Northwest
Pacific (PA)	American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau	Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)
Southeast (SE)	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina	SERVE Center, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Southwest (SW)	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas	Edvance Research, Inc.
West (W)	Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah	WestEd

NOTE: Complete subcontracting arrangements are not shown and may have varied over time, even if the prime contractor remained the same. The end date for the 2006-2011 REL contracts was December 31, 2011.

Under the contracts in place between 2006 and 2011, the RELs performed two broad categories of applied research projects to prepare reports that were released and disseminated as IES publications. “Fast Response Projects” (FRPs) were short-term education research and/or technical assistance projects intended to (a) respond to regional and national education needs and priorities and (b) inform policy and practice. FRPs used various methods, such as literature reviews, analyses of extant data, and qualitative studies. “Impact studies” were projects designed specifically to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practice, typically using randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?

The study team’s plan to evaluate the quality and relevance of REL impact study proposals and reports included use of an independent expert panel to review the technical quality and relevance of impact study reports released by IES and of the proposals that had resulted in those reports. Because of resource limitations for the evaluation, the evaluation study team and NCEE focused panel reviews on the beginning and end stages of IES-published reports. Revised proposals, proposals that were rejected or were still under review as of September 1, 2011, and proposals for reports that were not published by IES were all excluded from panel review.

The evaluation study team collected from REL web sites and from the REL program office all of the REL impact study reports published by IES on its website, as well as the corresponding proposals that were produced by the ten RELs between March 1, 2006 and September 1, 2011. A total of eight impact studies had been completed; they resulted in eight published reports by seven RELs over this period of time.⁷ In order to ensure that all 10 RELs had impact-related documents for review, researchers also collected one initial proposal for each of the three RELs that did not have a published report but whose final report was close to publication. This resulted in 8 reports and 11 initial proposals for the expert panel review. All of the studies reviewed used randomized controlled trials.

The study team developed two rubrics for use in the expert panel review: one for reports and one for proposals (Appendix A). The rubrics included two dimensions: technical quality and relevance. Each dimension was further defined by multiple indicators. The rubrics for rating proposals and reports shared 8 indicators of quality and 5 indicators of relevance. Seven additional indicators of quality and one additional indicator of relevance were included in the rubric for rating reports. One quality indicator was unique to the rubric for rating proposals. Indicators for the dimensions were rated on a 5-point scale, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating. The rubrics gave quality ratings the adjectival labels of “very weak” (1), “weak” (2), “adequate” (3), “strong” (4), or “very strong” (5). Relevance ratings received the adjectival labels of “not relevant” (1), “marginally relevant” (2), “adequate” (3), “relevant” (4), or “very relevant” (5).

⁷ Under the 2006-2011 REL contracts, the RELs completed a total of 23 impact studies, which resulted in 24 impact study reports (two reports were published about one study). This included eight reports about the eight completed impact studies that were published before September 1, 2011 and were part of the review conducted for this evaluation. There were 15 impact studies completed and 16 reports published after September 1, 2011 that were not part of the review for this evaluation.

Executive Summary

A team of 11 expert panelists⁸ rated 8 IES-published impact study reports as, on average, between “strong” and “very strong” in quality (mean quality rating of 4.10 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). The 11 impact study proposals selected for review, including proposals for the 8 studies producing IES-published reports, received a mean quality rating of 3.59, which is between “adequate” and “strong” on a 5-point scale.

The expert panelists rated 8 IES-published reports as, on average, between “relevant” and “very relevant” (mean relevance rating of 4.06 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). The 11 impact study proposals selected for review received a mean relevance rating of 3.61, which is between “adequate” in relevance and “relevant.”

The body of the report provides more detailed REL-specific findings on the quality and relevance of the impact study reports and proposals.

How relevant and useful were the REL technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in their regions?

To evaluate the relevance and usefulness of REL research and technical assistance products to the needs of state and district administrators nationwide and within their regions, between October 2011 and May 2012, the evaluation team conducted a survey of a nationally representative sample of 346 state administrators and 4,834 district administrators.⁹ The survey addressed respondents’ needs for education research and technical assistance, familiarity with and use of REL products and services, and satisfaction with the work of the REL program.

Data collection for the web-based survey began in October 2011. Email and telephone follow-up was used with those who had not responded, and members of the evaluation team also offered to complete the survey with the administrators over the phone. A third of all the completed surveys were conducted over the phone, with the phone interviewer entering the administrators’ responses into the web survey. The evaluation team continued to contact administrators until data collection ended in early May 2012. The overall response rate was 87 percent for the state sample of administrators, and 80 percent for the district sample, resulting in data from 290 state administrator respondents and 3,709 district administrator respondents.

⁸ Three of the 11 experts were assigned to review each product according to their content or methodology expertise.

⁹ Based on input from a Technical Working Group, the evaluation team identified state and district administrators as the primary audience or customers for REL products and services.

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators was teacher/staff evaluation. The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in STEM.

- Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research and/or technical assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators indicated a “high need” were teacher/staff evaluation (53 percent), achievement gaps (50 percent), college or career readiness (49 percent), support for low-achieving schools (49 percent), and using data for decisions (47 percent).
- The areas in which the five largest percentages of district administrators indicated a “high need” for research and/or technical assistance were content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM (37 percent); using data for decisions (35 percent); achievement gaps (35 percent); content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (32 percent); and assessment (31 percent).

Twenty-nine percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), regardless of the source of assistance.

- The percentage of state administrators who reported that their needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, varied by region, from a high of 60 percent in the Pacific to a low of 18 percent in the Midwest. The percentage of district administrators who reported that their needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, also varied by region, from a high of 30 percent in the Southeast to a low of 18 percent in the Northwest.

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most commonly reported sources for education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators were professional associations. The most commonly reported sources for education research and/or technical assistance for district administrators were counterparts at other LEAs or SEAs.

- State and district administrators reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. Professional associations and

Executive Summary

counterparts in other states and districts were most commonly reported as being relied upon “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all (States: 87 and 78 percent, respectively; Districts: 70 and 82 percent, respectively) (Figure ES-1).

- Almost half of state administrators (49 percent) and 18 percent of district administrators reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure ES-1).
- State administrators’ reliance on the REL program varied across the regions: the percentage who reported relying on the REL program for research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” ranged from a high of 71 percent in the West to a low of 27 percent in the Southwest. For district administrators, the percentage who reported relying on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” ranged from a high of 22 percent in the Northwest to a low of 15 percent in the Midwest.
- Eighty-eight percent of state administrators and 93 percent of district administrators reported that it was “very easy” or “moderately easy” (as opposed to “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

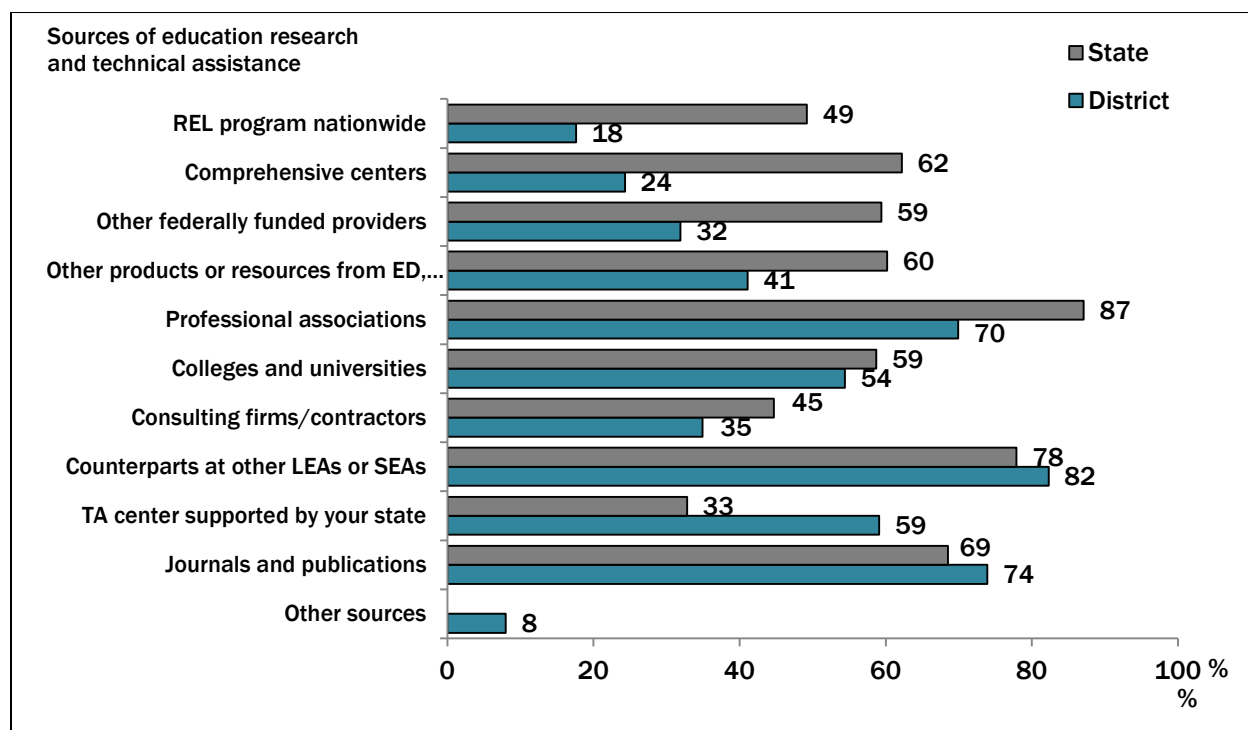
Eighty-six percent of state administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program. In contrast, 52 percent of district administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program.

- More than three-fourths (86 percent) of state administrators reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program, and more than half (52 percent) of district administrators reported that they were had *at least* “a little” familiarity with the program.
- Fourteen percent of state administrators reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program, and almost one-half (48 percent) of district administrators reported that they were “not familiar at all” with it.

In all ten regions, more than 70 percent of state administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program.

- In all 10 regions, more than 70 percent of state administrators reported being “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program, ranging from a high of 96 percent in Northwest to a low of 71 percent in Southwest. REL Southwest was a first-time REL grantee in FY 2006.

Figure ES-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—National: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 289 and 3,700, respectively. The total N for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 284 to 288, depending on the number of state respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 3,684 to 3,694, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for district administrators for “Other sources” was 217.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- The percentage of district administrators who reported that they were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program ranged from a high of 68 percent in Northwest to a low of 44 percent in Southwest.

How many state and district administrators use REL services?

Seventy-seven percent of state administrators and 46 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months. Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed considerably for states and districts.

- Of state administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, the percentages that reported that they used each major type of REL service were 55

Executive Summary

percent for technical assistance, 46 percent for a live or virtual event, 45 percent for responses to data or research requests, and 41 percent for information on the REL's website. Of district administrators *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program, 34 percent reported obtaining information from the REL's website; 20 percent reported attending a live or virtual event; 13 percent reported receiving a response to a data or research request; and 11 percent reported receiving technical assistance.

- Nineteen percent of state administrators and 33 percent of district administrators reported that they were *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program but did not use any REL services in the past 12 months. When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, more than half of state and district administrators (54 and 56 percent, respectively) *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program but not using services in the past 12 months from the REL in their region reported that their needs were met elsewhere. In addition, 43 percent of these state administrators and 58 percent of these district administrators said they did not use REL services because they did not know what services were available.

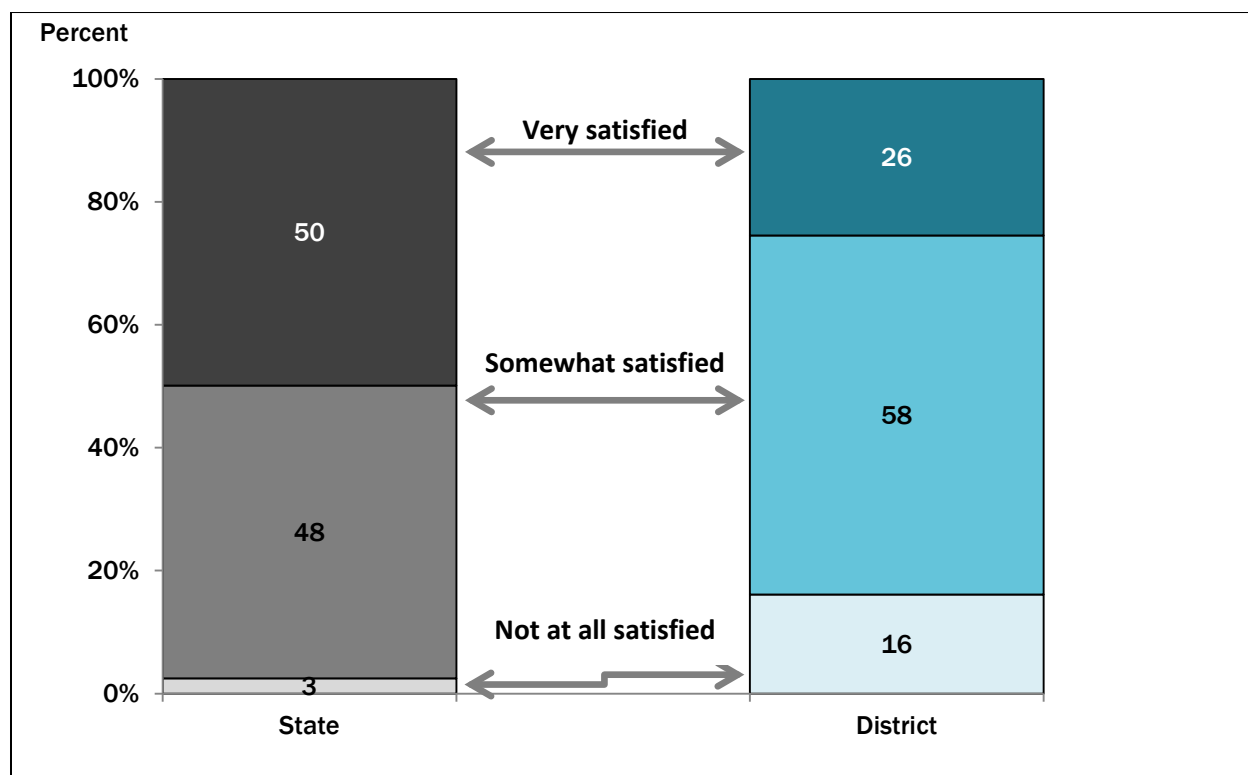
How satisfied with the REL program are state and district administrators?

One-half (50 percent) of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators who were *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program were "very satisfied" with it.

- Of the state administrators who reported being *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program, 50 percent reported being "very satisfied" with it; 48 percent reported being "somewhat satisfied" with it; and 3 percent reported being "not at all satisfied" with it (Figure ES-2).
- Of the district administrators who reported being *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program, 26 percent reported being "very satisfied" with it; 58 percent reported being "somewhat satisfied" with it; and 16 percent report being "not at all satisfied" with it (Figure ES-2).
- Across the regions, the percentage of state administrators who were *at least* "a little familiar" with the REL program and reported being "very satisfied" with it ranged from a high of 65 percent in the Southeast region to a low of 28 percent in the Mid-Atlantic region.
- The percentage of district administrators who were at least "a little familiar" with the REL program and reported being "very satisfied" with it ranged from a high of 34 percent in the West region to a low of 17 percent in the Midwest region.

Executive Summary

Figure ES-2. Percentage of administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 216, and the total N for district administrators was 1,619. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

The body of the report provides more detailed REL-specific findings from the survey of state and district administrators.

The Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) are a networked system of 10 organizations that serve the educational needs of 10 designated regions across the United States and its territories (Table 1-1). The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) to award contracts to 10 RELs to support applied research, development, wide dissemination, and/or technical assistance (TA) activities.¹⁰ The REL program is administered by the Knowledge Utilization Division of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEERA) within ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which was established by ESRA in 2002.

ED, through the Knowledge Utilization Division of the NCEERA within IES, awarded 5-year contracts to 10 RELs on a competitive basis in FY 2006. These contracts were subsequently extended to end in FY 2012. Table 1-2 lists the organizations holding the 10 REL contracts from 2006 to 2011 as well as their history of REL funding (i.e., whether they have held REL grants/contracts in the past).

Table 1-1. States and territories served by each REL

Region	States and territories
Appalachia (AP)	Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Central (CE)	Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming
Mid-Atlantic (MA)	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
Midwest (MW)	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
Northeast & Islands (NE & I)	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands
Northwest (NW)	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington
Pacific (PA)	American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau
Southeast (SE)	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina
Southwest (SW)	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
West (W)	Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah

¹⁰ The portion of ESRA pertaining to the Regional Educational Laboratories, Section 174 of P.L. 107-279, is available at <http://ies.ed.gov/pdf/PL107-279.pdf> [accessed April 19, 2013].

Table 1-2. REL prime contractors, 2006–2011

Region	Prime contractor	History of funding
Appalachia	CNA	CNA received a REL contract for the first time in FY 2006 (awarded February 6, 2006). CNA was also awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Central	Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)	McREL had held the REL grant/contract continuously since 1966. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on January 20, 2006. Marzano Research Laboratory was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Mid-Atlantic	The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), with 4 primary subcontractors: Rutgers University, ICF International, ANALYTICA, and the Metiri Group	PSU received a REL contract for the first time in FY 2006 (awarded March 23, 2006). ICF International was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Midwest	Learning Point Associates (LPA)	LPA had held a REL grant/contract since 1984. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on March 9, 2006. The American Institutes for Research, (AIR) which merged with LPA in 2011, was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Northeast & Islands	Education Development Center (EDC), with Learning Innovations at WestEd and AIR as primary subcontractors	EDC held one of the original REL grants but did not hold one immediately before the FY 2006 award. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on March 15, 2006. EDC was also awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Northwest	Education Northwest	Education Northwest, previously known as Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, had held the REL grant/contract since 1966. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on February 1, 2006. Education Northwest was also awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Pacific	Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)	PREL had held the REL grant/contract since 1990. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on March 16, 2006. McREL was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Southeast	SERVE Center, University of North Carolina at Greensboro	SERVE had held the REL grant/contract since 1990. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on March 16, 2006. Florida State University was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.
Southwest	Edvance Research, Inc.	Edvance received a REL contract for the first time in FY 2006 (awarded March 15, 2006). SEDL was awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.

Table 1-2. REL prime contractors, 2006–2011 (continued)

Region	Prime contractor	History of funding
West	WestEd	WestEd had held the REL grant/contract since 1966. The FY 2006 contract was awarded on January 18, 2006. WestEd was also awarded a REL contract for this region in FY 2012.

NOTE: Complete subcontracting arrangements are not shown and may have varied over time, even if the prime contractor remained the same. The end date for the 2006-2011 REL contracts was December 31, 2011.

Three contractors (CNA, Pennsylvania State University, and Edvance Research, Inc.) held first-time REL contracts in FY 2006; four contractors (Learning Point Associates, Education Development Center, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, and SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro) held previous REL contracts; and three contractors (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, Education Northwest, and WestEd) held continuous REL contracts since the inception of the program in 1966. Five of the 2006-11 prime contractors were awarded a REL contract for the same region in FY 2012.

Annual appropriations for the REL program varied over the period of performance of the 2006-2011 REL contracts. Appropriations in FY 2006 and under the FY 2007 continuing resolution equaled \$65.470 million each year. Over the following 3 years, appropriations rose, to \$65.569 million in FY 2008, \$67.569 million in FY 2009, and \$70.650 million in FY 2010. For FY 2011 and FY 2012, appropriations fell to \$57.535 and \$57.426 million, respectively.

Missions of the REL Program

While the REL program was begun in 1966, it was most recently reauthorized under ESRA in 2002. Section 174(g) of ESRA specifies 10 missions for the RELs:

1. Provide training and/or technical assistance to constituents
2. Disseminate scientifically valid research, information, reports, and publications that are usable for improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and encouraging and sustaining school improvement
3. Develop a plan for identifying and serving the needs of the region by conducting a continuing survey of the educational needs, strengths, and weaknesses within the region

4. Carry out applied research projects that are designed to serve the particular educational needs of the region, that reflect findings from scientifically valid research, and that result in user-friendly, replicable school-based classroom applications geared toward promoting student achievement
5. Provide educational applied research in usable forms that promote school-improvement, academic achievement, and the closing of the achievement gaps and contribute to the current base of education knowledge by addressing problems in elementary and secondary education and access to postsecondary education
6. Collaborate and coordinate services with other technical assistance providers funded by ED
7. Assist in gathering information on school finance systems to promote improved access to educational opportunities and to better serve all public school students
8. Assist in gathering information on alternative administrative structures that are more conducive to planning, implementing, and sustaining school reform and improved academic achievement
9. Bring teams of experts together to develop and implement school improvement plans and strategies, especially in low-performing or high-poverty schools
10. Develop innovative approaches to the application of technology in education that are unlikely to originate from within the private sector, but which could result in the development of new forms of education software, education content, and technology-enabled pedagogy

Table 1-3. Alignment of REL statement of work tasks with statutory missions for the RELs

ESRA mission	Task in the REL Statement of Work
1. Provide training and/or technical assistance to constituents	Regional education needs analysis, training and/or technical assistance, and fast-response applied research and development projects
2. Disseminate scientifically valid research, information, reports, and publications that are usable for improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and encouraging and sustaining school improvement	Regional dissemination
3. Develop a plan for identifying and serving the needs of the region by conducting a continuing survey of the educational needs, strengths, and weaknesses within the region	Regional education needs analysis, training and/or technical assistance, and fast-response applied research and development projects
4. Carry out applied research projects that are designed to serve the particular educational needs of the region, that reflect findings from scientifically valid research, and that result in user-friendly, replicable school-based classroom applications geared toward promoting student achievement	Regional education needs analysis, training and assistance, and fast-response applied research and development projects
5. Provide educational applied research in usable forms that promote school-improvement, academic achievement, and the closing of the achievement gaps and contribute to the current base of education knowledge by addressing problems in elementary and secondary education and access to postsecondary education	Rigorous applied research and development
6. Collaborate and coordinate services with other technical assistance providers funded by the Department of Education	Coordination of REL network, website, and Intranet
7. Assist in gathering information on school finance systems to promote improved access to educational opportunities and to better serve all public school students	Not explicitly included in the REL statement of work
8. Assist in gathering information on alternative administrative structures that are more conducive to planning, implementing, and sustaining school reform and improved academic achievement	Not explicitly included in the REL statement of work
9. Bring teams of experts together to develop and implement school improvement plans and strategies, especially in low-performing or high-poverty schools	Not explicitly included in the REL statement of work
10. Develop innovative approaches to the application of technology in education that are unlikely to originate from within the private sector, but which could result in the development of new forms of education software, education content, and technology-enabled pedagogy	Not explicitly included in the REL statement of work
Not explicitly included in the REL missions	National Laboratory Network
Not explicitly included in the REL missions	Planning, management, and reporting

Table Reads: The first statement of work task, Regional education needs analysis, training and/or technical assistance, and fast-response applied research and development projects, aligned with the first mission, Provide training and/or technical assistance to constituents.

NOTE: A statement of work is a document developed by the government agency to define the activities, deliverables, and timeline required from an external source bidding on a procurement.

SOURCE: Education Sciences Reform Act (P.L. 107-279) and the statement of work developed by NCEERA in 2005.

While most of the tasks of the REL statement of work (SOW) aligned explicitly with the missions specified for the RELs in ESRA, others did not (Table 1-3). The tasks that focused on regional needs identification, applied research and development projects, regional dissemination, and cross-REL coordination corresponded directly with the statutory missions for the REL program. The National Laboratory Network (NLN) task and the planning/management/reporting task did not correspond explicitly with any single REL mission specified in ESRA, but could be understood as supporting the performance of the other tasks. The NLN, for example, included Internet pages, accessible to the public from the IES website, describing each of the RELs and providing downloadable copies of IES-published REL reports. The NLN also included an Intranet for internal use in cross-REL collaboration and working groups. Four of the statutory missions of the REL program specified in ESRA—those focused on school finance, alternative administrative structures, school improvement strategies, and innovative technologies in education—were not explicit in the tasks of the SOW.

Under the contracts in place between 2006 and 2011, the RELs performed two broad categories of projects to prepare reports that were released and disseminated as IES publications. “Fast Response Projects” (FRPs) were short-term education research and/or technical assistance projects intended to (1) respond to regional and national education needs and priorities and (2) inform policy and practice. FRPs used various methods, such as literature reviews, analyses of extant data, and qualitative studies. “Impact studies” were projects designed specifically to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practice, typically using randomized controlled trials or regression discontinuity designs. Table 1-4 lists the number of IES-published FRP reports produced and IES-published impact studies conducted by each REL under their 2006-2011 contract, as well as the total amount obligated for the contract period to each REL. Under the 2006-2011 REL contracts, the RELs completed a total of 23 impact studies, which resulted in 24 impact study reports (two reports were published about one study). This included eight reports about the eight completed impact studies that were published before September 1, 2011 and were part of the review conducted for this evaluation. There were 15 impact studies and 16 reports published after September 1, 2011 that were not part of the review for this evaluation.

Table 1-4. Number of IES-published FRP reports, impact studies completed, and total amount obligated for the 2006-2011 contract, by REL

REL	Number of IES-published FRP reports	Number of completed impact studies	Total amount obligated
Appalachia	11	1	\$28,481,655
Central	10	3	\$27,651,454
Mid-Atlantic	12	2	\$36,337,559
Midwest	15	2	\$41,899,454
Northeast & Islands	23	2	\$44,050,549
Northwest	15	2	\$26,563,915
Pacific	7	1	\$21,828,195
Southeast	12	2	\$39,135,156
Southwest	22	3	\$40,411,227
West	24	6	\$45,383,654

SOURCE: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/index.asp?centername=REL¢er=REL> and <http://government-contracts.findthebest.com/guide>.

Independent Evaluation of the RELs

Section 174(j) of ESRA requires NCEEERA to provide for independent evaluations of each of the RELs in carrying out their duties, and transmit these results to Congress, the National Board for Education Sciences, and the appropriate REL governing boards. In 2009, the Evaluation Division of the NCEEERA—which is administratively distinct from the Knowledge Utilization Division that manages the REL program—contracted with Westat to conduct these evaluations as well as an evaluation of the REL program as a whole. The REL program evaluation was designed to address, for the program and for each REL funded between 2006 and 2011, the following questions:

- What activities did the RELs undertake to fulfill the mission specified in ESRA?
- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Fast Response Project reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?
- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?
- How relevant and useful were REL technical assistance products to the needs of states and districts in their regions?

An interim report from the evaluation was released in September 2013, addressing the first two evaluation questions listed above.¹¹ The results from the interim report are summarized briefly below as context for the findings from the final report.

What Activities Did the RELs Undertake: Summary From the Interim Report

To describe what activities the RELs had completed under the 10 missions specified in ESRA, including those not specified explicitly in the SOW, the evaluation study team conducted in-person interviews with staff members from each REL, including each REL's director. Interviews with REL staff took place between May 2010 and July 2010 and lasted approximately 4 hours per REL. Interviewers from the study team asked the RELs to describe up to three major activities under each mission. The study team reviewed transcripts of the interviews to prepare a document that described the major REL activities reported by REL staff as addressing each of the 10 missions. To verify the accuracy of the write-ups, each REL director reviewed the draft document and made any necessary factual corrections. In general, the RELs reported activities under each of the statutory missions for the program. The documentation of REL activities as reported by REL staff is presented in REL-specific chapters of the interim report.

What Were the Technical Quality and Relevance of REL Fast Response Project Reports Published by IES and of the Corresponding Proposals: Summary From the Interim Report

The study team's plan to evaluate the quality and relevance of REL Fast Response Project (FRP) reports and the corresponding proposals included (1) gathering data from the Knowledge Utilization Division of the NCEERA on the percentage of FRP proposals accepted for continuation as IES-supported studies, (2) gathering data from the Knowledge Utilization Division on the percentage of FRP reports accepted for publication as IES reports, and (3) having an independent expert panel review the technical quality and relevance of FRP reports released by IES and of the proposals that had resulted in those reports.

As part of the FRP preparation and publication process, a REL would first submit a proposal for the FRP to its NCEERA project officer for review. Additional review of the proposal occurred through anonymous external reviewers working under the Analytical and Technical Support (ATS) contract that NCEERA awarded to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. in 2006. The ATS reviews informed NCEERA's decision to reject, approve, or request revisions to a REL proposal. For approved proposals, RELs would perform the work and submit draft reports to the NCEERA project officer

¹¹ Carlson et al. 2013, available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134014>. The Executive Summary of the interim report is reproduced as Chapter 2 of the final report.

for review. The ATS would again conduct an external review of the report. Also, at this point in the process the NCEERA Commissioner would transmit the report to the IES Standards and Review Office (SRO) for external review, resulting in revisions, and ultimately, the decision by the SRO office whether to approve the report for publication by IES.

For the calculation of the percentage of FRP proposals and reports approved, the study team excluded “proposal or report reviews in process.” The denominator for the percentage of accepted FRP proposals included all of the FRP proposals that, by December 1, 2009, were either accepted and authorized to proceed, or else rejected, but excluded proposals for which the NCEERA review was in process. The denominator for the percentage of accepted FRP reports included all of the reports that, by December 1, 2009, were either approved for publication or rejected, but excluded reports for which the IES review was in process. Readers should note that, even if a REL’s proposal for an FRP was accepted by NCEERA and the project was authorized to proceed, the resulting report could be rejected by NCEERA as a result of subsequent review by NCEERA or ATS contract staff.

Of 297 proposals for FRPs reviewed by NCEERA by December 1, 2009, 46 percent (137) were accepted, and the REL was authorized to proceed with the project. The number of proposals submitted by each REL ranged from 17 to 45, and the percentage accepted by IES for each REL ranged from 24 to 67 percent. Of 166 FRP reports reviewed by IES by December 1, 2009, 55 percent (92) were accepted for publication as IES reports. The number of reports submitted by each REL ranged from 10 to 27, and the percentage accepted ranged from 25 to 80 percent.

In addition to calculating acceptance rates for FRP proposals and reports, the study team selected IES-published FRP reports and corresponding proposals for independent review by expert panels of methodological and content experts. Because of resource limitations for the evaluation, the evaluation study team and NCEERA focused panel reviews on the beginning and end of IES-published FRP reports. Revised proposals, proposals that were rejected or were still under review, and proposals for reports that were not published by IES were all excluded from panel review. Consequently, findings on the quality and relevance of proposals refer only to proposals resulting in IES-published FRP reports that were released by December 1, 2009. The study team collected from REL web sites and from the REL program office all of the FRP reports that met these criteria, as well as the corresponding initial proposals that were submitted by the RELs. In total, the RELs produced 91 IES-published reports by this date, 88 of which were derived from 75 initial proposals. In some cases, a single proposal led to multiple IES-published reports (e.g., one for each state in a region).

The study team developed two rubrics for use in the FRP expert panel review: one for reports and one for initial proposals. The rubrics included two dimensions: technical quality and relevance. Each dimension was further defined by multiple indicators, which were rated on a 5-point scale, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating (Figure 1-2).

The study team recruited 48 experts in content and/or methodology, screened them for conflicts of interest, and trained them to use the rubrics for evaluating the quality and relevance of IES-published FRP reports and corresponding proposals. Training of panelists occurred in January and February 2010. Comments from panelists during the training were used to make minor revisions to each rubric. A total of 79 panels were organized to review FRPs, including 46 experts and an average of 2.92 experts per panel. The number of panels on which any one expert served averaged 5.02 and ranged from 2 to 10. Three panels reviewed a report with no corresponding proposal, since no written initial proposal for the FRP was available. All other panels reviewed both the proposal for the FRP and the resulting IES-published report. Five panels reviewed multiple IES-published reports that arose from the same proposal. While three experts were generally assigned to review each set of FRP documents based on content or methodology expertise, in five cases, fewer experts were assigned to review a product because no other panelists had the necessary expertise. Ratings for each FRP document (proposal or report) were generated by averaging the scores across all panelists and across dimension-specific indicators. Panel reviews and reconciliation phone calls occurred between February and May 2010.

On average, the expert panels rated IES-published FRP reports and corresponding proposals as being between “adequate” and “strong” in quality. The IES-published reports received a mean quality rating of 3.81 on a 5-point scale, while the corresponding FRP proposals received a mean quality rating of 3.24. For proposals, 9.1 percent of quality ratings were at the highest level of quality (“very strong”), while for IES-published FRP reports, 26.9 percent of quality ratings were “very strong” (Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1. Distribution of expert panelist indicator-level quality and relevance ratings for IES-published Fast Response Project reports and corresponding proposals from all 10 RELs combined

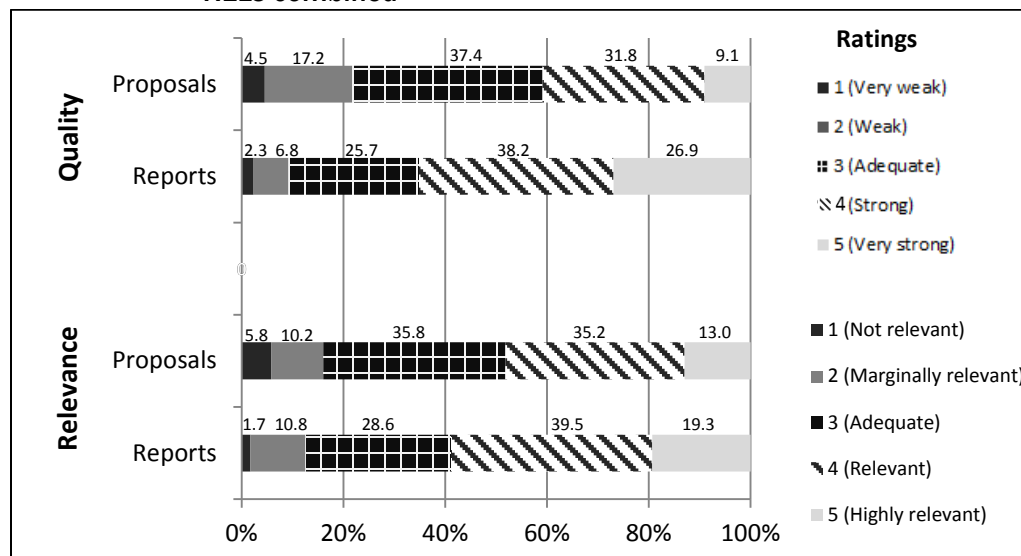


Figure Reads: 9.1 percent of the indicator-level proposal quality ratings submitted by expert panelists had a value of 5 (“very strong”) on a 5-point scale.

NOTE: The distributions for proposal quality and relevance were based on 1,280 and 656 indicator-level ratings, respectively, which is largely attributed to differences in number of indicators associated with quality and relevance. The distributions for IES-published report quality and relevance were based on 2,051 and 1,065 indicator-level ratings, respectively. The difference in number of indicators associated with quality and relevance between IES-published reports and proposals is due to the fact the number of IES-published reports is larger than that of proposals. Ratings of “not applicable” were not included in these frequency distributions.

Source: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for reports prepared under the 2006-2011 REL contracts and published by IES by September 1, 2011); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for proposals for impact studies under the 2006-2011 REL contracts submitted by September 1, 2011) (Appendix A).

The expert panels rated IES-published FRP reports and corresponding proposals, on average, as being between “adequate” in relevance and “relevant.” The IES-published reports received a mean relevance rating of 3.64 on a 5-point scale, while the corresponding FRP proposals received a mean relevance rating of 3.39. For proposals, 13.0 percent of relevance ratings were at the highest level of relevance (“highly relevant”), while for IES-published reports, 19.3 percent of relevance ratings were at the level of “highly relevant” (Figure 1-1). The interim report provides more detailed REL-specific findings on the quality and relevance of the FRP reports and corresponding proposals.

