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# National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers Program Appendices

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# APPENDIX A: Additional Background of the Evaluation

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This evaluation, which focuses on the capacity-building mission of the Comprehensive Centers, was designed to add to the findings of the previous national evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers Program. That evaluation, completed in 2011, used survey data, structured interviews, and rating scales to analyze the extent to which SEA capacity changed and to assess the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Center services across all state priority areas.<sup>1</sup> The current evaluation analyzed the processes by which Centers may produce SEA capacity change. In addition, by focusing on two priority areas, the current evaluation aimed to provide more nuanced information on the implementation processes and how they may lead to changes in capacity-related outcomes.

## Comprehensive Centers and Their Context

Title II of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (Section 203) authorized the Comprehensive Centers program. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education awarded five-year cooperative agreement grants, later extended to seven years, to 15 Regional Centers and 7 Content Centers under the program. Between 2012 and 2018, the U.S. Department of Education invested nearly \$350 million in the 22 Comprehensive Technical Assistance (TA) Centers. These Centers were charged with delivering TA that builds the capacity of state education agencies (SEAs) to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in improving student outcomes.

The 15 Regional Centers, assigned to regions as depicted on the map below, were required to build SEA capacity in the following federal priority areas, focusing on those that address each state's particular needs:

1. Implementing college and career-ready standards and aligned, high-quality assessments for all students
2. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders
3. Turning around the lowest-performing schools
4. Ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten
5. Building rigorous instructional pathways that support the successful transition of all students from secondary education to college without the need for remediation, and careers
6. Identifying and scaling up innovative approaches to teaching and learning that significantly improve student outcomes
7. Using data-based decision making to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Turnbull, B. J., White, R. N., Sinclair, E., Riley, D. L., & Pistorino, C. (2011, August). *National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers: Final report* (NCEE 2011-4031). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

In 2016, assistance with ESSA implementation was added as a priority area for the Centers' work. Some Regional Centers were authorized to address additional priorities as appropriate for their regions, including Native American Education.

The 15 Regional Centers served states and entities in their regions as follows:

Appalachia Comprehensive Center:

- Kentucky
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- West Virginia

California Comprehensive Center:

- California

Central Regional Comprehensive Center:

- Colorado
- Kansas
- Missouri

Florida and the Islands Comprehensive Center:

- Florida
- Puerto Rico
- Virgin Islands

Great Lakes Comprehensive Center:

- Indiana
- Michigan
- Ohio

Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center:

- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania

Midwest Comprehensive Center:

- Illinois
- Iowa
- Minnesota
- Wisconsin

North Central Comprehensive Center:

- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Wyoming

Northeast Comprehensive Center:

- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Rhode Island
- Vermont

Northwest Comprehensive Center:

- Alaska
- Idaho
- Montana
- Oregon
- Washington

Pacific Comprehensive Center:

- American Samoa
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- Guam
- Hawaii
- Palau

South Central Comprehensive Center:

- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- New Mexico
- Oklahoma

Southeast Regional Center:

- Alabama
- Georgia
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina

Texas Comprehensive Center:

- Texas

West Comprehensive Center:

- Arizona
- Nevada
- Utah

The seven Content Centers were required to deliver TA nationally in one of seven priority areas (the first six above plus one focusing generally on “building state capacity”), using their content expertise to build the capacity of SEAs and Regional Centers in that priority area. The seven Content Centers included:

- Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
- Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
- Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
- Center on Innovations in Learning
- Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
- Center on School Turnaround
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

### SEAs’ Changing Needs for Technical Assistance

Over the past few decades, SEAs have been asked to expand their traditional role of monitoring district and school compliance to include developing standards and accountability systems and improving school performance.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in the 1990s, federal mandates have required the SEAs to take on expanded roles and responsibilities in implementing educational reforms.<sup>3</sup> Accumulating demands and expectations have driven the SEAs’ needs for TA from the Comprehensive Centers and other sources. Below we briefly describe major federal laws and policies that informed SEAs’ needs for TA during the evaluation period.

#### The Structures of SEAs

SEAs vary in their structure and approach to their work. Each agency is led by a chief, who may be called a superintendent, secretary, director, or commissioner of education or public instruction. In some states, governors appoint the chief, while in others the chief state school officer is elected. SEAs are operated under the authority granted by a state’s constitution, state laws and regulations, and federal law. In some states, a state board of education also exercises oversight and shares key responsibilities with the SEA. SEAs’ needs for TA could vary greatly due, in part, to their differing levels of influence on state education policy and differing levels of authority over districts.\* For example, some SEAs administer the teacher evaluation systems in their states, while others have no role or only provide guidance or recommendations.

\*Gottfried, M. A., Stecher, B. M., Hoover, M., & Cross, A. B. (2011). *Federal and state roles and capacity for improving schools*. Retrieved from [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical\\_reports/2011/RAND\\_TR989.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2011/RAND_TR989.pdf). Also see Aspen Institute. (2015). *Roles and responsibilities of the state education agency*. Retrieved from <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/roles-responsibilities-state-education-agency>

<sup>2</sup> Murphy, P., & Hill, P. (2011). *The changing role of states in education: The move from compliance to performance management* (2011 PIE Network Summit Policy Briefs). Retrieved from [http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/PIE\\_Changing\\_Role\\_Oct11.pdf](http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/PIE_Changing_Role_Oct11.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

In the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Congress linked new requirements for state action to states' eligibility for funding.<sup>4</sup> When ESEA was reauthorized in 2001, the President and Congress further strengthened its requirements through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).<sup>5</sup> NCLB required states to adopt grade-level standards, administer state assessments in reading and math, and develop accountability systems. States faced significant implementation challenges with NCLB.<sup>6</sup> As subsequent federal programs as well as modifications to NCLB requirements unfolded, SEAs' roles and responsibilities evolved further, sometimes with implications for their work in the two focal priority areas of this evaluation.

In 2009, the federal government invested \$4.35 billion in the Race to the Top (RTT) initiative, created with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. RTT established a competitive grant program for states committed to implementing a comprehensive set of education reforms. Selection criteria for awarding funds included proposals for improving teacher and principal effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> Through 2011, 19 states were awarded RTT grants for up to four years. In addition, 20 states received RTT Early Learning Challenge Grants to improve and increase access to early learning programs and services. RTT grants required complex planning and implementation, including in the two focal areas of this evaluation (teacher and leader effectiveness; early learning), which may have increased the need for TA among many SEAs.

Between 2011 and 2014, 43 states received ESEA flexibility waivers from the U.S. Department of Education, waiving certain NCLB requirements and penalties.<sup>8</sup> In exchange for the waivers, states submitted plans for adopting and implementing reforms such as college- and career-ready standards and rigorous teacher and leader evaluation systems that include student achievement data. Administration of complex reforms required under these waivers necessitated new types of expertise among some SEAs receiving these waivers.

In July 2014, the Department of Education notified SEAs of the requirement to submit new state educator equity plans in accordance with the requirements of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The plans had to describe how the states will ensure that disadvantaged students have the same level of access to highly qualified teachers as other students. To create the plans, SEAs were required to consult with key stakeholders (LEAs, teachers, principals, administrators, parents, and others), use data to define equity gaps, explain the root causes of the equity gaps, and describe how they intended to address the equity gaps and report on their progress.<sup>9</sup> These federal requirements further fueled SEAs' needs for Centers' TA, as evidenced by the fact that equity plan development and

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OESE/archives/legislation/ESEA/brochure/iasa-bro.html>

<sup>5</sup> No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/1>

<sup>6</sup> Goertz, M. E. (2005). Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act: Challenges for the states. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 80(2), 73–79.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/infographics/nclbwaivers.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/equitable/titleiequityanalysis1031.pdf>

implementation was the most common topic of SEAs' work with Centers in the teacher/leader effectiveness priority area during the evaluation period (see Exhibit D-8).

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, replacing NCLB.<sup>10</sup> Compared to NCLB, ESSA gives SEAs more flexibility to tailor their own education policies. Under ESSA, states were required to develop and submit consolidated state plans in spring or fall 2017. States that previously had NCLB waivers no longer have to include student outcomes in educator evaluation systems. However, states have had to make a number of new decisions about standards, assessments, accountability indicators, plans for low-performing schools and parent involvement.

During the evaluation period SEAs also faced financial and human resources shortages and cutbacks. At a time when ESSA increased SEAs' responsibilities, SEAs in about half of the states were still coping with budget cuts and staff reductions dating back to the 2007–2009 economic recession.<sup>11</sup> Even in states that have since increased education funding levels, more funding has been applied at local levels than at the state level.<sup>12</sup> The result was that SEAs continued to lay off or furlough staff or to leave vacant positions unfilled.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the winding down of RTT grants during the latter part of the evaluation period may have contributed to shifting priorities, SEA staffing reductions in key priority areas, and further strain on resources in some states (Findings related to SEA staff shortages and turnover are explored in the report).

All of these developments since the 1990s that created additional responsibilities for SEAs likely helped to create a greater need for TA more generally. The latest federal policies and programs over the past decade, in particular, probably helped shape SEAs' specific needs for TA during the period of evaluation.

### Technical Assistance Resources Available to SEAs

The National Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center program is one of many federal and non-federal programs that provide TA to SEAs. In contrast to most TA providers, the Comprehensive Centers address a wider range of policy areas and SEA needs. Below are descriptions of several major programs that provided TA to SEAs during the evaluation period and that sometimes collaborated with the Centers:

- The **Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs)** are contracts funded by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct applied research projects and partner with school districts, SEAs, and others to build their capacity to use data and research-based evidence. The ten REL regions overlap with but do not perfectly correspond to the fifteen Comprehensive Center regions. Both RELs and Comprehensive Centers aim to build SEA capacity to improve student achievement, with the RELs focusing specifically

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>

<sup>11</sup> Burnette, D. (2016, March 11). ESSA poses capacity challenges for state education agencies. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/01/20/essa-poses-capacity-challenges-for-state-education.html>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Kober, N., & Rentner, D. S. (2012). *State education agency funding and staffing in the education reform era*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, George Washington University.

on research and analytic capacity and the Centers focusing on designing and implementing education reforms.

- are grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education to Typical activities include TA in the selection of appropriate education programs for students with limited English proficiency or training designed to develop educators' skills in specific areas. For example, the centers disseminate information on successful education practices and the legal requirements related to nondiscrimination in education programs.
- The **Early Learning Challenge Collaborative** is a privately funded initiative that has supported states applying for and receiving Race To the Top Early Learning Challenge Grants, helping them through tailored TA, topical consortia, webinars, and learning community activities.<sup>15</sup>

## Literature on Capacity Building

In the evaluation's initial phase of literature review, document review, and informal meetings with Centers,<sup>16</sup> the research team examined existing concepts of capacity building in order to inform the development of interview protocols and coding. These concepts were the subject of continued examination and further refinement throughout the evaluation.

The research team reviewed literature that described or defined the process and goals of capacity building in public agencies or systems, particularly in education. Some of these documents were suggested to the research team by Center staff during the informal meetings with the Centers. The team also conducted a database search of reports and articles, searching Google Scholar, JSTOR, and EBSCO for publications from 2003 to 2013 that focused on capacity building in education and in public reform.

The following concepts emerged from the literature review and informed the study design:

- *Century's four types of "capacity within systemic educational reform."*<sup>17</sup> Century defines capacity as an entity's "ability to achieve the goals of a reform" and articulated four dimensions of capacity necessary for reform: human, organizational, structural, and material. Human capacity requires people with "intellectual proficiency and will," including knowledge, expertise, understanding, and persistence for carrying out reform.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.buildinitiative.org/AboutUs/MissionHistory.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> Evaluators met with Center staff early in the evaluation period in order to collect documents and request input on the evaluation design.

<sup>17</sup> Century, J. R. (1999, April). Determining capacity within systemic educational reform. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED434162.pdf>

Organizational capacity involves interactions and communication among individuals in the system, forming an organizational culture. Structural capacity includes the elements of the system that exist independently of the individuals in the system, such as policies, practices, and processes, which may or may not be sustainable. Material capacity, which is less amenable to TA than the other dimensions, is made up of the financial and material resources and support available to the reform.

- *Harsh's notions of "stages" of capacity building, culminating in sustainability.*<sup>18</sup> Harsh, a former director of the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, describes capacity building that gradually moves organizations through the stages of exploration, emerging implementation, full implementation, and sustainability. In the final stage, the constituent organization is able to make "pervasive and consistent" use of the newly gained skills and practices and to self-analyze and modify practices when needed.
- *Coburn's requirements for bringing educational reforms to scale.*<sup>19</sup> Coburn emphasizes four requirements for going to scale: "deep change," or changes in beliefs, norms, and principles; "sustained" change, or change that continues over time; "spread" of change; and "ownership" of the reform by all the participants.
- *Studies of SEA capacity in specific policy areas have found widely varying state needs for TA.* Massell et al.,<sup>20</sup> focusing on how SEAs use research in school improvement policy, and McGuinn,<sup>21</sup> looking at SEAs' implementation of new teacher evaluation systems, found that SEAs had widely differing numbers and types of staff, organizational structures and rules, and relationships with external organizations, all of which affected their use of TA.

This literature, along with Centers' documents, was used to identify possible themes in the Centers' approach to capacity building and to develop interview questions and constructs for coding, particularly for the design-focused interviews that took place in 2015.

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<sup>18</sup> Harsh, S. (2010). Gaining perspective on a complex task: A multidimensional approach to capacity building. In S. Harsh, K. Bradley, K. Good, & J. Ross (eds.), *Capacity building technical assistance: Change agent analyses* (pp.1–19). Charlestown, WV: Edvantia, Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center.

<sup>19</sup> Coburn, C. E. (2003). Rethinking scale: Moving beyond numbers to deep and lasting change. *Educational Researcher*, 32(6), 3–12.

<sup>20</sup> Massell, D., Goertz, M. E., & Barnes, C. (n.d.). *State education agencies' acquisition and use of research knowledge in school improvement strategies*. Retrieved from [http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/journal/1421\\_pjemassellgoertzbarnesfinalversion625121.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/journal/1421_pjemassellgoertzbarnesfinalversion625121.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> McGuinn, P. (2012, November). *The state of teacher evaluation reform: State education agency capacity and the implementation of new teacher evaluation systems*. Retrieved from [http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1495\\_mcguinnthestateofevaluation-final.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1495_mcguinnthestateofevaluation-final.pdf)

# APPENDIX B: Evaluation Methods

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The evaluation was designed to combine quantitative data from surveys and activity reports, which collectively provided information on all projects in two focal priority areas, teacher/leader effectiveness and early learning, with extensive qualitative interview data. Interviews allowed close examination of Centers' design process overall as well as the capacity-building process in a subset of projects in the two priority areas.

A focus on two federal priority areas in the implementation and outcomes components of the evaluation enabled the evaluation to limit burden on the Centers while examining Centers' TA in these areas in depth. The two priority areas were selected with input from the evaluation's Technical Working Group and the U.S. Department of Education. The teacher/leader effectiveness area was chosen because it was a particularly high priority for the U.S. Department of Education at the start of the evaluation and because all Centers had multiple projects in this area. The early learning area was chosen because it was a newer or emerging priority area for SEAs, required different TA approaches than the teacher/leader effectiveness area, and potentially offered a contrast to teacher/leader effectiveness in implementation and outcomes.

In addition to participating in survey data collection and activity data collection each year, all Centers participated in interviews addressing questions about the general design of their TA in 2015, and provided documents including theories of action overviews and annual work plans. All Centers also participated in interviews about implementation (in both 2015 and 2016) and outcomes (in 2017) for selected projects in the two focal priority areas. Center staff selected projects for discussion in interviews, and these were not expected to be representative of the universe of projects in the two priority areas.

Similar data from TA recipients were collected. For each of the three survey years, Centers identified the key TA recipients for all projects listed in the activity reports in the two focal priority areas and confirmed by the Centers as active for each survey period. These TA recipients were then surveyed on implementation and outcomes. Analogously, Center staff identified one or two key TA recipients for each of the projects discussed in Center interviews. These TA recipients were then individually interviewed on those projects in each of the three years of data collection.

Survey data and activity data were analyzed through calculation of frequencies or average rating scores; results are presented in tables and charts in this report. Interviews were systematically coded and analyzed using qualitative analysis software. This process allowed examination and illustration of quantitative findings, as well as analysis of new themes that emerged in interviews. Exhibit B-1 lists the data sources used to answer each of the evaluation's research questions. The remainder of this appendix provides additional details on each of these data sources.

### Exhibit B-1. Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Questions	Data Sources
<b>Design</b>	
How did the Centers define capacity building in their theories of action?	Center staff interviews Center documents
How did the Centers assess the needs of their constituents and develop work plans to address those needs?	Center staff interviews Center documents
<b>Implementation</b>	
What strategies did Centers employ to achieve their outcomes?	Center staff interviews TA recipient interviews Center documents Center TA activity reports
To what extent and how did Centers collaborate with each other?	Center staff survey Center staff interviews Center TA activity reports Center documents
What challenges did Centers face and how did they respond?	Center staff survey TA recipient survey Center staff interviews TA recipient interviews
<b>Outcomes</b>	
Did Centers achieve their expected capacity-building outcomes, and how did they know?	Center staff survey TA recipient survey Center staff interviews TA recipient interviews Center documents
What strategies were perceived to be most effective and why?	Center staff survey TA recipient survey Center staff interviews TA recipient interviews

### Center Staff and TA Recipient Surveys

Survey instruments are included in Appendix C.

Web-based surveys of Center staff and TA recipients were administered in spring 2015, 2016, and 2017. The surveys were administered to Center staff and key TA recipients who were involved in projects in the two priority areas over the previous six months. Each year, evaluators worked with Center staff to develop updated lists of relevant projects and people who could report on those projects. All Center staff who worked on projects in the two priority areas were included in the survey sample. To form the TA recipient survey sample, Centers were asked to identify “key” TA recipients: those who were knowledgeable about each project and able to report on the capacity-building outcomes of the Centers’ TA. The guidance letter for Centers on preparing for the surveys is provided below.

