



Supplemental educational services and implementation challenges in the Northwest Region states



Institute of Education Sciences
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Summary

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Prepared by

Steffen Saifer, Ed.D.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

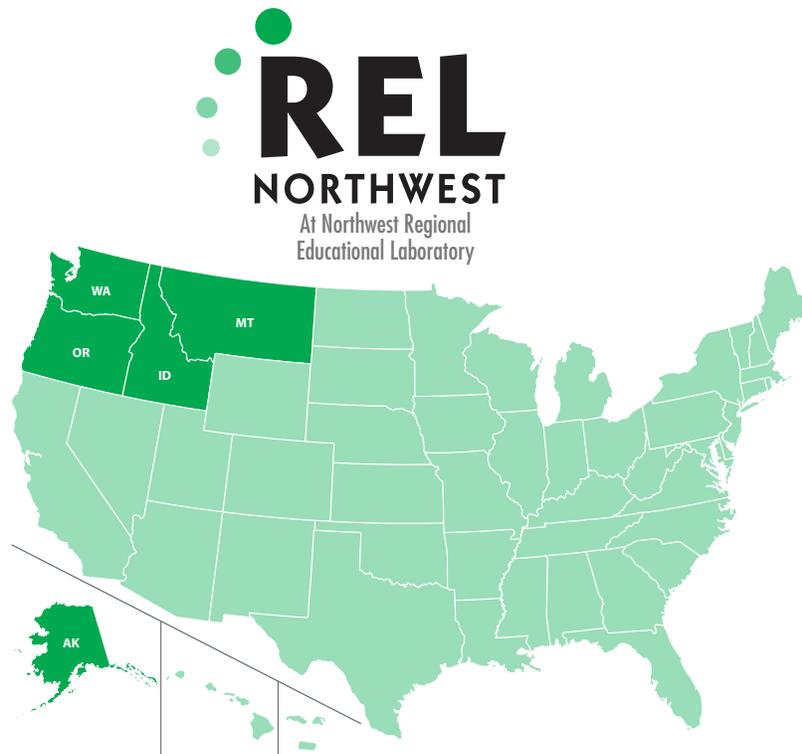
Timothy Speth

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory



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Summary

Supplemental educational services and implementation challenges in the Northwest Region states

Participation in supplemental educational services in the Northwest Region is about one-third the national rate. Among the challenges to improving services for all eligible children are recruiting, monitoring, and evaluating service providers; communicating effectively at all levels, from parents to the state; and weak data systems, with data both difficult to access and often conflicting.

This report describes the initial efforts and current status of implementing supplemental educational services (SES) in the Northwest Region states, identifies information gaps and areas of further inquiry, and delineates concerns and challenges for the states. It is an exploratory effort to identify issues for deeper examination in follow-up work that will include direct inquiry in districts, schools, and providers. Specifically, it seeks to answer two questions about supplemental educational services, which are tutoring services available to students in Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress against established targets for three consecutive years:

- What are the supplemental educational services usage rates in the Northwest Region states, and how do those rates compare with usage rates nationally and regionally?

- What are some of the challenges for state education agencies in providing supplemental educational services with respect to participation, access to providers, monitoring and evaluation, and communication?

Of the Northwest Region states Oregon had the highest SES usage rate and Montana the lowest in 2004/05, the year for which the most complete and accurate data were available. All states except Oregon were below the regional and national averages. The regional usage rate is about one-third the national rate. While the SES participation rate increased nationally from 12 percent in 2003/04 to 19 percent in 2004/05, it increased from 4.3 percent to 6.5 percent in the Northwest Region, which left the region further behind the national average.

Each state education agency faces different challenges with supplemental educational services. These challenges are based on differences in the numbers of schools required to offer supplemental services, the numbers of schools in remote or rural areas, the person-hours and resources that state education agencies must devote to the effort, the skills of staff in charge of the effort, the availability of SES providers, the quality of providers, and many more factors. Several state SES coordinators indicated that the cost-benefit ratios of the services are currently unfavorable.

While improvements have been made in providing services, significant common challenges remain for optimizing supplemental educational services for the students in the Northwest Region:

- *Increasing participation rates.* Although usage rates are low throughout the country, they are significantly lower in the Northwest Region because of the rural nature of the region and the lack of resources (personnel and funds) to adequately support and enforce the effort.
- *Adequately evaluating and monitoring SES providers.* Systems for tracking services by school and district are lacking or disorganized. No state in the region has an adequate evaluation system in place. The rigor necessary to evaluate a provider with enough certainty to determine whether to retain or remove it from the approved list requires a level of resources and expertise that no state education agency seems willing or able to provide.
- *Working more effectively with SES providers.* State education agencies struggle with formulating policies and procedures for providers that will meet the needs of schools, students, parents, and providers. Examples include when and how often to allow providers to apply for inclusion on

the approved list and whether to allow providers to offer incentives to entice students and parents to use their services.

- *Improving communication.* Timely communication among states, districts, schools, providers, parents, and students is a great challenge. Often, districts and schools do not get enough advance notice of their failure to make adequate yearly progress under the No Child Left Behind Act and so are unable to notify parents, contract with providers, and set up programs before the school year is well under way. Also needing attention is the flow of information between teachers and providers about curriculum approaches, teaching strategies, and student progress.

A key finding of the investigation is that the state education agency data systems are in great need of improvement. Most state SES coordinators had difficulty getting accurate numbers—whether on schools required to offer supplemental services, on eligible students, or on students served. Often, district-level information differed from state-level information, and data tables on state education agency web sites had conflicting information. This made collecting reliable data on usage rates and providers difficult.

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