Report Organization

This final report addresses the remaining two questions for the evaluation, relying on expert panel review of REL impact study reports published by September 1, 2011, and impact study proposals

submitted by that date, and on a survey of state educational agency and local school district administrators conducted between October 2011 and May 2012. It is organized as follows. Chapter 2 describes the design of the evaluation and specific methods used to address the final two research questions. Data on the impact study proposals and reports published by IES, and expert panel reviews of the quality and relevance of those products, are presented in chapter 3 along with results from a survey of REL customers on the relevance and usefulness of REL products and services. Ten subsequent chapters describe the quality and relevance of each REL's impact study reports and corresponding proposals as well as results of the customer survey based on each region's respondents. Appendix A includes the rubric used by the expert panel, and Appendix B describes the process used for assessing inter-rater agreement among expert panel members. Appendix C provides the distribution of indicator-level expert panelist ratings for REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports on quality and relevance. Appendix D includes a summary of the REL impact study methods and results. Appendix E describes the sample and weights for the customer survey. Appendix F includes the customer survey administered to state and local education agency administrators, and Appendix G lists the Technical Working Group (TWG) members advising the evaluation study team.

Evaluation Design and Methods

2

This report addresses the following two research questions:

- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?
- How relevant and useful were REL technical assistance products to the needs of states and districts in their regions?

The study team for the evaluation used a variety of data collection and analysis activities to address these questions. Plans for these activities were developed in consultation with members of a Technical Working Group with expertise in program evaluation and education-related technical assistance (Appendix G), and with technical guidance from the project officer and leadership within the Evaluation Division of the NCEERA.

To evaluate the technical quality and relevance of impact study reports and proposals, the study team organized expert panels consisting of individuals with relevant content and/or methodological expertise to rate the technical quality and relevance of impact study reports published by IES by September 1, 2011, and of the corresponding initial proposals.

Expert Panel Review of Impact Studies

Section 186(c) of ESRA requires all research, statistics, and evaluation reports conducted by, or supported through, IES, to “be subjected to rigorous peer review before being published or otherwise made available to the public.” In the case of REL impact study reports, this review occurred through an Analytical and Technical Support (ATS) contract, which NCEERA awarded to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., on September 29, 2006 and ended on March 28, 2012. A REL would first submit a proposal for the impact study to its NCEERA project officer for review. Additional review of the proposal occurred through anonymous external reviewers working under the ATS contract. These reviews informed NCEERA’s decision to reject a proposal, approve the project, or request the REL to revise its proposal. For approved projects, RELs would perform the work and submit draft reports to the NCEERA project officer for review. The ATS would again

conduct an external review of the report. Also, at this point in the process the NCEERA Commissioner would transmit the report to the IES Standards and Review Office (SRO) for external review, resulting in revisions, and ultimately, the decision by the SRO office whether to approve the report for publication by IES.

RELs submitted initial as well as revised proposals to the IES Knowledge Utilization Division as part of the impact study process. The evaluation study team chose to focus the proposal review on initial proposals. While later proposals could be seen as representing the collective work of the REL, IES, and its ATS contractor, the initial proposals could be more completely attributed to the RELs. In addition, by evaluating the initial proposals and IES-published reports, the study is able to document ratings before and after the contributions of the IES review process. Because of resource limitations for the evaluation, the evaluation study team and the NCEERA decided to focus panel reviews on the beginning and end of IES-published impact study reports. Revised proposals, proposals that were rejected or were still under review, and proposals for reports that were not published by IES were all excluded from panel review. Consequently, findings on the quality and relevance of proposals refer only to proposals resulting in IES-published impact study reports that were published between March 1, 2006 and September 1, 2011.

The evaluation study team collected from REL web sites and from the REL program office all of the impact study reports published by IES on its website, as well as the corresponding initial proposals that were produced by the 10 RELs between March 1, 2006 to September 1, 2011.¹² A total of eight impact studies had been completed; they resulted in eight impact study reports published by seven RELs.¹³ To ensure that all 10 RELs had impact-related documents for review, the study team also collected one initial proposal for each of the three RELs that did not have a published report but whose final report was close to publication. This resulted in 8 reports and 11 initial proposals for the expert panel review (Table 2-1). All of the studies reviewed used randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

¹² It is important to note that the REL program contract start dates varied by REL as follows: REL Appalachia, February 6, 2006; REL Central, January 20, 2006; REL Mid-Atlantic, March 23, 2006; REL Midwest, March 9, 2006; REL Northeast, March 15, 2006; REL Northwest, February 1, 2006; REL Pacific, March 16, 2006; REL Southeast, March 16, 2006; REL Southwest, March 15, 2006; and REL West, January 18, 2006. IES extended the contract end dates through December 31, 2011.

¹³ Under the 2006-2011 REL contracts, the RELs completed a total of 23 impact studies, which resulted in 24 impact study reports (two reports were published about one study). This included eight reports about the eight completed impact studies that were published before September 1, 2011 and were part of the review conducted for this evaluation. There were 15 impact studies completed and 16 reports published after September 1, 2011 that were not part of the review for this evaluation.

Table 2-1. Impact study proposals and reports by REL

REL	Study title
AP	Effects of the Kentucky Virtual Schools' Hybrid Program for Algebra I on Grade 9 Student Math Achievement *
CE	Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Impact on Elementary School Mathematics in the Central Region: Final Report
MA	A Multisite Cluster Randomized Trial of the Effects of Compass Learning Odyssey Math on the Math Achievement of Selected Grade 4 Students in the Mid-Atlantic Region
MW	Improving Adolescent Literacy Across the Curriculum in High Schools (Content Literacy Continuum, CLC)*
NE	Impact of the Thinking Reader Software Program on Grade 6 Reading Vocabulary, Comprehension, Strategies, and Motivation: Final Report
NW	An Experimental Study of the Project CRISS Reading Program on Grade 9 Reading Achievement in Rural High Schools
PA	Pacific Evaluation of Principles-Based Professional Development to Improve Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners *
SE	Effectiveness of a Program to Accelerate Vocabulary Development in Kindergarten
SW	The Impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Students in Linguistically Diverse Schools
WE	Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction
WE	Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets

*Proposal only.

The study team developed two rubrics to assist in the expert panel review of impact studies: one for IES-published reports and one for initial proposals (Appendix A). The rubrics included two dimensions: technical quality and relevance. Each dimension was further defined by multiple indicators (Table 2-2). Indicators for the dimensions were rated on a 5-point scale, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating. Descriptive “anchors” were provided for the extreme and median points on the scale (values 1, 3, and 5). While the indicators and anchors were designed to enhance the reliability of the ratings, expert panel members were also required to use their professional judgment when assigning ratings. For example, for impact study report indicator 1D, reviewers were not provided guidance about what would be considered a “rigorous” random assignment design and implementation. The panel members’ professional experience and training as What Works Clearinghouse reviewers was considered critical to ensuring their common understanding of research standards and terminology.

The draft rubrics, including the anchors, underwent a series of external reviews and tests. First, the draft rubrics were pilot tested by two reviewers. Cognitive interviews of pilot-test reviewers were used to assess their understanding of the rubrics and rationale for the ratings. The rubrics were further refined by incorporating feedback from the expert panel after the training sessions described in the next section.

Table 2-2. Dimensions and indicators from the rubric used in the expert panel review of IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals

Proposals: Dimensions and Indicators	
Dimension: Quality	
Indicator 1A.	The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.
Indicator 1B.	The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.
Indicator 1C.	The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.
Indicator 1D.	The design for random assignment is rigorous.
Indicator 1E.	The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power
Indicator 1F.	Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly-aligned with the intervention.
Indicator 1G.	The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.
Indicator 1H.	The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).
Indicator 1I.	The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.
Dimension: Relevance	
Indicator 2A.	The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.
Indicator 2B.	The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.
Indicator 2C.	The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.
Indicator 2D.	The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.
Indicator 2E.	The proposal is clearly-written and well-presented.
Reports: Dimensions and Indicators	
Dimension: Quality	
Indicator 1A.	The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.
Indicator 1B.	Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).
Indicator 1C.	There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.
Indicator 1D.	The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.
Indicator 1E.	The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.
Indicator 1F.	The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.
Indicator 1G.	Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly-aligned with the intervention.
Indicator 1H.	The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.
Indicator 1I.	The data collection plan is well-implemented.
Indicator 1J.	The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.

Table 2-2. Dimensions and indicators from the rubric used in the expert panel review of IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals (continued)

Reports: Dimensions and Indicators (continued)	
Dimension: Quality (continued)	
Indicator 1K.	The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).
Indicator 1L.	Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.
Indicator 1M.	The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.
Indicator 1N.	All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.
Indicator 1O.	The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.
Dimension: Relevance	
Indicator 2A.	The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.
Indicator 2B.	The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.
Indicator 2C.	The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.
Indicator 2D.	The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.
Indicator 2E.	The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.
Indicator 2F.	The report is clear and well-written for the technical audience.

An indicator-specific comment field was provided to record raters' notes, and a general comment field permitted reviewers to indicate uncertainty about the rating or note strengths or weaknesses not linked to a specific indicator.

To identify potential expert panel members, the evaluation team began with a list of What Works Clearinghouse certified reviewers provided by IES. To avoid conflicts of interest, the evaluation team excluded from further consideration potential reviewers who had worked on the corresponding REL studies under review. The team subsequently reviewed the bios of potential panelists to identify areas of content expertise and prioritized for recruitment those with expertise that corresponded with the topics covered in the REL impact studies.

The evaluation study team recruited 12 experts in content and methodology, screened them for conflicts of interest, and trained them to use the rubrics for evaluating the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals. Panelists were primarily academics but also included contractors with expertise relevant to the content of the impact studies and/or methods used. All 12 experts participated in one of two 1-day, in-person training sessions in Rockville, MD in November 2011. The specific purposes of the training were to inform expert panelists about their roles and responsibilities; teach them about the review process; help them become familiar with the scoring rubrics; and provide opportunities to practice scoring products

using the rubrics, debrief, and undertake reconciliation with other experts. Comments from panelists during the training were used to make minor revisions to each rubric.

A total of 19 panels were organized to review impact studies (8) and proposals (11), including 12 experts and three experts per panel. The number of panels on which any one expert served averaged 5.2 and ranged from 2 to 7. All panels reviewed both the proposal and the resulting IES-published report, except for the three proposals with no corresponding report. All the expert panelists submitted their ratings for each of the IES-published reports and corresponding proposals assigned to them. Ratings for each document (proposal or report) were generated by averaging the scores across all panelists and across dimension-specific indicators.

To assess the reliability of the expert panel reviews, the study team measured inter-rater agreement by product type (i.e., proposals and reports) and by dimension (i.e., quality and relevance) using the “Rwg(j)” index (LeBreton and Senter 2008). Rwg(j) values range from 0 to 1 and provide estimates of the level of inter-rater agreement between sets of experts who provide ratings for different targets (i.e., IES-published reports and proposals in this case) using multiple items. Levels of Rwg(j) can be interpreted as follows (LeBreton and Senter 2008): 0.00-0.30 (lack of agreement), 0.31-0.50 (weak agreement), 0.51-0.70 (moderate agreement), 0.71-0.90 (strong agreement), 0.91-1 (very strong agreement).¹⁴

While, in general, the initial inter-rater agreement was high (e.g., a mean Rwg(j) higher than 0.85), the study team held one reconciliation discussion with a panel whose review of a proposal had an Rwg(j) of less than 0.30. In the reconciliation session, all three members convened over a conference call that was facilitated by a study team researcher. Prior to the call, experts received email notification, including their original ratings. Panelists did not see the ratings of the other members of their panel, since confidentiality of ratings was assured to panelists. Only the dimensions and indicators with low agreement were reconciled. On the call, experts were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal relative to the indicator in question. Experts were given an opportunity to revise their scores voluntarily after the reconciliation call. Experts participating in reconciliation used the on-line rating system to modify their scores or informed the study team within 3 business days of the reconciliation call that no changes were being made. After reconciliation, mean inter-rater agreement was uniformly high (Table 2-3). Further analysis of the Rwg(j) ratings indicated that they were negatively skewed for proposals and that the median Rwg(j) for proposals was higher than the mean (e.g., “Quality” ratings on proposals had a median Rwg(j) of 0.93 vs. a mean of 0.90).

¹⁴ Additional information on the use of the Rwg(j) can be found in Appendix B.

Table 2-3. Rwg(j) statistics for reviews of IES-published impact studies and corresponding proposals

Product	Dimension	
	Quality	Relevance
Proposals (N=11)	0.90	0.89
Reports (N=8)	0.96	0.95

Table Reads: For the 11 proposals, the mean inter-rater agreement for indicator ratings along the quality dimension was 0.90.

Source: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Studies (For Reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Studies (For Proposals) (Appendix A).

Limitations of Expert Panel Review

The expert panel review of impact study reports and proposals was characterized by several limitations in terms of the generalizability of the findings. Impact study proposals that did not result in IES publications by September 1, 2011 and draft impact study reports or reports published after September 1, 2011 were not included in this review. Therefore, results of the expert panel review cannot be generalized to reports that were not included in the review.

Readers are cautioned that it is not possible to use the expert panel reviews of IES-published impact study reports and initial proposals to distinguish the contributions of the REL, the ATS contractor, or NCEERA to the quality or relevance ratings for the reports published by IES. Readers should also be aware that, although there is correspondence between the 8 IES-published impact study reports reviewed and 8 of the 11 initial proposals, the average indicator-level quality and relevance ratings are distributed differently for reports than for proposals, for two reasons. First, because three initial proposals were without a corresponding report, the average ratings are distributed differently *across impact studies* for reports and for proposals. Second, because the rubric for reviewing reports had more indicators of quality and relevance than the rubric for rating proposals, the average ratings are distributed differently *across indicators* for reports and for proposals.

REL Customer Survey

To evaluate the relevance and usefulness of REL research and/or technical assistance products to the needs of the state and district administrators nationwide and within their regions, in winter/spring 2012, the study team conducted a survey of a nationally representative sample of state

and district administrators.¹⁵ The survey addressed respondents' needs for education research and/or technical assistance, familiarity with and use of REL products and services, and satisfaction with the RELs. The statutory mission of the RELs includes both research and technical assistance, so the survey included both concepts together to encompass the broad range of activities and needs addressed by the RELs.¹⁶

Sample Design for Survey of REL Customers

The primary customers of the RELs are employees of SEAs and LEAs in their respective geographic regions. However, the study team included in the survey population not only actual users of REL services and products but also *potential* users. Surveying *potential* users instead of only *actual* users allowed us to glean information about the target audiences' needs, awareness of REL services and products, and the reasons for non-use.

All SEAs and defined users within the SEAs were included in the sample frame. For LEAs, a two-stage sample design was used, where a sample of LEAs was first selected and then users were sampled from lists compiled from district websites. A unique feature of REL Pacific is that all SEAs served by the REL have only one school district, so the SEAs and LEAs coincide. Therefore, there is no LEA stratum for the Pacific region. To build the list of targeted respondents for SEAs in 10 regions and the sample frame for LEAs in 9 regions (excluding Pacific), the study team used state and district websites to identify administrators holding the following state and district positions:

- Chief State School Officers/Superintendents
- Deputy Superintendents

¹⁵ Based on input from a Technical Working Group (TWG), the evaluation team identified state and district administrators as the primary audience or customers for REL products and services.

¹⁶ The survey, which can be found in Appendix F of the report, did not define the terms research and technical assistance. However, Section 102 of ESRA defines applied research as “research—(A) to gain knowledge or understanding necessary for determining the means by which a recognized and specific need may be met; and (B) that is specifically directed to the advancement of practice in the field of education.” It defines basic research as “research— (A) to gain fundamental knowledge or understanding of phenomena and observable facts, without specific application toward processes or products; and (B) for the advancement of knowledge in the field of education.” It defines technical assistance as “(A) assistance in identifying, selecting, or designing solutions based on research, including professional development and high-quality training to implement solutions leading to— (i) improved educational and other practices and classroom instruction based on scientifically valid research; and (ii) improved planning, design, and administration of programs; (B) assistance in interpreting, analyzing, and utilizing statistics and evaluations; and (C) other assistance necessary to encourage the improvement of teaching and learning through the applications of techniques supported by scientifically valid research.”

- Directors of
 - Special Education,
 - Title I,
 - Bilingual Education/ESL,
 - Curriculum and Instruction,
 - Certification,
 - Professional Development,
 - Assessment,
 - School Improvement,
 - Migrant Education,
 - Gifted Education,
 - Early Childhood Services,
 - Career and Technology Education.

This approach did not cover all conceivable actual and potential users but rather the majority of them; it would be difficult to identify all users, and the cost would have been prohibitive. Likewise, while principals and teachers may be perceived as potential users of REL products and services, inclusion of school level personnel was considered prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, the proportion of school-level personnel who were actual users instead of potential users was expected to be small, so a very large sample would have been required to elicit a sufficient number of responses for analysis of survey items pertaining to services received.

The universe was naturally stratified by SEA and LEA, but stratification was also necessary to use different sample designs for the SEAs and LEAs. This type of stratification was also viewed as beneficial because user needs may differ for state and local personnel. Furthermore, the universe was stratified by REL to produce estimates by REL with a specified level of precision.¹⁷

¹⁷ The target precision was set to be 3 percentage points for a population proportion of 50 percent for a user characteristic.

Data Collection for Survey of REL Customers

Data collection for the web-based customer survey began in fall 2011. To gather information on response rates and determine if any necessary adjustments would need to be made to the design or to the projected precision, data were initially collected on the state sample and a sub-sample of the district administrators. In October 2011, the study team sent emails to all 346 state administrators and a sub-sample of 1,027 district administrators. In February 2012, emails were sent to state and district administrators who had not responded to the survey in fall 2011/winter 2012 and to the remaining 3,800 district administrators in the sample who were not included in the sub-sample. The emails included:

- A link to the customer survey,
- A username and password for accessing the survey,
- A letter from ED requesting the administrator’s participation in the survey and explaining the purpose of the survey, and
- A letter from Westat providing instructions for completing the survey and contact information for the study team.

Administrators were asked to complete the survey within 2 weeks. Those who did not respond after 2 weeks were sent a reminder email and asked to respond within a week. Once that date had passed, those who had not responded were given to Westat’s Telephone Research Center (TRC) for telephone follow-up. The TRC called to remind administrators to complete the survey online and also offered to complete the survey with the administrators over the phone. A third of all the completed surveys were conducted over the phone, with the phone interviewer entering the administrators’ responses into the web survey.¹⁸ Through online searches and calls to the state or district departments of education, the study team traced administrators as needed to obtain updated contact information. The TRC continued to contact administrators until data collection ended in early May 2012. The field results of the LEA sample and the SEA sample are shown in Table 2-4.

¹⁸ Regression analyses demonstrated that after controlling for respondents’ regions, the results for two key items in the survey, item B1 (“How familiar are you with the REL program overall?”) and item B8 (“Overall, how satisfied were you with the work of the REL program nationwide including your regional REL?”) did not vary significantly by differences in mode of survey completion (online versus telephone) (state administrators for B1: $p = 0.558$; state administrators for B8: $p = 0.595$; district administrators for B1: $p = 0.872$; district administrators for B8: $p = 0.331$).

Table 2-4. Results for state and district administrators on the REL customer survey, by response status

Status code	State administrator sample	% of potentially eligible SEA administrators	District administrator sample	% of potentially eligible LEA administrators
Complete	290	87	3,709	80
Nonresponse	12	4	196	4
Eligibility unknown	30	9	736	16
Total potentially eligible	332	100	4,641	100
Ineligible	14	4	181	4

Note: Administrators were deemed ineligible if they were no longer in the position and the position was vacant, were inadvertently duplicated, the person sampled was not actually an administrator or was an inappropriate respondent to the survey (e.g., an administrative assistant or Director of Facilities).

There were 766 users (14.8 percent of the sample) who did not respond at all by the close of data collection, even after repeated email reminders and phone calls, and their eligibility was not ascertained. The overall response rate was 87 percent for the sample of state administrators, and 80 percent for the sample of district administrators. The response rates by REL are shown in Table 2-5. Information on sampling and weighting for the customer survey are presented in Appendix E.

Table 2-5. Survey sample sizes and response rates by REL

REL Name	SEA		LEA	
	Sample size	Response rate (%)	Sample size	Response rate (%)
Appalachia	28	100	534	83
Central	44	91	511	82
Mid-Atlantic	32	90	543	78
Midwest	47	91	546	81
Northeast and Islands	46	80	538	73
Northwest	33	91	474	82
Pacific	17	71	NA	NA
Southeast	40	95	596	81
Southwest	33	72	566	81
West	26	83	526	78
Total	346	87	4,834	80

Cross-REL Findings on the Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness of Research and Technical Assistance Products

3

This chapter focuses on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of REL research and technical assistance products by addressing the following two research questions: (1) What were the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals? and (2) How relevant and useful were the REL technical assistance products to the needs of states and districts in their regions?

What Were the Technical Quality and Relevance of REL Impact Study Reports Published by IES and of the Corresponding Proposals?

To assess the technical quality and relevance of REL impact study reports and proposals, the study team organized expert panel reviews of 11 impact study proposals submitted by the 10 RELs between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, and 8 impact study reports from 7 RELs published by IES between November 2009 and April 2011. Three RELs had not produced any IES-published impact study reports by September 1, 2011.

The expert panelists rated eight IES-published impact study reports as, on average, between “strong” and “very strong” in quality (mean quality rating of 4.10 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). The 11 impact study proposals selected for review, including proposals for the 8 studies producing IES-published reports, received a mean quality rating of 3.59, which is between “adequate” and “strong” on a 5-point scale. For reports, all indicators had a rating of 4.0 or higher in quality except “The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described,” “Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence),” “The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous,” “The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power,” and “The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.” Indicator-specific ratings of quality are provided in Table 3-1.

The expert panelists rated eight IES-published reports as, on average, between “relevant” and “very relevant” (mean relevance rating of 4.06 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest value). The 11 impact study proposals selected for review received a mean relevance rating of 3.61, which is between “adequate” in relevance and “relevant.” For reports, all indicators had a rating of 4.0 or higher in relevance except “The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied,” and “The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.” Ratings of IES-published impact study reports and proposals by specific indicators of relevance are provided in Table 3-1. The separate chapters for each REL discuss detailed REL-specific expert panel review findings.

Table 3-1. Mean ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) from expert panel review of REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports, by rating indicator

Quality indicators for proposals	Proposals (N=11)
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.61
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	3.82
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.64
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.55
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.15
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.76
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.45
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.00
Relevance indicators for proposals	Proposals (N=11)
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.70
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.27
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.06
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.67

Table 3-1. Mean ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) from expert panel review of REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports, by rating indicator (continued)

Quality Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N=8)
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.96
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	3.83
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	4.33
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.50
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	3.83
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	3.79
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	4.00
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.08
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	4.25
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	3.83
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.21
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.33
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.38
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	4.21
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.00
Relevance indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N=8)
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.33
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.00
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.75
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.17
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	3.88
2F. The report is clear and well-written for the technical audience.	4.25

NOTE: Proposals were submitted by the RELs between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011; reports were published by IES between November 2009 and April 2011.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports prepared under the 2006-2011 REL contracts and published by IES by September 1, 2011); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals for impact studies under the 2006-2011 REL contracts submitted by September 1, 2011) (Appendix A).

A summary of the methods and results for each of the 8 IES-published impact studies is provided in Appendix D.¹⁹ Each summary contains (1) study citation, (2) what the study was about, (3) features of the intervention, and (4) what the study found.

How Relevant and Useful Were the REL Technical Assistance Products to the Needs of States and Districts in Their Regions?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, the evaluation team surveyed state and district administrators to ask them how relevant and useful REL technical assistance products were in meeting their needs²⁰. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators was teacher/staff evaluation (53 percent). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (37 percent) (Table 3-2).

¹⁹ The summaries for impact studies were provided by IES.

²⁰ Appendix F includes the survey administered to state and local education agency administrators.

- Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research and/or technical assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators indicated a “high need” were teacher/staff evaluation (53 percent), achievement gaps (50 percent), college or career readiness (49 percent), support for low-achieving schools (49 percent), and using data for decisions (47 percent). (Table 3-2 for top five needs and Table 3-3 for a complete set of needs.)
- The areas in which the five largest percentages of district administrators indicated a “high need” for research and/or technical assistance were content standards, curriculum, or instruction in STEM (37 percent); using data for decisions (35 percent); achievement gaps (34 percent); content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (32 percent); and assessment (31 percent). (Table 3-2 for top five needs and Table 3-3 for a complete set of needs.)

Table 3-2. Percentage of state and district administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and/or technical assistance: Top five needs—National: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	<i>n</i>	High need for research and/or assistance	Moderate need for research and/or assistance	Low or no need for research and/or assistance
Teacher/staff evaluation	286	53	31	16
Achievement gaps	288	50	37	13
Support for low-achieving schools	286	49	37	15
College or career readiness	286	49	37	14
Using data for decisions	286	47	40	14
District administrators				
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in: STEM	3,692	37	45	18
Achievement gaps	3,698	35	47	19
Using data for decisions	3,689	35	44	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in: reading/writing	3,686	32	48	21
Assessment (formative or summative)	3,695	31	47	22

NOTE: Excludes Other. See Table 3-3 for a complete list of topic areas in which respondents reported needs for research and/or technical assistance.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

Twenty-nine percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), regardless of the source of assistance.

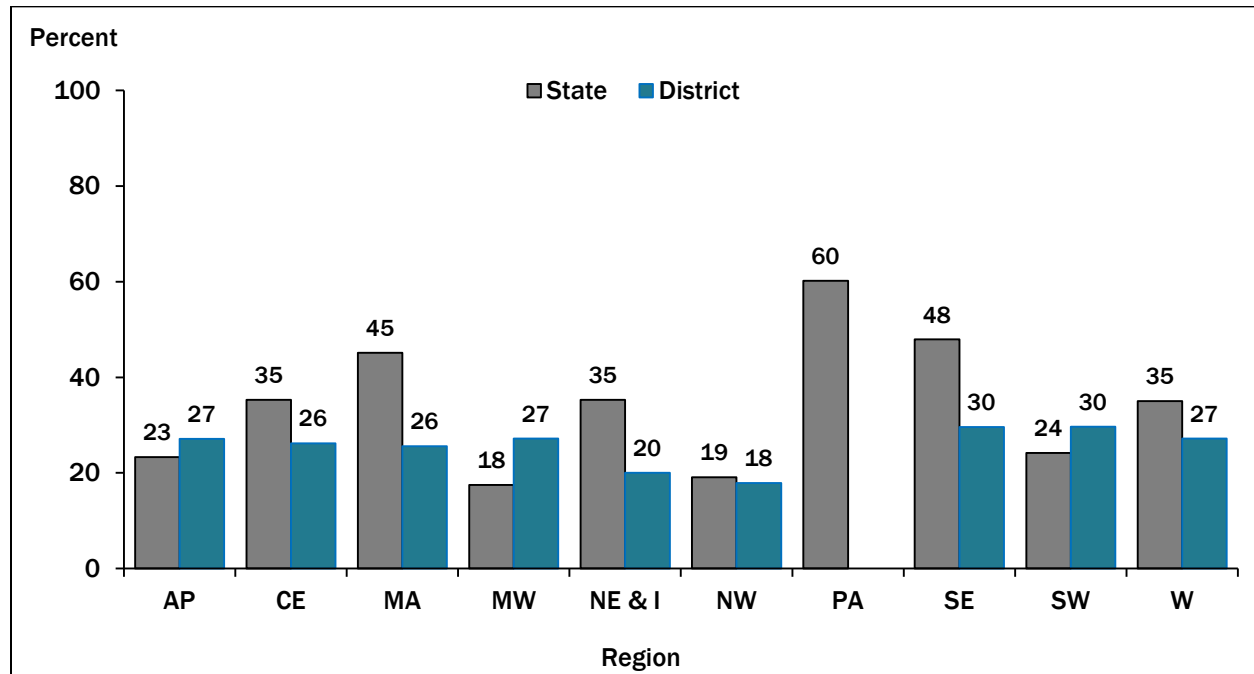
Table 3-3. Percentage of state and district administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and/or technical assistance—National: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	n	Need for research and/or assistance			n	Need for research and/or assistance		
		High %	Moderate %	Low or no need %		High %	Moderate %	Low or no need %
Achievement gaps	288	50	37	13	3,698	34	47	19
Assessment (formative or summative)	286	37	45	19	3,695	31	47	22
Behavior, character education, or health	284	12	37	51	3,681	18	44	38
College or career readiness	286	49	37	14	3,677	30	43	27
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	285	37	41	22	3,692	37	45	18
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	284	33	40	26	3,686	32	48	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other subject	284	13	48	39	3,666	11	51	38
Dropout prevention	284	40	42	18	3,684	24	37	39
Early childhood	284	33	39	28	3,687	19	39	41
English language learners	284	44	41	15	3,688	23	38	39
High school reform	283	37	38	25	3,687	23	38	39
Leadership	285	37	42	21	3,688	22	51	27
Longitudinal data systems	283	35	36	29	3,691	28	45	27
Parental involvement	282	31	45	23	3,690	26	47	27
Professional development	287	38	44	17	3,693	27	51	23
Rural schools	285	35	39	26	3,685	20	28	52
School accountability	285	38	37	25	3,689	17	48	35
School choice	284	11	33	56	3,683	6	25	69
School finance	283	17	34	49	3,681	18	37	45
Students with disabilities	283	28	44	28	3,687	25	49	27
Supplemental education services	284	17	34	48	3,689	12	43	45
Support for low-achieving schools	286	49	36	15	3,692	26	36	38
Teacher/staff evaluation	286	53	31	16	3,694	28	45	27
Using data for decisions	286	47	40	14	3,689	35	44	21
Other	17	‡	‡	88	383	33	13	54

NOTES: Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

Figure 3-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, by region: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 285, and the total N for district administrators was 3,686.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

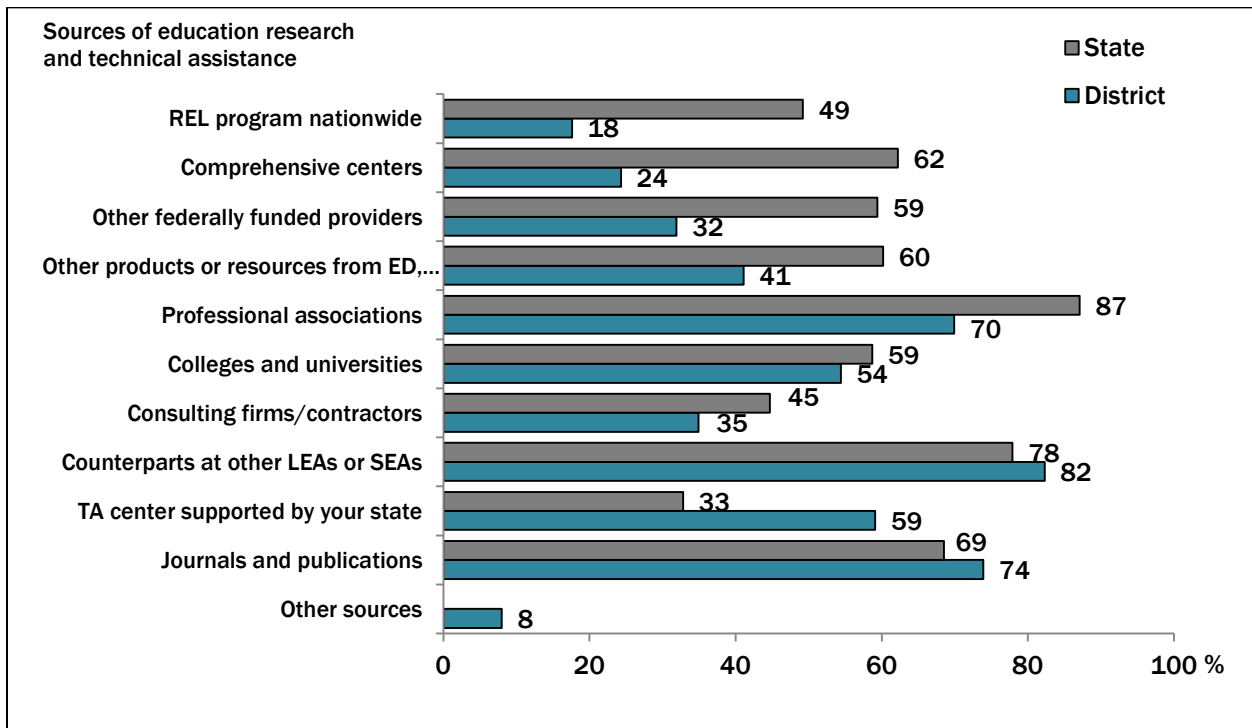
- The percentage of state administrators who reported that their needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, varied by region, from a high of 60 percent in the Pacific to a low of 18 percent in the Midwest. The percentage of district administrators who reported that their needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source of assistance, also varied by region, from a high of 30 percent in the Southeast to a low of 18 percent in the Northwest (Figure 3-1).

What Sources of Education Research and technical assistance do state and district administrators use?

Forty-nine percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for education research and/or technical assistance as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all. In contrast, 87 percent of state administrators relied on professional associations, and 82

percent of district administrators, relied on their counterparts in other districts “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent.”