The surveys, consisting of both selected-response and open-ended items, included questions about implementation and outcomes. On the Center staff survey, Center staff members were

asked to select the projects on which they had worked and then complete the same set of seven questions for each project they selected. For example, respondents were asked to rate the overall success of each project in building the capacity of its constituents by selecting a response on a four-point scale ranging from “not at all” to “to a great extent.” Respondents had the option of writing in explanations for their ratings. All data from the Center staff survey are at the project level.

In contrast to the Center staff survey, TA recipients completed a single set of questions about all projects in which they had participated. To minimize burden, and because TA recipients might not explicitly distinguish and attribute the support they received from Centers to specific Center projects, TA recipients were asked to provide feedback on Center TA generally, after identifying the projects on which they had received Center TA. Most respondents had received TA on more than one project, and many received TA on both teacher/leader and early learning projects. The questions for TA recipients that provided data for this report included requests for ratings of Centers’ contributions to a number of specific improvements associated with individual, organizational, and policy development or implementation capacity. TA recipients were also asked to write in their responses about the most helpful services they received from Centers. (See detailed definitions of codes applied to write-in survey questions.) All data from the TA recipient survey are at the respondent level.

Selected-response survey items were analyzed by tabulating each response option. Responses to open-ended survey questions were coded by a team of four coders. Responses were coded into existing categories where appropriate; for example, most responses to the request for “other” challenges on both surveys could be recoded into one of the categories of challenges already listed on the survey. To code data that did not fit into existing categories, coders used a multistep process. Coders first read through responses and created categories that captured recurring themes in the data. These categories were turned into codes through an iterative process, by checking and rechecking how common the responses were. The goals were to create codes broad enough to represent respondents’ major concerns and to capture constructs relevant to the research questions. If fewer than 10 responses ultimately fell into a code or category, coders re-examined the need for the code and considered consolidation with other codes. On the Center staff survey, four new categories of challenges were created based on write-in descriptions of “other,” and four categories of project collaborators were created and analyzed. No new categories of challenges were added to the list included on the TA recipient survey.

The Center staff survey achieved a response rate of 79% (190 of 242 eligible staff) in 2015, 83% (194 of 235 eligible staff) in 2016, and 86% (166 of 193 eligible staff) in 2017. The TA recipient survey achieved a response rate of 67% (246 of 369 eligible TA recipients) in 2015, 68% (232 of 343 eligible TA recipients) in 2016; and 68% (235 of 345 eligible TA recipients) in 2017.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Sample Ns reported in exhibits may differ from the total respondent Ns due to item-level non-response.

While Center staff survey data were aggregated to the project level across years, TA recipient survey data (which did not provide data at the project level) were analyzed at the respondent level, separately for each of the three survey years. TA recipient respondents selected from the project list, on average, three projects each per year. Their selections broke down by priority area as follows: projects in teacher/leader effectiveness only, 66% of TA recipients in 2015, 68% in 2016, and 65% in 2017; projects in early learning only, 22% of TA recipients in 2015, 21% in 2016, and 22% in 2017. The remaining respondents (12% in 2015, 11% in 2016, and 13% in 2017) chose projects in both priority areas.

The surveys gathered respondents' views on most projects in the two priority areas each year. Exhibit B-2 presents details on the percentages, out of all projects in the two priority areas implemented by the Centers each year, that were covered by the survey respondents, and also presents the mix of projects in the survey sample by Center type and priority area. Exhibit B-3 presents the distribution of projects that were included in the survey for one, two, or three years. Projects varied in their timing and their duration. In interpreting the survey results, it is helpful to keep in mind that the data include projects with a mix of time periods. About 15% of all projects in the surveys appeared in the surveys for all three years of survey data collection.

**Exhibit B-2. Project Sample in Surveys**

	Projects Covered in Surveys						
	Total Projects on Survey List	Project Selection Rate*	Projects Selected by Respondents	Regional Centers	Content Centers	Teacher/Leader	Early Learning
<b>Center staff survey, 2015</b>	126	98%	123	82	41	95	28
<b>Center staff survey, 2016</b>	166	93%	154	94	60	114	40
<b>Center staff survey, 2017</b>	155	96%	149	98	51	114	35
<b>TA recipient survey, 2015</b>	124	96%	119	79	40	92	27
<b>TA recipient survey, 2016</b>	166	83%	138	82	56	107	31
<b>TA recipient survey, 2017</b>	155	92%	143	93	50	108	35

Source: Center staff and TA recipient surveys, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

\*Project selection rate is the percentage of projects on the list selected by at least one respondent. On the Center staff survey (individual response rate about 80% per year), respondents addressed a set of questions about each project they selected. On the TA recipient survey (response rate about 68% per year), respondents answered one set of questions about all projects they selected. TA recipients selected an average of three projects in each year. In 2015, Center staff could not identify TA recipients for two projects; these projects focused on development of resources that were broadly disseminated online.

### Exhibit B-3. Projects in Survey Data Across Three Years

Number of Years in Which Project Was Included in Survey Data	Total*	Regional Centers	Content Centers	Teacher/Leader	Early Learning
<b>Center Staff Survey</b>	<b>(N = 279)</b>	<b>(N = 171)</b>	<b>(N = 108)</b>	<b>(N = 213)</b>	<b>(N = 66)</b>
1 year	62%	57%	70%	63%	61%
2 years	23%	25%	19%	23%	23%
3 years	15%	18%	11%	15%	17%
<b>TA Recipient Survey</b>	<b>(N = 288)</b>	<b>(N = 176)</b>	<b>(N = 112)</b>	<b>(N = 217)</b>	<b>(N = 71)</b>
1 year	62%	56%	70%	63%	58%
2 years	23%	26%	19%	22%	27%
3 years	15%	18%	11%	15%	15%

Source: Center staff survey and TA recipient survey, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

\*Projects in the activity data (N = 333) have a similar distribution overall: 57% in the data for 1 year, 28% for 2 years, and 15% for 3 years.

#### Guidance Provided to Centers on Preparing for Surveys

In preparation for the Center staff and TA recipient surveys each year, Center directors were provided an initial project list based on their annual work plans and were asked to confirm or correct the list, and to identify Center staff and TA recipients to be surveyed. For example, guidance to the Center directors in spring of 2015 included the following:

*The attached spreadsheet has three tabs: 1) Projects, 2) Center Staff, and 3) TA Recipients.*

*The **Projects** tab contains a list of projects related to the selected priority areas that we identified from your Year 3 work plan. Please either confirm this list as accurate, or update the list by correcting project names or adding/deleting projects. The project names should be those that your staff and TA recipients would recognize.*

*The **Center Staff** tab is formatted for collecting contact information for the online Center staff survey, but does not yet have any data. Please add contact information for all Center staff, sub-contractors and consultants who were involved in the work on any of the projects in the updated/confirmed list. You do not need to include administrative staff working on these projects. In some cases, staff members may work on more than one project in the list. Please include staff members who work on any of the projects on the list, regardless of how many they work on. During the survey, respondents will be able to select the projects they know about from the project list.*

*The **TA Recipients** tab is formatted for collecting contact information for the online TA recipient survey, but does not yet have any data. Please add contact information for all individuals who were key recipients of, or participants in, technical assistance activities related to the projects in the two selected priority areas. These should be people who are the direct or primary participants in TA projects from your Center, and can knowledgeably comment on the TA and how it is being used. The TA recipients identified for our survey should be those who are expected to use the TA to build their own or others' capacity to support local education agencies*

*(LEAs) and schools. Please use the guidance in the box below to determine how to select TA recipients for our survey sample. Some projects may not have key recipients in the way we are defining them. This is perfectly acceptable.*

<b>TA Recipients on the list should include...</b>	<b>But not...</b>
<i>Staff of SEAs, Regional Centers (if you direct a Content Center), or other constituent organizations who could knowledgeably comment on the TA and related outcomes.</i>	<i>People whose involvement is limited to implementing the programs or policies developed by SEAs and Comprehensive Center partners (but who do not have direct knowledge of the Centers).</i>
<i>Constituents who have worked directly with your Center in planning, implementing, or overseeing the selected capacity-building projects and associated activities.</i>	<i>LEA- and school-level staff who participate in needs-sensing events with no specific capacity building follow-on activity or outcomes expected.</i>
<i>Constituents who are expected to build capacity in LEAs and schools after receiving TA from your Center.</i>	<i>LEA- and school-level staff who participate in capacity building activities led by SEA staff, but not by your Center.</i>
<i>Constituents who directly and actively participated in Center-led events or sponsored activities for the selected projects. Active participation includes engaging in work sessions and any follow-up activities.</i>	<i>People whose participation was limited to listening in to webinars or attending occasional training events.</i>
<i>Constituents who received Center consultations or responsive technical assistance over a period of months, working towards a significant product, policy change, or initiative.</i>	<i>People whose only involvement with the Center was a one-time request for information.</i>

*The number of TA recipients identified may vary for each project depending on its size and intended reach. We understand that in some cases, TA recipients may work with you on more than one project in the list. Please include key TA recipients who work with you on any of the projects on the list, regardless of how many they work on. During the survey, respondents will be able to select the projects they know about from the project list.*

*Please let us know if you have questions. We are happy to set up a call with you to review these directions and assist you.*

## **Center Staff and TA Recipient Interviews**

Interview protocols are included in Appendix C.

### **Center Interviews**

Evaluators went on annual site visits to conduct group interviews with Center staff in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Each site visit team consisted of the site liaison (a research expert) and a TA expert. As the site visits were planned, each Center director was given the flexibility to determine which of his or her colleagues (up to five individuals) would be present for each interview.

The focus of interviews differed each year. Design-focused interviews were administered during site visits in 2015. Researchers asked about Center definitions of capacity building, theories of action, and approaches to needs assessment and planning. Respondents included some combination of the following Center staff members: director, deputy directors, evaluators, project leads, content leads, and TA providers. All 22 Centers participated in the 2015 Design-focused interviews.

Implementation interviews were administered during site visits in 2015 and 2016. One or two group implementation interviews were conducted at each Center, depending on whether the Center was currently implementing projects in one or both of the focal priority areas in that given year. In preparation for the visits, the Center directors were asked to select one or two illustrative projects to discuss in each interview; they were also asked to invite up to five relevant staff to participate in each interview. Interview participants included TA managers and content specialists who worked in each priority area. Implementation interview questions focused on the goals, TA strategies, activities, challenges, progress, and early outcomes (when relevant) of the selected projects. The protocol also included several questions about initiatives and trends in the priority area. In both years, group interviews in the area of great teachers/leaders were conducted in all 22 Centers. Some Centers did not implement early learning projects in these years, so interviews were conducted in the 15 Centers with early learning projects in 2015 and in the 14 Centers with early learning projects in 2016.

Outcomes interviews were administered during the 2017 site visits. One or two group outcomes interviews were conducted at each Center, depending on whether the Center implemented projects in one or both of the focal priority areas in 2016. In preparation for the visits, the Center directors were asked to identify one project per priority area that had been discussed in an implementation interview in 2016 (or in both 2015 and 2016). They were also asked to invite up to five relevant staff, including TA leaders for the project and Center evaluators, to participate. Outcomes interview questions focused on the outcomes, outcomes measures, challenges to achieving outcomes, and effective strategies for producing outcomes of the selected projects. The protocol also included several questions about outcomes, challenges, and strategies in the priority area overall. Group interviews on teacher/leader effectiveness projects were conducted in all 22 Centers. Group interviews were conducted in the 14 Centers that had discussed early learning projects in 2016.

### **TA Recipient Interviews**

Design interviews, conducted in 2015, included Center staff only. Implementation interviews, conducted in 2015 and 2016, included both Center staff and TA recipients. Outcomes interviews, conducted in 2017, also included both Center staff and TA recipients. After the Center site visits, interviewers conducted telephone interviews with 1-2 TA recipients for each of the projects discussed during the Center interviews. Centers were asked to identify 1-2 key TA recipients per project at the time of each implementation interview, and 1 key TA recipient per project at the time of each outcomes interview. Evaluators asked the Centers to identify the TA recipients who were most actively involved in the projects, preferably those who had been

involved in initial project development if they were still available, and who were sufficiently knowledgeable to answer in-depth questions. TA recipient implementation interviews addressed questions about project development, goals, strategies, progress, challenges, and early outcomes, with a focus on how the respondents and their organizations experienced the process of working with Centers. TA recipient outcomes interviews addressed questions about the projects' accomplishments and capacity-building outcomes, challenges to achieving outcomes, and Centers' TA strategies that were effective.

In 2015, the study team reached out to a total of 55 TA recipients and completed 50 interviews, for a response rate of 91%. In 2016, the study team conducted interviews with 37 of the 47 TA recipients contacted, for a response rate of 79%. In 2017, the study team reached out to a total of 34 TA recipients and completed 31 interviews, for a response rate of 91%. Centers could not identify a TA recipient for a few projects that were primarily conducted through online posting and dissemination of resources, without active involvement of constituents in planning the project or working directly with the Center. Some TA recipients who had been involved with project development had left the SEAs by 2016 or 2017, or had shifted responsibilities, were less involved in the projects, and were less available for interviews.

### Project Sample for Center and TA Recipient Interviews

The samples of projects covered by the implementation and outcomes interviews are presented in Exhibits B-4 and B-5.

**Exhibit B-4. Projects Discussed in Implementation Interviews**

	Projects in Center Staff Interviews (N = 55)	Projects in TA Recipient Interviews (N = 44)
<b>Center Type</b>		
Regional Center	40	32
Content Center	15	12
<b>Priority Area</b>		
Teacher/leader effectiveness	35	27
Early learning	20	17
<b>Year</b>		
2015	45	39
2016	47	39
Both years	37	34

Source: Center staff and TA recipient interviews, 2015 and 2016.

### Exhibit B-5. Projects Discussed in Outcomes Interviews

	Projects in Center Staff Interviews (N = 36)	Projects in TA Recipient Interviews (N = 31)
<b>Center Type</b>		
<b>Regional Center</b>	25	22
<b>Content Center</b>	11	9
<b>Priority Area</b>		
<b>Teacher/leader effectiveness</b>	22	20
<b>Early learning</b>	14	11

Source: Center staff and TA recipient interviews, 2017.

All projects discussed in outcomes interviews had previously been included in at least one of the implementation interviews.

#### Interview Coding

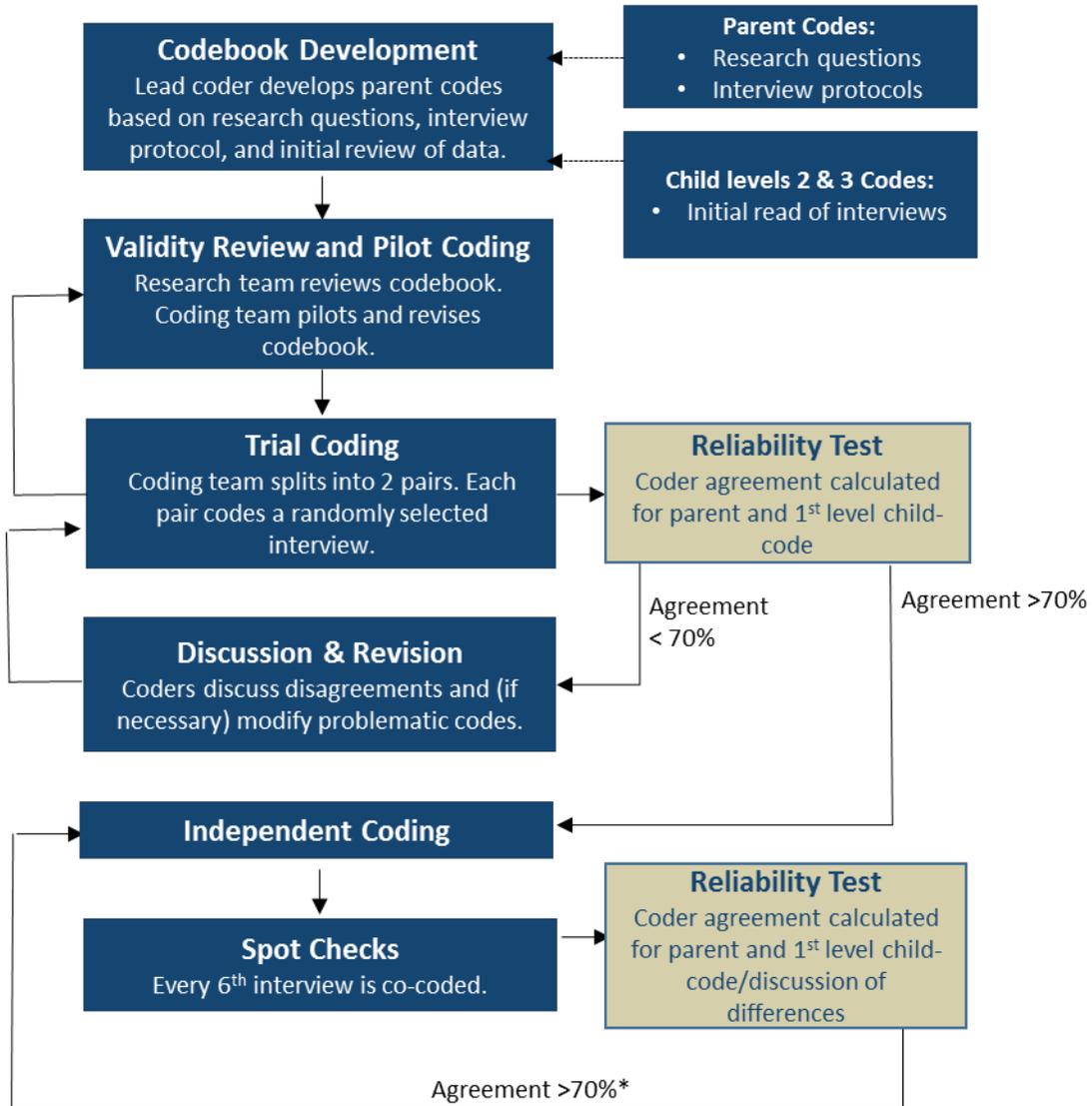
Interviews were coded and analyzed through a process of conceptual modeling, codebook development, piloting, and revision to achieve a minimum intercoder agreement rate of 70%. First, implementation interviews were transcribed from audio files and uploaded to an NVivo qualitative analysis software database for organization and coding. Codebook development and subsequent analyses were subject to these standards:

- **Clarity.** Coding and analysis rules were easy to understand for members of the coding and analysis teams, the larger research team, and outside reviewers.
- **Consistency.** Coding and analysis rules were applied in the same instances and in the same manner across interviews, coders, and the duration of the analysis activity.
- **Transparency.** Coding and analysis rules were well documented and accessible to the coding and analysis teams, the larger research team, and outside reviewers.