Figure 3-2. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—National: School year 2011-12



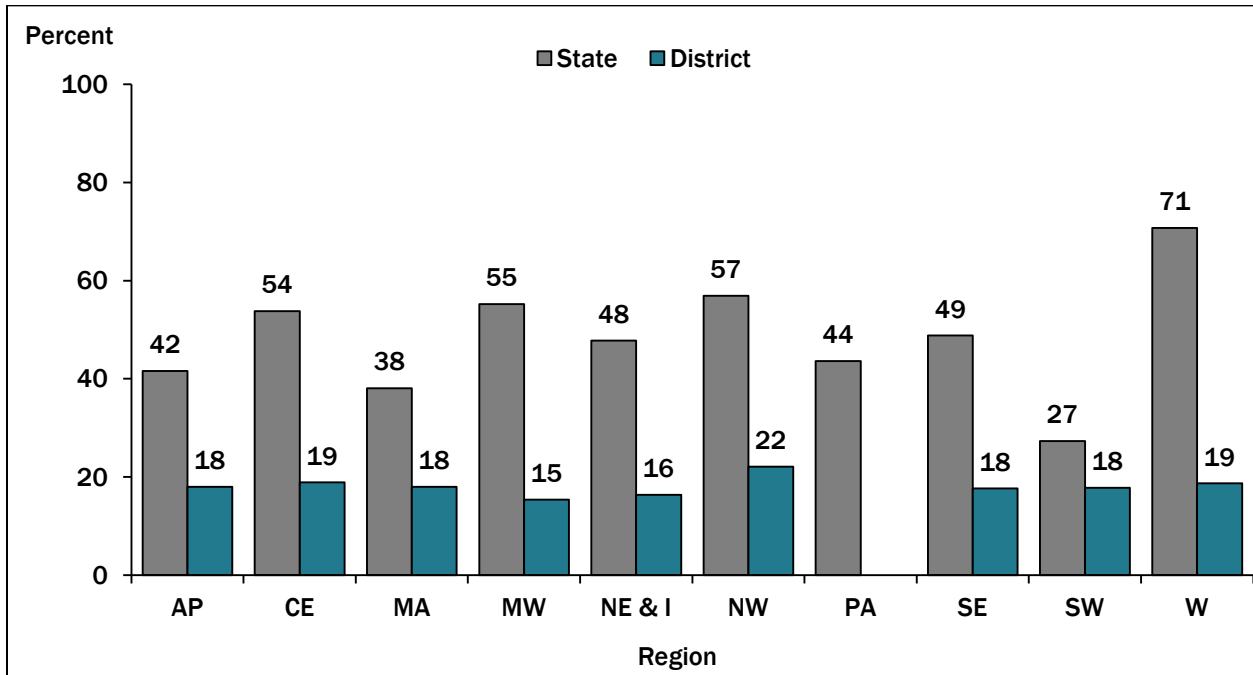
NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 289 and 3,700, respectively. The total N for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 284 to 288, depending on the number of state respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 3,684 to 3,694, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for district administrators for “Other sources” was 217.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- State and district administrators reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. Professional associations and counterparts in other states and districts were most commonly reported as being relied upon “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (states: 87 and 78 percent, respectively; districts: 70 and 82 percent, respectively) (Figure 3-2).
- State administrators’ reliance on the REL program varied across the regions: the percentage who reported relying on the REL program for research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” ranged from a high of 71 percent in the West to a low of 27 percent in the Southwest. For district administrators, the percentage who reported relying on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a

moderate extent” ranged from a high of 22 percent in the Northwest to a low of 15 percent in the Midwest (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on the national REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent,” by region: School year 2011-12



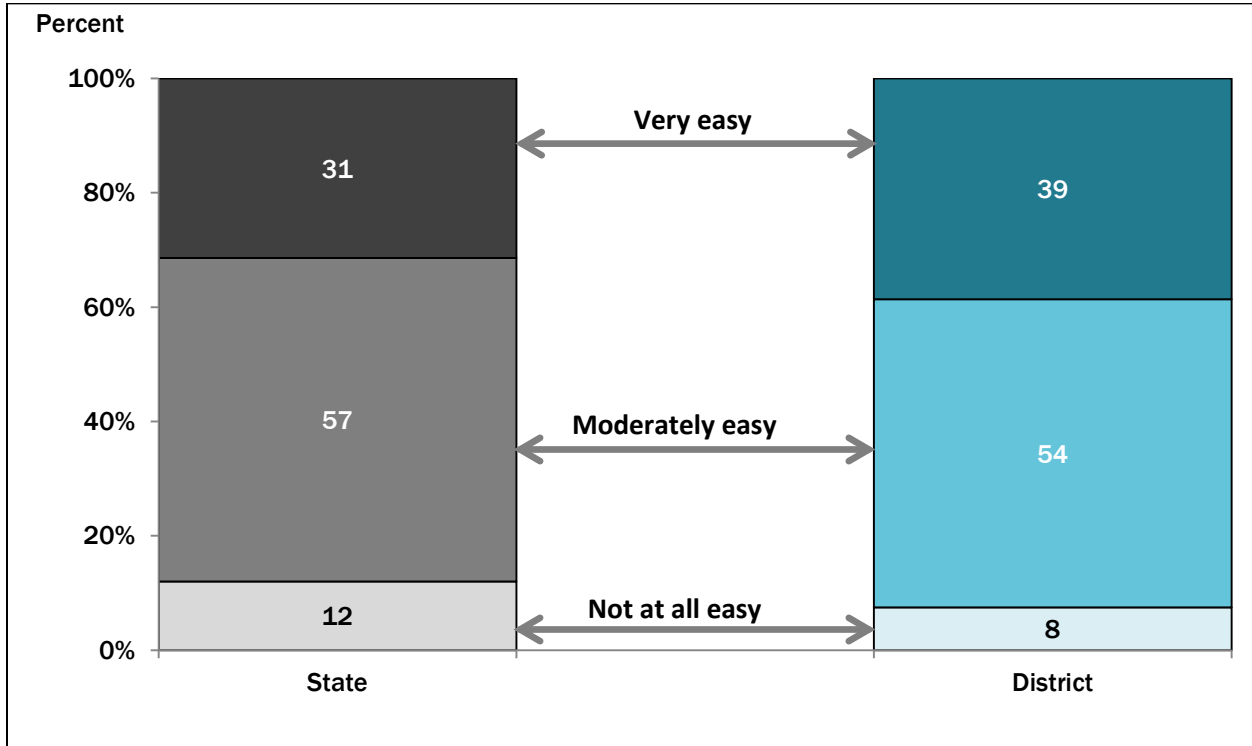
NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 289, and the total N for district administrators was 3,700.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

How easily do state and district administrators access the education research and/or technical assistance they need?

Eighty-eight percent of state administrators and 93 percent of district administrators reported that it was “very easy” or “moderately easy” (as opposed to “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information (Figure 3-4).

Figure 3-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—National: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 288, and the total N for district administrators was 3,700. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- The percentage of state administrators who reported that it was “very easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance varied from 26 percent in the Midwest and West regions to 45 percent in the Mid-Atlantic region (Table 3-4). The percentage of district administrators who said it was “very easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance varied from 30 percent in the Northwest region to 43 percent in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Table 3-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed, by region: School year 2011–12

Region	<i>n</i>	% of State administrators
National	93	31
Appalachia	8	30
Central	11	29
Mid-Atlantic	12	44
Midwest	11	26
Northeast and Islands	14	40
Northwest	9	30
Pacific	‡	‡
Southeast	15	41
Southwest	7	32
West	5	26
Region	<i>n</i>	% of District administrators
National	1,413	39
Appalachia	160	38
Central	161	40
Mid-Atlantic	176	43
Midwest	168	40
Northeast and Islands	140	37
Northwest	115	30
Pacific	—	—
Southeast	179	39
Southwest	163	37
West	151	38

—Not applicable

‡ Reporting standards were not met.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

How familiar are state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-six percent of state administrators and 52 percent of district administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program (Table 3-5).

- Fourteen percent of state administrators and 48 percent of district administrators reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 3-5).

Table 3-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—National: School year 2011-12

Familiarity with the REL program	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	79	27	170	4
Somewhat familiar	102	35	738	19
A little familiar	68	23	1,075	28
Not familiar at all	41	14	1,722	48

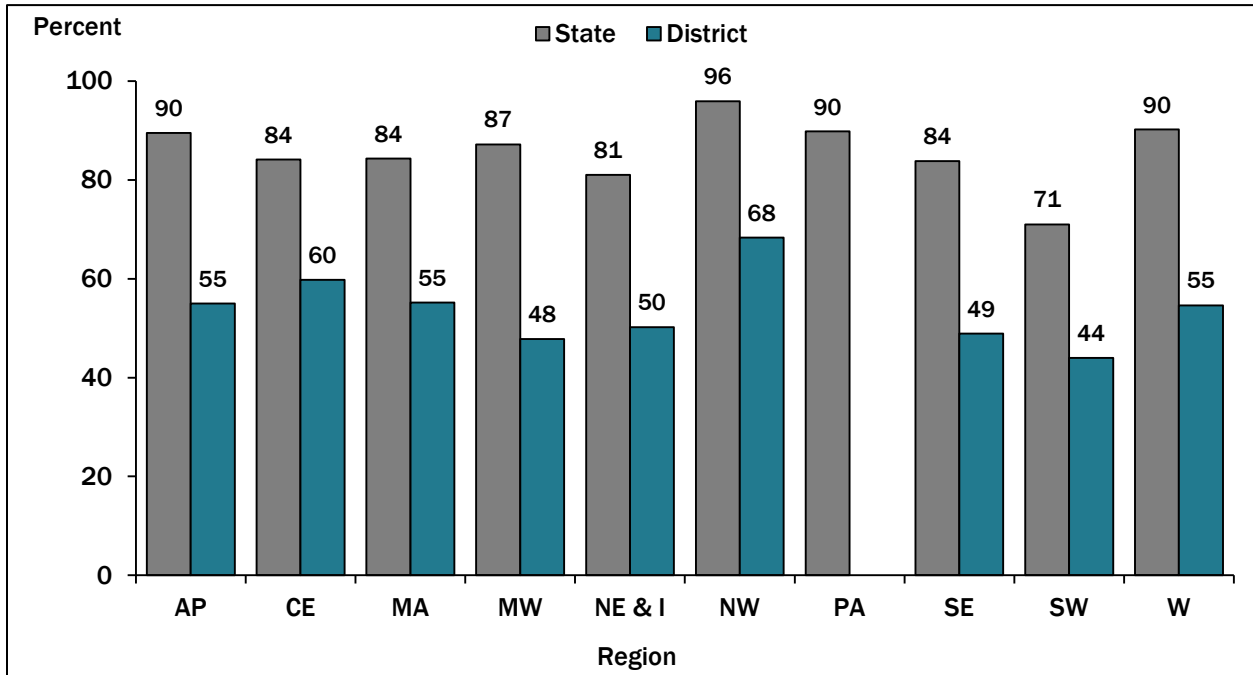
NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

In all 10 regions, more than 70 percent of state administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program (Figure 3-5).

- In all 10 regions, more than 70 percent of state administrators reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, ranging from a high of 96 percent in the Northwest region to a low of 71 percent in the Southwest region. (Figure 3-5).
- The percentage of district administrators who reported that they were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program ranged from a high of 68 percent in the Northwest region to a low of 44 percent in the Southwest region (Figure 3-5). REL Southwest was a first-time REL grantee in FY 2006.

Figure 3-5. Percentage of all state and district administrators who reported they were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, by region: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 290, and the total N for district administrators was 3,705.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators use REL services?

Seventy-seven percent of state administrators and 46 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.²¹

- The percentage of state administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used REL services in the past 12 months ranged from 47 percent in Mid-Atlantic region to 94 percent in the West region (Table 3-6).
- The percentage of district administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used REL services in the past 12 months ranged from 38 percent in the Southwest region to 62 percent in the West region (Table 3-6).

²¹ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” and “a little familiar.” Note that state and district administrators’ familiarity with the REL program varied across regions, as shown in figure 3-5.

Table 3-6. Percentage of state and district administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who had used one or more REL services in the past 12 months: School year 2011-2012

Region	<i>n</i>	% of State administrators
National	191	77
Appalachia	17	69
Central	26	79
Mid-Atlantic	10	47
Midwest	31	83
Northeast and Islands	27	93
Northwest	23	82
Pacific	8	70
Southeast	24	79
Southwest	8	59
West	17	94
Region	<i>n</i>	% of District administrators
National	915	46
Appalachia	95	41
Central	103	43
Mid-Atlantic	109	48
Midwest	82	41
Northeast and Islands	82	43
Northwest	139	55
Pacific	–	–
Southeast	98	45
Southwest	73	38
West	134	62

– Not applicable

NOTE: Administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed considerably for states and districts (Table 3-6).

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- More than 40 percent of state administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each major type of REL service: technical assistance (55 percent), a live or virtual event (46 percent), responses to data or research requests (45 percent), and information on the REL’s website (41 percent). Of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 34 percent reported obtaining information from the REL’s website; 20 percent reported attending a live or virtual event; 13 percent reported receiving a response to a data or research request; and 11 percent reported receiving technical assistance (Table 3-7).

Table 3-7. Percentage of state and district administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who used various REL services in the past 12 months—National: School year 2011-12

REL services	<i>n</i>	% of State administrators
A live or virtual event	116	46
Technical assistance	135	55
Responses to data or research requests	113	45
Information on the REL’s website	103	41
REL services	<i>n</i>	% of District administrators
A live or virtual event	389	20
Technical assistance	216	11
Responses to data or research requests	262	13
Information on the REL’s website	683	34

NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 249, and the total N for district administrators was 1,987. Administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed considerably for states and districts.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- Among administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 19 percent of state administrators and 33 percent of district administrators reported that they did not use any REL services in the past 12 months. When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common response for state administrators (54 percent) was that their needs were met elsewhere. Forty-three percent of these state administrators said they did not know what services were available from the RELs. The most common response for district administrators was that they did not know what services were available (58 percent) (Table 3-8).

Table 3-8. Reasons administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—National: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	25	54
Didn’t know what services were available	21	43
Had no need for REL resources	12	24
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	8	16
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	‡	‡
Reason	District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	117	56
Didn’t know what services were available	368	58
Had no need for REL resources	117	18
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	51	8
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	10	2

NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 47, and the total N for district administrators was 647. Administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed considerably for states and districts.

‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL that served their region:
 - Majorities of the state administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and used REL services indicated that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (76 percent); they had a REL representative attend a meeting or workshop the administrator also attended (74 percent); or they had attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (54 percent) (Table 3-9).
 - More than 30 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL services said a REL representative was present at a meeting the administrator also attended (36 percent); they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (34 percent); they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (32 percent); or they contacted the reference desk for help or used the Ask a REL link on the website (32 percent) (Table 3-9).

Table 3-9. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—National: School year 2011-12

Contact	State		District	
	n	%	n	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	36	19	260	32
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	101	54	274	34
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	138	74	286	36
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	142	76	257	32
Forwarded a request to the REL	43	23	90	12
Other type of contact	18	10	124	15

NOTE: The total N state administrators was 189, and the total N for district administrators was 866.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program are state and district administrators?

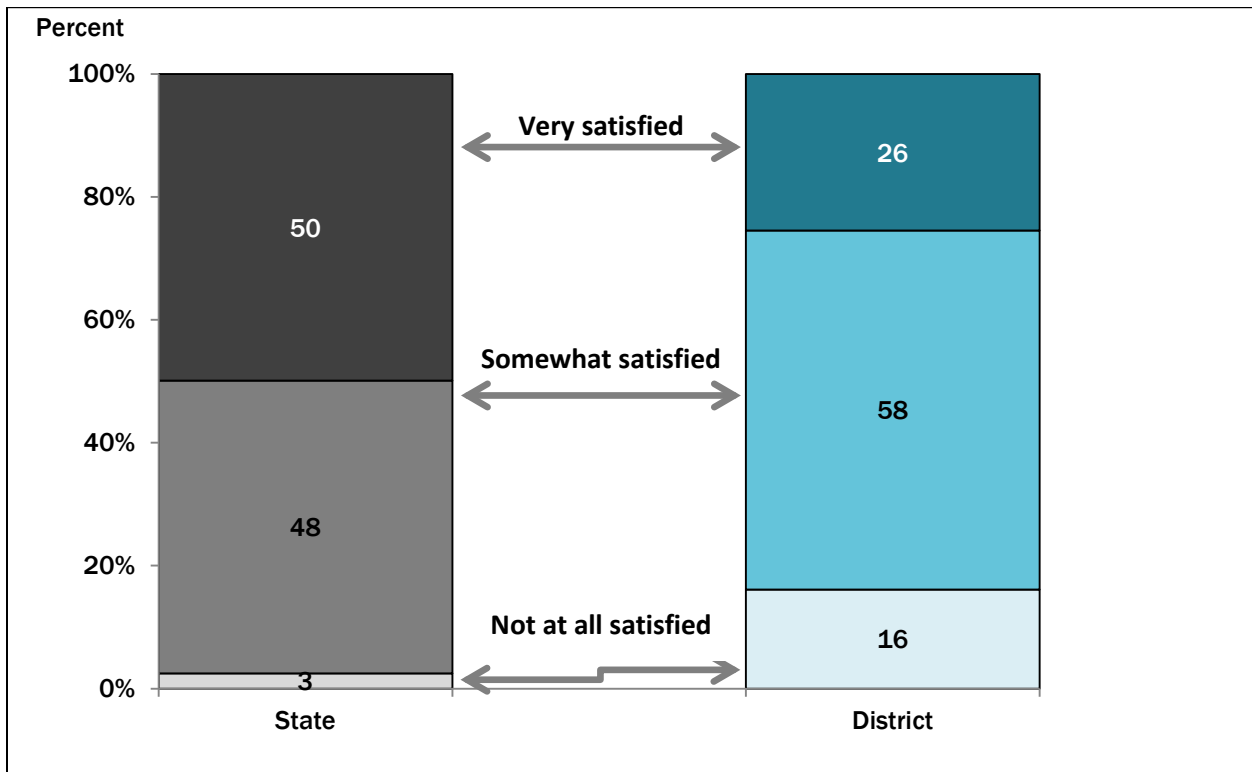
One-half (50 percent) of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program were “very satisfied” with it.

Of the state administrators who reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 50 percent reported being “very satisfied” with it; 48 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with

it; and 3 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Figure 3-6). The level of satisfaction varied by familiarity with the REL program (Figure 3-7).

- Of the district administrators who reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 26 percent reported being “very satisfied” with it; 58 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it; and 16 percent report being “not at all satisfied” with it (Figure 3-6).
- Of state administrators who reported being “very familiar” with the REL program, 70 percent were “very satisfied” with it, while 49 percent of those who reported being “somewhat familiar” and 20 percent of those who reported being “a little familiar” with the REL program were “very satisfied” with it. Of the district administrators who reported being “very familiar” with the REL program, 65 percent were “very satisfied” with it compared to 31 percent of the district administrators who reported being “somewhat familiar” with REL program and 13 percent who reported being “a little familiar” with it (Figure 3-7). Level of familiarity and satisfaction may also vary by other factors that were not examined, such as use of services.

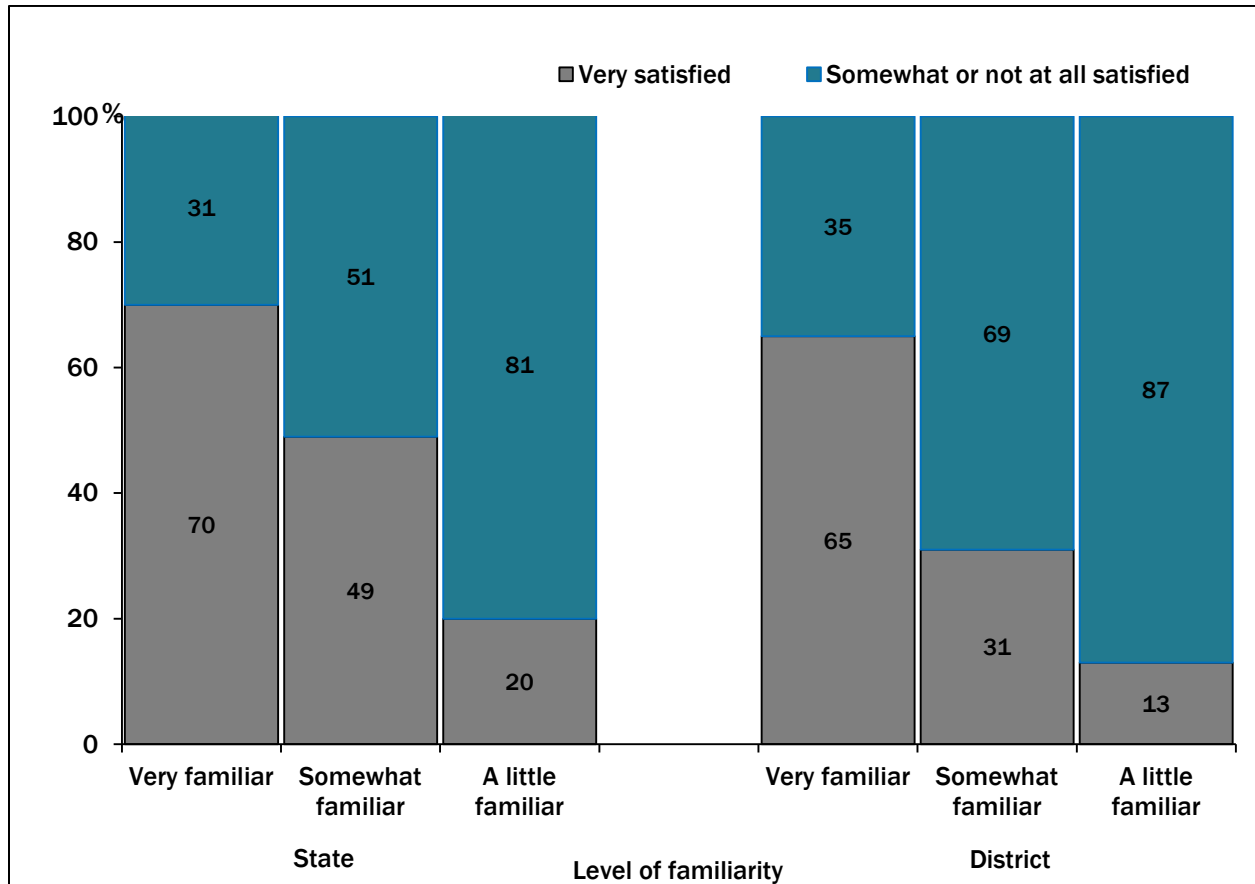
Figure 3-6. Percentage of administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program and were “very satisfied,” or “somewhat or not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 216, and the total N for district administrators was 1,619. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

Figure 3-7. Percentage of administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar” with the REL program and were “very satisfied,” or “somewhat or not at all satisfied” with it—National: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 216, and the total N for district administrators was 1,618. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

- Across the 10 regions served by the REL program, the percentage of state administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and reported being “very satisfied” with it ranged from a high of 65 percent in the Southeast region to a low of 28 percent in the Mid-Atlantic region (Table 3-10).
- The percentage of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and reported being “very satisfied” with it ranged from a high of 34 percent in the West region to a low of 17 percent in the Midwest region (Table 3-10).

Table 3-10. Percentage of state and district administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied” with it, by region: School year 2011-12

Region	<i>n</i>	% of State administrators
National	107	50
Appalachia	11	61
Central	11	39
Mid-Atlantic	4	28
Midwest	19	56
Northeast and Islands	18	63
Northwest	11	39
Pacific	‡	‡
Southeast	17	65
Southwest	5	48
West	10	61
Region	<i>n</i>	% of District administrators
National	422	26
Appalachia	32	18
Central	54	27
Mid-Atlantic	47	26
Midwest	27	17
Northeast and Islands	40	28
Northwest	68	29
Pacific	–	–
Southeast	50	29
Southwest	39	26
West	65	34

– Not applicable

‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011–spring 2012.

Summary

To answer the research question “What were the technical quality and relevance of the REL impact study reports published by IES and corresponding proposals?” the study team organized an expert panel review of the 11 impact study proposals and 8 impact study reports published by IES between November 2009 and April 2011. The expert panelists rated the quality of the impact study reports as, on average, between “strong” and “very strong” and the quality of the impact study proposals as between “adequate” and “strong.” For relevance, the expert panelists rated the impact study reports

as between “relevant” and “very relevant” and the impact study proposals as between “adequate” and “relevant.”

The study team surveyed state and district administrators to answer the second research question “How relevant and useful were the REL technical assistance products to the needs of states and districts in their region?” First, administrators were asked about their needs for education research and technical assistance and whether those needs were met. Twenty-nine percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” regardless of the source. When asked how much they relied on the REL program for education research and/or technical assistance, 49 percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent.”

Administrators were then asked about their familiarity and satisfaction with the REL program. Eighty-six percent of state administrators and 52 percent of district administrators were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program. Of administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 77 percent of state administrators and 46 percent of district administrators reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months. For administrators who had not used any REL services in the past 12 months, when asked why they had not used any REL services the most common response for state administrators was that their needs were met elsewhere (54 percent) and for district administrators was that they did not know what services were available (58 percent). Finally, 50 percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program were “very satisfied” with it.



REL: Appalachia

4

Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia serves the following states:

- Virginia;
- West Virginia;
- Tennessee; and
- Kentucky.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Appalachia was headquartered at the CNA Institute for Public Research, a nonprofit research firm in Alexandria, Virginia. The FY 2006 award was the first time CNA had held a REL contract, and CNA was also awarded the REL Appalachia contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Appalachia impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?²²

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES did not publish any impact studies from REL Appalachia, but one proposal was reviewed as part of the evaluation:

- *Effects of the Kentucky Virtual Schools' Hybrid Program for Algebra I on Grade 9 Student Math Achievement.*²³

²² Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using randomized controlled trials or regression discontinuity designs.

²³ This study was published by IES in April 2012.

The Kentucky Virtual Schools hybrid algebra I curriculum uses online resources in face-to-face technology-enhanced classrooms to facilitate the use of standards-based instructional practices. Participating teachers engage in sustained professional development focusing on effective pedagogy and the use of technology. This study tested whether the program improves classroom quality and increases student engagement and achievement. As reported in the study, researchers found that the hybrid class format was no more effective at increasing student achievement and future coursetaking in math than algebra offered in the traditional face-to-face format.

The average quality rating for the impact study proposal from REL Appalachia that was reviewed by the expert panel was 3.56. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong” (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Appalachia (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	3.56	2.80

Table Reads: For the impact study proposal for Effects of the Kentucky Virtual Schools' Hybrid Program for Algebra I on Grade 9 Student Math Achievement, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.56.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Appalachia was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Appalachia was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings.

SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance rating for the impact study proposal from REL Appalachia that was reviewed by the expert panel was 2.80. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal relevance rating fell between “marginally relevant” and “adequate” (Table 4-1).

Table 4-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean rating from the expert panel review of the proposal from REL Appalachia.

Table 4-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of the impact study proposal for REL Appalachia, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	4.33
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	3.33
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.33
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.67
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.00
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.67
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.00
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	2.67
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	2.67
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.00
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	3.00
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	2.67

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Appalachia technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Appalachia technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Appalachia region. State and district administrators

were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Appalachia.²⁴

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Appalachia region was high school reform (45%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Appalachia region was achievement gaps (46%).

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the six largest percentages of state administrators in the Appalachia region indicated a “high need” were:

- High school reform (45%);
- Achievement gaps (43%);
- College or career readiness (39%);
- Dropout prevention (39%);

²⁴ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

- Professional development (38%); and
- Rural schools (38%).

In the Appalachia region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting a “high need” were:

- Achievement gaps (46%);
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (41%);
- College or career readiness (37%);
- Using data for decisionmaking (36%); and
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in: reading/writing (35%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance is provided in Table 4-3.

Twenty-three percent of state administrators and 27 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”).

- Seventy-seven percent of state administrators in the Appalachia region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 0 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 4-4).
- Sixty-six percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 7 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 4-4).

Table 4-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	26	43	41	16	421	46	41	12
Assessment (formative or summative)	26	17	57	26	420	30	49	21
Behavior, character education, or health	26	11	35	54	417	15	44	41
College or career readiness	26	39	45	16	418	37	42	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	26	26	32	42	420	41	42	17
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	26	26	24	50	419	35	48	18
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	26	‡	‡	58	415	14	48	39
Dropout prevention	26	39	37	24	419	33	40	27
Early childhood	26	31	34	35	418	21	42	37
English language learners	26	30	47	23	418	19	37	44
High school reform	26	45	14	41	416	24	44	32
Leadership	27	30	51	18	419	21	54	25
Longitudinal data systems	26	20	42	38	418	24	48	28
Parental involvement	26	27	52	21	421	26	48	25
Professional development	26	38	51	11	419	26	51	23
Rural schools	26	38	40	22	418	22	32	45
School accountability	26	24	38	38	419	17	49	33
School choice	26	‡	‡	62	417	3	24	73
School finance	26	‡	‡	62	416	12	35	53
Students with disabilities	26	24	45	32	416	29	49	22
Supplemental education services	26	‡	‡	51	418	10	43	47
Support for low-achieving schools	26	26	59	15	420	34	39	27
Teacher/staff evaluation	27	34	40	25	418	28	45	27
Using data for decisions	27	28	61	10	418	36	44	21
Other	3	‡	‡	‡	51	38	8	54

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 4-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	6	23	114	27
Moderately well	19	77	275	66
Not well	0	0	30	7

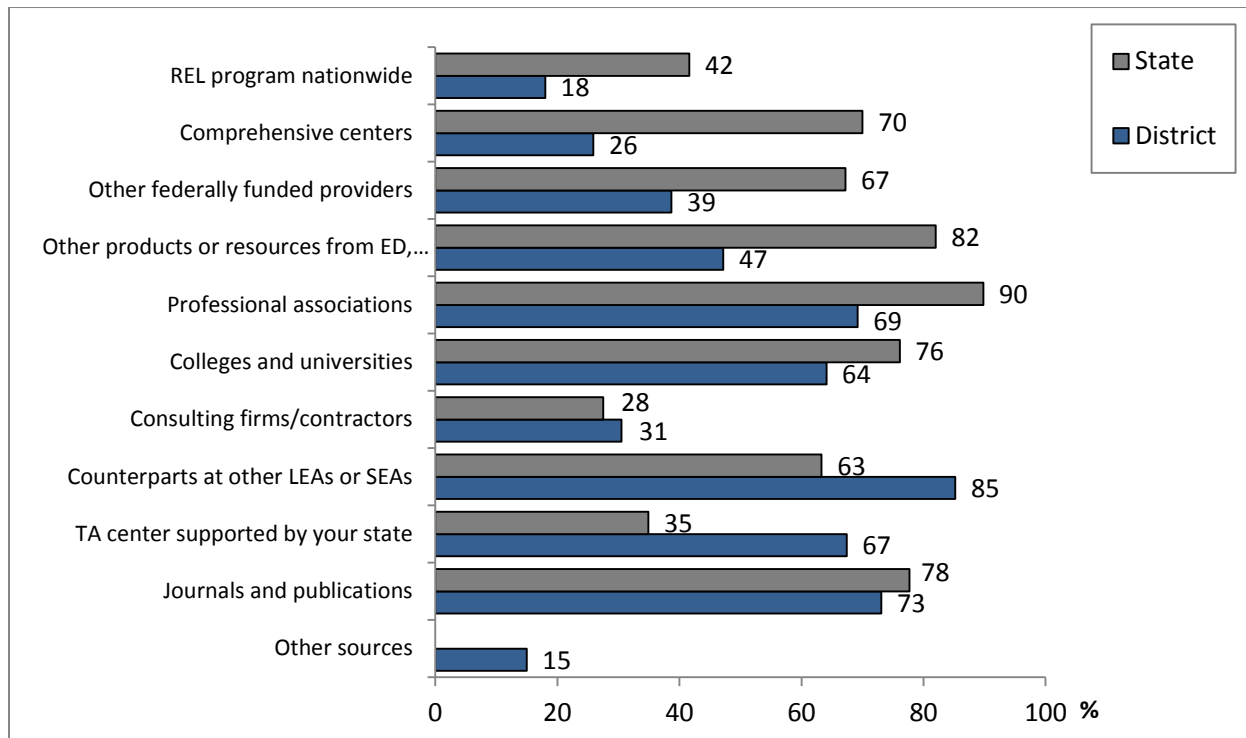
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (90%), and for district administrators it was counterparts in other states and districts (85%). Forty-two percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (90%) and other products or resources from ED (82%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (85%) and journals and publications (73%) (Figure 4-1).
- Forty-two percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that they relied on the REL program overall “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 4-1).
- Thirty percent of state administrators in the Appalachia region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 38 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 4-5).

Figure 4-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Appalachia: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on other sources of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N* for state administrators was 23. The total *N* for district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program was 224, and the total *N* for district administrators on the items about all other specified sources of research ranged from 419 to 422, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total *N* for district administrators for “other sources” was 22.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 4-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	8	30	160	38
Moderately easy to access	‡	‡	239	57
Not at all easy to access	‡	‡	21	5

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Ninety percent of state administrators in the Appalachia region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 55 percent of district administrators.

- Ten percent of state administrators and 45 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 4-6).

Table 4-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	5	18	13	3
Somewhat familiar	12	46	77	18
A little familiar	7	26	142	34
Not familiar at all	3	10	189	45

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

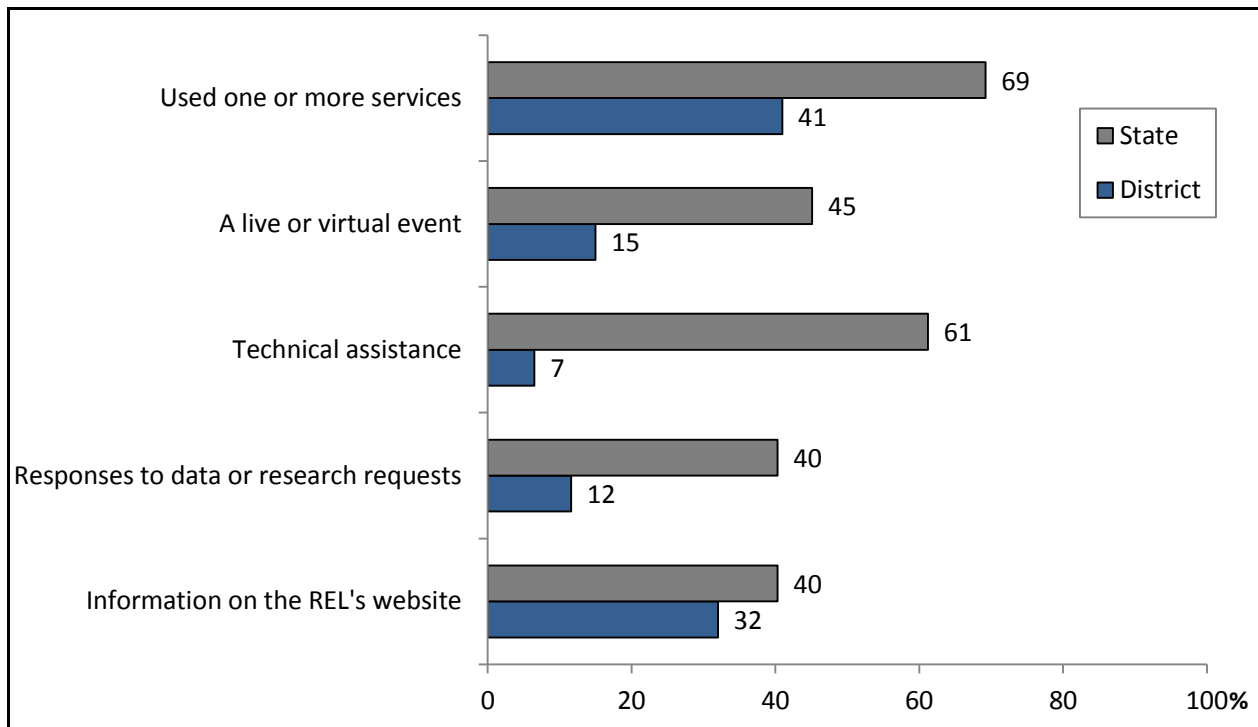
How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Sixty-nine percent of state administrators and 41 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.²⁵

- The majority of state administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used REL technical assistance services in the past 12 months (61%). Of district administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 32 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 15 percent attended a live or virtual event; 12 percent received a response from a data or research request; and 7 percent received technical assistance (Figure 4-2).

²⁵ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Appalachia region.

Figure 4-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Appalachia: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 23; the total N for district administrators was 168.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Of administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 27 percent of state administrators and 32 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.²⁶ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for state and district administrators were that they didn’t know what services were available (64 and 55 percent, respectively), and their needs were met elsewhere (53 and 52 percent, respectively) (Table 4-7).

²⁶ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 4-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL Program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Reason	State		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	3	53	30	52
Didn't know what services were available	4	64	27	55
Had no need for REL resources	0	0	17	15
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL's resources	0	0	‡	‡
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	0	0

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 6, and the total *N* for district administrators was 73. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Appalachia region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Appalachia services in the past year indicated that they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (74%), or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (73%). Among district administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Appalachia services in the past year, 39 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 31 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the Ask a REL link on the REL's website; 30 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 24 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 10 percent said they forwarded someone else's request to the REL; and 16 percent had some other type of contact (Table 4-8).