The evaluation team developed a first draft of the codes based on the research questions, the initial document review, the interview protocols, and team brainstorming sessions. The codebook was piloted and refined through an iterative process. The coding team established the face validity of each code by discussing the codes with the research team. Definitions for each code were clarified or adjusted based on the experience of pilot coding. (See detailed code definitions applied to interviews in Appendix C.)

Once the codebook was ready, the process of establishing intercoder reliability occurred as shown in Exhibit B-6.

**Exhibit B-6. Codebook Refinement and Intercoder Reliability Testing**



\*All pairs achieved 70% agreement or higher at this stage.

During pilot coding, the team of four researchers coded two interviews as a group. Next, each coder coded two interviews independently, after which the team met to compare coding, discuss discrepancies, and further refine the codebook. Then they split the codes into two groups, assigning each group to a pair of coders. Throughout the coding period, each pair only coded their assigned group of codes. Within each pair, the members independently coded a randomly selected interview. If they achieved a minimum agreement score of 70% for each code, they began independently coding the implementation interviews, using their assigned half of the codebook. Coders used an agreement level template based on previous research and the sensitivity level of kappa scores, particularly in NVivo.<sup>23</sup> If that level of agreement was not

<sup>23</sup> Bazely, P., & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

reached, the full group of four discussed to determine whether additional codebook refinements were necessary. Coders met and refined the process regularly until both pairs achieved the desired agreement level of 70%.

Two processes ensured that reliability was maintained throughout the coding process. First, the full group of coders met weekly to discuss any coding issues or anomalies. Second, after each member of each pair had independently coded five different interviews, the two independently coded one interview to check agreement levels and then met to discuss and resolve any discrepancies. In this process, all coding pairs' comparisons yielded agreement rates of more than 70%. Most were above 80%; for four out of 26 comparisons of interview coding, agreement rates fell below 80% but above 70%.

Interview results were used in the evaluation to interpret survey and activity data results, provide context, and provide specific project examples and illustrative quotes. When relevant, frequencies of specific responses were reported. However, due to the complexity and variety of meanings assigned by respondents to concepts such as “outcomes” and “strategies,” specific frequencies of interview responses reported in these analyses are more suggestive than conclusive. Interview questions were open-ended. Reporting the number or percentage of Centers that described a particular approach does not mean that the other Centers did *not* use this approach—only that staff did not *report* performing it when asked an open-ended question. Findings in this report should be considered with this caveat in mind.

## Activity Reports

Activity reports provided a fine-grained view of Centers' TA projects in the two priority areas. To collect detailed information on the individual TA activities within projects, evaluators designed an activity report template for the Centers to complete. The template included descriptors of projects and of activities nested within the projects. Fields included project goals, project content focus, activity dates, milestones, constituents, and product and activity types. Appendix C provides detail on the coding of activity types.

At six-month intervals beginning in April 2015, evaluators sent activity report requests to the 22 Centers, requesting that Center staff review and update the current set of projects being implemented in the two selected federal priority areas. Additionally, the reports collected information for all activities that occurred within the previous six-month period as part of these projects. Evaluators provided each Center director with an instruction sheet and the activity report template, prefilled with project information from the Center's annual management plan, which was provided by the U.S. Department of Education. After receiving the completed activity reports, evaluators contacted Center directors to confirm and clarify any unclear or incomplete information.

Activity data were collected in six cycles, covering activity from October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2017 (see Exhibit B-7). The evaluation team received activity reports from all Centers. Across the six cycles, data were collected on activities of 333 active, unique projects in

the two priority areas. Sample details are presented in Exhibit B-8. The activity data project sample is larger than the project sample used for Center staff survey analysis (see Exhibit B-8), since survey respondents did not report on all projects, and since the final activity data collection cycle occurred after completion of the final survey administration in 2017.

**Exhibit B-7. Activity Report Collection Schedule**

Cycle #	Activity Report Period	Center Year	Time of Request
1	October 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015	3	April 2015
2	April 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015	3	October 2015
3	October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016	4	April 2016
4	April 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016	4	October 2016
5	October 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017	5	April 2017
6	April 1, 2017 – September 30, 2017	5	September 2017

**Exhibit B-8. Projects in Activity Reports**

Total Projects	Regional Centers	Content Centers	Great Teachers/ Leaders	Early Learning
333	188	145	235	98

*Source: Center activity reports, 2015, 2016, 2017.*

## Center Documents

Information on projects' goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and services was collected from annual management plans (also called work plans) provided to the evaluation team by the U.S. Department of Education. This information was entered in an evaluation database, where it was used to prepopulate activity reports and to link with other project data when needed for analysis. Management plans and project documents, such as project plans, reports, and tools provided by the Centers, were used to prepare for surveys, to prefill project information in activity reports, and to clarify or supplement project information provided in interviews.

The evaluation team reviewed the annual evaluation reports produced by the 22 Centers in late 2016, reporting on the Centers' fourth year. This review focused on identifying Centers' outcomes measures, in order to supplement information on outcomes evidence gathered through interviews.

## **APPENDIX C: Evaluation Instruments and Codebooks**

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## Center Staff Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We are conducting this survey in order to gather information from Comprehensive Centers about the successes and challenges of building constituent capacity and providing technical assistance.

The focus of this survey is on technical assistance in two areas:

1. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders
2. Ensuring school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten.

We are interested in your responses as someone who provides technical assistance to state departments of education or to Regional Comprehensive Centers. However, there may be some questions on the survey that you feel do not apply to you.

The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Information collected for this study falls under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. For the most part, findings from the survey will be reported in aggregate form only and will not be associated with specific individuals or Centers. Quotations from individual respondents may occasionally be presented for illustrative purposes. We will not identify the names of these individual respondents or their Centers, but we may provide the broad respondent category they belong to (e.g., “SEA staff”; “Regional Center”). Because the number of Centers is small and because we will describe specific content and contextual features of the Centers’ work, in some cases it may be possible to indirectly identify some Centers. We will not provide information that directly identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

This survey is voluntary. You can decide not to participate, or you can discontinue participation at any time without consequence. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, but we encourage you to answer as many as you can.

Your responses will be saved as you complete the survey. If you need to come back at a later time, you can continue the survey where you left off.

If you have any questions, please contact Michaela Gulemetova at 202.774.1999 extension 1956 or [NCCEvaluation@impaqint.com](mailto:NCCEvaluation@impaqint.com).

Thank you for your help!

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1850-0914 and the expiration date is 03/31/2018.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this interview is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Amy Johnson at [Amy.Johnson@ed.gov](mailto:Amy.Johnson@ed.gov).

**1. Please select all of the projects that you worked on in any capacity in the last 12 months. (Select all that apply)**

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Project 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Project 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Project 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Project 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*[Note: The following questions are asked for each project clicked "Yes" in question 1.]*

These questions are about your experience working on [the first selected project in question 1].

**2. What is your role on the project? Select all that apply.**

- Project and/or Center leader
- State liaison/state manager
- Consultant
- Content expert
- Data analyst
- Meeting planner or facilitator
- Professional development provider
- Project team member
- Writer/editor
- Online/social media developer
- Quality assurance reviewer
- Advisor/consultant
- Evaluator
- Other

**If you indicated that you have an "Other" role, please describe the role:**

**3. Which of these factors have been the *most significant* challenges in this project? Select up to three.**

[Allow only 3 selections]

- a. Turnover in chief state school officer and/or other SEA leadership
- b. Turnover among state education agency (SEA) staff
- c. Turnover among Center staff
- d. Changing priorities at an SEA
- e. Mismatch between stated SEA needs and Center federal priorities
- f. Difficulty establishing relationships with an SEA
- g. Policy shifts in a state government
- h. Cuts in SEA staffing/budgets
- i. Meeting diverse needs across SEAs (and/or regions)
- j. Lack of communication within an SEA
- k. Lack of Center financial resources
- l. Lack of access to appropriate expertise
- m. Project timeline constraints
- n. Other

**If you indicated an “Other” challenge, please describe the challenge:**

**4. Which of these have been *most significant* in supporting success in this project? Select up to three.**

[Allow only 3 selections]

- a. Content expertise among Center staff
- b. Knowledge of state context among Center staff
- c. Expertise among SEA staff
- d. Supportive leadership in Center
- e. SEA Leadership commitment to the project
- f. Strong relationships between Center staff and SEA leadership
- g. Strong relationships between Center staff and SEA staff
- h. Collaboration with Content Comprehensive Center
- i. Collaboration with Regional Comprehensive Center
- j. Collaboration with a Regional Educational Laboratory
- k. Collaboration with an institution of higher education
- l. Collaboration with a government agency
- m. Collaboration with a professional association (e.g., ASCD, CCSSO)
- n. Collaboration with a subcontractor
- o. Other

If you indicated an "Other" supporting factor, please describe it:

5. Who are your collaborators on this project? (specific Comprehensive Centers, Regional Educational Laboratories, institutions of higher education, etc.)

6. To what extent is this project succeeding (or has succeeded) in building the capacity of your constituents (SEA staff or other participants)?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To some extent
- Not at all

Please explain your response:

*{GO TO next project and ask questions 2-6, until all projects have appeared. Then ask the following question once.}*

7. Of the projects you indicated earlier that you worked on, is there one that would be suitable for a project profile (an in-depth description of a project), in that it is high-leverage (is likely to lead to extensive capacity building) and long-term (longer than one year)? In what ways is it likely to be high-leverage?

## Center Staff Survey Codes for Open-Ended Question

Survey Item	Code	Definition	Example
<b>6. To what extent is this project succeeding (or has succeeded) in building the capacity of your constituents? Please explain your response:</b>			
6	<b>Project progress</b>	TA provided/needs addressed/some examples of capacity change	SEA staff asked for support with tight turn-around and we provided valuable feedback on their planning.
6	<b>Don't know or difficult to measure</b>	Difficult for Center respondent to assess or measure capacity-building (CB) in a formal way; or Center staff respondent says they don't know the extent to which CB was built	Hard to measure impact with this project
6	<b>Implementation challenges</b>	Various challenges have limited the extent to which CB has been built - includes SEA capacity, SEA turnover, other federal/ SEA priorities	Maintaining membership has been a challenge so capacity building is slow; ESSA has taken priority; SEA has limited staff
6	<b>Work still in progress/not widely used yet</b>	project is still in progress; response specifically indicates this; work is intended to be more widely used	The Summit was designed to be a 'kick off' event to launch additional regional meetings and resources over time. Those follow through activities are now under way and continue to build knowledge about professional learning standards
6	<b>Light touch: not meant to extensively build capacity</b>	Center's work was not intended to extensively build SEA capacity; Center just created a product or for various reasons, only conducted limited TA/ CB	These were informational and used as the launch for our materials.
6	<b>Outcome measure/feedback cited</b>	Explanation for rating is based on some sort of feedback or evidence from constituent	This is my best guess based on the feedback I received. The events are well-received but I can only guess at building capacity based on the conversations
6	<b>Variable outcomes</b>	Outcomes varied by state or constituent	This project includes two states and one state has been greatly involved and the second state not as much. Changing priorities, including signing of ESSA, put the project on hold in one state.
6	<b>No explanation</b>	Rating provided, but response/explanation is blank, or vague statements cannot be coded.	
6	<b>No rating</b>	no rating provided	

## Technical Assistance Recipient Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The US Department of Education supports 22 Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers to help increase state education agencies' capacity to assist districts and schools in meeting student achievement goals. As part of an external evaluation of the national Comprehensive Centers program, IMPAQ International is surveying recipients of technical assistance like you about your experience with the program and related capacity-building outcomes. Your responses will help assess outcomes and inform improvement of the Comprehensive Centers program.

The focus of this survey is on technical assistance in two areas:

1. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders
2. Ensuring school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Information collected for this study falls under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. For the most part, findings from the survey will be reported in aggregate form only and will not be associated with specific individuals or Centers. Quotations from individual respondents may occasionally be presented for illustrative purposes. We will not identify the names of these individual respondents or their Centers, but we may provide the broad respondent category they belong to (e.g., "SEA staff"; "Regional Center"). Because the number of Centers is small and because we will describe specific content and contextual features of the Centers' work, in some cases it may be possible to indirectly identify some Centers. We will not provide information that directly identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

This survey is voluntary. You can decide not to participate, or you can discontinue participation at any time without consequence. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, but we encourage you to answer as many as you can.

Your responses will be saved as you complete the survey. If you need to come back at a later time, you can continue the survey where you left off.

If you have any questions, please contact Michaela Gulemetova at 202.774.1999 extension 1956 or [NCCEvaluation@impaqint.com](mailto:NCCEvaluation@impaqint.com).

Thank you for your help!

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1850-0914 and the expiration date is 03/31/2018. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this interview is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Amy Johnson at [Amy.Johnson@ed.gov](mailto:Amy.Johnson@ed.gov)

**1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your relationship with the [Center]? (Select ONE response in each row)**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. We have frequent communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Our relationship is collaborative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. They understand my organization's needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. They provide technical assistance in timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next, we will ask you questions about specific technical assistance (TA) you have received during the last 12 months in the Department of Education's priority areas related to:

- Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders (great teachers and leaders) and
- Ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten (early childhood learning)

**2. Have you personally received the any of following specific TA from [Center or Centers] during the last 12 months? (Please select a response for each project)**

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Project 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Project 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Project 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Project 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Other (Please specify)_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The rest of the survey will ask you about your experiences with the specific TA you indicated you received in the prior question.

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the technical assistance (TA) you received from [Center] during the last 12 months? (Select ONE response in each row)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Overall, the TA <b>content</b> was of high quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Overall, the TA <b>delivery</b> was of high quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Overall, the TA was relevant to my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Overall, the TA was useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following questions for the TA you indicated you received at the beginning of this survey.

4. After receiving technical assistance last year, have you engaged in any of the following activities? (Check ALL that apply)

- a. Reviewed the materials/resources/handouts provided by the [Center]
- b. Looked up references provided by the [Center]
- c. Researched additional materials on the topic
- d. Used the information in drafting internal memos/plans/reports
- e. Used the information in developing new processes/projects/programs
- f. Used the information to overcome a barrier or challenge
- g. Made recommendations to SEA leadership or staff
- h. Other
- i. I have not yet engaged in any activities related to the TA, but have made plans to do so
- j. No, I have not engaged in any activities related to the TA I received from the [Center]

If you indicated an "Other" activity, please describe the activity: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you discussed the information you received through the TA with any of the following? (Check ALL that apply)

- a. [Center] staff/event organizers
- b. Other technical assistance recipients from outside our organization (e.g., other SEAs)
- c. LEA staff
- d. Other staff within your organization
- e. Other
- f. No, I have not discussed the information

If you indicated that you discussed the information with an "Other" person, please describe who that was: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during last 12 months helped *you* in the following ways? (Select ONE response in each row)**

<i>To what extent did the TA you received help you....</i>	Not at all	Very little	To some extent	To a great extent	Not Applicable
a. Solve a problem?	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Access the information you wanted?	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Increase your knowledge and expertise in the topic?	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Identify additional training events, webinars, and seminars of interest?	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Build collaborations with professional experts outside your organization?	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Access useful information or ideas from other states?	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Learn about or obtain new tools that you can use in your work?	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Learn new strategies that you can use in your work?	<input type="radio"/>				
i. Perform your job in a more informed and efficient way?	<input type="radio"/>				
j. Other (Please specify):_____					

**7. To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during the last 12 months helped your *organization* in the following ways? (Select ONE response in each row)**

<i>To what extent did the TA you received help your organization...</i>	Not at all	Very little	To some extent	To a great extent	Not Applicable
a. Develop and implement internal staff trainings?	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Incorporate the new information into internal procedures and processes?	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Redesign state agency structures, teams and departments?	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Improve communication channels across state agencies?	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Improve communication channels with LEAs?	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Partner more with external experts?	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of great teachers and leaders?	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Provide better support to LEAs in the area of great teachers and leaders?	<input type="radio"/>				
i. Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of early learning?	<input type="radio"/>				
j. Provide better support to LEAs in the area of early learning?	<input type="radio"/>				
k. Identify other needs for information?	<input type="radio"/>				
l. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>				

**8. Do you have specific plans to use the information you received from the [Center] in the upcoming 12 months? (Select ONE)**

- a. Yes → if yes, please elaborate how: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No

9. Has the [Center]'s technical assistance enabled you to accomplish what you may not have otherwise accomplished?

- a. Yes → Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No

10. Please describe the aspects of the services and/or resources that have been most helpful and why: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please describe the aspects of the services and/or resources that have been least helpful and why: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please describe if you have any needs that were not met by the services and/or resources:

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What challenges have you encountered in your experience with the [Center] during the last 12 months? (Check ALL that apply)

- a. Lack of understanding of our needs by [Center] staff
- b. Delay in receiving needed TA
- c. Staff turnover at our organization
- d. Staff turnover at the [Center]
- e. Difficulty scheduling time for our staff to participate
- f. Difficulty in communication with the [Center]
- g. Lack of skills/expertise by [Center] staff to address our needs
- h. Lack of alignment between my organization's needs and [Center] priorities
- i. Insufficient number of in-person meetings with the [Center]
- j. Unclear understanding of the role of the [Center] and what it can offer
- k. No challenges
- l. Other

If you indicated that you have had "Other" challenges. Please describe the challenge.

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Please provide any additional comments about your experience with the [Center]: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please identify your organization: (Select ONE)

- a. State Education Agency
- b. Local Education Agency/School District
- c. School
- d. Comprehensive Center
- e. Other (please specify)

If you indicated an "Other" organization, please describe your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is your role in your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

17. How long have you been in your current role? (Select ONE)

- a. 0 – 1 years
- b. 2 – 3 years
- c. 4 or more years

18. How long have you been with your organization? (Select ONE)

- a. 0 – 1 years
- b. 2 – 3 years
- c. 4 – 10 years
- d. 11 or more years

Thank you!

## Technical Assistance Recipient Survey Codebook for Open-Ended Survey Questions

Survey Item	Code	Definition	Examples
<b>10. Please describe the aspects of the services and/or resources that have been most helpful and why.</b>			
10	<b>Support for Plan or Product Creation</b>	Center supports SEA in developing plans, reports, other documents.	Assistance in development of professional learning standards, teacher equity plans, strategic plans
10	<b>Access to Experts</b>	References to Centers' connections to outside experts or to expertise of the Center staff.	Brought in expert presenter or panel member, provided expert review
10	<b>Provisions of Products/ Materials/ Resources</b>	Center provides product or resource created by Center or available through Center partner, resource library or scan	Specific Center product provides the LEAs with a doable format of school improvement
10	<b>Training</b>	Center provides or supports training for constituents	Specific Center staff member's presentation to the leadership Fellows - very useful
10	<b>Cross-State and Peer Sharing</b>	References to peer group contacts made through the Center, usually in other states	Finding out how other states address problems relating to teacher evaluation, especially for special education teachers and other teachers without the traditional classroom assignment.
10	<b>Thought Partner</b>	References to helping SEA think through issues, acting as a critical friend	Mostly specific Center staff member's readiness to be a thought partner and talk to us about ways his center could support us.
10	<b>Stakeholder Engagement/Facilitation</b>	References to Center's role in reaching out, obtaining stakeholder buy-in, including meeting facilitation	Her facilitator skills were so greatly appreciated by me. Together we were much better in soliciting responses from the stakeholders and gathering feedback from them.
10	<b>Relationships</b>	References to the importance of the relationship between the Center and the SEA	They have been true partners and a great resource in this work.
10	<b>Responsiveness</b>	References to Center's responsiveness to SEA needs or requests	Center has been very responsive to our requests, questions, and suggestions.
<b>11. Please describe the aspects of the services and/or resources that have been least helpful and why.</b>			
11.	<b>All helpful</b>	Respondent states that all services were helpful or can't identify any that were unhelpful	Cannot recall a service or resource that isn't helpful
11.	<b>Relevance or quality concerns</b>	Deficiency or limitations of a product or service is noted.	Certain resources "have not been as pertinent in our region"; "At times the protocols were a bit redundant and, therefore, tedious to follow." "Webinars are not convenient."
11.	<b>Availability</b>	Respondent would have liked more time from Center staff, more accessibility, or more time on-site with the SEA staff	"More side by side assistance"; "Sometimes difficult to get hold of."

Survey Item	Code	Definition	Examples
11.	<b>SEA issues.</b>	Limitations in using the TA related to the SEA, not the Center	Things change rapidly so not having the capacity on staff (as opposed to outside TA) is not always timely - through no fault of the TA. At some point, state agencies just need to be staffed appropriately for reform work.
<b>12. Please describe if you have any needs that were not met by the services and/or resources.</b>			
12.	<b>All needs were met</b>	Respondent states that all needs were met by Center or can't think of any other needs they wanted the Center to address	"They provided all support that we need."
12.	<b>More TA</b>	Would like more resources, connections, staff availability or TA in some priority areas	"It is often difficult to book our support folks from the center for in-person workshops when we need them as their calendars are full." "I simply would love to have another year of assistance! Never enough time to learn all we need to learn! Great experience!"
12.	<b>Center staff turnover</b>	Center staff changes caused confusion/would have liked more clarity or consistency	"Consistency in the group"

## Design-Focused Interview Protocol for Center Staff

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*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Below are suggested introductory remarks. While it is not necessary to follow this as a script, it is important that you cover all of the main points contained here.]*

*I work for IMPAQ International, and we are evaluating the system of Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study. You may recall that we visited last year to learn about your Center.*

*As part of our study, we will be interviewing directors, managers, and staff at the Centers to understand the work that you do. The purpose of the study is to gather data to describe the work of the Centers and how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education, and to report that information to the Department of Education. What you have to say is important to us and we appreciate you helping us understand your work. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.*

*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: **Please read the following to the respondent(s):***

*"Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. However, respondents' roles and the CC they work with may be identified in the report, which may lead to individuals' being identified. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law."*

*Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?*

*To start, do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of our note taking?*

These questions will be asked of Center leadership (manager or director) and may include a larger group including technical assistance providers. If respondents in a group interview differ in their responses/opinion, those differences will be recorded in the interviewer notes. Prior to conducting the interview, the interviewer will review relevant extant documents such as proposals, annual performance review reports, evaluation reports, etc. Some of the answers to questions asked below may be in those documents. If so, the interviewer will start the question by referring to information gleaned from the document, and will ask the respondent to verify the accuracy of the information.

### **Capacity Building Definition**

1. For the purposes of your Center work with state education agencies (SEAs) [or for Content Centers, SEAs and Regional Centers], how do you define capacity building? What is the basis for your definition (research, experience, other Centers)?

**PROBES:**

*How do you talk about capacity building among your Center staff?*

*Do you focus on different types of capacity building (e.g. human, organizational, structural, etc.? If so, please tell us about that.*

*[For Content Center interviews: Do you focus on different types of capacity building for Regional Centers as compared to SEAs? Does capacity building look different for Regional Centers and SEAs?]*

*How do you discuss capacity building with your SEA constituents—to what extent do you use the term “capacity building”?*

2. When thinking about your work, how do you know when you have built capacity? What does that “look like”? In other words, what observed changes in stakeholder behaviors indicate capacity building? What are the outcomes that you expect to see?
3. Do you collect evidence to assess your progress in building capacity? If so, what kinds of evidence do you collect?

### **Theory of Action**

We are interested in the assumptions behind your work with SEAs—how you decide, out of all of the options available, what work you will do with the SEAs (and for Content Centers, the Regional Centers) and how you monitor and adjust that work as needed. Please describe (and/or show us graphically) your theory of change and explain how you arrived at it.

4. How do you assess SEA needs—what information do you request, collect and review?

**PROBES:**

*Who is involved in conversations/meetings about SEA goals? [for Content Centers, ask also about Regional Center goals and goals that might be generated through means other than directly by states or Regional Centers, e.g., addressing a broad, multi-sector or national need]*

*To what extent do your SEAs present you with their goals, and to what extent do you suggest goal options to them?*

5. How do you determine the needs you can help the SEA meet or the goals the SEA can pursue through collaboration with your Center?
6. How do you assess the SEA's current level of capacity to meet their goals? [For Content Center interviews, also ask: is the process different in your work with Regional Centers? If yes, in what ways?]

**PROBES:**

*To what extent do your SEAs present you with their goals, and to what extent do you suggest goal options to them?*

*If different SEA personnel present you with different goals, how do you resolve this?*

7. To what extent do the states' identified needs align with the Federal priority areas? Have you encountered many state needs or requests for TA that did not align with these priorities? Or that you could not address for some other reason? If so, please explain. How do you respond in these cases?
8. Once SEAs have determined their goals, how do you choose your Center objectives—the overall results your Center hopes to achieve to support the SEA's goals?

**PROBES:**

*Who is involved in conversations/meetings about Center objectives?*

*To what extent are the Center objectives determined by the SEA's requests of you, and to what extent do you suggest the Center's objectives to the SEA?*

9. How do you choose which specific strategies or projects to pursue to achieve your objectives? What is your theory about how these strategies, activities, or projects will contribute to achieving your objectives?

**PROBES:**

*Who is involved in conversations/meetings about strategies?*

*What do you take into consideration when deciding upon strategies (feasibility, evidence, availability of expertise, experience in other projects, expectations of SEA, likelihood of building capacity, etc.)?*

*To what extent are your projects/strategies determined by the SEAs' requests of you, and to what extent do you suggest the projects to the SEAs?*

10. How do you customize strategies to the SEA's existing capacity level and needs?
11. Can you describe how the local context—political, economic, etc.—affects your choice of strategies/projects, if at all?

**PROBES:**

*How do you become aware of these contextual factors?*

*How influential do you think context is in your decision making?*

12. How does the availability of Center resources (financial, human, etc.) enter into your choice of strategies? [*If resources do affect strategy choice: If you're making decisions about projects based on resources, do you involve stakeholders (SEAs/Rocs) in the decision process? If so, how?*]

*The next set of questions asks about practical aspects of your project work, such as how you monitor project activities and how you determine timeframes. These questions will help us describe the process by which you do your work, and how your theories of actions inform the process.*

13. How do you track and assess progress in your projects? What evidence do you collect or review to do this?
14. How do you choose which outcomes to track for specific projects or the Center as a whole? Can you give us any examples of outcomes that you've documented so far?

**PROBES:**

*Who is involved in decisions about outcomes?*

*What implementation milestones do you track, and how?*

*What do you do if implementation milestones aren't met?*

*How do you decide on longer-term outcomes for your Center work?*

*How do you measure your longer-term outcomes?*

15. How do you determine the timeframe for a particular project? Do you have any rules of thumb about how long projects should be?

**PROBES:**

*How do you take stakeholder expectations and availability into account when developing timelines? How does the SEAs' planning process impact project timelines?*

16. To what extent, if any, has your Center updated plans during a project? If so, how did you become aware of a need to change something? Can you describe this process of changing projects or strategies? How often does this happen?
17. As you track progress toward your Center objectives, to what extent do you also assess SEAs' progress toward their goals?
18. Have you modified your theory of change over time? If so, please describe how and why.
19. What else would you like to share about your approach to working with SEAs [or RCs, for Content Centers]?

## Implementation-Focused Interview Protocol for Center Staff

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*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Below are suggested introductory remarks. While it is not necessary to follow this as a script, it is important that you cover all of the main points contained here.]*

*I work for IMPAQ International, and we are researching the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study. You may recall that we visited last year to learn about the Center.*

*As part of our study, we will be interviewing directors, managers, and staff at the Centers to understand the work that you do. The purpose of the study is to gather data to describe the work of the Centers and how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education, and to report that information to the Department of Education. What you have to say is important to us and we appreciate you helping us understand your work. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.*

***[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Please read the following to the respondent(s):***

*“Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. However, respondents’ roles and the CC they work with may be identified in the report, which may lead to individuals’ being identified. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.”*

*Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?*

*To start, do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of our note taking?*

All questions will be asked about the Early Learning priority area first, and then about the Great Teachers/Leaders priority area. Questions are for staff of both Regional Centers and Content Centers unless specifically noted otherwise. Interview respondents for the first section (“Overall Perspective”) should be Center Directors, Content Specialists in the Early Learning or Great/Teachers Leaders areas, and lead TA providers who work within these priority areas. Interview respondents for the second section (“Project Background”) should be lead TA providers who work on the identified projects, but Center Directors and Content Specialists may also be involved with these projects and should be included as relevant. **Prior to conducting the interview, the interviewer will review relevant extant documents such as proposals, annual performance review reports, evaluation reports, etc. Some of the answers to questions asked below may be in those documents. If so, the interviewer will start the question by referring to information gleaned from the document, and will ask the respondent to verify the accuracy of the information.**

*Further introduction from the Interviewer: We are going to ask you questions that focus on two priority areas. We will begin with the Early Learning priority area; we will first ask about your overall approach to TA in this area, and then we will ask about specific projects. We will then ask about the Great Teachers/Leaders priority area, again starting with questions about your overall approach followed by questions about specific projects. [Note to interviewer; ask ALL questions, including both overall perspective and project-specific questions, first about Early Learning and then repeat all the questions focusing on Great /Teachers Leaders.]*

### **Overall Perspective on the Priority Area**

*Ask Regional Centers Only:*

1. Are there needs for technical assistance within the Early Learning [Great Teachers/ Leaders] priority area that have been identified by your states? If so, please describe the needs.
2. If there are needs, how did they come to your attention? If this area has not been identified as a priority need, do you know why not? What do SEA staff say about why this area is or is not a priority TA need?

**PROBE:** *What evidence have you reviewed that helps you understand the needs?*

3. Is there a range of early learning [great teachers/leaders] TA needs across states in your region? How do states in your region differ in the types and level of these needs?

**Ask Content Centers Only:**

4. Are there needs (whether state, regional, national needs) in this priority area that have fallen within the purview of your center, or intersected with the focus of your center? If so please describe these needs. How did these needs come to your attention?

**PROBES:** *Have early learning [great teachers/ leaders] needs come up in discussions with Regional Centers, other Content Centers, SEAs, or other constituents? What evidence have you reviewed that helps you understand the needs?*

5. Have you encountered a range of early learning [great teachers/leaders] needs across states and regions? If so please describe the differences in level or types of needs.

***If no needs have been identified in the Early Learning priority area, skip the remaining questions for Early Learning and start over with the Great Teachers/Leaders area.***

6. Have the needs in this priority area changed since first identified to the Center? If so, please describe how. How did you learn about any changes?
7. Who (individuals, agencies, groups) has been part of the Center’s discussion of early learning [great teachers/leaders] needs and any plans to address them?

**PROBES:**

- *Chief State School Officers or other SEA leadership*
- *Other SEA staff (such as middle management staff)*
- *Leadership in other Agencies such as Human Services, Family and Children's Services, etc.*
- *Other staff within these agencies (such as middle management staff)*
- *Others such as governors' offices, task forces, etc.*
- *Advocacy or TA groups*
- *Other Centers, whether Regional or Content Centers*

8. Do you have designated staff and partners who work with you on early learning [great teachers/leaders] projects? [If so], please identify them and their expertise relevant to this area of work.
9. Do you have a theory of action that is specific to early learning? [*If so*], please describe it. By theory of action, we mean how your Center works to build SEA capacity in early learning, including the chain of causal assumptions linking program resources, activities, intermediate outcomes and ultimate goals. Specifically, we’d like to know:
  - 9a. What are you trying to help the states achieve in early learning? What are the expected outcomes? How is this TOA anchored to the needs we discussed above?
  - 9b. Can you identify any overall approaches or strategies (e.g., ones that cut across specific projects or activities) that you use to help states achieve these outcomes in early learning [great teachers/leaders]—approaches or strategies that are specific to this priority area? How do the strategies lead to the outcomes?

10. *[Note to interviewer: whether the Center being interviewed is a Regional or Content Center, be sure to ask about how they work with both types of Centers.]* Do [other] Regional Centers work with you on these approaches or strategies? If so, how? Do [other] Content Centers work with you on these approaches or strategies? If so, how?
11. What has gone particularly well in your work with other Centers—with both Regional and Content Centers-- in this priority area? What has been challenging in working with other Centers—with both Regional and Content Centers?
12. *[Note to interviewer: ask this of both types of Centers, since Content Centers may receive training from other Content Centers.]* Have you received TA or training in this priority area from any of the [other] Content Centers (directed to your own center as distinct from or in addition to SEA staff)? If so, please describe and tell me how you have used this information.
13. As you think about all of your work in early learning [great teachers/leaders], what do you consider to be going very well? How do you know? What indicators do you rely on?
14. As you think about all of your work in early learning [great teachers/leaders], what have you found to be unsuccessful or challenging? How do you know? What indicators do you rely on?

### **Project Implementation**

*We will now discuss up to 2 projects from your center as examples of how the Center works in this priority area. As we discussed with you earlier when planning this visit, if you have more than two projects in this priority area, please select the two projects that you consider the best illustrations of your work in this area in terms of their capacity building potential, or uniqueness to the work that you do at your center.*

15. *[Start with one project]* What do you call this project?
16. Is this a state, regional, or national project? Please identify the specific states or regions, if relevant, or describe the scope of the project.
17. Is the project completed or ongoing? What was the start date, and the ending date (or anticipated end date) if applicable?
18. Why did you select this project as a focal project for discussion?

19. What prompted this project? Who initiated the concept of this project? Who participated in the early discussions? Who helped plan the project? What needs were identified as having the greatest priority? How did you decide on priorities?

**PROBES:**

- *Chief State School Officers*
- *SEA staff below leadership level*
- *Other Centers*
- *Other partner organizations*

20. Which constituents (SEA representatives or others) do you work with most closely on this project? Please describe their roles on the project. Can you give us their contact information so we can contact them for interviews to obtain the TA recipient perspective?

21. Please identify and describe the roles of any organizations serving as partners in this project. What is their role in implementing the project and how do the partners work together?

**PROBES:**

*Other Regional Centers or Content Centers*

*RELS*

*Other TA providers or experts*

22. Which Center staff members work on this project? Please describe their respective roles on the project.

23. What were the elements of the context –political, fiscal, legal, economic, etc.—that were influential factors during the project’s early development? Did these elements facilitate or impede the project in any way? If so, how?

**PROBES:**

*How influential do you think these elements of the context were?*

*How did it impact what your team was thinking and doing in relation to this project?*

*Did the state(s) have any Federal or state grant money behind this project?*

**Project Goals**

24. What are the broad goals of the project? What areas of SEA capacity are expected to improve? Which SEA staff are the primary targets of this project?

**PROBES:**

*Human capacity/knowledge/skills*

*Organizational capacity*

*Structural capacity/policy change*

25. Have the goals of the project changed over time? If so, please describe.

26. What are the key strategies and activities—including training events, products, meetings—that are part of achieving the goals? Who are the recipients of these strategies and activities?
27. Have you modified the strategies or activities originally planned for this project? [If so] Please tell us about how and why these were changed.

### **Project Communication**

28. How often do you meet or talk with SEA representatives, or other key constituents, if relevant, regarding planning and implementation of the project? With which SEA representatives do you meet? What do you discuss? How do these discussions inform implementation of the project?

### **Project Implementation and Outcomes**

29. What is your definition of success in this project? What will we ‘see’ if this project is successful? What are the milestones for the project?
30. Based on your definitions of a successful project, how have things gone so far? What is your evidence for making this assessment of progress?

#### ***PROBES:***

*Has the project met its milestones so far? Why/why not?*

31. What have been the outcomes so far? Have you seen changes in the capacity of the SEAs or other targeted constituencies? Please describe any changes in each of these types of capacity, and the evidence of the change:
- Knowledge and skills (e.g., knowledge, expertise, skills, will, understanding necessary to implement something)
  - Organizational (e.g., interaction, collaboration, communication among individuals in a system; evaluation and feedback on processes and structures for continuous improvement)
  - Structural/policy change (e.g., policies, procedures, and formalized practices) *PROBE: Has the SEA capacity to work with LEAs improved?*
32. What has been the most challenging aspect of this project—including any challenges to implementation or to building SEA capacity? Please describe. How have you handled the challenges?