Table 4-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Contact	State		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	3	20	25	31
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	7	47	24	30
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	11	74	31	39
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	11	73	19	24
Forwarded a request to the REL	‡	‡	8	10
Other type of contact	‡	‡	13	16

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 17, and the total *N* for district administrators was 91. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Sixty-one percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

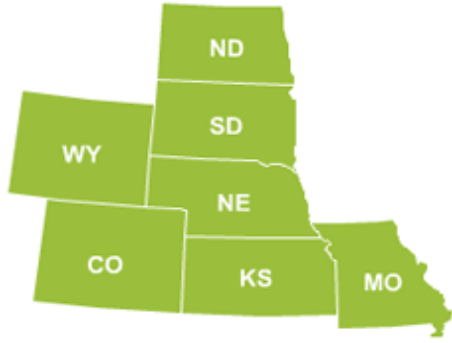
- Of the district administrators in the Appalachia region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 67 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 16 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 4-9).

Table 4-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Appalachia: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	11	61	32	18
Somewhat satisfied	‡	‡	122	67
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡	29	16

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



Regional Educational Laboratory Central serves the following states:

- Colorado;
- Kansas;
- Missouri;
- Nebraska;
- North Dakota;
- South Dakota; and
- Wyoming.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Central was housed at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). At the time of data collection, McREL had held the REL contract continuously since 1966. Marzano Research Laboratory was awarded the REL Central contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Central impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?²⁷

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Central:

²⁷ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

- *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Impact on Elementary School Mathematics in the Central Region.*

CASL is a professional development program on classroom and formative assessment that includes a textbook, DVDs, ancillary books, and an implementation handbook, all of which are used to train teachers to conduct classroom assessments that are appropriate for and aligned with their learning targets. The study used a random assignment design to investigate the effectiveness of the *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (CASL)* program by comparing mathematics achievement of elementary school students in the *CASL* and comparison groups in the spring of the implementation year. The study found no effects of *CASL* on the mathematics achievement of fourth- and fifth-grade students.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Central that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.11 and 3.96, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong,” and the average proposal quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong” (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Central (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	3.96	3.73
IES-published impact study report	4.11	3.72

Table Reads: For the proposal Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Impact on Elementary School Mathematics in the Central Region, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.96.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Central was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Central was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Central was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Central was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings.
 SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Central that were reviewed by the expert panel were 3.72 and 3.73, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal relevance ratings fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 5-1).

Table 5-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from expert panel reviews of the IES-published impact study and corresponding proposal from REL Central.

Table 5-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Central, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	4.00
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	4.00
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.00
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	4.00
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	4.33
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.00
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.33
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.67
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.33
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.00
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	5.00
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	4.00

Table 5-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Central, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.67
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	4.00
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	4.67
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.00
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	4.00
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	3.33
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.67
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.67
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	4.67
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	3.33
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.00
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.33
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.67
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	5.00
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.67
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.00
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.33
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	3.33
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.33

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

Source: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Central technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Central technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Central region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL Program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL Program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Central.²⁸

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Central region was support for low-achieving schools (67%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Central region was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (36%).

²⁸ Results for the nation are presented in chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no” need for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the Central region indicated “high need” were:

- Support for low-achieving schools (67%);
- Rural schools (63%);
- Achievement gaps (59%);
- College or career readiness (54%); and
- Teacher/staff evaluation (52%).

In the Central region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (36%);
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (31%);
- Using data for decisions (30%);
- Assessment (29%); and
- Achievement gaps (28%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance is provided in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Central: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	39	59	31	11	408	28	52	21
Assessment (formative or summative)	39	29	55	16	408	29	47	24
Behavior, character education, or health	39	13	46	42	406	18	46	36
College or career readiness	39	54	30	16	408	24	46	30
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	38	32	48	19	407	36	46	19
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	38	32	45	24	406	31	51	18
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	38	21	35	44	403	7	50	43
Dropout prevention	38	26	‡	‡	407	22	39	39
Early childhood	38	48	39	13	408	23	39	38
English language learners	38	47	46	7	408	17	35	48
High school reform	38	28	59	13	408	16	45	40
Leadership	38	40	52	7	406	21	51	28
Longitudinal data systems	38	34	42	24	408	21	50	28
Parental involvement	38	34	54	13	408	27	47	26
Professional development	38	38	47	16	408	24	55	21
Rural schools	38	63	26	11	407	24	33	43
School accountability	38	48	33	19	408	12	53	35
School choice	38	7	23	69	408	4	23	73
School finance	38	10	39	51	408	16	41	44
Students with disabilities	38	21	55	24	408	18	50	32
Supplemental education services	38	24	34	42	408	9	44	47
Support for low-achieving schools	38	67	22	12	407	22	40	37
Teacher/staff evaluation	38	52	40	8	408	24	47	28
Using data for decisions	38	46	‡	‡	407	30	46	24
Other	‡	‡	‡	‡	34	27	‡	‡

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Thirty-five percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Sixty-six percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” by their sources of assistance and 8 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Central: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	13	35	106	26
Moderately well	‡	‡	268	66
Not well	‡	‡	33	8

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

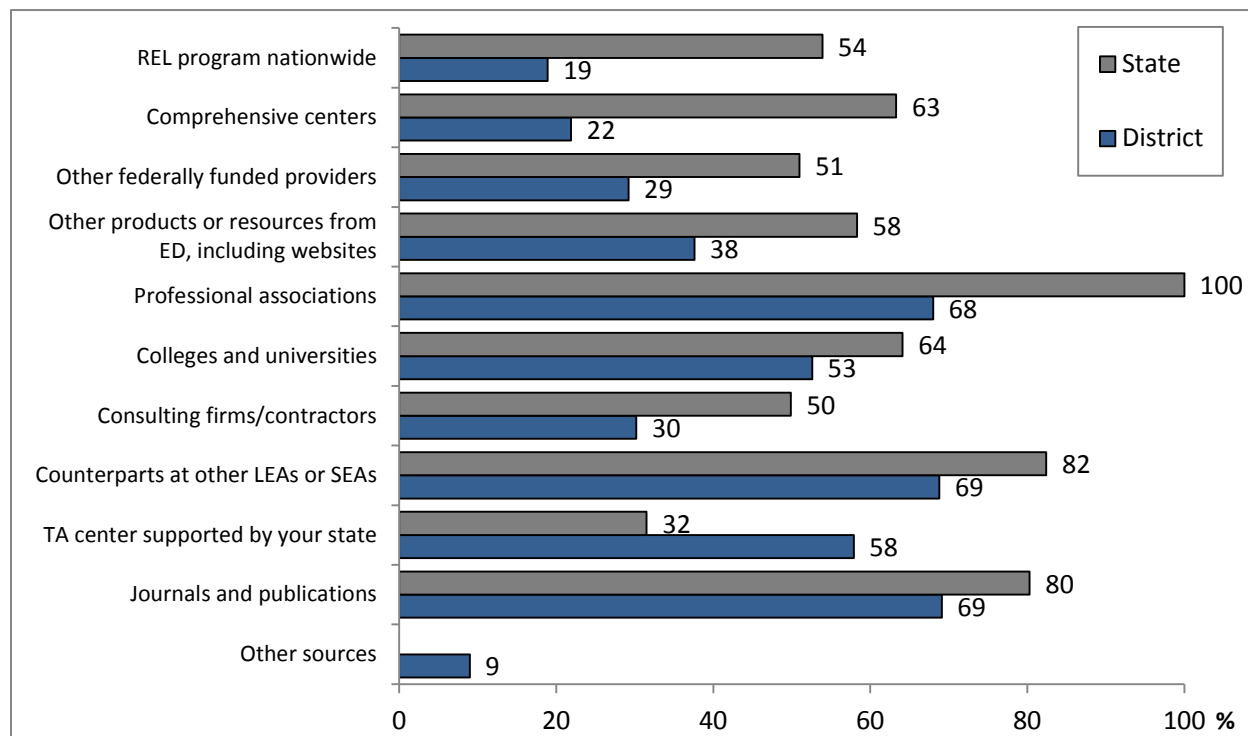
What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (100%). For district administrators, the most reported sources were education journals and publications (69%) and counterparts in other states and districts (69%). Fifty-four percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Central region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (100%) and counterparts in other states and districts (82%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on education journals and publications (69%) and counterparts in other states and districts (69%) (Figure 5-1).

- Fifty-four percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 5-1).

Figure 5-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Central: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N* for state administrators was 39. The total *N* for district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program was 409; the total *N* for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 407 to 408, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total *N* for district administrators for “other sources” was 34.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Twenty-nine percent of state administrators in the Central region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 40 percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 5-5).

Table 5-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Central: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	11	29	161	40
Moderately easy to access	‡	‡	213	52
Not at all easy to access	‡	‡	35	9

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-four percent of state administrators in the Central region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 59 percent of district administrators.

- Sixteen percent of state administrators and 40 percent of district administrators in the Central region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 5-6).

Table 5-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Central: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	10	25	18	4
Somewhat familiar	20	51	91	22
A little familiar	3	8	134	33
Not familiar at all	6	16	165	40

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

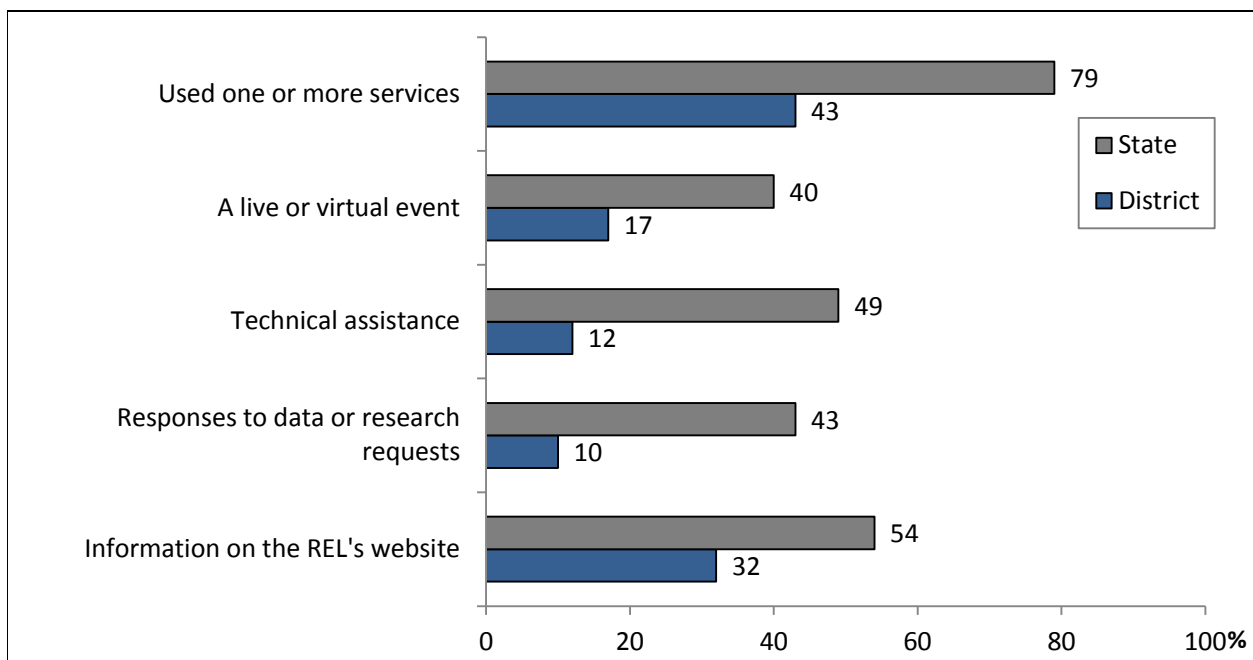
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Seventy-nine percent of state administrators and 43 percent of district administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.²⁹

- The majority of state administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used information on the REL’s website in the past 12 months (54%). Of district administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 32 percent used information on the REL’s website; 17 percent attended a live or virtual event; 12 percent received technical assistance from the REL; and 10 percent received a response from a data or research request (Figure 5-2).

Figure 5-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Central: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 33, and the total N for district administrators was 244.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

²⁹ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Central region.

- Of administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with this REL program, 21 percent of state administrators and 36 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.³⁰ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for state administrators (57 percent and 43 percent, respectively), were that their needs were met elsewhere or they didn’t know what services were available. Likewise, the most common responses for district administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program but had not used any REL services in the past 12 months (55 and 56 percent, respectively) were that their needs were met elsewhere or they didn’t know what services were available (Table 5-7).

Table 5-7. Reasons administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Central: School year 2011-12

Reason	State		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	4	57	48	55
Didn’t know what services were available	3	43	49	56
Had no need for REL resources	‡	‡	20	23
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	‡	‡	11	12
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	‡	‡	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* state administrators was 7, and the total *N* for district administrators was 89. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Central region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Central services in the past year indicated that they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (78%), or they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (66%). Among district administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Central services in the past year, 40 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 39 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 37 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; 31 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; and 11 percent forwarded a request they had received to the REL (Table 5-8).

³⁰ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 5-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Central: School year 2011-12

Contact	State		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	5	20	32	37
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	11	43	58	40
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	20	78	54	31
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	17	66	45	39
Forwarded a request to the REL	3	12	18	11
Other type of contact	‡	‡	22	10

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 26, and the total *N* for district administrators was 97. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Forty percent of state administrators and 27 percent of district administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the state administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 61 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 0 percent of state administrators reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 5-9).
- Of the district administrators in the Central region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 60 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 13 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 5-9).

Table 5-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Central: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	11	39	54	27
Somewhat satisfied	19	61	121	60
Not at all satisfied	0	0	26	13

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



REL: Mid-Atlantic

6

Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic serves the following states:

- Delaware;
- District of Columbia;
- Maryland;
- New Jersey; and
- Pennsylvania.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Central was headquartered at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and included four primary subcontractors: Rutgers University, ICF International, ANALYTICA, and the Metiri Group. The 2006-11 contract period was the first time PSU or any of its partner organizations held a REL contract. The REL Mid-Atlantic contract beginning in FY 2012 was awarded to ICF International and its partners.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Mid-Atlantic impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?³¹

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Mid-Atlantic:

- *A Multisite Cluster Randomized Trial of the Effects of Compass Learning Odyssey Math on the Math Achievement of Selected Grade 4 Students in the Mid-Atlantic Region.*

³¹ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Odyssey® Math, is a web-based K–8 mathematics curriculum and assessment tool designed to enable teachers to differentiate student instruction and make data-driven decisions. The study examined whether exposure to *Odyssey® Math* improved mathematics achievement of fourth-grade students.

The study found no discernible effects of *Odyssey® Math* on mathematics achievement in the spring of the implementation year.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Mid-Atlantic that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.42 and 4.22, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong” (Table 6-1).

Table 6-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Mid-Atlantic (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	4.22	3.53
IES-published impact study report	4.42	4.39

Table Reads: For the proposal A Multisite Cluster Randomized Trial of the Effects of Compass Learning Odyssey Math on the Math Achievement of Selected Grade 4 Students in the Mid-Atlantic Region, the mean quality dimension rating was 4.22.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Mid-Atlantic was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Mid-Atlantic was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Mid-Atlantic was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Mid-Atlantic was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings.

SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Mid-Atlantic that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.39 and 3.53, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report relevance rating fell between “relevant” and “very relevant,” and the average proposal relevance rating fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 6-1).

Table 6-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from expert panel reviews of IES-published impact studies and corresponding proposals from REL Mid-Atlantic.

Table 6-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Mid-Atlantic, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.67
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	5.00
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.67
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.67
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	4.00
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	4.67
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	5.00
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.00
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.00
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.67
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.00
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.33
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.67

Table 6-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Mid-Atlantic, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	4.67
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	4.33
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	4.67
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.33
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	4.33
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	4.00
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	5.00
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	5.00
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	5.00
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	4.67
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.00
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.67
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	5.00
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	2.33
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.33
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.33
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.00
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	4.33
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	5.00
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	4.67
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.00

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Appalachia technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Mid-Atlantic technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Mid-Atlantic.³²

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region was teacher/staff evaluation (53%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region was other types of research and/or technical assistance (41%).

³² Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region indicated “high need” were:

- Teacher/staff evaluation (53%);
- Achievement gaps (45%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (43%);
- Assessment (42%); and
- Professional development (39%).

In the Mid-Atlantic region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Other types of research and/or technical assistance (41%);
- Using data for decisions (35%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (33%);
- Teacher/staff evaluation (33%); and
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (31%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance is provided in Table 6-3.

Table 6-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	25	45	31	24	404	30	52	18
Assessment (formative or summative)	24	42	31	26	404	29	50	21
Behavior, character education, or health	25	0	32	68	402	20	42	38
College or career readiness	25	24	59	17	403	29	39	32
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	25	43	27	29	405	33	46	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	25	36	29	35	404	31	50	19
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	25	20	34	46	400	10	49	41
Dropout prevention	25	37	28	35	403	23	33	44
Early childhood	25	24	35	42	404	16	38	46
English language learners	25	21	50	29	404	15	39	45
High school reform	25	36	36	28	404	21	37	41
Leadership	26	32	34	35	405	23	49	28
Longitudinal data systems	25	26	31	43	405	29	45	26
Parental involvement	25	32	26	41	403	28	44	28
Professional development	26	39	30	31	405	28	47	25
Rural schools	25	‡	‡	39	403	12	21	67
School accountability	25	36	44	20	404	16	45	39
School choice	25	‡	‡	43	404	9	23	68
School finance	25	20	28	52	404	20	34	45
Students with disabilities	25	18	34	48	403	28	49	23
Supplemental education services	25	22	18	60	405	11	48	41
Support for low-achieving schools	25	36	35	29	404	23	34	43
Teacher/staff evaluation	26	53	15	32	405	33	44	22
Using data for decisions	25	33	36	31	404	35	45	20
Other	0	0	0	0	44	41	7	52

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Forty-five percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Sixty-nine percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” by their sources of assistance and 5 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met (Table 6-4).

Table 6-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	12	45	103	26
Moderately well	‡	‡	279	69
Not well	‡	‡	22	5

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

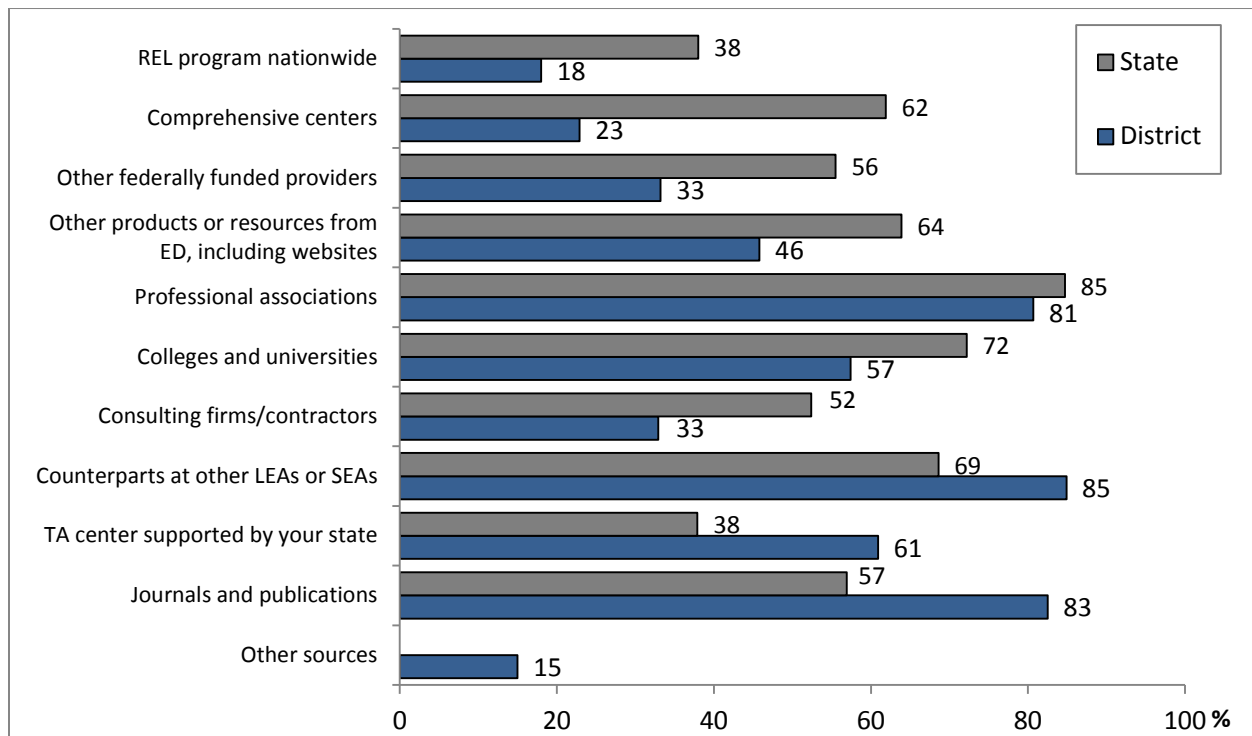
What sources of education research and technical assistance do state and district administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (85%), and for district administrators, it was counterparts in other states and districts (85%). Thirty-eight percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (85%) and counterparts in other states and districts (69%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (85%) and journals and publications (83%) (Figure 6-1).

- Thirty-eight percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 6-1).

Figure 6-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N* for state administrators ranged from 24 to 26, depending on the number of respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total *N* for district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program was 406; the total *N* for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 403 to 405, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total *N* for district administrators for “other sources” was 18.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Forty-four percent of state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 43 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 6-5).

Table 6-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	12	44	176	43
Moderately easy to access	‡	‡	210	52
Not at all easy to access	‡	‡	20	5

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-five percent of state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 56 percent of district administrators.

- Sixteen percent of state administrators and 45 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 6-6).

Table 6-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	6	24	17	4
Somewhat familiar	7	27	89	22
A little familiar	9	34	119	30
Not familiar at all	4	16	181	45

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

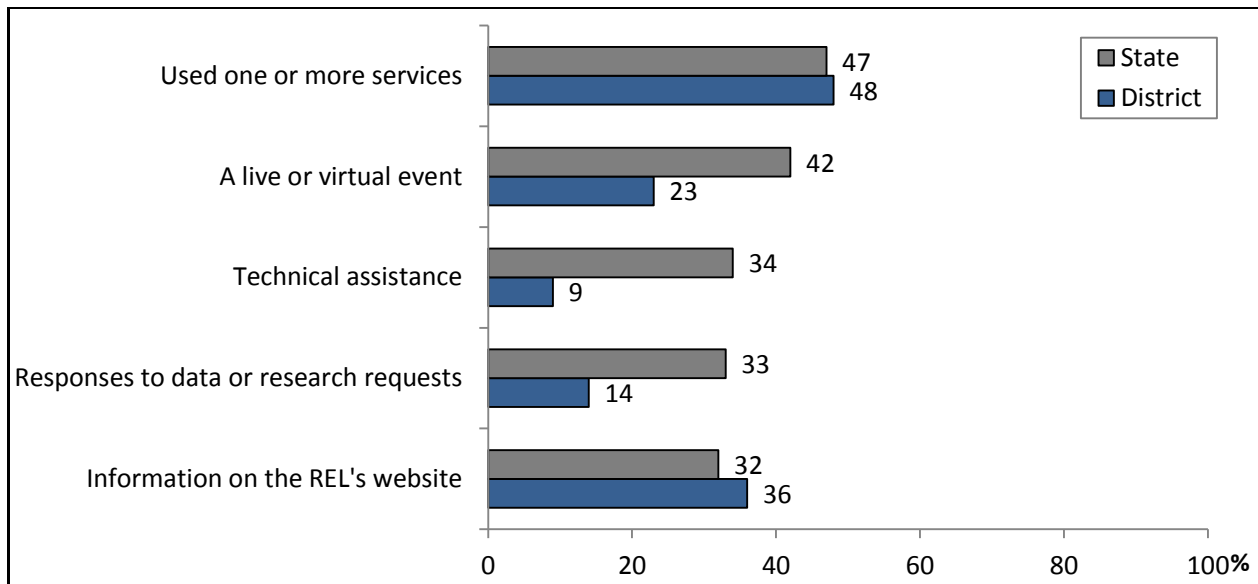
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Forty-seven percent of state administrators and 48 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.³³

- Of state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 42 percent reported that they attended a live or virtual event in the past 12 months; 34 percent received technical assistance from the REL; 33 percent received a response to a data or research request; and 32 percent obtained information from the REL’s website. Of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 23 percent attended a live or virtual event; 36 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 14 percent received a response from a data or research request; and 9 percent received technical assistance (Figure 6-2).

Figure 6-2. Percentage of administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 22; the total *N* for district administrators was 226.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

³³ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Mid-Atlantic region.

- Of administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program 41 percent of state administrators and 34 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.³⁴ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for state administrators were that their needs were met elsewhere (43%) or they didn’t know what services were available (41%). Similarly, the most common responses for district administrators (60 and 55 percent, respectively) were that they didn’t know what services were available or their needs were met elsewhere (Table 6-7).

Table 6-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Reason	State		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	4	43	41	55
Didn’t know what services were available	4	41	44	60
Had no need for REL resources	3	37	11	15
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	‡	‡	5	7
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 9, and the total *N* for district administrators was 74. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Mid-Atlantic services in the past year indicated that they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (91%); contacted the REL for research or other assistance (72%); and attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (61%). Among district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Mid-Atlantic services in the past year, 40 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 37 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 28 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; 25 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; and 14 percent said they forwarded someone else’s request to the REL (Table 6-8).

³⁴ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 6-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	3	29	27	28
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	6	61	34	37
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	9	91	38	40
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	7	72	24	25
Forwarded a request to the REL	‡	‡	13	14
Other type of contact	0	0	10	11

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 10, and the total *N* for district administrators was 106. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Twenty-eight percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the district administrators in the Mid-Atlantic region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 60 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 14 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 6-9).

Table 6-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Mid-Atlantic: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	4	28	47	26
Somewhat satisfied	‡	‡	105	60
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡	25	14

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest serves the following states:

- Illinois;
- Indiana;
- Iowa;
- Michigan;
- Minnesota;
- Ohio; and
- Wisconsin.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Midwest was headquartered at Learning Point Associates (LPA), located in Naperville, Illinois. LPA is an affiliate of the American Institutes for Research (AIR). At the time of data collection, LPA had held previous REL contracts. The REL Midwest contract beginning in FY 2012 was awarded to AIR.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Midwest impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?³⁵

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals.

³⁵ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES did not publish any impact studies from REL Midwest, but one proposal was reviewed as part of the evaluation:

- *Improving Adolescent Literacy Across the Curriculum in High Schools (Content Literacy Continuum, CLC).*

The Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) combines whole-school and targeted approaches to supporting student literacy and content learning, using instructional routines and learning strategies. This study examined the impacts of the CLC on high school students' reading comprehension and accumulation of credits in core subject areas. The study found no statistically significant impacts of CLC on reading comprehension or accumulation of core credits.

The average quality rating for the impact study proposal from REL Midwest that was reviewed by the expert panel was 2.89. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal quality rating fell between “weak” and “adequate” (Table 7-1).

Table 7-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Midwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	2.89	3.47

Table Reads: For the proposal *Improving Adolescent Literacy Across the Curriculum in High Schools (Content Literacy Continuum, CLC)*, the mean quality dimension rating was 2.89.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Midwest was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Midwest was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance rating for the impact study proposal from REL Midwest that was reviewed by the expert panel was 3.47. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal relevance rating fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 7-1).

Table 7-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean rating from the expert panel review of the proposal from REL Midwest.

Table 7-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Midwest, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	2.67
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	2.33
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.67
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.00
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	2.33
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	2.67
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.00
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.00
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	3.67
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.33

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Midwest technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Midwest technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Midwest region. State and district administrators were

included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Midwest.³⁶

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Midwest region was college or career readiness (60%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Midwest region was other type of education research and/or technical assistance (39%).

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the six largest percentages of state administrators in the Midwest region indicated “high need” were:

- College or career readiness (60%);
- Using data for decisions (57%);
- Teacher/staff evaluation (55%);

³⁶ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

- Achievement gaps (54%);
- School accountability (48%); and
- Support for low achieving schools (48%).

In the Midwest region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Other type of education research and/or technical assistance (39%);
- Using data for decisions (39%);
- Assessment (36%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (36%); and
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (33%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance is provided in Table 7-3.

Eighteen percent of state administrators and 27 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Seventy-one percent of state administrators in the Midwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 11 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 7-4).
- Sixty-five percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 8 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 7-4).

Table 7-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Midwest: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	43	54	37	9	425	32	50	18
Assessment (formative or summative)	43	46	45	9	425	36	47	17
Behavior, character education, or health	41	10	41	49	425	17	44	39
College or career readiness	42	60	30	10	424	29	42	28
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	42	41	43	16	425	36	47	17
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	42	42	40	18	424	33	47	20
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	42	9	58	34	422	10	58	33
Dropout prevention	42	34	49	17	424	20	34	46
Early childhood	42	41	43	16	424	21	38	41
English language learners	42	45	48	7	425	19	36	45
High school reform	42	35	49	16	425	19	37	44
Leadership	42	35	42	24	424	19	56	25
Longitudinal data systems	41	44	28	29	425	28	44	28
Parental involvement	41	28	45	28	423	25	48	27
Professional development	42	33	51	17	424	27	52	21
Rural schools	42	24	52	24	423	16	31	53
School accountability	43	48	27	25	424	18	48	33
School choice	42	17	31	52	423	6	23	71
School finance	42	20	30	50	424	19	38	42
Students with disabilities	42	30	55	16	425	25	48	26
Supplemental education services	42	‡	‡	56	423	12	42	47
Support for low-achieving schools	42	48	36	17	425	23	32	45
Teacher/staff evaluation	42	55	33	12	424	32	44	24
Using data for decisions	43	57	30	13	423	39	42	19
Other	0	0	0	0	44	39	11	50

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 7-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Midwest: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	n	%	n	%
Very well	8	18	116	27
Moderately well	30	71	277	65
Not well	5	11	32	8

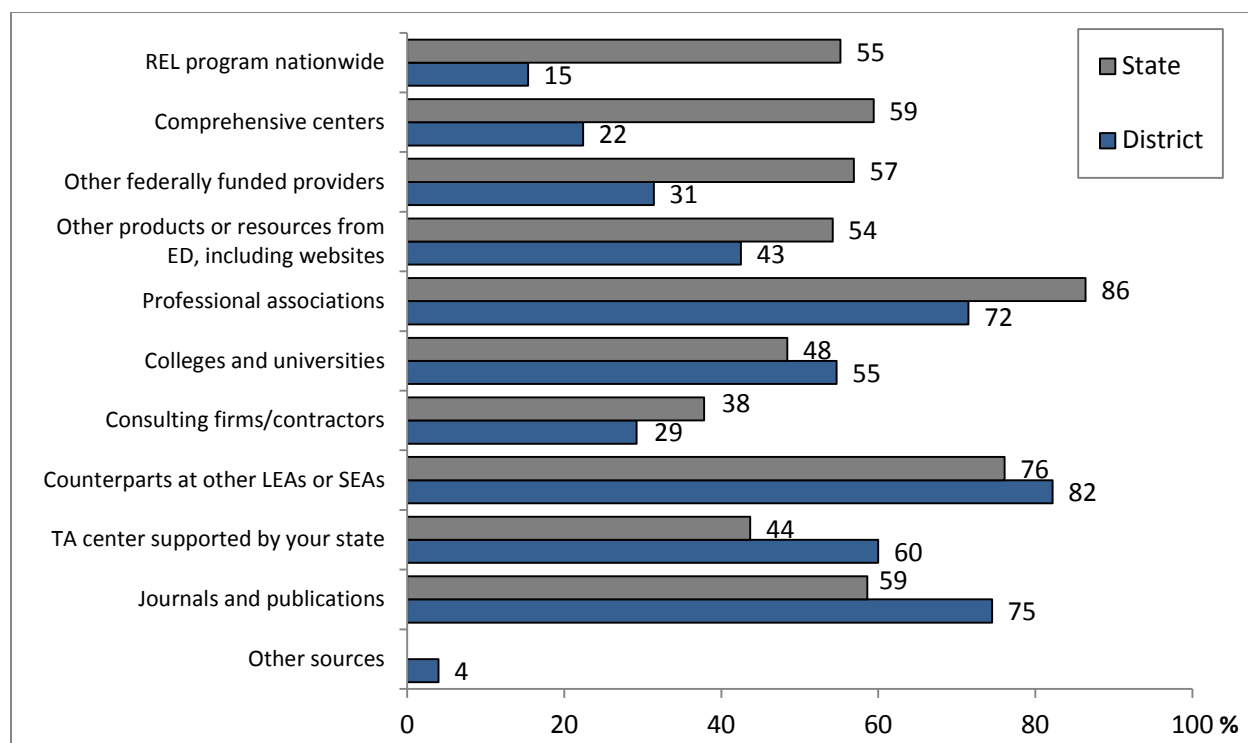
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (86%), and for district administrators was counterparts in other states and districts (82%). Fifty-five percent of state administrators and 15 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Midwest region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (86%) and counterparts in other states and districts (76%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (82%) and journals and publications (75%) (Figure 7-1).
- Fifty-five percent of state administrators and 15 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 7-1).
- Twenty-six percent of state administrators in the Midwest region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 40 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance easy (Table 7-5).

Figure 7-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Midwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N*s for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 43 and 425, respectively. The total *N* for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 42 to 43. The total *N* for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 422 to 425, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total *N* for district administrators for “other sources” was 24.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 7-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Midwest: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	11	26	168	40
Moderately easy to access	24	56	223	52
Not at all easy to access	8	18	34	8

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-seven percent of state administrators in the Midwest region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 49 percent of district administrators.

- Fifty-two percent of district administrators in the Midwest region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program, compared to 13 percent of state administrators (Table 7-6)”

Table 7-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Midwest: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	12	27	11	3
Somewhat familiar	15	37	66	16
A little familiar	10	23	126	30
Not familiar at all	6	13	222	52

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

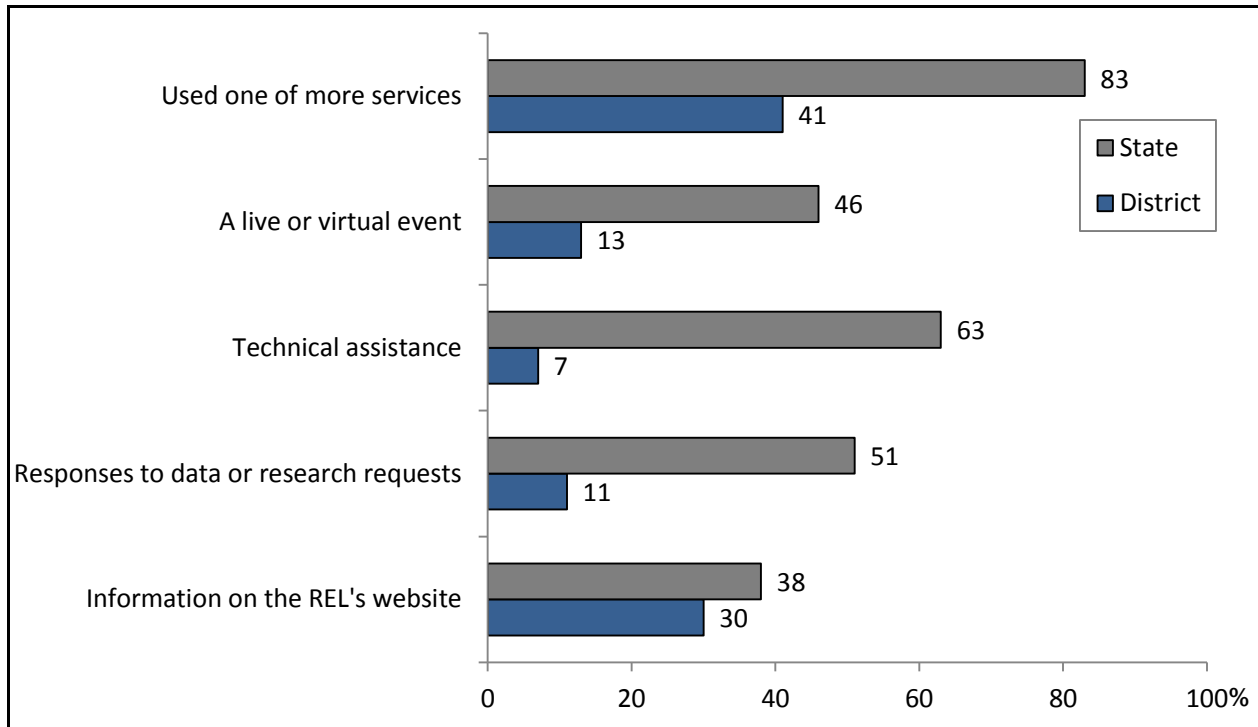
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Eighty-three percent of state administrators and 41 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.³⁷

³⁷ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Midwest region.