#### ***PROBES:***

*Has there been turnover within the SEA?*

*Have there been challenges in communicating with the SEA?*

*Have there been other challenges in working with the SEA*

*Have there been challenges in working with partners?*

*What makes it difficult to build capacity?*

33. Overall what do you think has been the most successful aspect of this project? Please describe it. To what do you attribute this success? What have you learned from this?
34. Are there plans for the Center to build on, replicate, or continue this project?
35. Have the SEAs or other constituents begun to take over or "own" this work in any way? What are their next steps?
36. Are there upcoming events associated with this project that we may be able to observe to help us understand project implementation? *[If so]* Please describe them and provide dates.
37. Are there products/materials associated with this project (in addition to those we've received prior to the interview) that we could collect and read to help us understand project implementation or outcomes?

*Repeat project questions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> project in the Early Learning area, if applicable. Then repeat all questions for the Great Teachers/Leaders priority area.*

## Implementation-Focused Interview Protocol for TA Recipients

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*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Below are suggested introductory remarks. While it is not necessary to follow this as a script, it is important that you cover all of the main points contained here.]*

*I work for IMPAQ International, and we are evaluating the system of Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study.*

*As part of our study, we will be interviewing recipients of Center work. The purpose of the study is to gather data to describe the work of the Centers and how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education. We will use the information we learn from our visit today to report our results to the U.S. Department of Education. What you have to say is important to us and we appreciate your helping us understand the Centers’ work. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.*

*[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: **Please read the following to the respondent(s):***

*“Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. The reports prepared for this study will include information that is summarized and aggregated and should not associate responses with a specific Center, state, district or individual. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. However, respondents’ roles and the CC they work with may be identified in the report, which may lead to individuals’ being identified. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.”*

*Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?*

*To start, do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of my note taking?*

## Individual Information and Knowledge of Centers

1. Please describe your position and your responsibilities with the SEA.
2. How long have you been in this position? How long have you worked with the SEA?
3. Please describe any other background particularly relevant to your current work with the SEAs?
4. When did you first work with or receive services from any of the Comprehensive Centers? Which Centers have you worked with or received technical assistance from since that time?
5. I would like to focus now on the Centers that are currently funded (funded Centers since late 2012). We'd like to hear about ways you've worked with or received services from these Centers. How did the Center try to learn about your needs?

### **PROBES:**

*What data or documents did the Center request?*

*Whom did the Center interview?*

*What was discussed in the early contacts/meetings?*

*Have you had regular contact with them since the first contact?*

*Is this typically in person, by phone, or by e-mail?*

6. Please describe the major projects or services the Center has provided you or that you've participated in with the Center(s).
7. How are decisions made about what services the Center should provide to the SEA?
8. How would you characterize the specific role of the Center(s) in serving the SEAs, as distinct from other TA providers available to the SEA?
9. What are you most hoping to get from the Center? What needs do you hope the Center will address?

### **PROBE:**

*In what ways do you hope the Center will build your capacity?*

10. Do you believe the Centers have been effective in addressing the needs of the SEA and the state? If yes, please describe how and what evidence you have of their effectiveness. If no, please explain why and how/in what ways they have not been effective in serving the SEA/state needs.

## Project Background

Now we'd like to discuss one or two specific projects that the Center staff has identified as illustrative that they are implementing with your SEA:

11. How would you briefly describe the \_\_\_\_\_ project to someone who isn't familiar with it?
12. What are the key strategies and activities—including training events, products, meetings—that are part of achieving the goals?
13. How does the project fit into the overall work at the SEA or your division?  
**PROBES:**  
*Are there other initiatives or projects at the SEA that are related to this project?  
What is the policy or regulatory context for this project?*
14. What prompted this particular project? What needs does it address? Why did you decide to work with the Center on this?
15. How did you work with the Center to develop this project?  
**PROBES:**  
*Did your staff suggest the strategy or activities the Center might undertake to address the needs, or did the Center recommend the strategy? Please describe how you arrived at the project plan.*
16. Is there any part of the local context (political, fiscal, legal, economic, etc.) that you think played a role in the project's early development?  
**PROBES:**  
*How did it impact what your team was thinking and doing in relation to this project? Did your office have any Federal or state grant money behind this project?*
17. Can you tell me about the other SEA or other state agency team members on this project? Specifically, what are the titles or positions of SEA staff, and what are their respective roles on the project?  
**PROBE:** *[Ask about other agency staff (such as workforce staff for college and career readiness, or human services staff for early childhood) where appropriate.]*
18. Whom from the relevant Center(s) do you work with on this project?

19. Who else from outside the SEA or the Center is involved in this project?

**PROBES:**

*LEAs?*

*Other Centers?*

*Other partners (TA providers or consultants, universities, foundations, etc.)*

20. How often do you meet or talk with Center representatives, or other key constituents, if relevant, regarding planning and implementation of the project? With which Center representatives do you meet? What do you discuss? How do these discussions inform implementation of the project?

**PROBES:**

*How would you describe the roles and responsibilities of the various organizations involved in the project?*

### **Project Goals and Progress**

21. Ultimately, what will we “see” if this project is successful? In other words, what are your hoped-for outcomes from this project?

22. Have the SEA needs or goals changed or shifted since the project began? [If so] Please tell us about that. How has this affected your work with the Center on the project?

23. So far, has the project been implemented as planned? Please describe the progress of implementation so far, as well as any deviations from plans. What are the reasons for any changes in plans?

24. Has any part of the local or state context changed in a way that has impacted the project’s implementation or success since its early development? How?

### **Project Outcomes**

25. Have you used any products or materials produced by the Center through this project (including webinars, trainings, presentations)? [If so] have you been able to make use of what you learned? [If so] can you explain how? [If not] can you explain why?

26. Do the products/materials or technical assistance events help address the project goals, and if so, how?

27. What have been the major challenges related to this project (if any)? Please describe them. How were the challenges addressed (if at all)?

28. In your opinion, what has been the most successful aspect of this project? Please describe it.

29. What have been the outcomes so far? Have you seen changes in your or your organization's capacity? Please describe any changes in each of these types of capacity and the evidence of the change:

- Knowledge and skills (e.g., knowledge, expertise, skills, will, understanding necessary to implement something)
- Organizational (e.g., interaction, collaboration, communication among individuals in a system; evaluation and feedback on processes and structures for continuous improvement)
- Structural/policy change (e.g., policies, procedures, and formalized practices) **PROBE:**  
*Has your capacity to work with LEAs improved?*

30. Are you or the SEA as an organization doing anything differently now, that you have not mentioned above, as a result of this project and the TA from the Center?

**PROBES:**

*How are you using new knowledge or skills?*

*How has the TA influenced policies and procedures or practices at the SEA?*

*How has the TA influenced the SEA's internal interactions, collaboration and communications?*

31. Are there plans in your agency to build on, replicate, or continue this project or this line of work? Are you planning to do this with or without the Center(s)? What are the next steps?

Overall, have you learned any lessons from this project's implementation? Any recommendations you might make to Comprehensive Centers based on either successes or challenges of this project? Any lessons for your own agency?

## Outcomes-Focused Interview Protocol for Center Staff

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1850-0935 and the expiration date is 04/30/2020.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this interview is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes response. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to [Amy.Johnson@ed.gov](mailto:Amy.Johnson@ed.gov).

### Introduction

#### ***Suggested introductory remarks (Cover all main points here):***

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I work for IMPAQ International, and we are conducting a National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers Program. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study.

As part of our evaluation, we are interviewing directors, managers, and staff at the Centers to understand the work that you do. The purpose of the evaluation is to gather data to describe the work of the Centers and how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education, and to report that information to the Department of Education. What you have to say is important to us and we appreciate your helping us understand your work. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 90 minutes.

This is the last of three rounds of site visits and interviews conducted for this evaluation. Interviews this year will focus on the outcomes of your work with states and other constituents.

#### ***Read the following to the respondent(s):***

“Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. Specific Centers may be identifiable when occasional examples of their work are provided. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.”

Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy? Do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of our note taking?

As we proceed with the interview, we will first discuss a specific project in this priority area (Great Teachers/Leaders or Early Learning), following up on a project we have discussed

previously. We will then ask a few questions about your work overall in this priority area (Great Teachers/Leaders or Early Learning).

*Site liaisons will have communicated when scheduling the visit that two one-hour interviews will be administered, one for each of the two priority areas.)*

In this interview, we are interested in focusing on outcomes. Please keep in mind that the purpose of this evaluation is not to monitor performance, but to describe and understand capacity-building processes and outcomes.

Throughout the interview, please take care to explicitly identify the different actors and their different roles. We need to be able to clearly distinguish actions of the Center, SEAs, and partner organizations and to identify specific outcomes for specific constituents. It's easy for these to blur together.

### **Updated Description of Specific Project**

*(Site liaisons will have communicated with the Centers before the interview to identify the project to be discussed. Site liaisons will prepare for the visit by reviewing the project information that they will be asked to confirm.)*

We would now like to discuss the \_\_\_\_\_ project, which we have discussed in previous visits.

We want to first quickly confirm the project features and understand any new developments in the project since our last discussion.

1. We understand that the name of this project is \_\_\_\_\_. Is this the name by which the Center refers to and reports on the project? (If not, please provide the correct or updated name.)
2. Based on our last interview in spring 2016, we understand that the goals of the project are \_\_\_\_\_, including the capacity-building goals of \_\_\_\_\_. Is this correct? Have there been any modifications to those goals or the objectives of the project since our interview in spring 2016? If so, please describe these modifications and what led to them. Have there been any other important changes in the context of the project?
3. We understand that the start date for this project was \_\_\_\_\_. Is this correct? What was the end date (or what is the anticipated end date)?

4. We understand that the organizational constituents for this project are (specific SEAs, LEAs, IHEs, other agencies or some combination, broad national constituency) \_\_\_\_\_. Is this correct? If not, please provide the current organizational constituents served by the project. Have any of the constituents changed since our last interview in 2016?
5. We understand that other organizations or partners involved in providing technical assistance on this project include \_\_\_\_\_. Is this correct? Have there been any changes since our last interview in spring 2016?
6. The major project activities that we discussed in our last interview in spring 2016 included \_\_\_\_\_. Were there any changes in activities, or new developments in the implementation of the project, since our last interview in spring 2016 that we should be aware of? Please explain. *(If the project is not yet completed)* Please describe any planned activities for the remainder of the project.

### Measuring Outcomes

7. We'd like to ensure that we understand how you measure and track outcomes.
  - a. How do/did you track, record, or measure changes in the SEAs' capacity over time for this project? How do you assess whether the Center's activities are helping to drive these changes? Do you do this differently for other project outcomes (other than capacity-building)?
  - b. What instruments/tools, if any, do you use?
  - c. What were the challenges involved in measuring outcomes for this project? How did the Center address these challenges?
  - d. Are the measures used for this project typical of what you use as a Center for all projects? If there are major differences, please describe.

### Outcomes of Project

8. We'd now like to discuss the project outcomes, and the TA strategies that produced each of the outcomes.

We are now going to read through a list of types of *SEA capacity* and ask you to look at the handout for reference. Please tell us which of these categories of capacity has been produced by this project so far, and we will then follow up about the details. We will give you a chance later to describe other kinds of outcomes you achieved from this project. We understand that not all types of capacity are relevant for all projects.

*(Interviewer now reads through the handout, including types of capacity and definitions. The respondents will have received it in advance. After the reading of the handout, the respondent is asked to identify the categories of outcomes produced by this project.)*

*For each outcome identified by the respondent, probe for a detailed description of capacity changes, and ensure that each of the following is addressed:)*

- i. What is the agency or agency staff doing differently now that they did not do before? *(Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, or processes as relevant.)*
- ii. Was this an intended or unintended outcome?
- iii. How do you know that your work led to this change? *(If the respondent has difficulty answering, refer to the measures discussed in question #7 and ask if they were used.)*
- iv. What technical assistance strategy(ies) or services worked well in producing this change? How and why? What strategies or services did not work as well? Why?
- v. What were the challenges in producing this outcome? How did the Center address these challenges?

*The handout will include these:*

- a. *Knowledge and skills or human capacity:* Any changes in SEA staff knowledge, expertise or skills resulting from the project.
  - Includes increased content knowledge or policy knowledge.
  - Management or technical skills.
- b. *Organizational capacity, including structural, fiscal, or material capacity:* Any changes in SEA organizational capacity resulting from the project. By changes in organizational capacity, we mean any of the following:
  - SEA agency restructuring.
  - Changes in SEA agency processes and procedures.
  - Changes in communication and coordination across staff and divisions of the SEA or other agencies.
  - Improvements in SEA use of resources.
  - Changes in SEA performance management and continuous improvement.
  - Other.
- c. *Policy development or design:* Any changes in the SEAs' capacity to develop or inform the development and design of state policy, including recommendations, advising to Boards of Education and legislators.

- d. *Capacity for policy implementation, including political capacity:* Any changes in how SEAs implement policy. What we mean here are changes in how SEAs do any of the following:
    - How SEAs work to “roll out,” disseminate, or spread a policy or practice throughout the state.
    - How SEAs work with LEAs and other stakeholders in the state, for example, in supporting, guiding, or communicating with them.
  - e. *Other capacity changes for the SEA that you would like to describe.*
  - f. *Capacity changes for other constituents, such as local education agencies or institutions of higher education.*
9. Has the project had any other outcomes that we haven’t discussed, including any unrelated to capacity building? If so, please describe.  
*(Interviewer, elicit a detailed description and ensure that each of the following is addressed.)*
- a. What is happening in the agency or state now that did not happen before? *(Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, policies or processes as relevant.)*
  - b. Was this an intended or unintended outcome?
  - c. How do you know that your work led to this change? *(If the respondent has difficulty answering, refer to the measures discussed in question #7 and ask if they were used.)*
  - d. What technical assistance strategy(ies) or services worked well in producing this change? What strategies did not work as well? Why?
  - e. What were the challenges in producing this outcome? How did the Center address these challenges?
10. *(If not already addressed)* Have the constituents begun to take over or own the project activities, information, or processes to any degree? Please explain how they are doing this and sustaining the work. Do you know what their next steps are for moving forward? Do you think they will require additional support to sustain the work, and if so, in what way?
11. *(For completed projects)* Did the project achieve its goals? Were there any goals or project objectives that the Center was not able to achieve? If so, to what do you attribute this?  
*(For projects still in process)* Is the project meeting its goals so far? Are there any goals or project objectives that the Center has not been able, or may not be able, to achieve? If so, to what do you attribute this?

## Priority Area Overview

We will now ask a few questions about this overall priority area (Great Teachers/Leaders or Early Learning).

12. Since the inception of the Center grant, has the context or focus for this priority area (Great Teachers/Leaders or Early Learning, as per the specific interview) changed for your constituents, beyond what we've already discussed? *(If so)* How has it changed? How has this affected the work of your Center?

*If the above project was the only one in this priority area, you may skip questions 13-15 and move to question 16.*

13. Considering all of the projects within this priority area over the last 5 years, to what extent and in what ways did your Center contribute to your constituents' capacity, beyond what we have already discussed? What were the major outcomes that you were able to achieve in this area?

14. What strategies were the most effective in this priority area and why? What “works” for building capacity in this priority area? What did not “work?”

15. What challenges (if any outside of those already discussed) made it difficult to build needed capacity in this priority area? How did you address the challenges? Please give examples. How likely are these challenges (or others) to persist moving forward? What additional supports are needed to continue building or sustaining capacity in this area?

16. Did the connections between strategies and outcomes that we have discussed today align with your theory of action as a Center? If not, why not? Have you changed or modified your theory of action (the underlying principles that inform your approach to building capacity) to take these results into account? Please explain.

17. Have you learned anything new about how to build SEA capacity over the course of this grant? What lessons have you learned doing this work?

Thank you very much for your time today. Your input has been very helpful.

## Outcomes-Focused Interview Protocol for TA Recipients

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### Introduction

#### ***Suggested introductory remarks (Cover all main points here):***

My name is <Interviewer Name> and I work for IMPAQ International. We are researching the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers. The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences contracted with us to conduct this study.

(If applicable) You may recall that we talked last year about [name of Center].

As part of our study, we will be interviewing recipients of technical assistance from the Comprehensive Centers. The purpose of the study is to describe the work of the Centers, especially how the Centers build the capacities of state departments of education, and to help inform the future work of the Centers. What you have to say is important to us. We want to assure you that participation in this interview is voluntary. We estimate that this interview will take 60 minutes.

#### ***Read the following to the respondent(s):***

“Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for research purposes. Findings from the interview data will be reported in summary form and individuals will not be identified by name. However, respondents’ roles and the CC they work with may be identified in the report, which may lead to individuals’ being identified. Other than this situation that we have made respondents aware of, we will not provide information that identifies you to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.”

Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose of the evaluation or our confidentiality policy?

To start, do you mind if we audio record our session for the accuracy of our note taking?

*(Interviewer: Respondents will have been identified by the Centers as technical assistance recipients of projects in the two priority areas —teacher/leader effectiveness and early learning. Respondents should be staff of state agencies or offices responsible for administration of one of the two priority areas. In most cases the respondent will work for an office or division within the state department of education. Occasionally the respondent may work for a state agency other than the department of education, such as an office of early childhood. When administering the protocol, you may substitute for “state education agency” or “SEA” or “your agency or office” the specific name of the respondent’s office or agency as she or he generally refers to it.)*

### **Individual and Project Information**

1. We understand that you work for (name of agency and office or division if relevant). Is this correct? Please describe your position and your responsibilities.
2. When did you first start working with the [Center name]?
3. We’ll be discussing the [project name] that you worked on with the [Center name]. We understand that this project *(Interviewer provide description based on recent Center interview.)* Is this an accurate description, including an accurate description of the Center’s role in the project? (If not, ask the respondent to explain or add information.) If the project is ongoing, please describe any planned activities for the remainder of the project.
4. Please describe your involvement in this project since it started. Were others in your agency involved? If so, please describe their involvement.
5. We understand that the goals of the project for your agency are \_\_\_\_\_? Is this correct? If not, please correct this or describe any additional goals.
6. Have there been changes in your needs, goals or objectives for the project since its inception? If so, how has this affected your work with the Center on this project?

### **Measuring Outcomes**

7. We’d like to understand how you measure(d) project progress and outcomes. How do you measure or determine whether the project is meeting its goals and objectives? Has the Center worked with you on measuring or tracking outcomes for the project? If so, please describe how they have done this. Do you need more help in measuring project progress and outcomes?

## Outcomes of the Project

8. We'd now like to discuss the project outcomes, especially the Center's role in producing them.

We are now going to read through a list of types of agency capacity and ask you to look at the handout for reference. Please tell us which of these categories of capacity has been built by the Center's work with you on this project so far, and we will then follow up about the details. We will give you a chance to describe other kinds of project outcomes as well.

*Interviewer now reads through the handout, including types of capacity and definitions. After the reading of the handout, the respondent is asked to identify which outcomes on the list were produced by this project.*

*For each outcome identified by the respondent, probe for a detailed description of capacity changes, and ensure that each of the following is addressed:*

- i. What are you, your staff, or your agency doing differently now that you did not do before? (*Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, or processes as relevant.*)
- ii. Was this an intended or unintended outcome of this project (from your agency's perspective)?
- iii. How do you know that the Center's work on this project contributed to this change? What evidence do you have? (*Interviewer, refer to answers under #8 if applicable.*)
- iv. What technical assistance strategies or services provided by the Center worked well in producing this change? How and why? What strategies or services did not work as well? Why?
- v. What are the challenges in producing this outcome (building this type of capacity change or other outcome in your agency)? How did the Center address these challenges?

*The handout will include these:*

- a. *Knowledge and skills or human capacity:* Any changes in SEA staff knowledge, expertise or skills resulting from the project.
  - Includes increased content knowledge or policy knowledge.
  - Management or technical skills.
- b. *Organizational capacity, including structural, fiscal, or material capacity:* Any changes in SEA organizational capacity resulting from the project. By changes in organizational capacity, we mean any of the following:

- SEA agency restructuring.
  - Changes in SEA agency processes and procedures.
  - Changes in communication and coordination across staff and divisions of the SEA or other agencies.
  - Improvements in SEA use of resources.
  - Changes in SEA performance management and continuous improvement.
  - Other.
- c. *Policy development or design:* Any changes in the SEAs' capacity to develop or inform the development and design of state policy, including recommendations, advising to Boards of Education and legislators.
- d. *Capacity for policy implementation, including political capacity:* Any changes in how SEAs implement policy. What we mean here are changes in how SEAs do any of the following:
- How SEAs work to “roll out,” disseminate, or spread a policy or practice throughout the state.
  - How SEAs work with LEAs and other stakeholders in the state, for example, in supporting, guiding, or communicating with them.
- e. *Other capacity changes for the SEA that you would like to describe.*
9. Has the project had any other outcomes we haven't discussed, including any unrelated to capacity building? If so, please describe. *(Interviewer, for each change described, ask the following:)*
- i. What is happening in your agency or state now that did not happen before? *(Interviewer, probe for detail on specific behaviors, skills, policies or processes as relevant.)*
  - ii. Was this an intended or unintended outcome of this project (from your agency's perspective)? Did you expect the project to produce these changes, or were these changes unexpected?
  - iii. How do you know that the work on Center's work on the project contributed to this change? What evidence do you have? *(Interviewer, refer to answers under #8 if applicable.)*
  - iv. What activities, services or products technical assistance strategies or services provided by the Center worked particularly well in producing this change? How and why? Did any strategies or services did not work as well? Why?
  - v. What were the challenges in working on this area of capacity? What are the challenges in producing this outcome (building this type of capacity change or other outcome in your agency)? How did the Center address these challenges?

10. *(If not already addressed)* Have you begun to take over or own the project activities, information, or processes, without the Centers' help, to any degree? Please explain how you are doing this and sustaining the work. Do you know what your next steps are for moving forward? What do you think will be the biggest challenges? Do you think you will require additional support to sustain the work, and if so, in what way?
11. *(For completed projects)* Did the project achieve its goals for your agency? Did the Center meet your expectations for their work on the project? Please explain. If any goals or objectives, or expectations for the Center, were not achieved, to what do you attribute this?
12. *(For projects still in process)* Is the project meeting its goals so far? Is the Center meeting your expectations for their work on the project so far? If any goals or objectives (or expectations for the Center) have not been achieved, to what do you attribute this?

### **Priority Area Overview**

We'd now like to ask about your work with the Center in the area of *[teacher/leader effectiveness or early learning]* overall.

13. Since 2012, has the local or state context or focus for this priority area (teacher/leader effectiveness or early learning, as per the specific interview) changed for your agency? If yes, how has it changed? How has this affected your work with the Center?
14. Do you believe the Centers have been effective in addressing the needs of the SEA and the state in this priority area? If yes, please describe how and what evidence you have of their effectiveness. If no, please explain why and how/in what ways they have not been effective in serving the SEA/state needs.
15. Considering all of your work with the Center within this priority area over the last *[applicable number]* years, to what extent and in what ways did the Center contribute to your agency's capacity? What were the major outcomes that achieved in this area?
16. What Center technical assistance strategies, services, or products were the most effective in this priority area and why? What "worked" for building your agency's capacity in this priority area? What did not work?
17. What challenges (outside of those already discussed) made it difficult to build your agency's needed capacity in this priority area? Please give examples. How likely are these challenges (or others) to persist moving forward? What additional supports might you need to continue building or sustaining capacity in this area?

18. Do you have any lessons or recommendations for the Comprehensive Centers based on your experience in this project or the priority area overall? Did you learn any lessons for your own agency? Please explain.

Thank you very much for your time today. Your input has been very helpful.

## Interview Codebook – All Interviews

The coders applied these codes to interview transcripts, or parts of transcripts, and monitored intercoder reliability using methods described in Appendix B.

The coders were instructed to read through each interview transcript, coding paragraphs or passages of text to *all* applicable codes or subcodes. It was permissible to assign more than one code to the same selection of text.

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
<b>Design</b>	<b>Capacity-Building Principles</b>		How the Center conceptualizes capacity building—including the meaning of capacity building, how the Center works with the SEA to build capacity, and the themes of TA that are specific to capacity building and are different from other types of TA.	
		<b>Fostering Long-Term Changes</b>	Center focuses on long-term changes in the SEA or changes that are embedded in SEA systems and not easily dislodged. This code can be applied to capacity building that goes beyond near-term, quick-turnaround changes or to capacity building that is both long-term and systemic (and therefore sustainable).	The Center helps the SEA change in ways that are long lasting despite staff turnover. Many Center staff mentioned that capacity building means long-term change in a large system, such as changes in state standards, assessments, teacher evaluation policy, or relationships between SEAs and LEAs.
		<b>Fostering Ownership</b>	Center focuses on enabling SEA staff to take over initiatives and ultimately run them without the Center’s help.	“[SEA staff] phase us out.” “When we see it happen, really, they start to take over the mechanisms of the project itself. We call it a gradual release model ... It’s a much slower process. They really have to understand and take hold and get an idea. They’re part of the building of the project, but they’re usually not ready to do any leading of it, taking charge of things. That’s what they term it too.”
		<b>Fostering organizational process change</b>	Center work creates changes in fundamental systems or practices; it produces broadly applicable knowledge, processes, frameworks, or tools. SEAs or LEAs gain	One respondent described how the Center trained SEA staff by leading a process for grant review that the SEA could use going forward. Another Center developed a

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
			something that they can apply to a variety of situations or processes going forward, rather than just filling a short-term need. Centers may provide a framework that includes both a set of considerations or principles and a process for making decision May also be defined as “institutionalizing” processes or practices.	framework that SEAs can use when implementing new standards and assessments. Another respondent: “Essentially, our definition of capacity building is increasing, in our case, a SEA’s ability to successfully undertake an initiative and then to learn from that process and apply those lessons to future initiatives.”
<b>Design, Implementation, Outcomes</b>	<b>Capacity Types/Dimensions</b>		Types/levels of skills and practice, behavior, or policy changes the Center is trying to achieve. If respondents give examples of outcomes to illustrate the capacity-building design, those can be included here. (Don't confuse this code with code 1, Capacity-Building Conceptual Definition, which covers the broad concepts.)	See below.
		<b>SEA Staff Individual Knowledge and Skills</b>	Increase knowledge of policy content and options, exemplars, and lessons from other states; increase technical skills; increase management and leadership skills.	
		<b>SEA Organizational Capacity/ Development</b>	Primarily internal changes in agency or cross-agency structures, processes and practices. (Don't include work with LEAs--- this goes under policy implementation.)	See types of organizational capacity below
		Communication and Coordination	Improved coordination with SEA or between SEA and other agencies	SEA is making progress in “breaking down silos” to work better across divisions or agencies.
		Agency restructuring	Redesigned/expanded capacities of SEA divisions and structures	Capacity to create and manage a new division, such as an early learning division.
		Continuous improvement	Capacity for continuous improvement of agency	Creating processes of self-evaluation; creating performance metrics.
		<b>Policy Design</b>	SEA is better able to develop, design, change, interpret policy or regulations	SEA develops capacity to design ECE teacher licensing/permit policy, with Center support

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
		<b>Policy implementation</b>	SEA increases capacity to implement policy in the state, especially through guidance and training of LEAs and schools	SEA is able to train districts on hiring highly effective teachers
<b>Design</b>	<b>Needs Assessment</b>		How the Center assesses SEA needs for Center TA, including assessment of existing SEA capacity to meet its goals.	See level 2 and 3 codes.
		<b>Data Review</b>	Center reviews existing data (such as student performance data) or studies that identify states' educational needs.	Center may reference data in a particular report such as a state inspector general's report or a report on national or state standardized test scores.
		<b>Meetings with SEA</b>	In-person or telephone meetings with SEA leaders and/or staff.	"Facilitated meetings twice per year plus weekly or monthly phone calls with project staff."
		<b>Surveys</b>	Surveys of constituents to assess needs.	Annual surveys or questionnaires administered before and after specific events.
		<b>Discussions with State Chiefs</b>	In-person or telephone meetings with chief state school officers (commissioners, superintendents, depending on the state).	May be individual meetings/calls, group retreats, or both.
		<b>Relationship Building</b>	Center staff develop relationships with chiefs and SEA staff (and others) and, through ongoing relationships, learn about and understand needs.	
		<b>Content Expertise</b>	Center staff (especially Content Centers) work in the priority area (e.g., early learning), understand national priorities and policies, and know the issues/ needs that states are facing.	"It is our business to know the emerging needs in the field." Some respondents referenced their knowledge of the most recent national studies.
		<b>Tracking Requests</b>	Centers have a system for monitoring and recording the requests that they receive from SEAs.	Several Centers have online tracking systems accessible to all staff. They may see "a pattern of needs" emerging that they can address.

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
		<b>Work with Partner Organization</b>	Centers draw on specialized organizations with intimate knowledge of state or content-specific needs.	Content Centers rely on Regional Centers to assess regional and state needs; Regional Centers rely on Content Centers to assess content-specific needs and share expertise.
		<b>SEA Initiated</b>	SEA initiates contact or topic with the Center, identifying a particular need for help.	"They [the SEA] now contacts us when they have a TA need."
		<b>Center Staff Embedded with SEA</b>	Staff of a few Centers were located in SEA offices in order to conduct ongoing needs sensing	Both Centers and TA recipients have described a few of these situations where Center staff work "on-site" at the SEA.
<b>Design</b>	<b>Developing Center Work Plan/Choosing Strategies</b>		Developing goals and strategies for each state	
		<b>Focus, efficiency</b>	Consideration of Center expertise, budget, staff, time; targeting to highest priorities and greatest likelihood of outcomes	"We go deep rather than wide"; "We think about priority in terms of resources and in terms of our ability to build to capacity ..."
		<b>Interactive Planning Process</b>	Back-and-forth between Center and SEA staff or state leaders informs TA plans.	"A continuous dialogue assessing Center strengths and state needs and where's the best fit." Some Centers use the term "transactional" to describe the process.
		<b>Build on Relationships and State/Local knowledge</b>	Center understands the SEA or constituent well enough to match strategies to needs/capabilities/goals.	if you come in and try to ... sell an initiative that doesn't align with their [situation], that will likely not go anywhere
<b>Design, Implementation, Outcomes</b>	<b>Broad TA Strategies</b>		Broad strategies for building capacity	
		<b>Cross-Policy Coordination</b>	The Center helps the SEA understand how policy areas intersect, helps the SEA coordinate with other agencies, or helps SEA divisions work together.	Center supports the application of curriculum standards to early childhood.
		<b>Modeling</b>	Modeling of a process by the Center in order for the SEA to learn and adopt a new process it can implement on its own.	Center organizes professional development presentations/work sessions for the SEA, using a format that the SEA can then replicate for use with LEAs.

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
		<b>Stakeholder Engagement/Facilitation</b>	Includes, but not limited to, meeting facilitation. Center helps SEA conduct outreach, convene meetings, obtain input.	
		<b>Cross-State Knowledge Building</b>	May include a variety of Center-run regional activities, sharing or dissemination of state promising practices. Includes Center activities such as training, web scans, resource libraries that synthesize information from various states. SEAs may or may not be actively meeting or working together.	Center supports peer learning networks. SEAs learn promising school turnaround strategies from each other.
		<b>Thought Partnering</b>	Center acts as a "critical friend" and provides a different perspective for SEA, helps SEA with problem solving and brainstorming; SEA intentionally brings Center in to tackle a particular issue.	Center staffer: "I think we've also helped them bring together a space where we can exchange ideas and brainstorm about what is best, and bring in resources from the outside ... helping to give them another perspective."
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>TA Activities</b>		Activities, products and services that operationalized the strategies	
		<b>Products, tools, resources</b>	Center-provided products may include policy scans, policy briefs, guidance documents, reports, toolkits	Center produces publication summarizing research on best practices in teacher evaluation.
		<b>Webinars</b>	Web-based meetings or trainings	Web-based training on teacher data use
		<b>In-person training or conference</b>	Center organizes, delivers in-person sessions	
		<b>Support for research</b>	Help SEA conduct, use research or arrange for experts to conduct research	Help with survey design and administration, help with analysis, manage pilot study of teacher evaluation
		<b>Meeting facilitation</b>	Overlaps with broad strategy on stakeholder management	
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>		Collaborating with other organizations on projects, especially other Centers	
		<b>Cross-Center Type</b>	Regional and Content Centers work together	The Centers co-facilitate project, with Regional Center providing state knowledge/access and Content Center providing content knowledge

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
		<b>Same Center Type</b>	Regional Center with another Regional Center, or Content Center with another Center	Collaboration enables Centers to extend their geographic reach or combine content areas
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcome measures</b>		Measures used to track project outcomes. Include any evidence or data that supports claim of outcomes	
		<b>Surveys</b>	Constituent Surveys include capacity-building (C-B) outcome measures	Center administers surveys to SEA staff members before and after project that measure knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors on a particular topic
		<b>Informal Methods</b>	Ad hoc discussions with constituents, anecdotes, informal observations	Center staff say "in our conversations with states, they tell us that the conference was very helpful"
		<b>Interviews</b>	Structured interviews	Center does structured interview, following a protocol, with SEA staff about their knowledge of pre-K assessments
		<b>Case Studies</b>	Structured case studies	Center staff systematically collect data from SEAs to examine changes in CB - includes interviews with key staff and collection of documents and surveys
		<b>Capacity -Building Rubric or matrix</b>	Application of structured capacity-building scale with indicators and performance levels	Center has a capacity inventory rubric with a scale: 1 = little or no development and implementation to 4 = exemplary level of development and implementation
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Goal Achievement</b>		<i>To what extent did project meet its goals? (or is meeting its goals , if still in process)</i>	"There really wasn't anything we really implemented that didn't come to fruition, so I think we pretty much met all of our goals."
<b>Implementation, Outcomes</b>	<b>Challenges</b>		Key Challenges to achieving specific outcomes. Only apply if TA recipient specifically identifies the challenge. Do not over interpret. If you cannot find a child node that fits, code to parent node & "Other" and annotate.	
		<b>SEA turnover</b>	Staff turnover at SEA (or TA Recipient) organization	New SEA person coming into role and having to re-orient to the project work, and get to

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
				know the Center and build relationship with the Center staff
		<b>SEA staff/time/resource constraints</b>	Difficulty scheduling time for SEA staff to participate	Constrained timeline, busy schedules, difficulty finding time for all to be involved and participate in project activities
		<b>Changing state policy or priorities</b>	Shifts in state priorities/strategies that disrupt project	"The work that we did with the XX Commission was under our previous superintendent, and with the transition of the administration, they sort of, you know, wanted to wipe the slate clean and so they even removed the report from our web site ..."
		<b>Center resources</b>	Includes financial or organizational resources; Center lacks sufficient resources to carry out the project as fully as desired	State had to bring in another TA provider because Center did not have budget/staff to continue or provide service any longer.
		<b>Misunderstanding of Center role</b>	Breakdown in communication or understanding; SEA may not understand the Center's scope; Center finds it difficult to establish relationship with SEA	Center has difficulty getting SEA to respond or to work together on a state plan because SEA staff are not familiar with Center/do not know how to use the Center.
		<b>Mismatch between SEA &amp; Fed priorities</b>	Federal policy, regulation or priorities change that affect the project progress/implementation	ESSA caused major shift in SEA's work
<b>Implementation, Outcomes</b>	<b>Address Challenges</b>		How <b>Center</b> addresses challenge. Double code with specific challenges when possible	
		<b>Persistence</b>	Center staff follow up consistently with constituents	Center staff maintain frequent, flexible communication, follow up on a regular basis and engage in creative problem solving with their SEA contacts to help keep attention on the project despite distractions or shifts.
		<b>Stakeholder Relationships/ Broad Buy-In</b>	Center builds on relationships with multiple stakeholders (including SEA and others) in order to foster long-term investment despite SEA turnover.	Center builds relationships with mid-level SEA staff and community organizations as well as with top leadership; also helps SEA build support with multiple constituencies
		<b>Flexibility</b>	Center makes adjustments in response to shifting priorities	Center shifts project focus when state funding for original initiative is cut off.