Figure 7-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Midwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 37; the total N for district administrators was 203.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each of two types of REL services in the past 12 months: technical assistance (63%) and responses to data or research requests (51%). Of district administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 30 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 13 percent attended a live or virtual event; 11 percent received a response from a data or research request; and 7 percent received technical assistance (Figure 7-2).
- Of administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program 34 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.³⁸ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses (59 and 59 percent, respectively) were that their needs were met elsewhere or they didn’t know what services were available (Table 7-7).

³⁸ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 7-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Midwest: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	‡	‡	41	59
Didn't know what services were available	‡	‡	41	59
Had no need for REL resources	‡	‡	10	14
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL's resources	‡	‡	4	6
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	0	0

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 5, and the total *N* for district administrators was 69. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Midwest region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Midwest services in the past year indicated that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (90%), or they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (78%). Among district administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Midwest services in the past year, 33 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 29 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; 27 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; and 25 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (Table 7-8).

Table 7-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Midwest: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	‡	‡	21	29
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	14	48	20	27
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	23	78	24	33
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	26	90	18	25
Forwarded a request to the REL	6	20	11	15
Other type of contact	‡	‡	8	11

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 30, and the total *N* for district administrators was 78. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Fifty-six percent of state administrators and 17 percent of district administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the state administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 44 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 0 percent of state administrators reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 7-9).
- Of the district administrators in the Midwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 62 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 21 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 7-9).

Table 7-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Midwest: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	19	56	27	17
Somewhat satisfied	15	44	101	62
Not at all satisfied	0	0	34	21

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



REL: Northeast and Islands

8

Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands serves the following jurisdictions:

- Connecticut;
- Maine;
- Massachusetts;
- New Hampshire;
- New York;
- Puerto Rico;
- Rhode Island;
- U.S. Virgin Islands; and
- Vermont.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Northeast and Islands was based at the Education Development Center (EDC) in Newton, Massachusetts. Although EDC held one of the original REL contracts, it did not hold the previous REL contract. EDC was also awarded the REL Northeast and Islands contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Northeast and Islands impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?³⁹

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals.

Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Northeast and Islands:

- *Impact of the Thinking Reader® Software Program on Grade 6 Reading Vocabulary, Comprehension, Strategies, and Motivation: Final Report.*

Thinking Reader® is a software program that aims to motivate middle school students to read and to make self-directed use of seven target comprehension strategies: (a) summarizing, (b) clarifying, (c) visualizing, (d) reflecting, (e) questioning, (f) predicting, and (g) feeling. Students listen to a novel while following highlighted text on a computer screen and then respond to questions about the story. The study assessed the effectiveness of *Thinking Reader®* by comparing the reading comprehension of students in the *Thinking Reader®* and comparison conditions at the end of the school year. The study found no statistically significant differences on the comprehension outcomes of students in the *Thinking Reader®* classes, compared with students in the comparison classes.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Northeast and Islands that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.18 and 3.63, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong,” and the average proposal quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong” (Table 8-1).

³⁹ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Table 8-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Northeast and Islands (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	3.63	3.60
IES-published impact study report	4.18	3.67

Table Reads: For the proposal Impact of the Thinking Reader® Software Program on Grade 6 Reading Vocabulary, Comprehension, Strategies, and Motivation, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.63.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Northeast and Islands was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Northeast and Islands was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Northeast and Islands was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Northeast and Islands was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings. SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Northeast and Islands that were reviewed by the expert panel were 3.67 and 3.60, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal relevance ratings fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 8-1).

Table 8-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from expert panel reviews of the IES-published impact study and corresponding proposal from REL Northeast and Islands.

Table 8-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northeast, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	4.00
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.33
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.33
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	4.00
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.67
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.33
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.33
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.00
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	3.67
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.67
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.33
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.00
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.67

Table 8-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northeast, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	4.00
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	4.00
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	4.33
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.67
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	3.33
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	4.00
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	4.00
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.00
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	4.67
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	4.67
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.67
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.00
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.33
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	5.00
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	3.00
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.67
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.00
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.00
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	3.00
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.00

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

Source: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Northeast and Islands technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Northeast and Islands technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Northeast and Islands region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Northeast and Islands.⁴⁰

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region was English language learners (49%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region was using data for decisions (36%).

⁴⁰ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region indicated “high need” were:

- English language learners (49%);
- Using data for decisions (45%);
- Achievement gaps (45%);
- Dropout prevention (43%); and
- Teacher/staff evaluation (41%).

In the Northeast and Islands region, the six topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Using data for decisions (36%);
- Longitudinal data system (35%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (34%);
- Other types of education research and/or technical assistance (34%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in reading/writing (33%); and
- Achievement gaps (33%).

Details on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance are provided in Table 8-3.

Table 8-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	35	45	36	19	376	33	42	25
Assessment (formative or summative)	35	24	52	24	375	32	47	20
Behavior, character education, or health	35	16	31	53	371	16	44	40
College or career readiness	35	40	47	13	369	25	46	29
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	35	30	47	23	374	34	45	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	35	32	37	31	374	33	48	20
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	35	12	49	39	371	13	51	37
Dropout prevention	35	43	31	26	371	20	40	41
Early childhood	35	24	44	32	373	17	43	40
English language learners	35	49	25	27	374	18	39	43
High school reform	35	31	31	38	374	24	36	40
Leadership	35	37	33	30	372	23	47	30
Longitudinal data systems	35	40	29	32	373	35	44	21
Parental involvement	34	24	61	15	373	20	48	32
Professional development	35	40	42	19	374	24	49	27
Rural schools	35	18	29	54	374	12	21	66
School accountability	35	31	30	39	374	13	47	40
School choice	35	‡	‡	63	372	4	22	74
School finance	35	12	21	67	373	14	36	50
Students with disabilities	35	34	40	27	374	24	50	26
Supplemental education services	35	11	18	71	374	9	41	50
Support for low-achieving schools	35	38	44	18	373	18	38	44
Teacher/staff evaluation	35	41	43	16	375	32	46	22
Using data for decisions	34	45	36	18	375	36	46	18
Other	3	0	0	100	39	34	13	53

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Thirty-five percent of state administrators and 20 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Fifty-six percent of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well,” and 9 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 8-4).

Table 8-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	12	35	77	20
Moderately well	19	56	267	71
Not well	3	9	32	9

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Seventy-one percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well,” and 9 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 8-4).

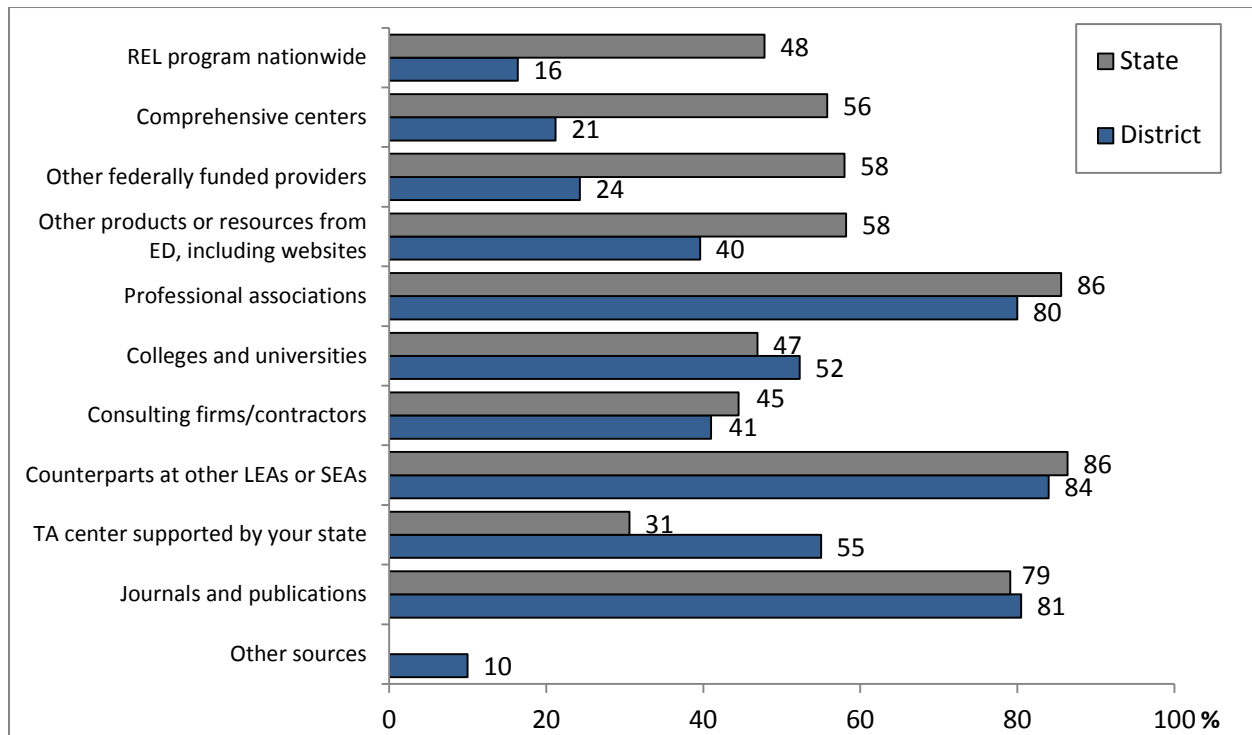
What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported sources of education research and/or technical assistance for both state and district administrators were counterparts in other states and districts (86 and 85 percent, respectively) and professional associations (86 percent and 81 percent, respectively). Forty-eight percent of state administrators and 16 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State and district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on counterparts in other

states and districts (86 and 85 percent, respectively) and professional associations (86 and 81 percent, respectively). (Figure 8-1).

Figure 8-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Northeast & Islands: School year 2011-2012



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 35 and 376, respectively. The total N for state and district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 33 to 34 for state administrators and 372 to 376 for district administrators, depending on the number of respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for district administrators for “other sources” was 22.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Forty-eight percent of state administrators and 16 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 8-1).
- Forty percent of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 37 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 8-5).

Table 8-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	14	40	140	37
Moderately easy to access	15	45	200	53
Not at all easy to access	5	15	37	10

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-one percent of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 50 percent of district administrators.

- Fifty percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program compared to 19 percent of state administrators (Table 8-6).

Table 8-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

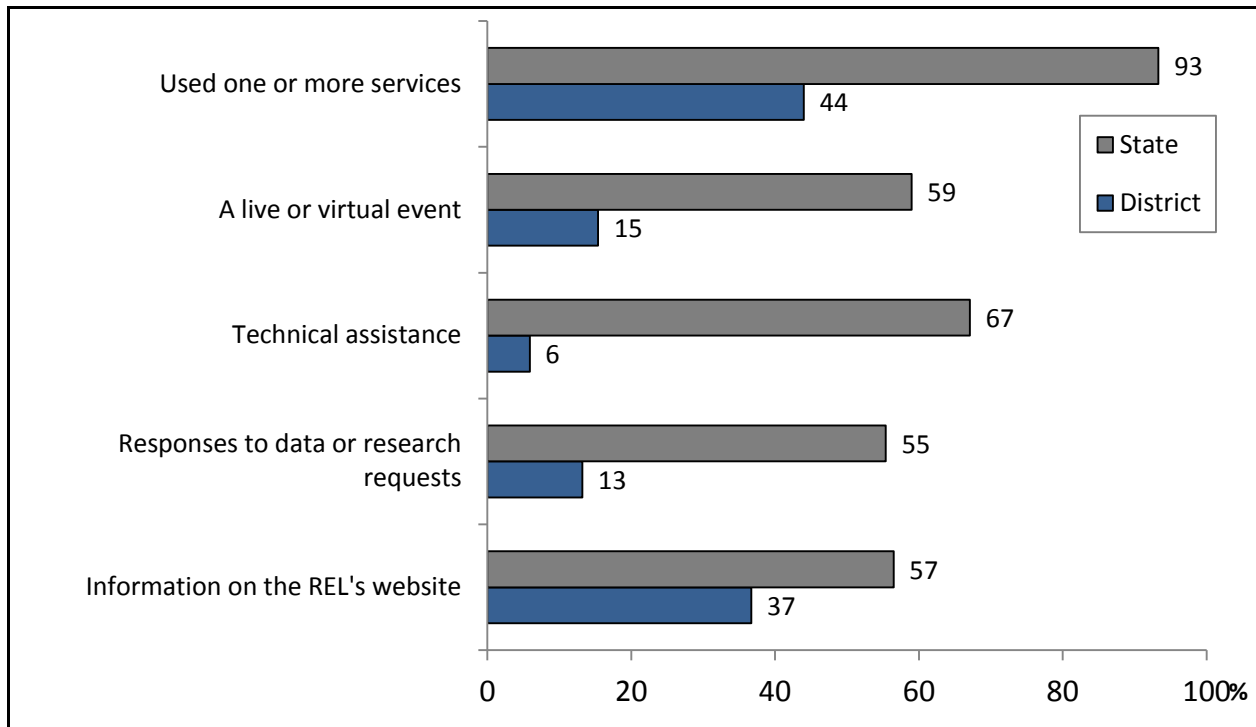
Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	15	43	22	6
Somewhat familiar	9	25	69	18
A little familiar	5	13	99	26
Not familiar at all	6	19	187	50

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Ninety-three percent of state administrators and 44 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁴¹

Figure 8-2. Percentage of administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 29; the total N for district administrators was 190.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each of four types of REL services in the past 12 months: technical assistance (67%), a live or virtual event (59%), information on the REL’s website (57%), and responses to data or research requests (55%). Of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 37 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 15 percent attended a live or virtual event; 13 percent received a

⁴¹ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Northeast and Islands region.

response from a data or research request; and 6 percent received technical assistance (Figure 8-2).

- Of administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 42 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.⁴² When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for district administrators (64 and 50 percent, respectively) were that they didn’t know what services were available or their needs were met elsewhere (Table 8-7).

Table 8-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	‡	‡	40	50
Didn’t know what services were available	‡	‡	51	64
Had no need for REL resources	‡	‡	12	15
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	‡	‡	7	9
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	‡	‡	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* for district administrators was 80. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Northeast and Islands services in the past year indicated that they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (81%); they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (80%); or they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (73%). Among district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Northeast and Islands services in the past year, 47 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; 30 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 29 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; and 23 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (Table 8-8).

⁴² Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 8-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	12	45	33	47
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	21	81	16	23
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	19	73	21	30
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	21	80	20	29
Forwarded a request to the REL	11	40	5	7
Other type of contact	‡	‡	13	19

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 26, and the total *N* for district administrators was 78. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Sixty-three percent of state administrators and 28 percent of district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the district administrators in the Northeast and Islands region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 53 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 19 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 8-9).

Table 8-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Northeast and Islands: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	18	63	40	28
Somewhat satisfied	‡	‡	77	53
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡	28	19

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest serves the following states:

- Alaska;
- Idaho;
- Montana;
- Oregon; and
- Washington.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Northwest was headquartered at Education Northwest⁴³ in Portland, Oregon, which had served as a REL since 1966; it was also awarded the REL Northwest contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Northwest impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?⁴⁴

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Northwest:

⁴³ The organization was previously called the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

⁴⁴ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

- *An Experimental Study of the Project CRISS Reading Program on Grade 9 Reading Achievement in Rural High Schools.*

Through *Project CRISS (Creating Independence Through Student-owned Strategies)*, high school teachers learn how to apply research-based learning principles and reading/writing strategies in all major subject or content areas using materials, training, and follow-up support provided by the developer. The study examined the effectiveness of *Project CRISS* on grade 9 student reading achievement. The study did not find any statistical significant difference in student reading comprehension test scores between treatment and control conditions.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Northwest that were reviewed by the expert panel were 3.64 and 3.00, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal quality ratings fell between “adequate” and “strong” (Table 9-1).

Table 9-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Northwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	3.00	3.47
IES-published impact study report	3.64	3.67

Table Reads: For the proposal *An Experimental Study of the Project CRISS Reading Program on Grade 9 Reading Achievement in Rural High Schools*, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.00.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Northwest was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Northwest was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Northwest was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Northwest was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings. SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Northwest that were reviewed by the expert panel were 3.67 and 3.47, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal relevance ratings fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 9-1).

Table 9-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean rating from the expert panel review of the IES-published impact study and corresponding proposal from REL Northwest.

Table 9-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northwest, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	2.67
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.00
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	2.67
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.00
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.00
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.33
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	2.67
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.00
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	3.67
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.00
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.00
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.33
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.00

Table 9-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Northwest, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	3.00
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	3.33
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.33
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	3.67
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	3.67
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	4.00
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.33
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	2.67
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	2.33
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.33
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.00
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.67
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	4.00
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.00
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.67
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.00
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.00
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	3.67
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	3.67

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Northwest technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Northwest technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Northwest region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Northwest.⁴⁵

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Northwest region was teacher/staff evaluation (65%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Northwest region was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (36%).

⁴⁵ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the Northwest region indicated “high need” were:

- Teacher/staff evaluation (65%),
- Career or college readiness (59%),
- Rural school (55%),
- Dropout prevention (51%), and
- Support for low-achieving schools (50%).

In the Northwest region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (36%);
- Using data for decisions (35%);
- Achievement gaps (33%);
- Professional development (31%); and
- Longitudinal data systems (30%).

Details on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance are provided in Table 9-3.

Table 9-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	30	45	33	23	379	33	45	22
Assessment (formative or summative)	30	33	47	21	379	29	50	21
Behavior, character education, or health	30	‡	‡	55	379	16	46	37
College or career readiness	30	59	24	16	377	25	41	33
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	30	31	39	30	379	36	43	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	29	28	41	31	378	28	48	24
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	30	13	37	50	379	10	46	44
Dropout prevention	30	51	30	19	379	21	40	39
Early childhood	30	20	37	43	379	24	41	35
English language learners	30	49	36	15	379	23	37	40
High school reform	29	45	18	37	379	19	36	46
Leadership	30	40	33	27	378	22	50	28
Longitudinal data systems	30	40	34	26	378	30	40	30
Parental involvement	29	27	52	21	378	25	50	25
Professional development	30	32	47	20	379	31	44	25
Rural schools	30	55	‡	‡	378	29	29	42
School accountability	30	40	33	27	379	14	47	39
School choice	30	16	23	61	379	3	25	73
School finance	30	10	45	46	378	17	35	48
Students with disabilities	30	19	51	30	379	27	46	27
Supplemental education services	30	22	15	63	378	13	37	50
Support for low-achieving schools	30	50	37	13	378	28	39	33
Teacher/staff evaluation	29	65	14	21	379	28	42	30
Using data for decisions	30	43	40	16	379	35	43	23
Other	30	0	0	100	31	26	‡	‡

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Nineteen percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Seventy-two percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 11 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 9-4).

Table 9-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Northwest: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	6	19	68	18
Moderately well	‡	‡	270	72
Not well	‡	‡	40	11

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

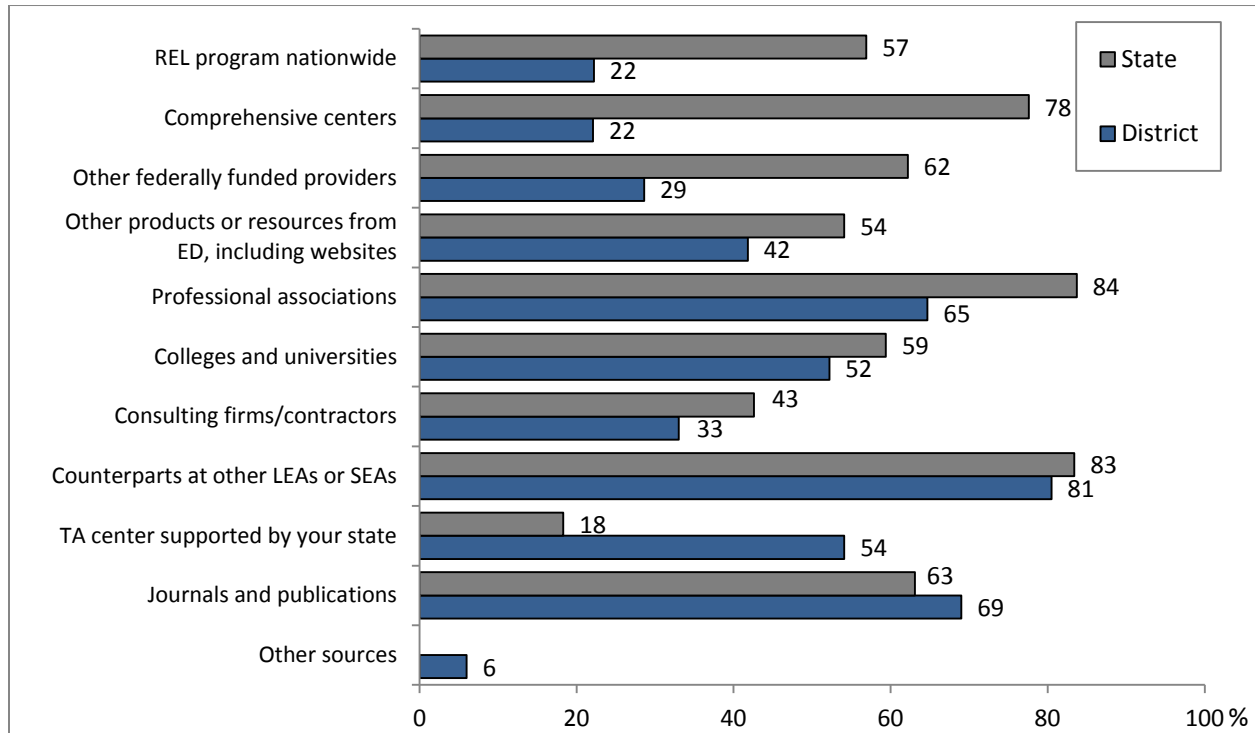
What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported sources of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators were professional associations (84%) and counterparts in other states and districts (83%). The most reported sources of education research and/or technical assistance for district administrators were counterparts in other states and districts (81%) and journals and publications (69%). Fifty-seven percent of state administrators and 22 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Northwest region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (84%) and counterparts in other states and districts (83%), while district administrators were most

likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate” extent on counterparts in other states and districts (81%) and journals and publications (69%) (Figure 9-1).

Figure 9-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Northwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N* for state administrators was 30. The total *N* for district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program was 380; the total *N* for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 373 to 379, depending on the number of district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total *N* for district administrators for “other sources” was 16.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Fifty-seven percent of state administrators and 22 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 9-1).
- Thirty percent of state administrators in the Northwest region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 30 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 9-5).

Table 9-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	9	30	115	30
Moderately easy to access	‡	‡	235	62
Not at all easy to access	‡	‡	29	8

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Sixty-three percent of state administrators in the Northwest region reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the REL program, compared to 36 percent of district administrators.

- Thirty-three percent of district administrators in the Northwest region reported that they were “a little familiar” with the REL program, and 32 percent reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 9-6).

Table 9-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	7	25	29	8
Somewhat familiar	12	38	106	28
A little familiar	‡	‡	124	33
Not familiar at all	‡	‡	120	32

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

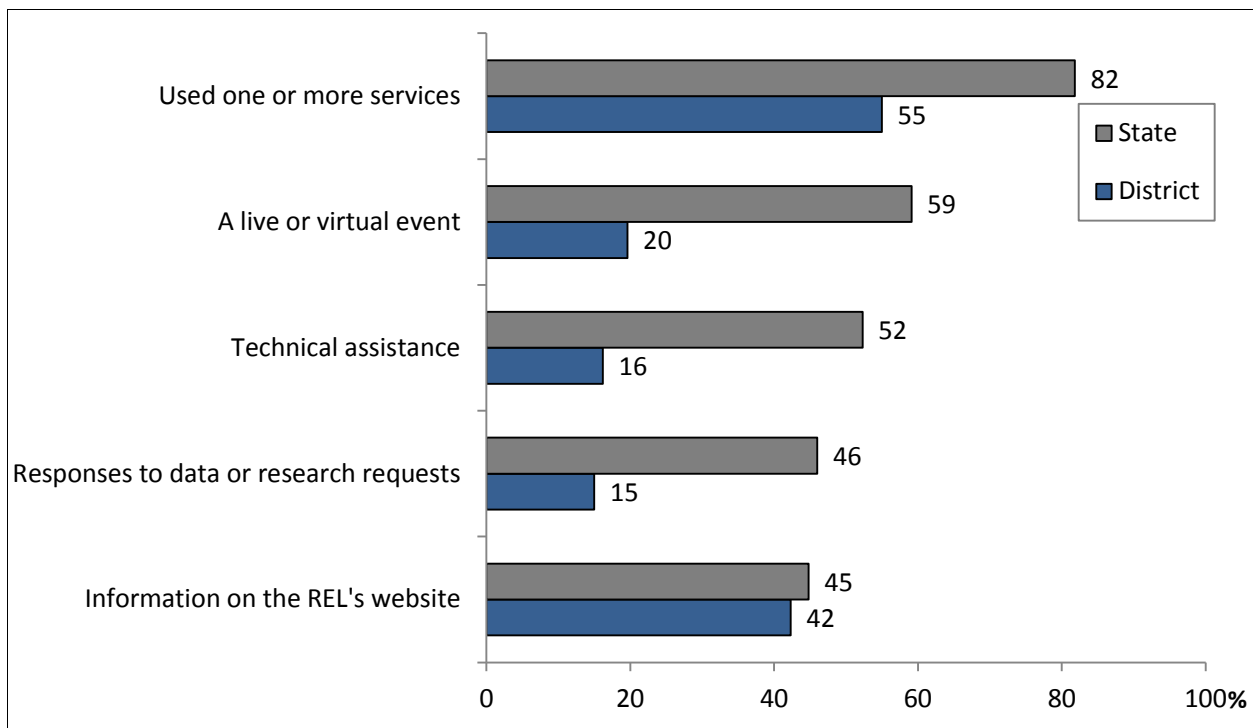
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Eighty-two percent of state administrators and 55 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁴⁶

- Majorities of state administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each of two types of REL services in the past 12 months: a live or virtual event (59%) and technical assistance (52%). Of district administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 42 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 20 percent attended a live or virtual event; 16 percent received technical assistance; and 15 percent received a response from a data or research request (Figure 9-2).

Figure 9-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Northwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 29; the total N for district administrators was 260.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

⁴⁶ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Northwest region.

- Of administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 11 percent of state administrators and 29 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.⁴⁷ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common response for state and district administrators was that their needs were met elsewhere (100 percent and 57 percent, respectively) (Table 9-7).

Table 9-7. Reasons administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	3	100	41	57
Didn't know what services were available	‡	‡	36	49
Had no need for REL resources	‡	‡	16	22
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL's resources	‡	‡	8	11
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 3, and the total *N* for district administrators was 73. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Northwest region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Northwest services in the past year indicated that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (78%); they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (76%); and they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (61%). Among district administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Northwest services in the past year, 37 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 36 percent said they attended a REL sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 36 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; and 35 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website (Table 9-8).

⁴⁷ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 9-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	6	27	42	35
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	13	61	43	36
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	17	76	45	37
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	17	78	43	36
Forwarded a request to the REL	6	29	14	12
Other type of contact	5	21	25	21

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 22, and the total *N* for district administrators was 127.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Thirty-nine percent of state administrators and 29 percent of district administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the district administrators in the Northwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 56 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 14 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 9-9).

Table 9-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Northwest: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	11	39	68	29
Somewhat satisfied	‡	‡	132	56
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡	35	14

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



The Pacific region also includes American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau, not pictured on the map.

REL: Pacific

10

Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific serves the following geographic locations:

- American Samoa;
- Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap);
- Guam;
- Hawaii;
- Northern Mariana Islands;
- Republic of the Marshall Islands; and
- Republic of Palau.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Pacific was housed at Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) in Honolulu, Hawaii. PREL had held previous REL contracts. The REL Pacific contract beginning in FY 2012 was awarded to Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL).

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Pacific impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?⁴⁸

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES had not published any impact studies from REL Pacific, but one proposal was reviewed as part of the evaluation:

- *Pacific Evaluation of Principles-Based Professional Development to Improve Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners.*

⁴⁸ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Pacific Communities with High Performance in Literacy Development (Pacific CHILD) is a two-year professional development program that trains fourth and fifth grade teachers in research-based reading comprehension strategies and instructional practices for enhancing student reading comprehension. The study examined the impact of Pacific CHILD on student achievement in reading comprehension and on teacher pedagogical knowledge and instructional practice in English language arts classes. The study found positive impacts of Pacific CHILD on reading comprehension and on teachers' instructional practices and knowledge of theories and strategies related to effective reading instruction.

The average quality rating for the impact study proposal from REL Pacific that was reviewed by the expert panel was 2.85. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal quality rating fell between “weak” and “adequate” (Table 10-1).

Table 10-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for impact study proposals from REL Pacific (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact Study Proposal	2.85	3.27

Table Reads: For the proposal Pacific Evaluation of Principles-Based Professional Development to Improve Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners, the mean quality dimension rating was 2.85.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Pacific was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Pacific was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance rating for the impact study proposal from REL Pacific that was reviewed by the expert panel was 3.27. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average proposal relevance rating fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 10-1).

Table 10-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from expert panel review of the proposal from REL Pacific.

Table 10-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of the impact study proposal for REL Pacific, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.00
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	3.33
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.00
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	2.67
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	2.00
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.00
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	2.67
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	2.67
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.00
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.00
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	3.33
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	3.00

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

Source: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Pacific technical assistance products to the needs of the states in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Pacific technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Pacific region. State administrators were included in the sample

regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state administrators use?
- How familiar were state administrators with the REL program?
- How many state administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state administrators in REL Pacific.⁴⁹

What needs did state administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported areas of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Pacific region were English language learners (87%) and support for low-achieving schools (87%).

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the six largest percentages of state administrators in the Pacific region indicated “high need” were:

- English language learners (87%);
- Support for low-achieving schools (87%);
- Achievement gaps (83%);
- Teacher/staff evaluation (77%);

⁴⁹ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

- Professional development (68%); and
- Using data for decisions (68%).

Details on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance are provided in Table 10-3.

Sixty percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Forty percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 0 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 10-4).

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (90%). Forty-four percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State administrators in the Pacific region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. They were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (90%) and colleges and universities (83%) (Figure 10-1).
- Forty-four percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 10-1).

Table 10-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Pacific: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	12	83	‡	‡
Assessment (formative or summative)	12	41	‡	‡
Behavior, character education, or health	12	31	‡	‡
College or career readiness	12	56	44	0
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	12	60	‡	‡
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	12	51	‡	‡
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	12	37	‡	‡
Dropout prevention	12	53	47	0
Early childhood	12	37	‡	‡
English language learners	12	87	‡	‡
High school reform	12	37	63	0
Leadership	12	54	‡	‡
Longitudinal data systems	12	54	‡	‡
Parental involvement	12	67	33	0
Professional development	12	68	‡	‡
Rural schools	12	58	‡	‡
School accountability	12	51	‡	‡
School choice	12	20	27	53
School finance	12	41	27	32
Students with disabilities	12	64	‡	‡
Supplemental education services	12	51	‡	‡
Support for low-achieving schools	12	87	‡	‡
Teacher/staff evaluation	12	77	‡	‡
Using data for decisions	12	68	‡	‡
Other	12	0	0	0

NOTE: Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

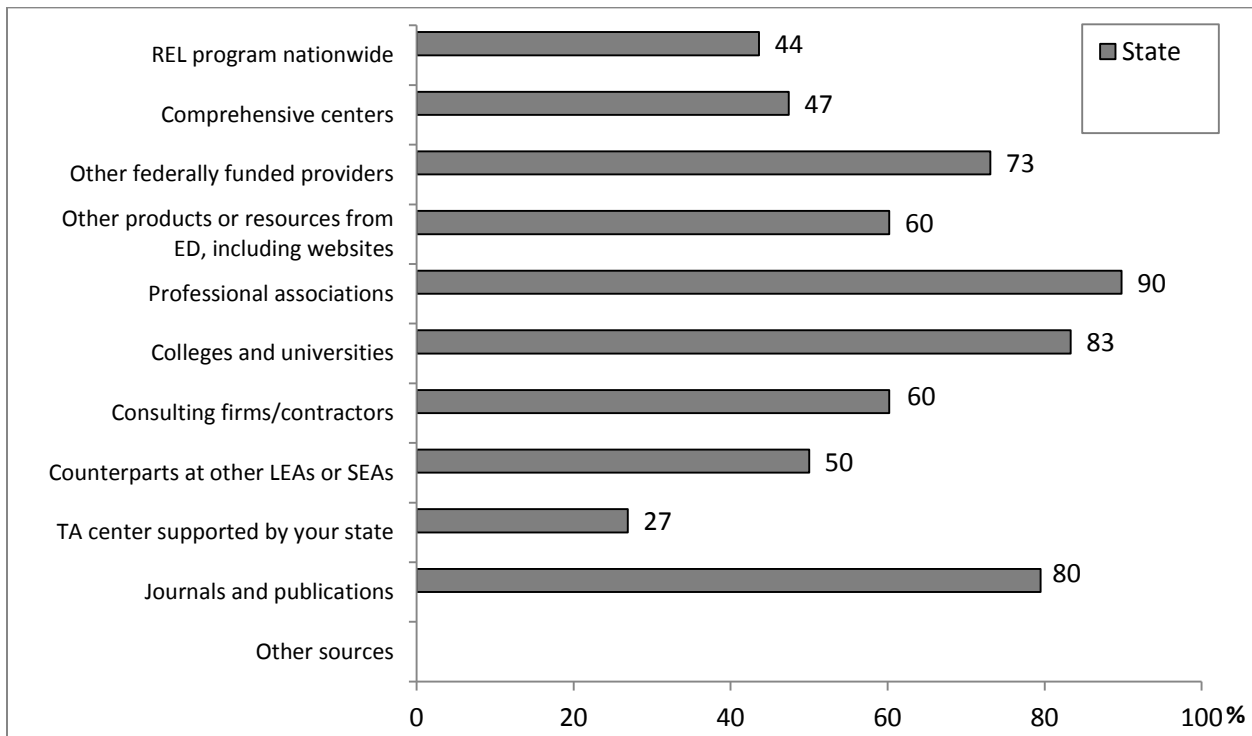
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 10-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Pacific: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	7	60
Moderately well	5	40
Not well	0	0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Figure 10-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Pacific: School year 2011-2012



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total *N* for state administrators was 12.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Fifty percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported that it was “very easy” or “moderately easy” to access education research and technical assistance across the available sources of information; and 50 percent reported it was “not at all easy” to access such assistance (Table 10-5).

Table 10-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Pacific: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy or moderately easy to access	6	50
Not at all easy to access	6	50

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state administrators with the REL program?

Sixty three percent of state administrators in the Pacific region reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the REL program.

- Thirty-seven percent of state administrators in the Pacific region were either “a little familiar” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 10-6)

Table 10-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Pacific: School year 2011-12

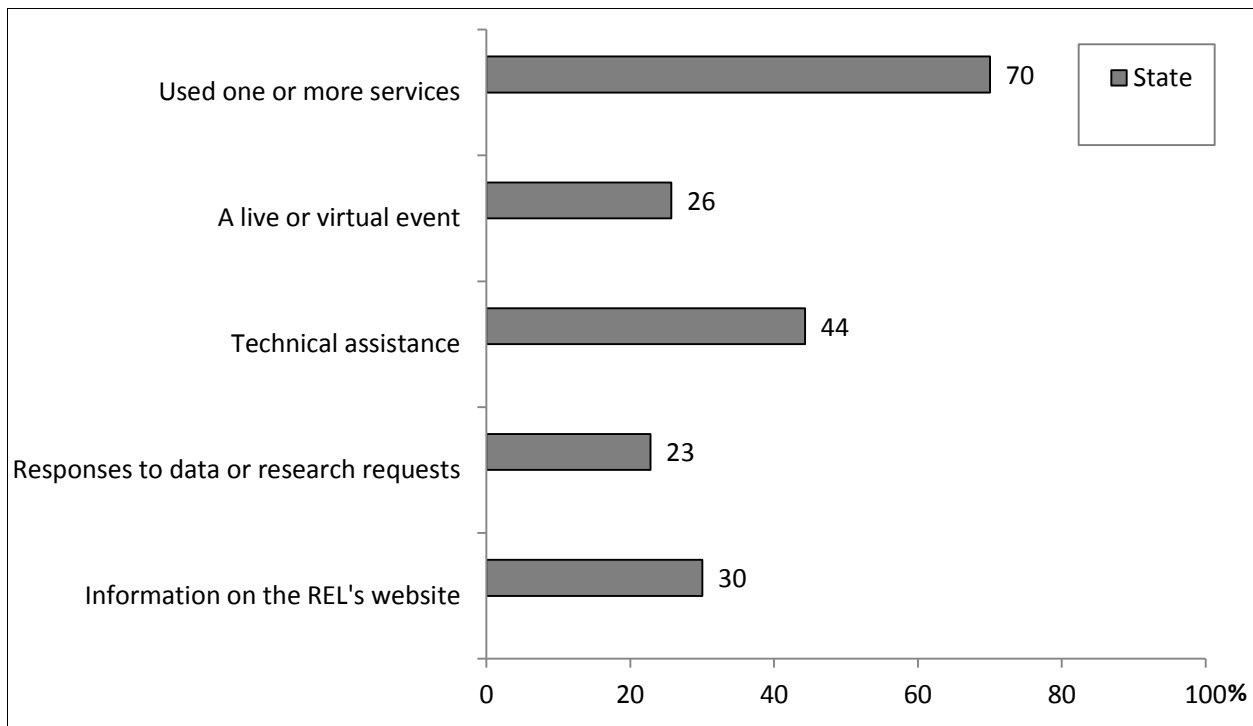
Familiarity	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	3	27
Somewhat familiar	5	36
A little familiar or not familiar at all	4	37

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state administrators used REL services?

Seventy percent of state administrators in the Pacific region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁵⁰

Figure 10-2. Percentage of administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Pacific: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 11.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Of state administrators in the Pacific region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 44 percent reported that they received technical assistance in the past 12 months; 30 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 26 percent attended a live or virtual event in the; and 23 percent received a response from a data or research request (Figure 10-2).

⁵⁰ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.”

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state administrators in the Pacific region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Among state administrators in the Pacific region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Pacific services in the past year, 53 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 43 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 43 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; and 37 percent said they forwarded someone else’s request to the REL (Table 10-7).

Table 10-7. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Pacific: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	‡	‡
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	3	43
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	3	43
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	4	53
Forwarded a request to the REL	3	37
Other type of contact	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 8. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state administrators?

Eighty-four percent of state administrators in the Pacific region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “somewhat satisfied” with it (Table 10-8).

Table 10-8. Percentage of the region’s administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Pacific: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	‡	‡
Somewhat satisfied	7	84
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡

NOTE: ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.



Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast serves the following states:

- Alabama;
- Florida;
- Georgia;
- Mississippi;
- North Carolina; and
- South Carolina.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Southeast was a university-based research center housed in the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina— Greensboro. The SERVE Center had held the REL Southeast contract for the previous four cycles of funding. Florida State University was awarded the REL Southeast contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Southeast impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?⁵¹

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Southeast:

- *Effectiveness of a Program to Accelerate Vocabulary Development in Kindergarten.*

⁵¹ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

The *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* program is a 24-week in-class supplement to a school’s core language arts program. It is built around the three components of explicit vocabulary instruction, interactive book reading, and adult-child conversations. The study assessed the *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* program’s effectiveness by comparing the expressive vocabulary and listening comprehension of students in the treatment and comparison groups at the end of the school year.

Kindergarten students in schools using *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* as a supplement to regular literacy instruction performed better than kindergarten students in comparison schools. The authors reported that students who received *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* instruction were 1 month ahead in vocabulary development at the end of kindergarten, compared with students in the comparison group.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Southeast that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.51 and 3.96, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong,” and the average proposal quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong” (Table 11-1).

Table 11-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Southeast (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	3.96	4.00
IES-published impact study report	4.51	4.56

Table Reads: For the proposal Effectiveness of a Program to Accelerate Vocabulary Development in Kindergarten, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.96.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Southeast was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Southeast was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Southeast was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Southeast was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings.

SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Southeast that were reviewed by the expert panel were 4.56 and 4.00, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report and proposal relevance ratings fell between “relevant” and “very relevant” (Table 11-1).

Table 11-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from the expert panel review of the IES-published impact study and corresponding proposal from REL Southeast.

Table 11-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southeast, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.00
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	4.33
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.00
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.67
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.33
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.67
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.33
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	5.00
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.33
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.67
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.67
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.00
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	4.33

Table 11-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southeast, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.67
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	4.67
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	5.00
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.67
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	4.00
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	4.67
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	4.33
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.33
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	4.67
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	4.67
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	5.00
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	5.00
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.67
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	4.67
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	3.67
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	5.00
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.67
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	4.00
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.33
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	4.67
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.67

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Southeast technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Southeast technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Southeast region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Southeast.⁵²

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Southeast region was support for low-achieving schools (57%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Southeast region was content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (43%).

⁵² Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the Southeast region indicated “high need” were:

- Support for low-achieving schools (57%);
- Using data for decisions (47%);
- College or career readiness (47%);
- Achieving gaps (45%); and
- Teacher/staff evaluation (45%).

In the Southeast region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing, or STEM (43%);
- Achievement gaps (40%);
- College or career readiness (35%);
- Dropout prevention (34%); and
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (34%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and/or technical assistance is provided in Table 11-3.

Table 11-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	37	45	‡	‡	454	40	45	15
Assessment (formative or summative)	36	41	50	9	453	27	49	23
Behavior, character education, or health	36	11	34	54	453	16	42	42
College or career readiness	37	47	37	16	453	35	44	21
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	36	31	53	16	453	43	42	15
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	36	28	56	17	452	34	49	17
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	36	14	56	30	450	14	52	34
Dropout prevention	36	44	47	9	453	34	41	25
Early childhood	36	35	30	34	453	21	38	42
English language learners	36	33	56	11	450	28	38	34
High school reform	36	36	36	27	453	28	41	31
Leadership	35	43	38	20	454	22	46	31
Longitudinal data systems	36	20	47	33	454	25	45	30
Parental involvement	37	25	48	27	452	30	44	25
Professional development	37	27	59	14	454	26	50	25
Rural schools	37	30	49	21	453	22	32	47
School accountability	36	34	38	28	453	20	49	32
School choice	36	8	51	42	452	5	30	64
School finance	36	14	31	55	452	16	39	45
Students with disabilities	36	34	33	33	453	27	49	24
Supplemental education services	36	11	45	44	454	14	37	48
Support for low-achieving schools	37	57	30	14	454	29	38	33
Teacher/staff evaluation	36	45	45	11	454	21	46	33
Using data for decisions	36	47	37	16	452	32	46	22
Other	4	0	0	100	44	32	20	48

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Forty-eight percent of state administrators and 30 percent of district administrators reported that their education research and/or technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Sixty-three percent of district administrators in the Southeast region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 8 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 11-4).

Table 11-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Southeast: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	17	48	132	30
Moderately well	‡	‡	284	63
Not well	‡	‡	35	8

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

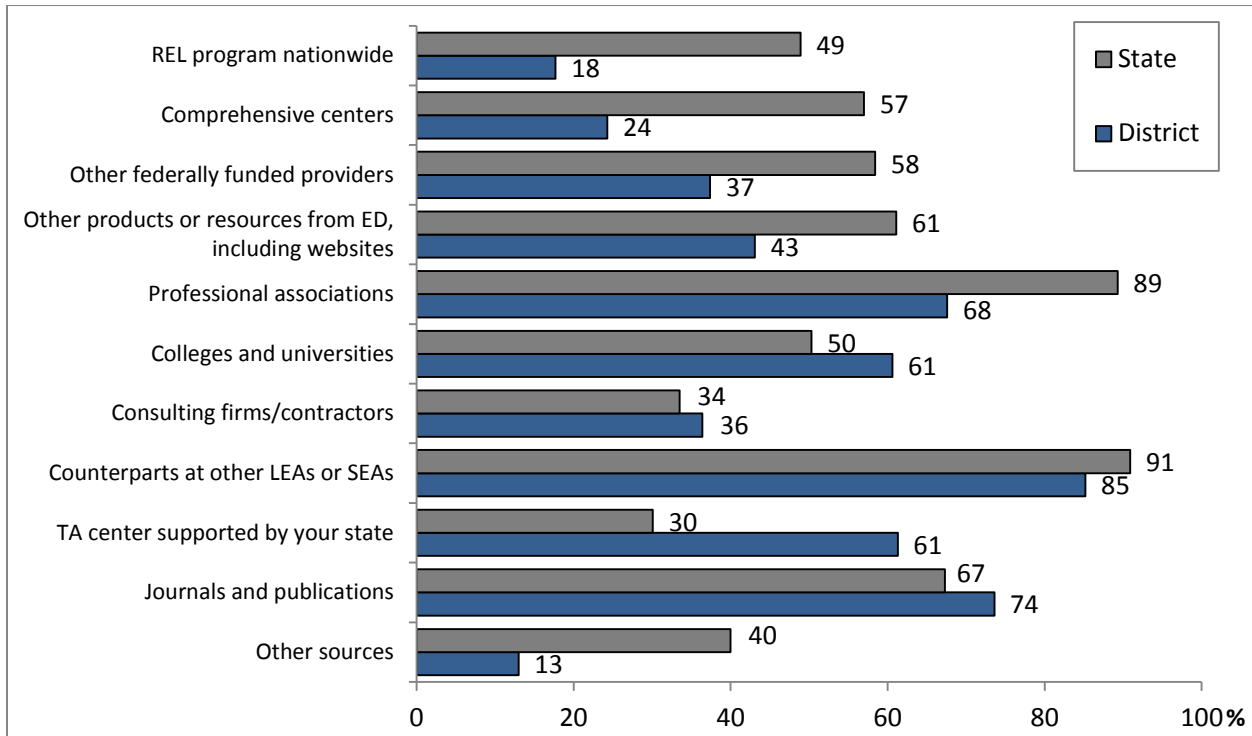
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

What sources of education research and technical assistance do state and district administrators use?

The most reported sources of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was counterparts in other states and districts (91%) and professional associations (89%). For district administrators, the most reported sources of research and/or technical assistance were counterparts in other states and districts (85%) and journals and publications (74%). Forty-nine percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Southeast region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on counterparts in other states and districts (91%) and professional associations (89%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (85%) and journals and publications (74%) (Figure 11-1).

Figure 11-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Southeast: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 37 and 451, respectively. The total N for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 36 to 37, depending on the number of respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item. The total N for state administrators for “other sources” was 5. The total N for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 453 to 454, depending on the number of respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total N for district administrators for “other sources” was 31.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Forty-nine percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 11-1).
- Forty-one percent of state administrators in the Southeast region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 39 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 11-5).

Table 11-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research or technical assistance when needed—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	15	41	179	39
Moderately easy to access	16	45	252	55
Not at all easy to access	5	13	23	5

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Eighty-four percent of state administrators in the Southeast region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 49 percent of district administrators.

- Sixteen percent of state administrators and 51 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region reported that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 11-6).

Table 11-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	10	28	15	3
Somewhat familiar	12	32	79	18
A little familiar	9	24	126	28
Not familiar at all	6	16	235	51

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

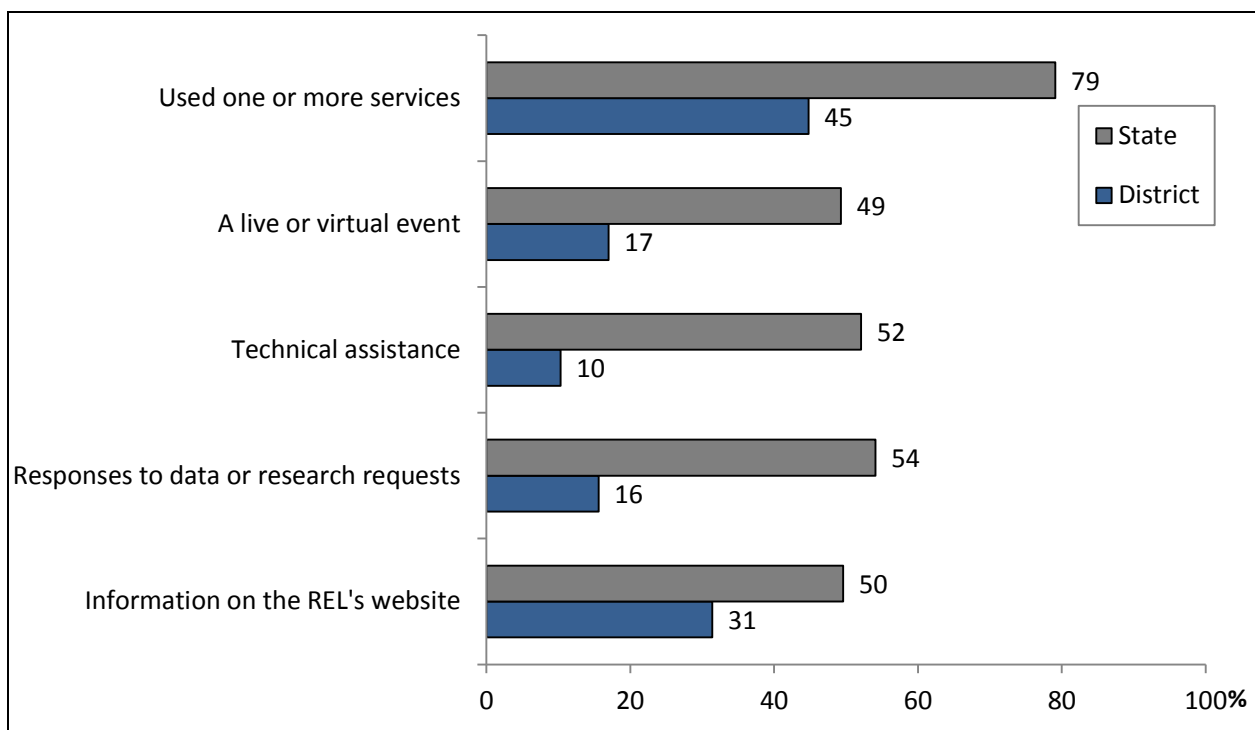
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

Seventy-nine percent of state administrators and 45 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁵³

- Majorities of state administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each of two types of REL services in the past 12 months: responses to data or research requests (54%) and technical assistance (52%). Of district administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 31 percent obtained information from the REL’s website, 17 percent attended a live or virtual event, 16 percent received a response from a data or research request, and 10 percent received technical assistance (Figure 11-2).

Figure 11-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Southeast: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 31; the total N for district administrators was 220.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey.

⁵³ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Southeast region.

- Of administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program 21 percent of state administrators and 55 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.⁵⁴ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for state administrators (73 and 57 percent, respectively) were that they didn’t know what resources were available or they had no need for REL resources. When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for district administrators (63 and 55 percent, respectively) were that they didn’t know what services were available or their needs were met elsewhere (Table 11-7).

Table 11-7. Reasons administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	‡	‡	37	55
Didn’t know what services were available	5	73	43	63
Had no need for REL resources	4	57	8	12
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL’s resources	0	0	‡	‡
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	0	0

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 7, and the total *N* for district administrators was 68. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Southeast region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Southeast services in the past year indicated that they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (81%), or they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (67%). Among district administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Southeast services in the past year, 32 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 31 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 28 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 28 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; and 15 percent had other types of contact with the REL (Table 11-8).

⁵⁴ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 11-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	3	12	25	28
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	12	49	24	28
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	19	81	28	32
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	16	67	27	31
Forwarded a request to the REL	7	30	9	10
Other type of contact	4	16	13	15

NOTE: The total *N* for state administrators was 24, and the total *N* for district administrators was 97.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Sixty-five percent of state administrators and 29 percent of district administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the district administrators in the Southeast region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program nationwide, 58 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it; and 12 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 11-9)

Table 11-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Southeast: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	17	65	50	29
Somewhat satisfied	‡	‡	100	58
Not at all satisfied	‡	‡	21	12

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey.



Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest serves the following states:

- Arkansas;
- Louisiana;
- New Mexico;
- Oklahoma; and
- Texas.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL Southwest was headquartered at Edvance Research, Inc. in San Antonio, Texas. This was the first REL contract that Edvance Research had held. The REL Southwest contract beginning in FY 2012 was awarded to SEDL, which had held previous REL contracts.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL Southwest impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?⁵⁵

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published one impact study from REL Southwest:

- *The Impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Students in Linguistically Diverse Schools.*

⁵⁵ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a set of instructional strategies designed to improve the reading comprehension of students with diverse abilities. Teachers implement *CSR* at the classroom level using scaffolded instruction to guide students in the independent use of four comprehension strategies; students apply the strategies to informational text while working in small cooperative learning groups. The study did not find any impact from *CSR* on student reading comprehension.

The average quality ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Southwest that were reviewed by the expert panel were 3.87 and 4.04, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong,” and the average proposal quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong” (Table 12-1).

Table 12-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL Southwest (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposal	4.04	4.07
IES-published impact study report	3.87	4.00

Table Reads: For the proposal *The Impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Students in Linguistically Diverse Schools*, the mean quality dimension rating was 4.04.

NOTE: The mean quality rating for proposals for REL Southwest was based on 27 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL Southwest was based on 15 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL Southwest was based on 45 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL Southwest was based on 18 indicator-specific ratings.

SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories’ Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

The average relevance ratings for the impact study report and proposal from REL Southwest that were reviewed by expert panels were 4.00 and 4.07, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report relevance rating was “relevant,” and the average proposal relevance rating fell between “relevant” and “highly relevant” (Table 12-1).

Table 12-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from the expert panel review of the IES-published impact study and corresponding proposal from REL Southwest.

Table 12-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southwest, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.67
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.33
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	4.33
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.67
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.00
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.33
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	5.00
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	4.67
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.00
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.67
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	4.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.00
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	4.33

Table 12-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL Southwest, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 1)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.33
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	3.00
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	3.67
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.67
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	3.67
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	3.67
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.33
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	3.67
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	3.67
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	3.67
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	4.33
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.33
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	4.33
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	4.67
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.00
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.67
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.00
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.67
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	3.33
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	4.00
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.33

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on three ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL Southwest technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL Southwest technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the Southwest region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL Southwest.⁵⁶

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the Southwest region was college or career readiness (60%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the Southwest region was achievement gaps (38%).

⁵⁶ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the eight largest percentages of state administrators in the Southwest region indicated “high need” were:

- College or career readiness (60%);
- Teacher/staff evaluation (57%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (53%);
- Dropout prevention (48%);
- Assessment (43%)
- Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing (43%);
- Professional development (43%); and
- Rural schools (43%).

In the Southwest region, the five topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Achievement gaps (38%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in areas other than reading/writing or STEM (37%);
- College or career readiness (33%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in reading/writing (31%); and
- Using data for decisions (29%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and technical assistance is provided in Table 12-3.

Table 12-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	21	38	48	15	438	38	44	18
Assessment (formative or summative)	21	43	20	37	438	26	45	29
Behavior, character education, or health	20	15	30	54	437	18	48	34
College or career readiness	21	60	19	20	435	33	45	22
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	21	53	24	23	437	37	45	18
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	21	43	34	23	437	31	45	24
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	21	‡	‡	33	435	12	50	38
Dropout prevention	21	48	24	28	435	25	42	32
Early childhood	21	33	20	47	438	18	42	40
English language learners	21	38	48	14	437	28	43	30
High school reform	21	39	38	23	438	25	42	33
Leadership	21	38	‡	‡	438	22	53	25
Longitudinal data systems	21	29	52	19	438	20	50	30
Parental involvement	21	38	34	28	438	28	48	25
Professional development	21	43	‡	‡	438	24	55	21
Rural schools	21	43	29	28	437	24	30	46
School accountability	21	29	48	24	436	20	48	32
School choice	21	19	34	47	436	8	28	64
School finance	20	30	44	25	437	22	39	39
Students with disabilities	20	30	40	30	438	22	50	28
Supplemental education services	21	25	61	14	437	13	49	38
Support for low-achieving schools	21	42	44	14	438	28	40	33
Teacher/staff evaluation	21	57	19	24	439	22	43	34
Using data for decisions	21	42	‡	‡	438	29	47	24
Other	‡	‡	‡	‡	48	23	19	58

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Twenty-four percent of state administrators and 30 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region reported that their education research and/or technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Sixty percent of district administrators in the Southwest region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 10 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance,” (Table 12-4).

Table 12-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—Southwest: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	5	24	130	30
Moderately well	‡	‡	265	60
Not well	‡	‡	43	10

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

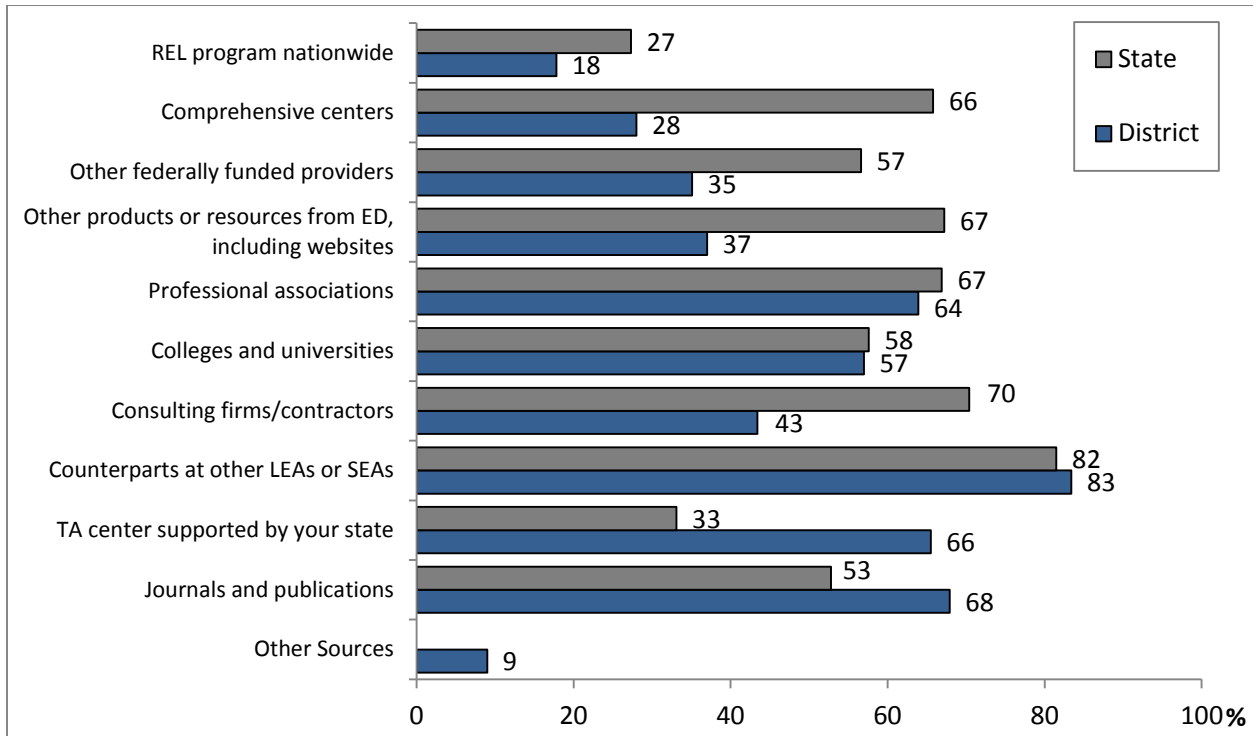
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state and district administrators was counterparts in other SEAs and LEAs (82 and 83 percent, respectively). Twenty-seven percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the Southwest region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on counterparts in other states and districts (82%) and consulting firms or contractors (70%), while district administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (83%) and journals and publications (68%) (Figure 12-1).

Figure 12-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—Southwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied to a great or moderate extent on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 16 and 188, respectively. The total N for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 20 to 21. The total N for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 435 to 437, depending on the number of state and district respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total N for district administrators for “other sources” was 32.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Twenty-seven percent of state administrators and 18 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 12-1).
- Thirty-two percent of state administrators and 37 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information. (Table 12-5).

Table 12-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	7	32	163	37
Moderately easy to access	10	48	244	56
Not at all easy to access	4	19	31	7

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Seventy-one percent of state administrators in the Southwest region reported being *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, compared with 44 percent of district administrators.

- Twenty-nine percent of state administrators and 56 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region report that they were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 12-6).

Table 12-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	‡	‡	12	3
Somewhat familiar	‡	‡	71	16
A little familiar	8	39	112	25
Not familiar at all	6	29	245	56

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How many state and district administrators used REL services?

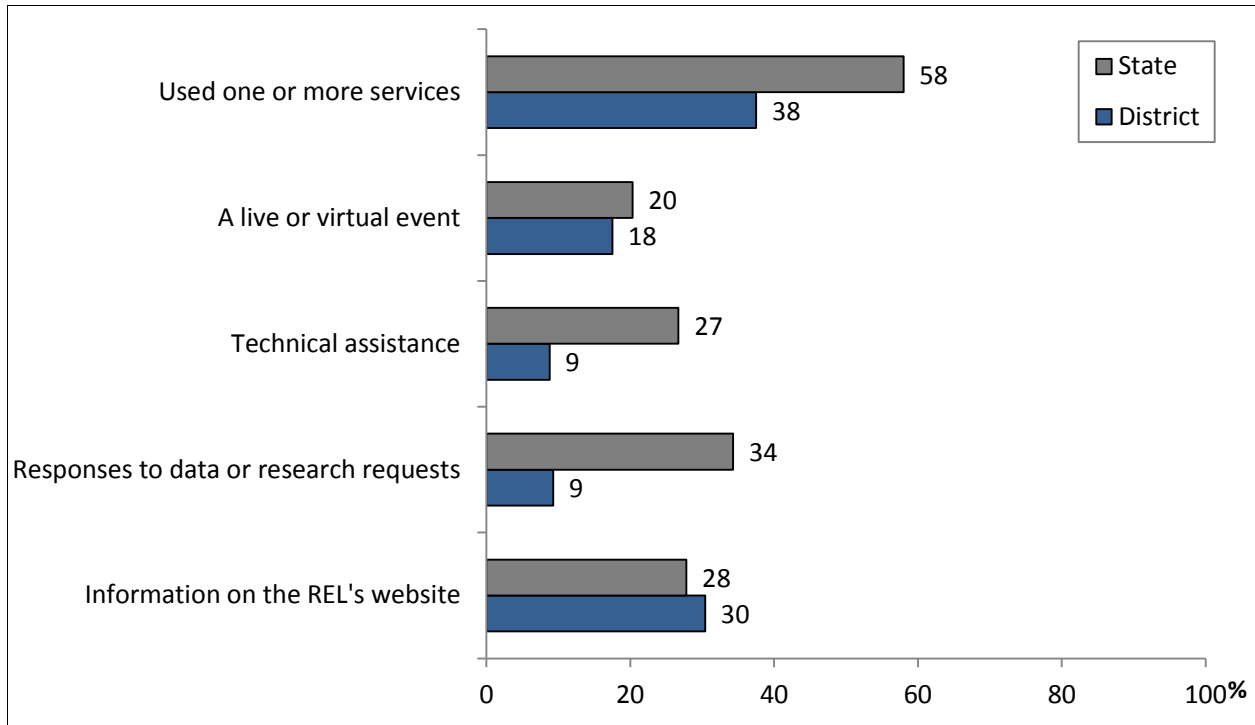
Fifty-eight percent of state administrators and 38 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁵⁷

- State administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that in the past 12 months they were most likely to have used responses from the REL to data or research requests (34%). Of district administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 30 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 18 percent attended a live or virtual event; 9 percent received a response from a data or research request; and 9 percent received technical assistance (Figure 12-2).
- Of administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program 37 percent of state administrators and 35 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.⁵⁸ When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common response for state administrators was that their needs were met elsewhere (79 percent). The most common responses for district administrators (56 and 54 percent, respectively) were that their needs were met elsewhere or they didn’t know what services were available (Table 12-7).

⁵⁷ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the Southwest region.

⁵⁸ Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Figure 12-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—Southwest: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 15, and the total N for district administrators was 195.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Table 12-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	n	%	n	%
Needs were met elsewhere	4	79	38	56
Didn't know what services were available	0	0	37	54
Had no need for REL resources	0	0	12	18
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL's resources	0	0	7	10
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	3	4

NOTE: The total N state administrators was 5, and the total N for district administrators was 68.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the Southwest region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Southwest services in the past year indicated that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (77%), they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training or workshop (54%), or they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (33%). Among district administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL Southwest services in the past year, 42 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 35 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the Ask a REL link on the REL’s website; 31 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 28 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; and 18 percent had other types of contact (Table 12-8).

Table 12-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	‡	‡	22	35
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	5	54	19	31
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	3	33	17	28
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	7	77	26	42
Forwarded a request to the REL	‡	‡	‡	‡
Other type of contact	‡	‡	11	18

NOTE: The total *N* state administrators was 9, and the total *N* for district administrators was 66. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Forty-nine percent of state administrators and 26 percent of district administrators in the Southwest region who were familiar with the REL program nationwide were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the state administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 52 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it

and 0 percent of state administrators reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 12-9).

Table 12-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—Southwest: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	5	48	39	26
Somewhat satisfied	5	52	88	58
Not at all satisfied	0	0	24	16

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Of the district administrators in the Southwest region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 58 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 16 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 12-9).



Regional Educational Laboratory West serves the following states:

- Arizona,
- California,
- Nevada, and
- Utah.

For the 2006-11 contract period, REL West was headquartered at WestEd in San Francisco, California. WestEd had held previous REL contracts and was also awarded the REL West contract beginning in FY 2012.

What were the technical quality and relevance of REL West impact study reports published by IES and of the corresponding proposals?⁵⁹

As part of the evaluation of the RELs, Westat conducted an expert panel review to examine the quality and relevance of IES-published impact study reports and the corresponding proposals. Between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, IES published two impact studies from REL West:

- *Effects of Problem-Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction, and*
- *Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets.*

⁵⁹ Impact studies are designed to make causal inferences about an intervention, policy, or practices, typically using RCTs or regression discontinuity designs.

Building on the more general techniques of problem-based learning, the *Problem Based Economics Instruction* curriculum was designed to help students actively learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills using real-world examples. The study assessed the effectiveness of *Problem Based Economics Instruction* by comparing the economics knowledge of students in the treatment and comparison groups at the end of their implementation semester. The study found no statistically significant difference on the economics knowledge of students in grades 11 and 12 in the classes that used *Problem Based Economics Instruction*, relative to students in the comparison classes. However, the effect size of 0.29 for the economics knowledge domain was positive.

Linguistic modification is a test accommodation strategy aimed at removing language barriers. This strategy requires the creation of carefully constructed test items that are accessible to all students, regardless of language background, while still maintaining the integrity of the content being tested. The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of using *linguistic modification* as a way of removing language barriers for English language learners and non-English language learners (EL) struggling with reading. This study focuses on the *linguistic modification* of math content that is typically presented on standardized math achievement tests. The study found a positive effect on math scores for students struggling with English who completed the *linguistic modification* item set relative to similar students who did not. The estimated six percentage-point gain on math achievement is statistically significant. The study found neither statistically significant nor substantively important differences for EP students who took the modified test, relative to those who did not.

The average quality ratings for the two impact study reports and two proposals from REL West that were reviewed by expert panels were 4.04 and 3.69, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report quality rating fell between “strong” and “very strong,” and the average proposal quality rating fell between “adequate” and “strong”

The average relevance ratings for the two impact study reports and two proposals from REL West that were reviewed by expert panels were 4.25 and 3.87, respectively. On a 5-point scale (1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest), the average report relevance rating fell between “relevant” and “very relevant,” and the average proposal relevance rating fell between “adequate” and “relevant” (Table 13-1).

Table 13-2 displays, for each indicator of quality and relevance, the mean ratings from expert panel reviews of IES-published impact studies and corresponding proposals from REL West.

Table 13-1. Expert panel quality and relevance ratings for IES-published impact study reports and corresponding proposals from REL West (on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest)

Product	Mean ratings	
	Quality	Relevance
Impact study proposals		
Proposals from REL West (N = 2)	3.69	3.87
<i>Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction</i>	3.96	3.73
<i>Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets</i>	3.41	4.00
IES-published impact study reports		
Impact study reports from REL West (N = 2)	4.04	4.25
<i>Effects of Problem-Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction</i>	3.98	4.39
<i>Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets</i>	4.11	4.11

Table Reads: For the 2 proposals for impact studies from REL West, the mean quality dimension rating was 3.69.

NOTE: N = Number of IES-published reports prepared under the 2006-11 REL contracts and released by September 1, 2011, or corresponding proposals submitted by the RELs between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011, and reviewed by expert panels. The mean quality rating for proposals for REL West was based on 54 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for proposals for REL West was based on 30 indicator-specific ratings. The mean quality rating for reports for REL West was based on 90 indicator-specific ratings, and the mean relevance rating for reports for REL West was based on 36 indicator-specific ratings.

SOURCES: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

Table 13-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL West, by rating indicator

Indicators for proposals	Proposals (N= 2)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	3.00
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	3.50
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.50
1D. The design for random assignment is rigorous.	3.67
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	3.83
1F. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.50
1G. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.00
1H. The data analyses will use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.33
1I. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	3.83
Relevance	
2A. The proposal provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	3.83
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	3.50
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	3.33
2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.50
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well presented.	4.17

Table 13-2. Mean ratings from expert panel review of impact studies for REL West, by rating indicator (continued)

Indicators for reports	IES-published reports (N = 2)
Quality	
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	4.50
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	3.83
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	4.50
1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	4.67
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	3.83
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	3.50
1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	3.83
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	4.33
1I. The data collection plan is well implemented.	4.33
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	3.67
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	3.67
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	4.17
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	3.67
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	4.00
1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	4.17
Relevance	
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	4.50
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	4.33
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	4.17
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	4.17
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	3.83
2F. The report is clear and well written for the technical audience.	4.50

NOTE: The mean for each quality and relevance indicator was based on six ratings.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals) (Appendix A).