Interview Protocol	Category	Subcode	Definition	Example/Quotation from Data
Outcomes	Effective/ Ineffective Strategies		See TA Strategies and Activities Above. Double code with “Effective” or “Ineffective”	
Outcomes	Lessons Learned		Lessons learned or reinforced about capacity building, includes recommendations for the Centers	
		<b>Important to engage multiple stakeholders</b>	Successful TA requires involvement of diverse stakeholders within and/or beyond the SEA	Respondents report importance of going beyond the immediate constituent to engage (for example) multiple divisions within SEA, multiple agencies and organizations statewide, or district staff, teachers, and parents
		<b>Need for guidance on use of Centers</b>	TA recipients had initial difficulty identifying role for Centers and/or respondent recommends more upfront guidance or information about Centers	Respondents may refer to the confusing TA landscape and the need for more structured introduction to Centers (such as “menu of options”)
		<b>Increase/clarify focus on LEAs</b>	TA should help the SEAs work with LEAs and ultimately produce outcomes at local level	Respondents suggest TA needs to focus on SEA-LEA relationship, clarify what SEA aims to produce at LEA level
		<b>Promote sustainable practices</b>	Aim of Center TA should be to create knowledge and practices that constituent can apply to future initiatives	May mention need for Center to equip the constituents with tools, documents, processes that will outlast staff changes and priority shifts
		<b>Need for continuing support</b>	Regardless of capacity improvements, SEAs seek continuing Center support	Respondents note SEAs are not ready, or are too small, to carry the initiatives forward entirely without Center help

## Codebook for Technical Assistance Activity Types

The categorization scheme for the type of TA activity was determined by reviewing several fields from the first round of activity reports, including the activity description, activity milestone, service or product developed, project name, priority area, project goals, and TA type. Evaluators read and analyzed the data to look for distinct categories of TA types; they then developed definitions of the TA types that emerged. After the first data collection cycle, evaluators created drop-down menus for these categories so that they could be selected by Center survey respondents in subsequent rounds of data collection.

TA Type (Activity Level)	Definition	Examples
<b>Conference/ Summit</b>	<i>Engaging in activities leading to a convening held or organized by the Center; presentation at a conference</i>	Center cosponsored equity leadership conference with outside partner organization.
<b>Consultation</b>	<i>Serving as thought partner or content expert; reviewing resources and giving feedback (providing examples or information but not developing materials or deliverables); holding discussions or initial conversations; providing direct counsel or advice to stakeholders and partners; fielding calls</i>	Center advised SEA in determining which early learning initiative logic model outcomes are appropriate to measure and the processes and structures for measuring those outcomes. Center gave SEA examples of peer learning communities.
<b>Brokering Stakeholder Connections</b>	<i>Arranging connections between stakeholders, such as between SEAs, or between SEAs and a Content Center, REL, or other organization, mainly independent of meetings</i>	Center secured experts to provide TA to SEA as requested. Center introduced SEA to director of preK intermediary organization.
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<i>Analyses of data from interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.; leading root-cause analyses; summarizing findings</i>	Center shared summary of teacher survey results on English learning effectiveness and evaluation.
<b>Literature Review/ Reference List</b>	<i>Reviewing research or documents and preparing summaries leading to producing a tangible resource; conducting scans; developing collections of resources</i>	Center developed annotated bibliography on overview of approaches to kindergarten entry/readiness assessments.
<b>Meeting Facilitation</b>	<i>Taking a specific role in meetings, such as leading, organizing, or coordinating meetings with external stakeholders to help groups define and achieve meeting objectives. These events often convene multiple stakeholders with coordination by the Center. Planning meetings and preparing agendas.</i>	Center facilitated the early learning advisory committee's executive team quarterly meetings.
<b>Resource Provision</b>	<i>Generating new written resources designed to support stakeholders, including reports, presentations, and others</i>	Center produced first chapter of multiple-chapter series and created a product that will walk SEAs through a process to select their measurement goals and measures.
<b>Survey</b>	<i>Designing and implementing surveys</i>	Center generated ideas and examples of alternative ways to design a principal survey and shared these ideas with SEA.

TA Type (Activity Level)	Definition	Examples
<b>Webinar</b>	<i>Hosting, leading, developing, or participating in a webinar (the term “webinar” will be used)</i>	Center facilitated pre-planning meeting for a webinar on principal evaluation systems.
<b>Workshop/ Training</b>	<i>Leading or implementing a workshop or training; conducting staff orientations; conducting professional learning; coaching; leading in-person work sessions</i>	Center held SEA Race to the Top facilitators’ training.
<b>Web Development Support</b>	<i>Completing wireframes for website; reviewing or developing websites, including SharePoint sites; developing online media resources</i>	Center provided technical support to SEA regarding transferring paper-based system to online system.
<b>Other</b>	<i>This category captures all events that were not captured in the categories above.</i>	Center edited an SEA’s video professional development module.

## APPENDIX D: Additional Analyses

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Exhibits D-1 through D-25 provide additional details supporting or expanding on the findings presented in the report.

## Design

Exhibits D-1 through D-3 present results of design-focused interviews conducted with staff of the 22 Centers in 2015. Qualitative interview data were coded using the methods described in Appendix B. Code definitions are provided in Appendix C.

As illustrated in Exhibit D-1, all Centers reported that SEA staff knowledge and skills were a target of capacity building. Most Centers identified SEA organizational capacity and SEA capacity for policy implementation as additional dimensions of capacity that they targeted. A smaller number of Centers (eight) identified SEA capacity for policy design.

**Exhibit D-1. Centers' Capacity Building Definitions: Dimensions of Capacity**

Centers' Targeted Dimensions of SEA Capacity				
	SEA Staff's Knowledge and Skills	SEA Organizational Development	SEA Capacity for Policy Design	SEA Capacity for Policy Implementation
Regional Center 1				
Regional Center 2				
Regional Center 3				
Regional Center 4				
Regional Center 5				
Regional Center 6				
Regional Center 7				
Regional Center 8				
Regional Center 9				
Regional Center 10				
Regional Center 11				
Regional Center 12				
Regional Center 13				
Regional Center 14				
Regional Center 15				
<b>Regional Center Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>
Content Center 1				
Content Center 2				
Content Center 3				
Content Center 4				
Content Center 5				
Content Center 6				
Content Center 7				
<b>Content Center Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Center design-focused interviews, 2015.

Exhibit D-2 shows that most Centers also defined capacity building in terms of one or more of the principles of fostering ownership, promoting longer-term change, and promoting change in organizational processes. One Content Center did not identify these principles but focused its definition on the dimensions of capacity presented in Exhibit D-1, as they applied to the specific content area of this Center.

**Exhibit D-2. Centers’ Capacity Building Definitions: Principles of Capacity Building**

<b>Centers' Principles of Capacity Building</b>			
	<b>Fostering Ownership</b>	<b>Fostering Longer-Term Changes</b>	<b>Fostering Organizational Process Change</b>
Regional Center 1			
Regional Center 2			
Regional Center 3			
Regional Center 4			
Regional Center 5			
Regional Center 6			
Regional Center 7			
Regional Center 8			
Regional Center 9			
Regional Center 10			
Regional Center 11			
Regional Center 12			
Regional Center 13			
Regional Center 14			
Regional Center 15			
<b>Regional Center Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>
Content Center 1			
Content Center 2			
Content Center 3			
Content Center 4			
Content Center 5			
Content Center 6			
Content Center 7			
<b>Content Center Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

*Source: Center design-focused interviews, 2015.*

Exhibit D-3 illustrates needs assessment methods that Centers reported using. All Centers, with one exception, reported meetings with SEA staff and/or chief state school officers as a needs assessment method, but most Centers also supplemented with additional methods.

### Exhibit D-3. How Centers Assessed SEA Needs

	Meetings with SEAs	State-Initiated Request	Meetings with Chief State School Officers	Center's Knowledge of Needs in Field	Data Review	Partnerships	Tracking Requests	Surveys	Center Staff Embedded w/SEA
Regional Center 1									
Regional Center 2									
Regional Center 3									
Regional Center 4									
Regional Center 5									
Regional Center 6									
Regional Center 7									
Regional Center 8									
Regional Center 9									
Regional Center 10									
Regional Center 11									
Regional Center 12									
Regional Center 13									
Regional Center 14									
Regional Center 15									
<b>Regional Center Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
Content Center 1									
Content Center 2									
Content Center 3									
Content Center 4									
Content Center 5									
Content Center 6									
Content Center 7									
<b>Content Center Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Center design-focused interviews, 2015.

As stated in the report, almost all Center projects served SEAs, but most served other TA recipients as well, and projects serving LEAs increased over time (see Exhibit D- 4).

### Exhibit D-4. Affiliations of TA Recipients of Center Projects

Recipient Type	2015	2016	2017
	N= 152 projects	N= 187 projects	N= 186 projects
SEA	93%	94%	95%
LEA	16%	27%	43%
Regional Center	26%	16%	21%
Non-SEA state agency	8%	12%	6%
Content Center	3%	6%	5%
Other	28%	28%	29%

Source: Center activity reports, 2015-2017.

Percentages of projects serving these TA recipients in any project activities. Percentages can add up to more than 100% because projects could serve more than one constituent group. "Other" recipients include institutions of higher education, research centers, and professional associations.

## Implementation

Implementation data were collected through interviews, activity data, and Center staff survey data. Interview findings on Centers' broad TA strategies that were used in a sample of projects identified by the Centers to discuss are presented in Exhibit D-4. Activity reports provided more granular data on TA activities of 333 projects implemented across three years (Exhibits D-5 and D-6). The Center staff survey responses on collaborations with non-Center organizations (supplementing the cross-Center collaborations reported in the report) are presented in Exhibit D-7.

### TA Strategies and Activities

When describing TA strategies of projects that were the focus of interviews, Center staff most often identified thought partnering, followed by cross-state knowledge building, and stakeholder engagement; TA recipients most often identified stakeholder engagement, followed by thought partnering and cross-state knowledge building (Exhibit D-5). TA strategy code definitions are presented in Appendix C and are also discussed in the report.

**Exhibit D-5. Implementation of Broad TA Strategies: Interview Results**

TA Strategy	Percentage of projects for which strategy was identified (N = 44 projects discussed by both Center staff and TA recipients)	
	Center Staff Interviews	TA Recipient Interviews
Thought partnering	82%	68%
Cross-state knowledge building	75%	68%
Cross-policy coordination	52%	23%
Stakeholder Engagement/Facilitation	73%	82%
Modeling	48%	23%

Source: Center staff and TA recipient implementation interviews, 2015 and 2016.

Qualitative data from interviews were coded using methods described in Appendix B. TA strategy codes are described in Appendix C.

Exhibit D-6 presents the frequencies of TA activity types documented in activity reports, supporting the findings presented in the report. As noted in the report, projects most often included consultations and meeting facilitation activities. Other activities that were relatively common included product and resource provision, workshops, and brokering of stakeholder connections, which involved outreach, connections to experts and peers in other states, and arranging partnerships.

**Exhibit D-6. Types of TA Activities in Center Projects**

Technical Assistance Activities	Percentage of Projects Including Each Activity		
	All Centers (N = 333)	Regional Centers (N = 188)	Content Centers (N = 145)
Consultation	68%	78%	55%
Meeting facilitation	50%	59%	39%
Product/resource provision	35%	35%	34%
Workshop/training	29%	32%	24%
Brokering stakeholder connections	26%	32%	17%
Conference/summit	22%	27%	16%
Webinar	18%	20%	17%
Data analysis	17%	24%	8%
Web development support	17%	15%	18%
Survey	13%	20%	4%
Literature review/reference list	9%	10%	8%

Source: Center Activity reports on projects in the early learning and teacher/leader effectiveness priority areas, 2015-2017.

TA activity codes are defined in Appendix C.

As presented in Exhibit D-7, most projects included at least two different types of TA activities, and Regional Centers were more likely to include three or more activity types than Content Centers.

**Exhibit D-7. Mix of TA Activity Types per Project**

Number of Activity Types	Percentages of Projects		
	All Centers (N = 333)	Regional Centers (N = 188)	Content Centers (N = 145)
One Activity Type	25%	19%	32%
Two Activity Types	25%	20%	31%
Three or More Activity Types	50%	61%	37%

Source: Center Activity reports on projects in the early learning and teacher/leader effectiveness priority areas, 2015-2017.

Exhibit D-8 presents the distribution of the specific content focus, within the two key priority areas, of Center TA projects included in the activity reports. In the early learning area, projects most often focused on early learning quality improvement. In the teacher/leader effectiveness area, projects most often focused on educator equity plans.

**Exhibit D-8. Content Focus of Projects**

Content Focus	Percentage of Projects Overall (N = 333)	Percentage of Projects within each Priority Area
<b>Teachers/Leader Effectiveness (N = 236 Projects)</b>		
Equity plans and equitable access to quality teachers	20%	28%
Principal/leader evaluation	1%	1%
Principal/leader preparation/pipeline/recruitment	3%	5%
Principal/leader professional development	11%	15%
Principal/leader standards	2%	2%
Teacher evaluation	13%	18%
Teacher preparation, pipeline, and recruitment	3%	4%
Teacher professional development	16%	22%
Teacher standards	2%	3%
Other	2%	3%
<b>Early Learning (N = 97 Projects)</b>		
Early childhood education quality improvement	12%	41%
Early childhood education workforce	7%	24%
Early childhood assessment and standards	6%	22%
Early childhood data systems or data use	3%	9%
Other	1%	4%

Source: Activity reports, 2015-2017.

## Collaborations

Exhibit D-9 presents Center staff survey reports on project collaborations with non-Center organizations. These collaborations supplemented collaborations between Centers, as discussed in the report. Many projects reported several types of collaborations.

**Exhibit D-9. Non-Center Organizations Collaborating on Center Projects**

Types of Organizations	Percentage of Projects		
	All Centers (N = 279)	Regional Centers (N = 171)	Content Centers (N = 108)
Non-Center non-REL TA provider	29%	30%	27%
REL	22%	27%	13%
Institution of higher education	20%	21%	19%
Other	30%	29%	31%

Source: Center staff survey, 2015-2017.

Percentage of projects for which at least one Center staff reported collaboration with this type of organization.

REL refers to Regional Educational Laboratories. "Other" includes professional associations, nonprofit organizations, and research centers.

## Challenges

Center staff identified a variety of challenges in addition to the top challenges included in the report. Exhibit D-10 shows complete Center staff survey results for project challenges.

**Exhibit D-10. All Project Challenges Reported by Center Staff**

Project Challenges Reported by Center Staff	Percentage of Projects		
	All Centers	Regional Centers	Content Centers
	(N = 279)	(N = 171)	(N = 108)
Changing priorities at an SEA	54%	56%	52%
Turnover among state education agency (SEA) staff	52%	55%	48%
Meeting diverse needs across SEAs (and/or regions)	43%	40%	47%
Cuts in SEA staffing/budgets	42%	41%	44%
Project timeline constraints	39%	49%	24%
Policy shifts in a state government	38%	36%	40%
Turnover in chief state school officer and/or other SEA leadership	35%	37%	31%
Lack of communication within an SEA	34%	33%	34%
Lack of Center financial resources	24%	21%	28%
Difficulty establishing relationships with an SEA	17%	16%	19%
Constituent commitment or engagement	11%	12%	10%
Mismatch between stated SEA needs and Center federal priorities	10%	8%	15%
Lack of access to appropriate expertise	10%	9%	12%
Turnover among Center staff	9%	11%	5%
Competing priorities	8%	8%	7%
Data/information access	4%	4%	4%
Other	13%	9%	19%

Source: Center staff surveys, 2015-2017.

Project challenges reported by at least one staff member for each project.

“Other” challenges included limited SEA staff in the relevant policy area, delays in receiving information from SEA staff, political tensions, lack of communication across state agencies or between state and local agencies.

TA recipients were asked to select “all that apply” from a list of challenges they might have encountered in working with the Center. Exhibit D-11 shows that results were similar across years. Difficulty scheduling time to participate, staff turnover (in SEAs), and unclear understanding of the Centers’ role were the most frequently identified challenges throughout. However, in each year, over 60 percent of respondents did not report any challenges.

**Exhibit D-11. Challenges Reported by TA Recipients, by Year**

Challenges	Percentage of TA Recipients Reporting Challenge		
	All Centers N = 215	Regional Centers N = 133	Content Centers N = 82
<b>2015</b>			
Difficulty scheduling time for our staff to participate	12%	13%	10%
Staff turnover at our organization	11%	14%	5%
Unclear understanding of role of the Center	9%	9%	9%
Mis-alignment between our needs and Center priorities	7%	5%	9%
Insufficient number of in-person meetings with Center	5%	2%	10%
Delay in receiving needed TA	3%	4%	2%
Lack of Center understanding of our needs	3%	5%	1%
Staff turnover at Center	2%	2%	2%
Lack of skills/expertise by Center staff	2%	3%	0%
Difficulty in communication with Center	1%	1%	2%
Total selecting at least one challenge	37%	38%	34%
<b>2016</b>			
Difficulty scheduling time for our staff to participate	10%	16%	3%
Staff turnover at our organization	12%	17%	7%
Unclear understanding of role of the Center	7%	6%	9%
Mis-alignment between our needs and Center priorities	6%	5%	6%
Insufficient number of in-person meetings with Center	3%	4%	2%
Delay in receiving needed TA	2%	4%	0%
Lack of Center understanding of our needs	4%	5%	3%
Staff turnover at Center	2%	4%	0%
Lack of skills/expertise by Center staff	3%	6%	0%
Difficulty in communication with Center	2%	2%	2%
Total selecting at least one challenge	29%	37%	21%
<b>2017</b>			
Difficulty scheduling time for our staff to participate	14%	14%	14%
Staff turnover at our organization	9%	11%	6%
Unclear understanding of role of the Center	8%	10%	6%
Mis-alignment between our needs and Center priorities	5%	3%	7%
Insufficient number of in-person meetings with Center	4%	5%	3%
Delay in receiving needed TA	4%	4%	3%
Lack of Center understanding of our needs	4%	6%	2%
Staff turnover at Center	2%	3%	1%
Lack of skills/expertise by Center staff	2%	3%	1%
Difficulty in communication with Center	3%	3%	2%
Total selecting at least one challenge	32%	33%	32%

Source: TA recipient surveys, 2015-2017.