How relevant and useful were the REL West technical assistance products to the needs of the states and districts in the region?

Between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, a survey of state and district administrators was conducted to determine how relevant and useful REL West technical assistance products were in meeting the needs of administrators in the West region. State and district administrators were included in the sample regardless of previous use of REL services or familiarity with the REL program. Specific research questions included:

- What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?
- What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?
- How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?
- How many state and district administrators used REL services?
- How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

This section presents the responses to those questions based on the results from the REL survey of state and district administrators in REL West.⁶⁰

What needs did state and district administrators have for education research and technical assistance, and were those needs met?

The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among state administrators in the West region was teacher/staff evaluation (66%). The most commonly reported area of “high need” for education research and/or technical assistance among district administrators in the West region was using data for decisions (39%).

⁶⁰ Results for the nation are presented in Chapter 3.

Administrators were asked to indicate whether they had a “high need,” “moderate need,” or “low or no need” for research/assistance in specific topic areas. The areas in which the five largest percentages of state administrators in the West region indicated “high need” were:

- Teacher/staff evaluation (65%);
- English language learners (58%);
- Using data for decisions (56%);
- Assessment (52%), and
- College or career readiness (51%).

In the West region, the eight topic areas with the largest percentage of district administrators reporting “high need” were:

- Using data for decisions (39%);
- Content standards, curriculum, or instruction in STEM (38%);
- English language learners (38%);
- Achievement gaps (35%);
- Assessment (34%);
- College or career readiness (34%);
- Longitudinal data systems (34%); and
- Support for low-achieving schools (34%).

Detail on the need for other areas of research and/or technical assistance is provided in Table 13-3.

Table 13-3. Percentage of all administrators who reported various levels of need for different types of research and technical assistance—West: School year 2011-12

Type of research and/or technical assistance	State administrators				District administrators			
	Need for research and/or technical assistance				Need for research and/or technical assistance			
		High	Moderate	Low or no need		High	Moderate	Low or no need
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
Achievement gaps	20	47	‡	‡	393	35	47	17
Assessment (formative or summative)	20	52	32	16	393	34	46	21
Behavior, character education, or health	20	15	16	70	391	21	40	39
College or career readiness	20	51	‡	‡	390	34	38	29
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in STEM	20	30	56	14	392	38	42	20
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in reading/writing	19	16	55	29	392	28	48	24
Content standards, curriculum or instruction in other areas	19	0	56	45	391	11	47	41
Dropout prevention	19	33	46	20	393	26	34	40
Early childhood	19	27	‡	‡	390	17	36	47
English language learners	19	58	‡	‡	393	38	36	26
High school reform	19	49	31	21	391	28	33	39
Leadership	19	27	54	19	392	29	46	25
Longitudinal data systems	19	49	35	15	392	34	39	26
Parental involvement	19	25	33	42	394	23	48	29
Professional development	20	41	35	24	392	31	49	20
Rural schools	19	23	53	25	392	25	25	50
School accountability	19	32	53	16	392	19	45	36
School choice	19	‡	‡	68	392	8	28	64
School finance	19	15	55	31	389	18	36	46
Students with disabilities	19	‡	‡	37	391	25	47	28
Supplemental education services	19	‡	‡	50	392	13	44	43
Support for low-achieving schools	20	35	51	14	393	34	36	30
Teacher/staff evaluation	20	65	‡	‡	392	30	46	24
Using data for decisions	20	56	‡	‡	393	39	41	21
Other	‡	‡	‡	‡	48	32	18	50

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shaded cells are those that are mentioned in the text. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Thirty-five percent of state administrators and 27 percent of district administrators in the West region reported that their education research and/or technical assistance needs were met “very well” (as opposed to “moderately well” or “not well”), taking into account all sources of such research and technical assistance.

- Sixty-five percent of state administrators in the West region reported that their education research and/or technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 0 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 13-4).

Table 13-4. Percentage of all administrators who reported that their research and technical assistance needs were met “very well,” “moderately well,” or “not well,” taking into account all sources of assistance—West: School year 2011-12

How well needs were met	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well	7	35	106	27
Moderately well	13	65	239	62
Not well	0	0	43	11

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Sixty-two percent of district administrators in the West region reported that their education research and technical assistance needs were met “moderately well” and 11 percent reported that their needs were “not well” met by their sources of assistance (Table 13-4).

What sources of education research and technical assistance did state and district administrators use?

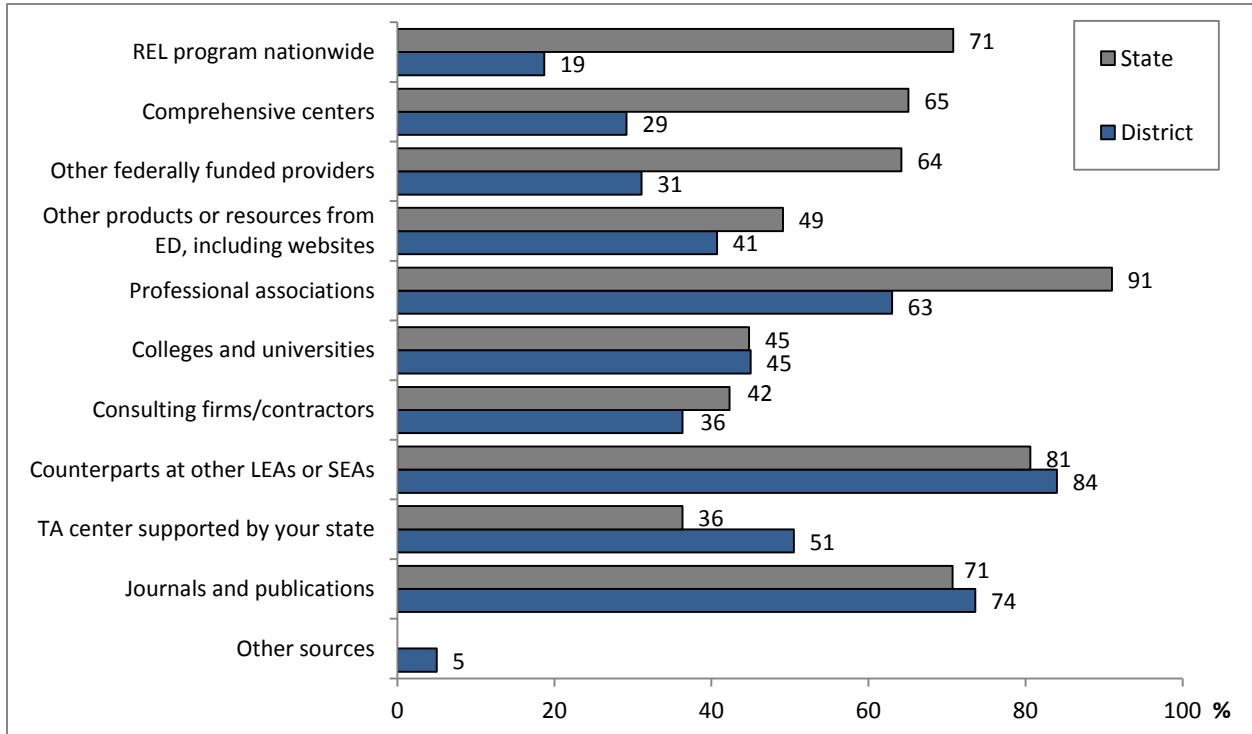
The most reported source of education research and/or technical assistance for state administrators was professional associations (91%), and for district administrators it was counterparts in other states and districts (84%). Seventy-one percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the West region reported that they relied on the REL program “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance.

- State and district administrators in the West region reported that they used a variety of sources for meeting their research and/or technical assistance needs. State administrators were most likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” (as opposed to a “small extent” or not at all) on professional associations (91%) and counterparts in other states and districts (81%), while district administrators were most

likely to rely “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on counterparts in other states and districts (84%) and journals and publications (74%) (Figure 13-1).

- Seventy-one percent of state administrators and 19 percent of district administrators in the West region reported that they relied on the REL program nationwide “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” for research and/or technical assistance (Figure 13-1).

Figure 13-1. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they relied on different sources of education research and/or technical assistance “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”—West: School year 2011-12



NOTE: “Other products or resources from ED” was specified as “including websites such as Doing What Works.” No state administrators reported that they relied “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent” on “other sources” of education research and/or technical assistance. The total Ns for state and district administrators on the item about reliance on the REL program were 18 and 195, respectively. The total N for state administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 1-20. The total N for district administrators on the items about other specified sources of research ranged from 389 to 392, depending on the number of respondents who chose not to respond to an individual item; and the total N for district administrators for “other sources” was 18.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Twenty-six percent of state administrators in the West region reported that it was “very easy” (as opposed to “moderately easy” or “not at all easy”) to access education research and/or technical assistance across the available sources of information, and 38 percent of district administrators in the West region reported that it was “very easy” to access such assistance (Table 13-5).

Table 13-5. Percentage of all administrators who reported that it was “very easy,” “moderately easy,” or “not at all easy” to access education research and/or technical assistance when needed—West: School year 2011-12

Ease of access	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very easy to access	5	26	151	38
Moderately easy to access	15	74	206	53
Not at all easy to access	0	0	35	9

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How familiar were state and district administrators with the REL program?

Seventy percent of state administrators in the West region reported being “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with the REL program, compared with 31 percent of district administrators.

- Twenty-four percent of district administrators in the West region were “a little familiar” with the REL program, and 45 percent of district administrators in the West region were “not familiar at all” with the REL program (Table 13-6).

Table 13-6. Percentage of all administrators who reported that they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” “a little familiar,” or “not familiar at all” with the REL program overall —West: School year 2011-12

Familiarity	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very familiar	6	28	33	8
Somewhat familiar	8	42	90	23
A little familiar	‡	‡	93	24
Not familiar at all	‡	‡	178	45

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

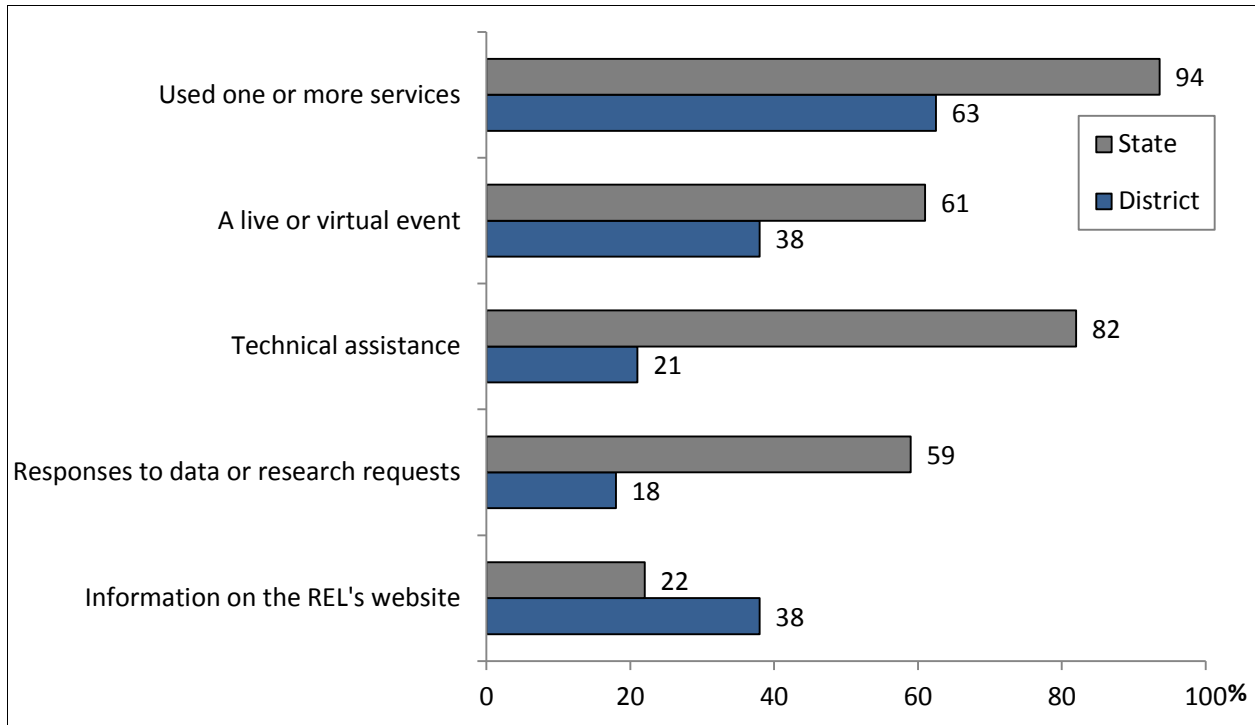
How many state and district administrators use REL services?

Ninety-four percent of state administrators and 63 percent of district administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used one or more REL services in the past 12 months.⁶¹

- Majorities of state administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program reported that they used each of three types of REL services in the past 12 months: technical assistance (82%), a live or virtual event (61%), and responses to data or research requests (59%). Of district administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program, 38 percent attended a live or virtual event; 38 percent obtained information from the REL’s website; 21 percent received technical assistance; and 18 percent received a response from a data or research request (Figure 13-2).

⁶¹ Unless otherwise specified, the term ‘*at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program’ includes “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “a little familiar.” Note that administrators’ use of services was contingent on familiarity, which differed for states and districts in the West region.

Figure 13-2. Percentage of administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program who reported that they used various REL services in the past 12 months—West: School year 2011-12



NOTE: The total N for state administrators was 18, and the total N for district administrators was 216.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

- Of administrators in the West region who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program, 6 percent of state administrators and 25 percent of district administrators did not use any REL services in the past 12 months.⁶² When asked why they had not used any REL services in the past year, the most common responses for district administrators (57 and 51 percent, respectively) were that their needs were met elsewhere or they didn’t know what services were available (Table 13-7).

⁶² Percentages may not sum to 100 because some administrators did not know if they had used REL services.

Table 13-7. Reasons administrators who were at least “a little familiar” with the REL program did not use REL services in the past 12 months—West: School year 2011-12

Reason	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Needs were met elsewhere	‡	‡	30	57
Didn't know what services were available	‡	‡	27	51
Had no need for REL resources	0	0	17	32
Not a good match between their current needs and the REL's resources	0	0	5	9
REL that served their state did not have a good reputation	0	0	‡	‡

NOTE: The total *N* for district administrators was 53. ‡ Reporting standards were not met.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

In addition to asking respondents about the services they had used, state and district administrators in the West region who had used REL services were also asked about the types of contact they had in the past 12 months with the REL.

- Majorities of state administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL West services in the past year indicated that: they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance (93%); they attended a meeting or workshop at which a REL representative was present (82%); they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop (52%); or they forwarded a request they had received to the REL (17 percent). Among district administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program and had used REL West services in the past year, 48 percent said they attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop; 44 percent said they attended a meeting at which a REL representative was present; 38 percent said that they or their organization contacted the REL for research or other assistance; 27 percent contacted a reference desk for help or used the “Ask a REL” link on the REL’s website; 15 percent forwarded a request they had received to the REL; and 18 percent had other types of contact with the REL (Table 13-8).

Table 13-8. Percentage of administrators who had used REL services and reported having various types of contact with the REL serving their state in the past year—West: School year 2011-12

Contact	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Contacted a reference desk or used the Ask a REL link on the website	0	0	32	27
Attended a REL-sponsored conference, training, or workshop	9	52	58	48
A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop	14	82	54	44
Contacted REL for research or other assistance	16	93	45	38
Forwarded a request to the REL	3	17	18	15
Other type of contact	0	0	22	18

NOTE: The total *N* state administrators was 17, and the total *N* for district administrators was 126.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

How satisfied with the REL program were state and district administrators?

Sixty-one percent of state administrators and 34 percent of district administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall were “very satisfied” with it.

- Of the state administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 39 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 0 percent of state administrators reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 13-9).
- Of the district administrators in the West region who were *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program overall, 53 percent reported being “somewhat satisfied” with it and 14 percent reported being “not at all satisfied” with it (Table 13-9).

Table 13-9. Percentage of the region’s administrators *at least* “a little familiar” with the REL program who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “not at all satisfied” with it—West: School year 2011-12

Satisfaction	State administrators		District administrators	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very satisfied	10	61	65	34
Somewhat satisfied	6	39	102	53
Not at all satisfied	0	0	27	14

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) Customer Survey, fall 2011 to spring 2012.

Appendix A

Rubrics for Expert Panel Review of Impact Studies

RUBRIC AND SCORING FORM FOR THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES' IMPACT STUDIES (FOR PROPOSALS)

REL: _____

Project: _____

Reviewer and Date: _____

SUMMARY SHEET

Dimensions and Indicators	Rating
DIMENSION 1: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT: Synthesis rating (mean of 1A through 1J)	
Sub-dimension 1: Intervention	
Indicator 1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	
Indicator 1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	
Sub-dimension 2: Study design	
Indicator 1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	
Indicator 1D. The design for the random assignment is rigorous.	
Indicator 1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	
Indicator 1F. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	
Indicator 1G. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, and not overly aligned with the intervention.	
Sub-dimension 3: Study implementation	
Indicator 1H. Data collection procedures are clearly described.	
Indicator 1I. The statistical analyses will use appropriate methods for the research questions (e.g., adjusting for confounding factors, clustering, missing data from nonresponse, attrition, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups, when necessary).	
Indicator 1J. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	

Dimensions and Indicators	Rating
DIMENSION 2: RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT: Synthesis rating (mean of 2A through 2E)	
Indicator 2A. The proposal focuses on a salient topic of interest that will inform decisions about policies, programs, or practices in the region served by the REL.	
Indicator 2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	
Indicator 2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	
Indicator 2D. The report will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	
Indicator 2E. The proposal is clearly-written and well-presented.	
GENERAL COMMENTS	

SPECIFIC RATING SHEET

Dimension 1: Quality (*Circle the number that best describes each indicator*).

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	The proposal clearly describes both the intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group (e.g., business as usual, alternative treatment, no treatment).		The proposal describes the intervention for the treatment group but is not sufficiently explicit about what the control group receives, or vice versa.		The proposal does not clearly describe either the intervention for the treatment group or the condition for the control group.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1B. The plan to document implementation of the intervention (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence) is appropriate.	The plan to document implementation is appropriately detailed and aligned with the overall study design.		There is a plan to document implementation but it should be more detailed and/or better aligned with the study design.		The proposal does not address implementation or the plan is seriously flawed.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1C. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	The research questions are clearly articulated, aligned with the study, and can be empirically tested.		Some but not all research questions are stated clearly, aligned with the study, and can be empirically tested.		The proposal does not explicitly state any research questions; or stated questions are poorly aligned with the study and/or cannot be empirically tested.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1D. The design for the random assignment is rigorous and sound.	The random assignment procedure represents the most rigorous approach to yield the impact evidence in the study context.		Although a random assignment procedure is used, a better design or features can be used in the study context.		The random assignment design is seriously flawed.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1E. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.	The sampling strategies are most appropriate for targeted populations in addressing the research questions. The resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.		The sampling strategies are reasonable for targeted populations in addressing the research questions, although there may be some potential sampling bias. The sample size(s) for the impact questions will have adequate statistical power.		The sample for targeted populations may contain serious sampling bias, and/or sample size(s) for the impact questions will not have enough statistical power.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1F. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	All data sources, mode, timing, and frequency of collection are clearly defined and appropriate for addressing the research questions.		Data sources, mode, timing, and frequency of collection are adequate for addressing the research questions, but some could be improved.		Data sources, mode, timing, and frequency of collection are either not identified explicitly or not well suited for addressing the research questions.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1G. Outcome measures are valid, reliable ¹ and not overly aligned with the intervention.	All of the outcome measures are valid, reliable and not overly aligned for addressing the research questions.		The alignment, validity and/or reliability of some outcome measures are in question.		The outcome measures have little if any validity or reliability for addressing the research questions or are overly aligned with the intervention, or the proposal does not address this.
Comments on rating					

¹ The WWC standards for test-retest reliability are 0.40 or higher; internal consistency is 0.60 or higher; inter-rater reliability is 0.50 or higher, where applicable.

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1H. Data collection procedures are clearly described.	Data collection procedures are clearly described.		Data collection procedures are described but could be clearer.		Data collection procedures are not described.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
11. The statistical analyses will use appropriate methods for the research questions (e.g., adjusting for confounding factors, clustering, missing data, from nonresponse, attrition, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups, when necessary).	The statistical analyses will use the most appropriate methods for the research questions to adjust for confounding factors, clustering, missing data from nonresponse, attrition, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups, when necessary.		The statistical analysis methods are reasonable for the research questions in adjusting for confounding factors, clustering, missing data from nonresponse, attrition, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups, although better ones could be applied within the context, when necessary.		The study proposes few if any appropriate statistical methods for the research questions to adjust for confounding factors, clustering, missing data from nonresponse, attrition, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups, when necessary.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1J. The proposed research is feasible to be carried out with reasonable timeline and sequencing of activities.	The timeline and sequencing of activities are very feasible and reasonable.		The timeline and sequencing of activities are mostly feasible and reasonable, but can be improved.		The timeline and sequencing of activities are not feasible or reasonable.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2A. The proposal focuses on a salient topic of interest that can be used to inform decisions about policies, programs, or practices in the region served by the REL.	The proposal provides strong justifications on why the topic was selected.		The proposal provides some justifications on why the topic was selected but could have made a stronger case for its importance.		The proposal provides little justifications if any on why the topic was selected or why it's important.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2B. The proposal provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	The proposal provides a thorough literature review of relevant and important research.		The literature review is adequate but may overlook some important work or include studies that are not well conducted, without consideration of their limitations.		The proposal does not include any review of relevant literature.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2C. The proposal provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	The proposal provides strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.		The proposal provides some justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.		The proposal provides little justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2D. The proposed study will contribute new information about the effectiveness of the intervention and the more general topic being addressed.	The proposed study will be current, new, or make a contribution to the intended audience in the region.		The proposed study will be somewhat limited in providing current or new information, or in making a contribution to the intended audience in the region.		The proposed study will not provide any current or new information or will not make a contribution to the intended audience in the region.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2E. The proposal is clearly written and well-presented.	The proposal contains clear, comprehensive, and accurate information about the design and conduct of the research.		The proposal describes the proposed design and conduct of the research but could be more clear.		The proposal is poorly written, with critical information missing about the design and conduct of the research.
Comments on rating					

**RUBRIC AND SCORING FORM FOR THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF
REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES' IMPACT STUDIES (FOR FINAL
REPORTS)**

REL: _____

Project: _____

Reviewer and Date: _____

SUMMARY SHEET

Dimensions and Indicators	Rating
DIMENSION 1: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT: Synthesis rating (mean of 1A through 1O)	
Sub-dimension 1: Intervention	
Indicator 1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	
Indicator 1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	
Indicator 1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	
Sub-dimension 2: Study design and implementation	
Indicator 1D. The research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	
Indicator 1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	
Indicator 1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	
Indicator 1G. Outcome measures are valid and reliable and not overly aligned with the intervention.	
Indicator 1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	
Indicator 1I. The data collection plan is well-implemented.	
Indicator 1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	
Indicator 1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	
Sub-dimension 3: Reporting	
Indicator 1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	
Indicator 1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	
Indicator 1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	
Indicator 1O. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	

Dimensions and Indicators	Rating
DIMENSION 2: RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT: Synthesis rating (mean of 2A through 2F)	
Indicator 2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected as salient to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	
Indicator 2B2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	
Indicator 2CC. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	
Indicator 2DD. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	
Indicator 2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.	
Indicator 2F. The report is clear and well-written for the technical audience.	

SPECIFIC RATING SHEET

Dimension 1: Quality (*Circle the number that best describes each indicator*).

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1A. The intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group are clearly described.	The report clearly describes both the intervention for the treatment group and the condition for the control group (e.g., business as usual, alternative treatment, no treatment)		The report describes the intervention for the treatment group but is not sufficiently explicit about what the control group receives, or vice versa.		The report does not clearly describe either the intervention for the treatment group or the condition for the control group.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1B. Implementation of the intervention is well documented (e.g., exposure, quality of delivery, adherence).	Implementation of the intervention is well-documented.		Implementation of the intervention is documented but could be more detailed.		Implementation of the intervention is poorly documented or not addressed in the report.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1C. There is minimal contamination in the form of crossover between subjects in treatment and control condition or spillover of the intervention from the treatment to the control group.	Contamination in the form of crossover or spillover is minimal.		Contamination in the form of crossover or spillover is present but at modest levels.		Contamination in the form of crossover or spillover is serious.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1D. All research questions are explicitly stated, aligned with the study, and are empirically testable.	All research questions are clearly articulated; aligned with the study, and can be empirically tested.		Some, but not all, research questions are stated clearly, aligned with the study, and can be empirically tested.		The report does not explicitly state any research questions, or stated questions are poorly aligned with the study and/or cannot be empirically tested.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1E. The design and implementation of random assignment are rigorous.	The random assignment design and implementation represents the most rigorous approach to yield the impact evidence in the study context.		Although a random assignment procedure is used, a better design or implementation features could have been used in the study context.		The random assignment design or implementation is seriously flawed.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1F. The sampling strategies are appropriate for targeted populations, and the resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.	The sampling strategies are most appropriate for targeted populations and addressing the research questions. The resulting sample size(s) for the impact questions have adequate statistical power.		The sampling strategies are reasonable for targeted populations in addressing the research questions, although there may be some potential sampling bias. The sample size(s) for the impact questions are not sufficiently powered.		The sample for targeted populations may contain serious sampling bias, and/or sample size(s) for the impact questions do not have enough statistical power.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1G. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, ¹ and not overly aligned with the intervention.	All of the outcome measures are valid, reliable and not overly aligned for addressing the research questions.		The alignment, validity and/or reliability of some outcome measures are in question.		The outcome measures have little if any validity or reliability for addressing the research questions or are overly aligned with the intervention, or the report does not address this aspect.
Comments on rating					

¹ The WWC standards for test-retest reliability are 0.40 or higher; internal consistency is 0.60 or higher; inter-rater reliability is 0.50 or higher, where applicable.

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1H. The data collection plan is appropriate for the research questions.	All data sources are clearly defined and mode, timing, frequency of collection are appropriate for addressing the research questions.		Data sources, mode, timing, and frequency of collection are adequate for addressing the research questions, but some could be improved.		Data sources, mode, timing, and frequency of collection are either not identified explicitly or not well suited for addressing the research questions.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1H. Outcome measures are valid, reliable, ² and not overly aligned with the intervention.	All of the outcome measures are valid, reliable and not overly aligned for addressing the research questions.		The alignment, validity and/or reliability of some outcome measures are in question.		The outcome measures have little if any validity or reliability for addressing the research questions or are overly aligned with the intervention, or the report does not address this aspect.
Comments on rating					

² The WWC standards for test-retest reliability are 0.40 or higher; internal consistency is 0.60 or higher; inter-rater reliability is 0.50 or higher, where applicable.

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1J. The data collection plan is well implemented.	The data collection plan is implemented essentially as designed.		There are some concerns with the implementation of the data collection plan.		There are serious concerns with the implementation of the data collection plan.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1J. The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates are acceptable given the length of the intervention.	The overall attrition rate and differential attrition rates between treatment and control groups are low given the length of the intervention.		The overall attrition and/or differential attrition rates are slightly high. However, the source of attrition is mostly exogenous (e.g., parent mobility with young children) rather than endogenous (e.g., students choosing whether to participate in an intervention).		The overall attrition or differential attritions are very high. The source of attrition is mostly endogenous.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator).*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1J. Data collection plan is well-implemented.	The data collection plan is implemented essentially as designed.		There are some concerns with how data were collected.		There are serious concerns with the data collection procedures.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1K. The data analyses use appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for any clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).	The data analyses use the most appropriate methods to address the research questions (e.g., adjusting where necessary for clustering, missing data from nonresponse, multiple comparisons, and/or baseline non-equivalence between groups).		The data analyses use reasonable methods to address the research questions although better methods could be applied within the context.		The data analyses use few, if any, appropriate methods to address the research questions.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1L. Appropriate statistics are provided to describe the sample and support the findings.	Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics, respectively, are provided to describe the sample and support the findings about the impact.		Some, but not all, appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics, respectively, are provided to describe the sample or support the findings about the impact.		The report does not provide descriptive statistics about the sample and/or inferential statistics about the impact.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1M. The conclusions about the intervention are drawn appropriately and consistently.	All of the intervention are adequately addressed by the report.		Some conclusions are either over-stated or under-stated, or the conclusions are stated slightly inconsistently throughout the report.		None of the research questions is adequately addressed by the analyses.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
1N. All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.	All of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.		Some, but not all, of the research questions are specifically addressed by the analyses.		None of the research questions is specifically addressed by the analyses.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 1: Quality, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Very strong	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Very weak
	5	4	3	2	1
10. The limitations of the study are clearly and comprehensively stated.	The limitations of the study are described clearly and comprehensively.		The limitations of the study are acknowledged but may not be clear or comprehensive.		The report includes little if any information on the limitations of the study.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2A. The report provides a strong justification why the topic was selected or focuses on a salient topic of interest that will inform decisions about policies, programs, or practices to meet the needs of the region served by the REL.	The report provides strong justifications on why the topic was selected. .		The report provides some justification on why the topic was selected but could have made a stronger case for its importance.		The report provides little justification on why the topic was selected or why it's important.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2B. The report provides a thorough summary of key literature and/or previous research in the topic area.	The study provides a thorough literature review of relevant and important research.		The literature review is adequate, but may overlook some important work or include studies that are not well conducted, without consideration of their limitations.		The report does not include any review of relevant literature.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2C. The report provides a strong justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.	The report provides strong justifications for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.		The report provides some justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.		The report provides little justification for selecting the particular intervention that is being studied.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2D. The report contributes new information about the effectiveness of the intervention being studied and the more general topic being addressed.	The information presented in the report is current, new, or makes a contribution to the intended audience in the region.		The report is somewhat limited in providing current or new information or in making a contribution to the intended audience in the region.		The report does not provide any current or new information or does not make a contribution to the intended audience in the region.
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2E. The executive summary of the report is easy to read and understand for a lay audience.					
Comments on rating					

Dimension 2: Relevance, continued *(Circle the number that best describes each indicator)*

Indicator	Highly relevant	Relevant	Adequate	Marginally relevant	Not relevant
	5	4	3	2	1
2F. The report is clear and well-written for the technical audience.	The report is well-written for the technical audience, containing clear, comprehensive, and accurate information about the design and conduct of the research.		The report is moderately well-written for the technical audience, but could be more clear or comprehensive about the design and conduct of the research.		The report is poorly written for the technical audience, with critical information missing about the design and conduct of the research.
Comments on rating					

Appendix B Inter-rater Agreement

When protocols require multiple sets of raters to assign ratings to targets (in this case, proposals and final reports), it is important to assess two related but conceptually distinct concepts: inter-rater agreement and inter-rater reliability. Levels of inter-rater agreement (IRA) index the extent to which raters assign the same scores to common targets, while inter-rater reliability (IRR) indicates the extent to which raters provide consistency in relative judgments. For example, if one rater provides ratings that are exactly 2 points higher than another rater, measures of inter-rater reliability will be high, while inter-rater agreement will be lower. For the expert panel review of REL products, IRA was identified as more conceptually appropriate for assessing the extent to which raters provided similar ratings.

There are a wide variety of methods for assessing IRA and IRR, including measures such as Cohen’s kappa and various intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC). However, these measures were less than optimal for purposes of the current study. For example, Cohen’s kappa is a classic measure of agreement, but requires additional modifications (e.g., weighting schemes) to handle ranked data and is primarily designed around assessing agreement dyadically—e.g., between pairs of individual raters on individual items. The various ICC coefficients (c.f., Shrout and Fleiss, 1979) are widely used to assess the consistency of ratings, but provide measures based on both IRA and IRR, rather than IRA alone (LeBreton and Senter, 2008), do not provide a measure of agreement for individual products, and are based on mean dimension-level ratings, rather than item-level responses.

For the expert panel review of REL proposals and IES-published reports, IRA was indexed using the $R_{wg(j)}$ measure (James, Demaree, and Wolf, 1984). This measure is widely used in the psychometric, management, and psychology literatures; is applicable to multi-item ordinal response scales; and provides a measure of IRA for each proposal and final report being rated (as opposed to a single measure of IRA for the entire study) based on a definite number of raters. $R_{wg(j)}$ is given by the following formula:

$$R_{wg(j)} = \frac{J \left(1 - \frac{\overline{S_{x_j}^2}}{\sigma_E^2} \right)}{J \left(1 - \frac{\overline{S_{x_j}^2}}{\sigma_E^2} \right) + \frac{\overline{S_{x_j}^2}}{\sigma_E^2}}$$

where J = the number of items in the rating scale, $\overline{s_x^2}$ is the mean of the observed variances for the J observed items, and σ_E^2 is the expected variance when there is a complete lack of agreement among raters (e.g., where raters respond randomly to items). For the expert panel review of REL proposals and IES-published reports, $\sigma_E^2 = 2$, based on the expected variance of a uniform response distribution for a 5-item response scale. $R_{wg(j)}$ ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating a complete lack of agreement and 1 indicating perfect agreement.

The analysis was conducted using the `rwg.j` function from the multilevel package in R version 2.10.1 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing 2010); codes are also provided for SPSS in LeBreton and Senter (2008). Because the $R_{wg(j)}$ formula expects numeric ratings, “NA” ratings were treated as missing data for purposes of the $R_{wg(j)}$ analysis.¹ Missing data are known to have an effect on $R_{wg(j)}$ estimates (Newman and Sin 2009), such that responses missing not at random (MNAR) tend to produce overestimates of $R_{wg(j)}$, with the level of bias dependent on the level of missingness in the data and the magnitude of the relationship between missingness and the variable of interest.

As with many metrics of IRA, what constitutes a “high” or “low” level of agreement will ultimately depend on the purposes of the ratings, but a review by LeBreton and Senter (2008) suggested the following interpretations of $R_{wg(j)}$: ranges from 0.00 to 0.30 represent a lack of agreement; 0.31 to 0.50 represents weak agreement; 0.51 to 0.70 is moderate agreement; 0.71 to 0.90 is strong agreement; and 0.91 to 1.00 is very strong agreement. In order to identify products for further reconciliation and re-review by raters, products were selected for reconciliation if they had an $R_{wg(j)}$ of 0.30 or less on either quality or relevance (the two dimensions).

In addition, for each product thus identified, raters were provided with a list of specific indicators for which the greatest level of disagreement existed, defined by the inter-rater variance for specific indicators. These were identified by selecting indicators for which ratings had a variance of two or more; this threshold was selected based on the expected variance of a uniform distribution of an ordinal scale with five response categories, such that indicators with variances less than two tended to have greater levels of agreement than might be expected based on chance responding. However, note that this threshold does not represent a statistical test of inter-rater agreement; rather, it was a heuristic designed to help raters quickly identify and resolve the largest discrepancies in their ratings in the limited time available.

¹ The base `rwg.j` function provided by the multilevel package had to be modified slightly to handle missing data; this is due to the default behavior of certain R functions for the mean and variance, rather than due to issues with the algorithm implemented by the `rwg.j` function or the $R_{wg(j)}$ formula itself.

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Appendix C

Distribution of Indicator-Level Expert Panelist Ratings

Table C-1. Distribution of indicator-level expert panelist ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) for REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports on quality and relevance

Quality rating	Percent of Impact study proposals (%)	Percent of IES-published Impact study reports (%)
Very weak	2.0	0.3
Weak	13.1	4.4
Adequate	29.3	21.1
Strong	35.0	33.1
Very strong	20.5	41.1
Relevance rating		
Not relevant	0.6	0.0
Marginally relevant	9.7	0.7
Adequate	33.3	24.3
Relevant	41.2	43.1
Highly relevant	15.2	31.9

NOTE: Proposals were submitted by the RELs between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011; reports were published by IES between November 2009 and April 2011. The distributions for proposal quality and relevance were based on 297 and 165 indicator-level ratings, respectively. The distributions for report quality and relevance were based on 360 and 144 indicator-level ratings, respectively. Differences are largely attributed to the number of indicators in each dimension. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports prepared under the 2006-2011 REL contracts and published by IES by September 1, 2011); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals for impact studies under the 2006-2011 REL contracts submitted by September 1, 2011) (Appendix A).

Table C-2. Distribution of indicator-level expert panelist ratings (on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest) for REL impact study proposals and IES-published reports on quality and relevance, by REL

Impact study proposals	AP	CE	MA	MW	NE & I	NW	PA	SE	SW	W
Quality rating										
Very weak	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7
Weak	14.8	7.4	0.0	25.9	14.8	18.5	40.7	3.7	0.0	9.3
Adequate	29.6	18.5	18.5	25.9	22.2	63.0	33.3	25.9	29.6	27.8
Strong	40.7	44.4	40.7	37.0	48.1	18.5	11.1	40.7	37.0	33.3
Very strong	14.8	29.6	40.7	0.0	14.8	0.0	11.1	29.6	33.3	25.9
Relevance rating										
Not relevant	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marginally relevant	26.7	6.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	20.0	26.7	0.0	0.0	6.7
Adequate	46.7	40.0	26.7	60.0	46.7	26.7	33.3	6.7	13.3	26.7
Relevant	20.0	26.7	53.3	33.3	46.7	40.0	26.7	35.6	66.7	40.0
Highly relevant	0.0	26.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	13.3	13.3	57.8	20.0	26.7
IES-published reports										
Quality rating										
Very weak	—	0.0	2.2	—	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	0.0
Weak	—	6.7	0.0	—	0.0	15.6	—	0.0	0.0	6.7
Adequate	—	15.6	8.9	—	22.2	26.7	—	20.0	42.2	23.3
Strong	—	37.8	31.1	—	37.8	35.6	—	60.0	28.9	28.9
Very strong	—	40.0	57.8	—	40.0	22.2	—	20.0	28.9	41.1
Relevance rating										
Not relevant	—	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	0.0
Marginally relevant	—	5.6	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adequate	—	38.9	5.6	—	38.9	44.4	—	5.6	27.8	16.7
Relevant	—	33.3	50.0	—	55.6	44.4	—	33.3	44.4	41.7
Highly relevant	—	22.2	44.4	—	5.6	11.1	—	61.1	27.8	41.7

—Not applicable

NOTE: Proposals were submitted by the RELs between March 1, 2006, and September 1, 2011; reports were published by IES between November 2009 and April 2011. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for reports prepared under the 2006-2011 REL contracts and published by IES by September 1, 2011); Rubric and Scoring Form for the Quality and Relevance of Regional Educational Laboratories' Impact Study Projects (for proposals for impact studies under the 2006-2011 REL contracts submitted by September 1, 2011) (Appendix A).

Appendix D

Summary of Impact Studies Reviewed

Review of the Report “Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: The Impact on Elementary School Mathematics in the Central Region”

Citation: Randel, B., Beesley, A.D., Apthorp, H., Clark, T.F., Wang, X., Cicchinelli, L.F., & Williams, J.M. (2011). *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: The impact on elementary school mathematics in the Central Region*. (NCEE 2011-4005). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study used a random assignment design to investigate the impact of *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (CASL)* on elementary students’ mathematics achievement.

A total of 67 schools across 32 Colorado school districts were randomly assigned to either an intervention condition that used *CASL* or a comparison condition that did not use *CASL*. The study analyzed data from 2,860 students in 33 schools with *CASL* and 3,379 students in 34 comparison schools without *CASL*. Fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in the intervention schools studied the *CASL* materials and applied *CASL* principles, practices, and tools in their classrooms during the training year. The intervention teachers then implemented the *CASL* program in their classrooms for one full school year. Teachers in the comparison group took part in their regular professional development activities.

The study assessed the effectiveness of the *CASL* program by comparing mathematics achievement of students in the *CASL* and comparison groups in the spring of the implementation year.

Features of *CASL*

CASL is a professional development program on classroom and formative assessment published by the Assessment Training Institute of Pearson Education. The *CASL* program includes a textbook, DVDs, ancillary books, and an implementation handbook, all of which are used to train teachers to conduct classroom assessments that are appropriate for and aligned with their learning targets.

CASL is typically implemented via teacher learning teams, in which teachers meet regularly to discuss and reflect on the content of the textbooks and DVDs and to share their experiences applying the program in their classrooms. Part of *CASL*'s approach is to increase student involvement in all aspects of assessment.

This study hypothesized that use of *CASL* would increase teachers' knowledge and quality of classroom assessment practices, which in turn would lead to improved student motivation and math achievement.

What did the study find?

The study found no effects of *CASL* on the mathematics achievement of fourth- and fifth-grade students. The estimated effect size of 0.01 is neither statistically significant nor substantively important.

Review of the Report “A Multisite Cluster Randomized Trial of the Effects of CompassLearning Odyssey® Math on the Math Achievement of Selected Grade 4 Students in the Mid-Atlantic Region”

Citation: Wijekumar, K., Hitchcock, J., Turner, H., Lei, P.W., & Peck, K. (2009). *A multisite cluster randomized trial of the effects of CompassLearning Odyssey® Math on the math achievement of selected grade 4 students in the Mid-Atlantic Region* (NCEE 2009-4068). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study examined whether exposure to *Odyssey® Math*, a web-based mathematics curriculum and assessment tool, improved mathematics achievement of fourth-grade students. The study analyzed data from 2,456 fourth-grade students in 122 classrooms in 32 elementary schools in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

The study randomly assigned all fourth-grade classrooms in 32 elementary schools to intervention or comparison conditions. Intervention classrooms used *Odyssey® Math* for 60 minutes each week

during the entire school year as a partial substitute for the regular curriculum; comparison classrooms used their school’s standard mathematics curriculum for the total math instructional time.

The study assessed the effectiveness of *Odyssey® Math* by comparing the mathematics achievement of students in the intervention and comparison groups in the spring of the implementation year.

Features of Odyssey® Math

Odyssey® Math, published by CompassLearning, is a web-based K–8 mathematics curriculum and assessment tool designed to enable teachers to differentiate student instruction and make data-driven decisions. *Odyssey® Math* can be used as a standalone curriculum or as a partial substitute to other mathematics curricula.

Each *Odyssey® Math* module contains learning activities for students that include narrative descriptions of how to solve problems, practice tasks, quizzes, and feedback. Modules also contain math tools and assessments. Specific learning activities and difficulty levels can be selected by the software or teacher.

What did the study find?

The study found no discernible effects of *Odyssey® Math* on mathematics achievement in the spring of the implementation year. The estimated effect size of 0.02 is not statistically significant or substantively important.

Review of the Report “Impact of the Thinking Reader® Software Program on Grade 6 Reading Vocabulary, Comprehension, Strategies, and Motivation”

Citation: Drummond, K., Chinen, M., Duncan, T.G., Miller, H.R., Fryer, L., Zmach, C., & Culp, K. (2011). *Impact of the Thinking Reader® software program on grade 6 reading vocabulary, comprehension, strategies, and motivation* (NCEE 2010-4035). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study of *Thinking Reader*® is a multisite cluster randomized controlled trial. Ninety-two reading/English language arts teachers from 32 elementary and middle schools were randomly assigned within their schools to either the *Thinking Reader*® condition or the comparison condition. The analysis sample consisted of 90 classes and 2,147 grade 6 students, with 1,156 students in the *Thinking Reader*® condition and 991 students in the comparison condition.

Teachers in the *Thinking Reader*® condition supplemented their regular English language arts or reading instruction with one to three preselected *Thinking Reader*® novels that students were asked to read within the *Thinking Reader*® software program. Students in comparison group classrooms participated in the schools' regular curriculum.

The study assessed the effectiveness of *Thinking Reader*® by comparing the reading comprehension of students in the *Thinking Reader*® and comparison conditions at the end of the school year.

Features of Thinking Reader®

Thinking Reader® is a software program that aims to motivate middle school students to read and to make self-directed use of seven target comprehension strategies: (a) summarizing, (b) clarifying, (c) visualizing, (d) reflecting, (e) questioning, (f) predicting, and (g) feeling. Students listen to a novel while following highlighted text on a computer screen and then respond to questions about the story. The program applies reciprocal teaching methods through the use of animated coaches and peers to enhance comprehension strategies.

The *Thinking Reader*® instructional routine consists of three phases. In the first phase, teachers introduce students to the program through activities such as modeling a strategy. During the second phase, the teachers observe and review students' progress while students read a novel on the computer. For the third phase, teachers and students interact offline: they discuss the book, and then students complete an activity to demonstrate understanding. The program has five levels of interactive instructional support and allows students to progress to lower levels of support where they can independently select comprehension strategies.

1What did the study find?

The study found no statistically significant differences on the comprehension outcomes of students in the *Thinking Reader*® classes, compared with students in the comparison classes.

Review of the Report “An Experimental Study of the Project CRISS Reading Program on Grade 9 Reading Achievement in Rural High Schools”

Citation: Kushman, J., Hanita, M., and Raphael, J. (2011). *An experimental study of the Project CRISS reading program on grade 9 reading achievement in rural high schools*. (NCEE 2010-4007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study examined the effectiveness of a teacher professional development called *Project CRISS (Creating Independence Through Student-owned Strategies)* on grade 9 student reading achievement.

Smaller rural and town high schools from six western states that enrolled 250-1,000 students were targeted. Fifty-two schools were randomly assigned to a treatment condition and control condition. Schools were blocked by cohort, state, and poverty index.

Treatment impact was assessed using the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (4th ed) Comprehension subtest.

Features of *Project CRISS*

Through *Project CRISS*, high school teachers learn how to apply research-based learning principles and reading/writing strategies in all major subject or content areas using materials, training, and follow-up support provided by the developer.

Over two school years in 2007-09, the treatment consisted of 24 hours of formal teacher training plus an additional 4-5 days of onsite consultation and assistance by a certified trainer. Additionally, a school teacher was selected to serve as a local facilitator.

What did the study find?

The study did not find any statistical significant difference in student reading comprehension test scores between treatment and control conditions.

Review of the Report “The Effectiveness of a Program to Accelerate Vocabulary Development in Kindergarten”

Citation: Goodson, B., Wolf, A., Bell, S., Turner, H., & Finney, P.B. (2010). *The effectiveness of a program to accelerate vocabulary development in kindergarten (VOCAB)*. (NCEE 2010-4014). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study examined whether exposure to *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success*, a vocabulary instruction program, improved the expressive vocabulary of kindergartners.

The study analyzed data for nearly 1,300 kindergarten students in 64 schools serving predominantly rural and high-poverty youth in the Mississippi Delta region and surrounding areas.

Eligible schools were placed into three blocks based on previous participation in reading initiatives and then randomly assigned within blocks to either supplement their language arts curriculum with the *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* program or not. Prior to random assignment of schools, two kindergarten classrooms were randomly selected from each school for participation in the study; a random sample of 10 students was then drawn from each classroom. The study followed this sample of students in each school.

The study assessed the *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* program’s effectiveness by comparing the expressive vocabulary and listening comprehension of students in the treatment and comparison groups at the end of the school year.

Features of the Kindergarten PAVEd for Success Program

The *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* program is a 24-week in-class supplement to a school’s core language arts program. It is built around three components:

1. *Explicit Vocabulary Instruction* on a large set of target words aligned with themes in Mississippi’s science and social studies frameworks;
2. *Interactive Book Reading*, which involves teachers asking questions that promote comprehension and oral language skills during story-reading time; and
3. *Adult-Child Conversations*, in which teachers have frequent conversations with individual or small groups of students to introduce or use new vocabulary.

What did the study find?

Kindergarten students in schools using *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* as a supplement to regular literacy instruction performed better than kindergarten students in comparison schools. The average effect size of 0.12 in the reading comprehension domain was statistically significant.

The authors reported that students who received *Kindergarten PAVEd for Success* instruction were 1 month ahead in vocabulary development at the end of kindergarten, compared with students in the comparison group.

Review of the Report “The Impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the Reading Comprehension of Grade 5 Students in Linguistically Diverse Schools”

Citation: Hitchcock, J., Dimino, J., Kurki, A., Wilkins, C., & Gersten, R. (2010). *The impact of collaborative strategic reading on the reading comprehension of grade 5 students in linguistically diverse schools*. (NCEE 2011-4001). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study examined the effect of *Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)* on students’ reading comprehension.

Study participants included 74 classrooms (37 *CSR*, 37 control) across 26 schools and 5 large urban and suburban districts with a total of 1,355 students in Oklahoma and Texas districts that serve a large number of ELL students (25 percent or more). Within each participating school, grade 5 social studies classrooms were randomly assigned to either condition.

Reading comprehension score on the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) was used as the outcome measure.

Features of the intervention

CSR is a set of instructional strategies designed to improve the reading comprehension of students with diverse abilities. Teachers implement *CSR* at the classroom level using scaffolded instruction to guide students in the independent use of four comprehension strategies; students apply the strategies to informational text while working in small cooperative learning groups.

The implementation period was 1 school year. The developer provided an initial 2-day training to teachers. Training was provided to coaches who offered four follow-up coaching sessions to teachers throughout the year. About 79 percent of teachers reported using *CSR* two or more times a week as instructed. However, classroom observation found that only 22 percent were using all five core teacher strategies defined as full procedural fidelity.

1What did the study find?

The study did not find any impact from *CSR* on student reading comprehension.

Review of the Report “Effects of Problem Based Economics on High School Economics Instruction”

Citation: Finkelstein, N., Hanson, T., Huang, C.-W., Hirschman, B., & Huang, M. (2010). *Effects of Problem Based Economics on high school economics instruction*. (NCEE 2010-4002). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study included 128 high school economics teachers from 106 schools in Arizona and California, half of whom were randomly assigned to the *Problem Based Economics Instruction* condition and half of whom were randomly assigned to the comparison condition. High levels of teacher attrition occurred after randomization and before implementation. The analysis sample included 64 teachers, with 35 in the treatment condition and 29 in the comparison condition. Student attrition was low, and the student analytic sample was shown to be equivalent in economic literacy at baseline.

Intervention teachers used *Problem Based Economics Instruction* materials as a major portion of their curriculum content and instructional program during the 2007–08 academic year, whereas comparison teachers used their schools’ standard instructional materials.

The study assessed the effectiveness of *Problem Based Economics Instruction* by comparing the economics knowledge of students in the treatment and comparison groups at the end of their implementation semester.

Features of Problem Based Economics Instruction

Building on the more general techniques of problem-based learning, the *Problem Based Economics Instruction* curriculum was designed by the Buck Institute for Education, with input from university economists and expert teachers. The intervention is intended to help students actively learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills using real-world examples.

Each economics unit took place over 4 to 15 instructional days. Teachers were asked to provide core course content and use a set of strategies to help students contextualize, comprehend, and solve real economic problems; work in a group; communicate effectively using multiple methods and technologies; gather information and analyze data; understand interrelationships across economics systems; and make inferences.

The curriculum was designed to include nine modules. Five of the nine available modules were selected for use in this study and were provided to the intervention group teachers; these modules were chosen because they included fundamental components of the curriculum standards in Arizona and California.

What did the study find?

The study found no statistically significant difference on the economics knowledge of students in grades 11 and 12 in the classes that used *Problem Based Economics Instruction*, relative to students in the comparison classes. However, the effect size of 0.29 for the economics knowledge domain was positive and large enough to be considered substantively important according to WWC criteria (that is, at least 0.25 standard deviations).

Review of the Report “Accommodations for English Language Learner Students: The Effect of Linguistic Modification of Math Test Item Sets”

Citation: Sato, E., Rabinowitz, S., Gallagher, C., & Huang, C.-W. (2010). *Accommodations for English language learner students: The effect of linguistic modification of math test item sets*. (NCEE 2009-4079). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

What is this study about?

The study is a randomized controlled trial in which seventh- and eighth-grade students were randomly assigned to complete a set of 25 math questions delivered with either standard language or language that had undergone *linguistic modification* by the research team.

The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of using *linguistic modification* as a way of removing language barriers for English language learners and non-English language learners (EL) struggling with reading.

Nearly 3,000 students from 13 middle schools in five school districts in California were randomly assigned to complete traditional math assessments or math assessments that had undergone *linguistic modification*. Researchers then examined the results for three subgroups of students: Spanish-speaking EL, non-English language learners who were not proficient in English language arts (NEP), and non-English language learners who were proficient in English language arts (EP). Comparisons were made between students who took the modified test and those who took the non-modified test.

Features of Linguistic Modification

The complexity of language used in test items may interfere with students' abilities to demonstrate understanding of content, especially when students are struggling with English. *Linguistic modification* is a test accommodation strategy aimed at removing language barriers. This strategy requires the creation of carefully constructed test items that are accessible to all students, regardless of language background, while still maintaining the integrity of the content being tested. This study focuses on the *linguistic modification* of math content that is typically presented on standardized math achievement tests.

What did the study find?

The study found a positive effect on math scores for students struggling with English who completed the *linguistic modification* item set relative to similar students who did not. The estimated six percentage-point gain on math achievement is statistically significant. The study found neither statistically significant nor substantively important differences for EP students who took the modified test, relative to those who did not.

Appendix E

Sample and Weights for the REL Customer Survey

The RELs serve 56 SEAs, including 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC), Puerto Rico (PR), Virgin Islands (VI), three territories: American Samoa (AS), the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (MP), and Guam (GU). In the REL customer survey, all of these were included in the SEA stratum corresponding with their REL region.

REL Pacific serves one state, Hawaii (HI); three territories, AS, GU, and MP; and also three nations in free association with the United States, the Federated States of Micronesia (FM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (MH), and the Republic of Palau (PW). These three nations have neither state nor local educational agencies. However, since they are served by a REL, any users from these nations were eligible for the survey. The sample design covered the three nations in the SEA stratum for the Pacific region but combined them into one unit, which is referred to as the Pacific Nations. Another unique feature of REL Pacific is that all SEAs served by the REL have only one school district, so the SEAs and LEAs coincide. Therefore, there is no LEA stratum for the Pacific region.

The study team used a two-stage design with LEAs as the primary sampling unit (PSU). The Common Core of Data (CCD) was used as the sampling frame. The CCD is produced annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All LEAs were included in the sampling frame except supervisory union administrative centers, which do not have any local school districts; Department of Defense (DoD) dependents schools located overseas; and agencies without students in prekindergarten (PK) through grade 12. The frame consisted of all other types of LEAs, including LEAs designated as domestic DoD and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

Since they were administrative units with REL users, supervisory unions were included regardless of whether they had students directly assigned to them as long as they supervised other districts that served students. Districts that were not supervisory unions and were serving no students were excluded.

Sample Design for the SEA Strata

The following sampling scheme was used, depending on the SEA size, i.e., number of users (M):

- If $M < 5$, take all;
- If $5 \leq M < 10$, take a simple random sample of 5;
- If $10 \leq M < 15$, take a simple random sample of 7;
- If $M \geq 15$, take a simple random sample of 10.

The sample selected as described above contained 346 users out of 569 in the SEA population. Table E-1 shows the population and sample distribution by SEA.

Table E-1. SEA user frame size, sample size, and sampling rate

REL name	SEA user frame size	SEA user sample size	Overall sampling rate (%)
Pacific	36	17	47.2
Appalachia	45	28	62.2
Central	67	44	65.7
Mid-Atlantic	52	32	61.5
Midwest	79	47	59.5
Northeast and Islands	72	46	63.9
Northwest	54	33	61.1
Southeast	66	40	60.6
Southwest	53	33	62.3
West	45	26	57.8
Total	569	346	60.8

Sample Design for the LEA Strata

For the LEA strata, users were reached using a two-stage cluster sample design, where a sample of LEAs was selected first, then users were selected from within the LEAs. To control the survey cost and enhance the survey efficiency, the study team planned to use a cluster design with a nearly equal probability for selection of users through the Probability-Proportional-to-Size (PPS) sampling method for LEA selection.¹ Since the number of users was not known when the LEAs were selected, the square root of student enrollment was used as the proxy size measure.

¹ The design effect, which is an indicator of sampling efficiency, consists of two main factors: the weighting factor and the clustering factor. A sample with a larger design effect is less efficient. The design effect increases as weights are more variable and/or the average cluster size increases. Therefore, the two goals (controlling the survey cost and

The precision requirement of the survey was set at the REL level, since data were to be analyzed by REL. To determine the sample size to meet the REL-level precision, the following assumptions were made: (1) the target precision was set to be 3 percentage points for a population proportion of 50 percent for a user characteristic—the half length of the 95 percent confidence interval was then 6 percentage points; (2) the expected response rate was 80 percent; and (3) the design effect in the final nonresponse adjusted weights was two.² (4) The average number of users per LEA was seven.

The needed sample sizes derived for each of the nine RELs based on the above assumption were 250 LEAs and 1,750 users from the 250 LEAs. The total sample sizes for the nine RELs were then 2,250 LEAs and 15,750 users.

The study team selected an LEA sample of 2,250 LEAs based on the PPS method using the square root of LEA enrollment as the size measure and compiled lists of users for sampled LEAs. As the user lists were accumulated, it became clear that the number of users per LEA did not vary as much as expected, and the average number of users was smaller than anticipated (the unweighted average size was 4.7 whereas the weighted average was 3.3). In addition, the proxy size measure used for sampling (the square root of enrollment) was inaccurate, which if left untreated could cause large variation in the sampling weights, contrary to the original plan of a nearly self-weighting design (i.e., equal sampling weights). Moreover, it appeared that the target sample size of users would not be reached unless the LEA sample size was substantially increased. To remedy the problem, a simpler sample design was adopted that used a one-stage cluster design instead of two-stage design.

The new design selected LEAs by simple random sampling and selected all users from the sampled LEAs. This design was an equal probability sampling of users. Because work had already begun on development of the user frame, the study team used the Keyfitz procedure (1951) to maximize the overlap between the old sample and the new sample of LEAs.

In designing the sample, the study team originally planned to achieve an 80 percent response rate. To determine whether this was realistic, the data collection procedure was tested with a sample of

increasing the sampling efficiency) are in conflict for a fixed sample size because the survey cost increases as the number of clusters (LEAs) increases (i.e., a larger number of user lists would need to be compiled). In contrast, sampling efficiency increases with the number of clusters in a sample of a given size. The evaluation team sought to choose a sample design that strikes a balance. An equal probability sample helps to enhance the sampling efficiency because it reduces the weighting factor in the design effect.

² This design effect was based on the assumption that seven users per LEA would be selected and that the intra-class correlation was 0.1. The evaluation team also assumed a moderate inflation (25%) in variance due to unequal weights that result from irregularities in sampling and nonresponse adjustment weighting.

1,027 users. The research team found that a 70 percent response rate could be achieved using the planned data collection procedures. Achieving an 80 percent response rate would require extensive follow-up with nonrespondents, more than originally planned. To free up the resources needed to achieve the target response rate without increasing the overall budget, the sample size was reduced. The final sample design was a one-stage cluster design that selected the LEA sample by simple random sampling and all users from selected LEAs without subsampling. The sample size of this final design is shown in Table E-2.

Table E-2. The sample sizes for the revised LEA design by REL

Frame size	New LEA sample size	Estimated average number of users	Expected user sample size
597	116	4.805	556
1,913	213	2.371	505
1,562	164	3.373	554
4,758	211	2.642	556
1,908	174	3.177	553
1,244	186	2.664	496
965	123	4.981	610
2,439	182	3.071	559
2,004	147	4.133	608
17,390	1,516	3.297	4,998

Results of Sample Selection and Data Collection

Using the sample design described in the preceding sections, SEA and LEA samples were selected. The selected samples are summarized in Table E-3.

Table E-3. Selected SEA and LEA sample sizes by REL

REL	State administrator sample size	LEA sample size	District administrator sample size
Pacific	17	NA	NA
Appalachia	28	116	534
Central	44	213	511
Mid-Atlantic	32	164	543
Midwest	47	211	546
Northeast and Islands	46	174	538
Northwest	33	186	474
Southeast	40	123	596
Southwest	33	182	566
West	26	147	526
Total	346	1,516	4,834

When the sample was fielded, positions in 12 LEAs had been eliminated, so the district administrator sample was reduced to 4,641, plus 181 district administrators found to be ineligible for the survey. The state administrator sample was 332, plus 14 state administrators found to be ineligible for the survey.

Weighting

Calculation of sampling weights was done in two steps. The first step was to weight the data by the inverse of the selection probability, and the second was to perform nonresponse adjustment. The resulting weights from these two steps were used to produce point estimates. To facilitate variance estimation, the study team created jackknife replicates and replicate weights. Each of these steps is explained in the sections that follow.

The original selection probability provided the basis for the base weights. For the LEA sample, the base weights were all equal within each REL because LEAs were selected by an equal probability sampling method (i.e., simple random sampling), and there was no subsampling of users. Note that the selection probability of the LEA was the same as the user selection probability and so were their base weights. However, researchers subsequently adjusted the base weights for unit-level nonresponse.

For nonresponse adjustment, weighting cells were created, and nonresponse adjustment was performed independently, cell by cell. The weighting cells were created using variables that are predictive of the response propensity. The study team used three variables to define the weighting cells for the LEA sample within each REL: (1) metro status (1 = Metro and 0 = Non-Metro); (2) type of LEA (regular and non-regular)³; and (3) LEA size class (small, medium, and large)⁴. There were 12 possible cells, but if the number of respondents in a cell was less than 20, it was collapsed

³ The CCD file from which the LEA sampling frame was created provided an LEA type variable with eight different types: 1 = Local school district that is not a component of a supervisory union; 2 = Local school district component of a supervisory union sharing a superintendent and administrative services with other local school districts; 3 = Supervisory union administrative center, or a county superintendent serving the same purpose; 4 = Regional education services agency, or a county superintendent serving the same purpose; 5 = State-operated institution charged, at least in part, with providing elementary and/or secondary instruction or services to a special-needs population; 6 = Federally operated institution charged, at least in part, with providing elementary and/or secondary instruction or services to a special-needs population; 7 = Agencies for which all associated schools are charter schools; 8 = Other education agencies that do not fit into the first seven categories. We defined the first three types (1, 2, and 3) as the regular districts and the remainder as the non-regular districts.

⁴ The size class was defined based on district enrollment. Three equal classes were defined in terms of the number of districts, so the cut-points that defined the size classes varied from REL to REL.

into another cell with a similar response rate. The team also controlled the adjustment factor, which is the ratio of the sum of the base weights of all sample units in a cell to the sum of the base weights of the respondents in the cell. If this factor was greater than 2, the cell was collapsed into another cell so the factor did not exceed the limit. Collapsing of small cells and cells with overly large factors was done to control the variance inflation from the large variability in the adjusted weights. When the necessary collapsing was done, the adjustment factor was recalculated, and the nonresponse adjusted weight was computed as the product of the factor and the base weight. This adjusted weight was used in analysis. For the SEA sample, nonresponse adjustments were made within each REL, treating the whole REL as the weighting cell.

To facilitate variance estimation, 40 replicate weights were developed for the SEA sample, with each user as the primary sampling unit (PSU); 60 replicate weights were developed for the LEA sample, with each LEA as the PSU.⁵ The combined sample has 100 replicate weights. For REL-specific analyses, there are always 60 replicates for the LEA sample since each REL has more than 60 LEAs. However, for most RELs, there are fewer than 40 replicates for the SEA sample.

Nevertheless, the total number of replicates is always greater than 60, which is usually adequate to maintain the stability of the variance estimate.⁶ When the data is analyzed for the SEA stratum for each REL, the number of replicates is 40 or less, but the variance estimate for the SEA stratum is still stable because the finite population correction is small.⁷

To create the replicates, PSUs were first paired randomly to form variance strata within the sample type (SEA and LEA). Then the paired jackknife variance estimator was defined (JK2) (Westat, 2002). Since the finite population correction factors were not negligible, especially for the SEA sample, the factors were developed for variance estimation. If the factors had not been used, the variance would have been over-estimated.

⁵ The jackknife method defines replicates based on the PSU, which is the first-stage sampling unit. The element sampling method used for the SEA sample selects the ultimate sampling units (users in this case) directly, whereas the cluster sampling method selects the first-stage clusters (LEAs in this case) as PSU and then the ultimate sampling units from the selected PSUs.

⁶ The number of replicates determines the degrees of freedom of the variance estimate, which in turn determines the stability of the variance estimate. In this case, they are roughly the same, that is, the number of degrees of freedom is the same as the number of replicates. The larger the number of degrees of freedom, the more stable the variance estimate becomes. A number of degrees of freedom such as 60, is generally considered adequate as the efficiency loss is less than 4 percent (see Korn and Graubard, 1999).

⁷ The finite population correction is one minus the sampling rate. This correction factor is multiplied by the uncorrected variance estimate, and the corrected variance estimate becomes small if the factor is small. The overall finite population correction was 0.43 for all SEA strata.

Appendix F

REL Customer Survey¹

A. YOUR EDUCATION RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

To better meet the needs of education policymakers and practitioners, the National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE), part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences (IES), invites you to participate in this brief survey about the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and your education research and technical assistance needs.

As you answer the survey questions, please focus on the area or areas you are responsible for. We begin by asking about your education research and technical assistance needs.

A1. Please indicate from the topics below your level of need for research and/or technical assistance. If needed, select a response that balances your need for different types of research and technical assistance. (Select one response in each row.)

	High need for research and/or assistance	Moderate need for research and/or assistance	Low or no need for research and/or assistance
a. Achievement Gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Assessment (Formative or Summative)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Behavior, Character Education, or Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. College or Career Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Content Standards, Curriculum or Instruction in:			
e1. Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e2. Reading/Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e3. Other (e.g., Social Studies, Fine Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Dropout Prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Early Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. English Language Learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. High School Reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Longitudinal Data Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Parental Involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Rural Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. School Accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. School Choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ This appendix does not include the screen shots visible to respondents but rather the survey used to program the web survey.

	High need for research and/or assistance	Moderate need for research and/or assistance	Low or no need for research and/or assistance
q. School Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Students with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. Supplemental Education Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Support for Low Achieving Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. Teacher/Staff Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Using Data for Decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
w. Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A2. To what extent do you rely on each of the following sources for education research or technical assistance? (Select one response in each row.)

Sources	Rely on source to a great extent	Rely on source to a moderate extent	Rely on source to a small extent	Do not rely on source at all
a. The REL program nationwide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. <i>If marked 1, 2, or 3 for (a) ask about: [REL Appalachia, CNA; McREL, etc.]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Comprehensive Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Other federally funded technical assistance providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other products or resources from ED including websites such as Doing What Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Professional associations (e.g., ASCD, Council of Chief State School Officers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Colleges and universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Consulting firms or private contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Your counterparts at other LEAs or SEAs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. A technical assistance center supported by your state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Education journals and publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A3. How easy is it for you to access education research and/or technical assistance when you need it?

MARK ONE ANSWER

- Very easy
- Moderately easy
- Not at all easy

A4. Overall, how well do your sources for education research and/or technical assistance meet your needs. Would you say ...

MARK ONE ANSWER

- Very well
- Moderately well
- Not well

The REL program consists of a network of laboratories that serve the educational needs of a designated region by providing access to research and technical assistance activities.

We would like to find out about your experience with the REL program nationwide, including [NAME OF REGIONAL REL – ORGANIZATION, such as REL Appalachia at CNA].

B1. How familiar are you with the REL program overall (e.g., Ask A REL, reports produced by the RELs, conferences or Bridge Events held by the RELs)?

MARK ONE ANSWER

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- A little familiar
- Not familiar at all → SKIP TO END

B2. Other than reports, which services provided by [NAME OF REGIONAL REL - ORGANIZATION] have you used in the past 12 months?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY, THEN, IF ANY ARE MARKED, SKIP TO B4

- A live or virtual event (e.g., Bridge Event, Webinar)
- Technical assistance
- Responses to data or research requests via email or phone (e.g. Ask A REL)
- Information on the REL's website
- Some other service (Please specify) _____

I haven't used any services provided by the REL in my region in the past 12 months

I don't know if services I used in the past 12 months were provided by the REL in my region. →
SKIP TO B5

B3. Why haven't you used the services provided by [NAME OF REGIONAL REL - ORGANIZATION] in the past 12 months?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY, THEN SKIP TO B5

- I had no need for the REL's resources in the past 12 months.
- My needs were met elsewhere.
- The REL in my region does not have a good reputation.
- There is not a good match between my current needs and the REL's resources.
- I didn't know what services were available through the REL.
- Some other reason(Please specify) _____

B4. What type of contact did you have with [NAME OF REGIONAL REL - ORGANIZATION]?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- I contacted a reference desk for help or used the Ask A REL link on the web site.
- I attended a REL sponsored conference, training, or workshop
- A REL representative was present at a meeting or workshop I attended.
- My organization and/or I contacted the REL for research or other assistance.
- I forwarded a request that came to me or my organization to the REL.
- Some other means (*Please specify*) _____

B5. Have you ever read any reports produced by one of the RELs nationwide, including [NAME OF REGIONAL REL - ORGANIZATION]?

- Yes
- No → If responded No to B5 and checked response 6 for B2 SKIP TO END
- Don't know → If responded Don't know to B5 and checked response 6 for B2 SKIP TO END

B6. In the last 12 months, how well did the REL program nationwide, including [NAME OF REGIONAL REL – ORGANIZATION] meet your education research and technical assistance needs? If needed, select a response that balances your need for different types of research and technical assistance. (Select one response in each row.)

[WEB INSTRUCTIONS: FOR EACH TOPIC AREA MARKED 1 OR 2 IN A1, ASK:]

The REL met my research and technical assistance needs...	Very well	Moderately well	Not at all well	Did not receive assistance from the REL
a. Achievement Gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Assessment (Formative or Summative)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Behavior, Character Education, or Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. College or Career Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Content Standards, Curriculum or Instruction in:				
e1. Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e2. Reading/Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e3. Other (e.g., Social Studies, Fine Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Dropout Prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Early Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. English Language Learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. High School Reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Longitudinal Data Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Parental Involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Rural Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. School Accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The REL met my research and technical assistance needs...	Very well	Moderately well	Not at all well	Did not receive assistance from the REL
p. School Choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. School Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Students with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. Supplemental Education Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Teacher/Staff Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. Support for Low Achieving Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Using Data for Decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
w. Other <i>(Please specify)</i> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B7. Please consider all your experiences in the past 12 months with the REL program nationwide, including [NAME OF REGIONAL REL – ORGANIZATION] (i.e., any reports from the RELs that you have read, conferences or Bridge Events that you have attended, and other services you or your organization received from the RELs). The work of the RELs... (Select one response in each row.)

	To a high degree	To a moderate degree	To a low degree	Not able to judge
a. Addressed an important need or problem that you or your organization face	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Addressed a topic in a timely manner for you or your organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Contributed new information on the topic being addressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Provided information that could be used to inform decisions about policies, programs, or practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Was convenient to access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Was presented in a way that was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Was presented in a way that was easy to use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Provided information that you or your organization will use again	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B8. Overall, how satisfied were you with the work of the REL program nationwide including [NAME OF REGIONAL REL – ORGANIZATION] ?

MARK ONE ANSWER

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not at all satisfied *[If not at all satisfied, a pop-up text box will appear with the question "Please explain briefly why you are not satisfied with the RELs."]*

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix G

Technical Working Group Members

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