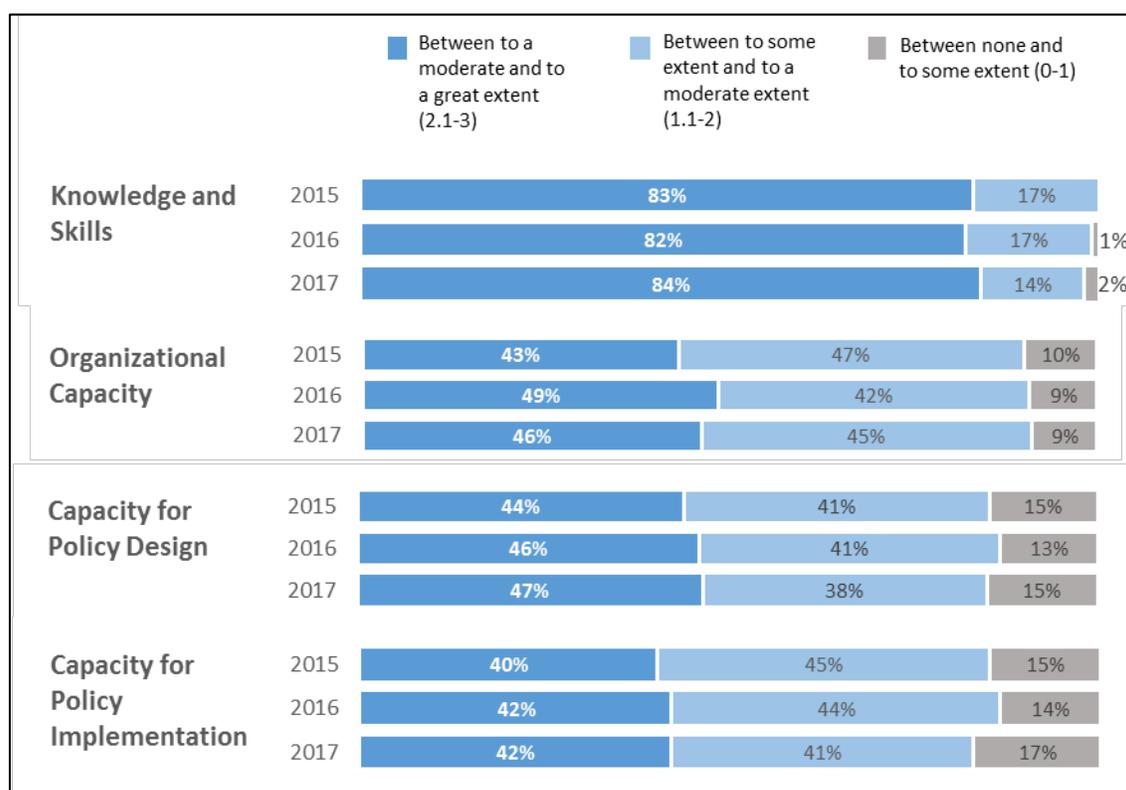
## Outcomes

### TA Recipient Ratings

Outcomes findings were based on survey data and interview data. While Center staff survey data were aggregated at the project level across years (see the report for outcomes reported by Center staff), TA recipient survey data were analyzed at the respondent level, separately for each of the three survey years. Many of the exhibits below add supporting detail to TA recipient survey findings in the report, presenting TA recipient survey results by year.

TA recipients' overall ratings for each capacity type varied little across years (Exhibit D-12).

**Exhibit D-12. TA Recipients' Ratings of the Extent to which Centers Contributed to Specific Types of Capacity, All Centers, By Year**



Source: TA Recipient Survey, 2015-2017.

Ratings of contributions to each capacity type were based on average ratings of items associated with that type (see Exhibits D-13 through D-17).

Exhibit D-13 presents results by Center type by year, separately for contributions to individual knowledge and skills, organizational capacity, capacity for policy design, and capacity for policy implementation. Over the three survey years, ratings of contributions to individual knowledge and skills varied little for TA recipients of either Center type. Ratings of contributions to organizational, policy design, and policy implementation domains improved over time among TA recipients of Content Centers.

**Exhibit D-13. TA Recipients' Ratings of the Extent to which Centers Contributed to Specific Types of Capacity, by Center Type, by Year**

<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>			
<b>Regional Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=129)</b>	<b>2016 (N=112)</b>	<b>2017 (N=113)</b>
0-1	0%	1%	3%
1.1-2	17%	14%	14%
2.1-3	83%	85%	83%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Content Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=78)</b>	<b>2016 (N=98)</b>	<b>2017 (N=114)</b>
0-1	0%	1%	1%
1.1-2	18%	19%	14%
2.1-3	82%	80%	85%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>			
<b>Regional Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=127)</b>	<b>2016 (N=110)</b>	<b>2017 (N=110)</b>
0-1	6%	8%	10%
1.1-2	47%	37%	43%
2.1-3	47%	55%	47%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Content Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=73)</b>	<b>2016 (N=94)</b>	<b>2017 (N=111)</b>
0-1	18%	11%	8%
1.1-2	46%	47%	47%
2.1-3	36%	42%	45%
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Policy Design</b>			
<b>Regional Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=110)</b>	<b>2016 (N=102)</b>	<b>2017 (N=104)</b>
0-1	12%	11%	13%
1.1-2	37%	37%	35%
2.1-3	51%	52%	52%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Content Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=67)</b>	<b>2016 (N=86)</b>	<b>2017 (N=102)</b>
0-1	19%	16%	18%
1.1-2	48%	44%	41%
2.1-3	33%	40%	41%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Policy Implementation</b>			
<b>Regional Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=117)</b>	<b>2016 (N=104)</b>	<b>2017 (N=105)</b>
0-1	10%	13%	16%
1.1-2	46%	37%	42%
2.1-3	44%	50%	42%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Content Centers</b>			
<b>Score Range</b>	<b>2015 (N=62)</b>	<b>2016 (N=73)</b>	<b>2017 (N=96)</b>
0-1	24%	15%	19%
1.1-2	44%	55%	38%
2.1-3	32%	30%	43%
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: TA recipient survey.

Based on the average of all items in the individual questions listed in Exhibits D-14 to D-17 for each type of capacity. TA recipients were asked to rate the Centers' capacity-building for each item using the following four-point scale: not at all (0), to some extent (1), to a moderate extent (2), to a great extent (3).

Exhibits D-14 through D-17 present the TA recipient survey items that were used to measure each of the four types of capacity. Item-level ratings from 0 (Centers did not contribute) to 3 (Centers contributed to a great extent) were averaged to produce results for each capacity type (Exhibit D-12). The exhibits below present disaggregated item-level results by Center type and by year, presenting the proportion of respondents who gave the highest ratings.

**Exhibit D-14. TA Recipients' Item-Level Ratings of Centers' Contributions by Year:  
Knowledge and Skills**

To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during the last 12 months helped you in the following ways?	Percentage of Respondents Reporting "To a Moderate Extent" OR "To a Great Extent"			
	Total N	All Centers	Regional Centers	Content Centers
<b>2015</b>				
Solve a problem	195	96%	96%	97%
Access the information you wanted	201	99%	99%	99%
Increase your knowledge and expertise in the topic	196	99%	98%	100%
Identify additional training events, webinars, and seminars of interest	176	92%	89%	96%
Build collaborations with professional experts outside your organization	193	91%	89%	95%
Access useful information or ideas from other states	195	93%	92%	95%
Learn about or obtain new tools that you can use in your work	195	94%	93%	96%
Learn new strategies that you can use in your work	191	94%	93%	96%
Perform your job in a more informed and efficient way	193	95%	96%	95%
<b>2016</b>				
Solve a problem	195	96%	99%	92%
Access the information you wanted	197	99%	100%	98%
Increase your knowledge and expertise in the topic	202	98%	98%	98%
Identify additional training events, webinars, and seminars of interest	191	85%	89%	81%
Build collaborations with professional experts outside your organization	195	92%	92%	92%
Access useful information or ideas from other states	204	92%	92%	93%
Learn about or obtain new tools that you can use in your work	202	94%	95%	93%
Learn new strategies that you can use in your work	197	92%	94%	90%
Perform your job in a more informed and efficient way	198	94%	93%	96%
<b>2017</b>				
Solve a problem	215	94%	92%	97%
Access the information you wanted	223	98%	97%	98%
Increase your knowledge and expertise in the topic	221	97%	96%	98%
Identify additional training events, webinars, and seminars of interest	203	90%	87%	93%
Build collaborations with professional experts outside your organization	215	92%	90%	94%
Access useful information or ideas from other states	219	92%	88%	96%
Learn about or obtain new tools that you can use in your work	214	96%	95%	97%
Learn new strategies that you can use in your work	218	95%	95%	95%
Perform your job in a more informed and efficient way	213	92%	89%	95%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Total N = Number of respondents selecting a rating; respondents selecting "not applicable" are excluded. Regional Center Ns range from 108-126 in 2015; 100-108 in 2016; and 95-110 in 2017. Content Center Ns range from 68-75 in 2015; 87-95 in 2016; and 106-113 in 2017.

**Exhibit D-15. TA Recipients' Item-Level Ratings of Centers' Contributions:  
Organizational Capacity**

To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during the last 12 months helped <i>your organization</i> in the following ways?	Percentage of Respondents Reporting "To a Moderate Extent" OR "To a Great Extent"			
	Total N	All Centers	Regional Centers	Content Centers
<b>2015</b>				
Partner more with external experts	177	86%	88%	83%
Identify other needs for information	130	83%	86%	79%
Incorporate the new information into internal procedures and processes	172	80%	86%	69%
Improve communication channels across state agencies	143	69%	69%	67%
Develop and implement internal staff trainings	159	71%	80%	57%
Redesign state agency structures, teams, and departments	140	54%	55%	54%
<b>2016</b>				
Partner more with external experts	179	91%	94%	87%
Identify other needs for information	136	85%	93%	74%
Incorporate the new information into internal procedures and processes	168	83%	89%	73%
Improve communication channels across state agencies	162	75%	73%	77%
Develop and implement internal staff trainings	164	76%	82%	69%
Redesign state agency structures, teams, and departments	147	61%	58%	64%
<b>2017</b>				
Partner more with external experts	201	87%	88%	86%
Identify other needs for information	148	87%	86%	89%
Incorporate the new information into internal procedures and processes	196	81%	86%	76%
Improve communication channels across state agencies	178	76%	72%	80%
Develop and implement internal staff trainings	178	71%	74%	68%
Redesign state agency structures, teams, and departments	163	56%	50%	61%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Total N = Number of respondents selecting a rating; respondents selecting "not applicable" are excluded. Regional Center Ns range from 77-111 in 2015; 74-100 in 2016; 76-100 in 2017. Content Center Ns range from 53-66 in 2015; 62-79 in 2016; 72-103 in 2017.

**Exhibit D-16. TA Recipients' Item-Level Ratings of Centers' Contributions:  
Capacity for Policy Design**

To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during the last 12 months helped <i>your organization</i> in the following ways?	Percentage of Respondents Reporting "To a Moderate Extent" OR "To a Great Extent"			
	Total N	All Centers	Regional Centers	Content Centers
<b>2015</b>				
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of great teachers and leaders	163	85%	90%	77%
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of early learning	114	65%	69%	61%
<b>2016</b>				
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of great teachers and leaders	173	89%	94%	83%
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of early learning	134	66%	67%	65%
<b>2017</b>				
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of great teachers and leaders	194	88%	90%	86%
Shape new and existing programs and policies in the area of early learning	153	69%	74%	64%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Total N = Number of respondents selecting a rating; respondents selecting "not applicable" are excluded. Regional Center Ns were 58 (shape new policies in early learning) and 107 in 2015; 66 and 96 in 2016; 78 and 99 in 2017. Content Center Ns were 56 for both items in 2015; 68 and 77 in 2016; 75 and 95 in 2017.

**Exhibit D-17. TA Recipients' Item-Level Ratings of Centers' Contributions:  
Capacity for Policy Implementation**

To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance you received during the last 12 months helped your organization in the following ways?	Percentage of Respondents Reporting "To a Moderate Extent" OR "To a Great Extent"			
	Total N	All Centers	Regional Centers	Content Centers
<b>2015</b>				
Improve communication channels with LEAs	157	74%	81%	60%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of great teachers and leaders	158	85%	92%	73%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of early learning	101	61%	64%	58%
<b>2016</b>				
Improve communication channels with LEAs	157	78%	83%	69%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of great teachers and leaders	159	91%	93%	89%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of early learning	115	57%	58%	55%
<b>2017</b>				
Improve communication channels with LEAs	173	75%	76%	74%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of great teachers and leaders	176	82%	85%	80%
Provide better support to LEAs in the area of early learning	135	62%	68%	55%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Total N = Number of respondents selecting a rating; respondents selecting "not applicable" are excluded. Regional Center Ns range from 53-106 in 2015; 60-99 in 2016; and 68-91 in 2017. Content Center Ns range from 48-52 in 2015; 55-64 in 2016; and 67-85 in 2017. Lowest Ns for both types of Centers were for "Provide better support to LEAs in the area of early learning."

TA recipient survey respondents were asked to select from a list of actions in which they might have engaged using the Centers' TA. Exhibit D-18 shows that results were similar across years, although overall reported use of Centers' information in developing new processes/projects/programs, in developing drafting internal memos/plans/reports, and to overcome a barrier or challenge declined somewhat after 2015.

**Exhibit D-18. TA Recipient Actions Reported, by Year**

TA Recipient Actions Using Materials Provided by the Centers	Percentage of TA Recipients		
	Total	Regional Centers	Content Centers
<b>2015</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Regional Centers</b>	<b>Content Centers</b>
	<b>N = 215</b>	<b>N = 133</b>	<b>N = 82</b>
Made recommendations to SEA leadership or staff	61%	56%	70%
Used the information in developing new processes/projects/programs	68%	75%	57%
Used the information in drafting internal memos/plans/reports	63%	68%	55%
Used the information to overcome a barrier or challenge	52%	56%	45%
<b>Reported at least one of the above actions</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Regional Centers</b>	<b>Content Centers</b>
	<b>N = 214</b>	<b>N = 112</b>	<b>N = 102</b>
Made recommendations to SEA leadership or staff	63%	63%	63%
Used the information in developing new processes/projects/programs	58%	76%	39%
Used the information in drafting internal memos/plans/reports	61%	71%	51%
Used the information to overcome a barrier or challenge	43%	51%	33%
<b>Reported at least one of the above actions</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Regional Centers</b>	<b>Content Centers</b>
	<b>N= 231</b>	<b>N= 115</b>	<b>N= 116</b>
Made recommendations to SEA leadership or staff	64%	61%	66%
Used the information to develop new processes/projects/programs	63%	69%	58%
Used the information in drafting internal memos/plans/reports	57%	64%	50%
Used the information to overcome a barrier or challenge	46%	50%	42%
<b>Reported at least one of the above actions</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>84%</b>

Source: TA recipient survey.

## Outcome Measures Used by Centers

Evaluators used interview data and review of Centers' Year 4 evaluation reports to examine outcome measures used by the Centers.<sup>24</sup> Centers' evidence for having achieved the project outcomes they described or reported included a combination of formal methods, such as surveys and interviews, and informal methods, such as ongoing discussions, project progress tracking, and reflections.

Center interview respondents were most likely to identify the use of surveys (86% of projects) and informal methods (89%) as the sources of evidence for having achieved project outcomes (Exhibit D-19). Informal methods included informal observations of constituent activities, progress tracking, conversations with constituents, and team reflections. Over two-thirds of Center respondents (67%) identified interviews as an approach used in measuring outcomes. A smaller percentage of respondents mentioned using case studies to aid in the measurement of outcomes of these projects (17%). Regional and Content Center staff reported similar methods.

**Exhibit D-19. Centers' Sources of Evidence for Project Outcomes  
As Reported in Center Staff Interviews**

Methods of Measuring Outcomes	Total (N = 36 projects)	Regional Centers (N = 25 projects)	Content Centers (N = 11 projects)
Surveys	86%	84%	91%
Informal methods	89%	88%	91%
Interviews	67%	68%	64%
Case studies	17%	12%	27%

Source: Center staff interviews, 2017.

Center staff respondents described several types of informal methods for assessing project outcomes: informal observations, in which Center staff observed and took notes on the TA recipients' progress to look for follow-through or ongoing participation (16 projects); program performance tracking in a Center database, which might track projects through program indicators or through a narrative (nine projects); informal constituent feedback through conversations (nine projects); and Center staff team discussions and reflection (five projects).

Formal methods Centers used to collect data to evaluate outcomes of projects described in interviews included surveys, interviews, and case studies. Evaluation reports for 2016, as shown in Exhibit D-20, confirmed that all Centers used surveys, interviews, or both, to measure outcomes of their projects. Some evaluation reports also included case studies that described or analyzed project outcomes, especially capacity-building outcomes.

Although surveys sometimes focused on customer satisfaction with the quality, relevance, and usefulness of Centers' work (as required for Government Performance and Results Act

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<sup>24</sup> Centers were required to submit annual evaluation reports to the U.S. Department of Education. Evaluation reports reviewed for this discussion were submitted in early 2017, reporting on Centers' work in 2016, Year 4 of the grant.

reporting), they also included questions about project outcomes, including capacity-building outcomes. Some Centers included questions about capacity building and other outcomes that were designed separately for each survey or interview. Others administered capacity-building rubrics as part of interviews or surveys; capacity-building rubrics are assessment tools specifying capacity-building dimensions or goals along with indicators or performance measures associated with each dimension. The rubrics might be administered by evaluators, Center staff, or the TA recipients themselves to produce ratings on each dimension, which can be compared over time to measure growth.

**Exhibit D-20. Outcome Measures Used in Centers’ Evaluation Reports, 2016**

Measure	Regional Centers (N = 15)	Content Centers (N = 7)
<b>Data collection tools that included outcomes measures</b>		
Interviews alone	3	0
Surveys alone	4	2
Both interviews and surveys	8	5
<b>Type of surveys</b>		
Post-event	8	1
Annual or other regular interval	8	6
Other (post-project or pre- and post-project)	1	1
<b>Case studies</b>		
Teacher/leader case studies	11	2
Early learning case studies	5	0
<b>A capacity-building tool or rubric was included in evaluation report</b>		
Yes	7	2
No	4	2
Data collection tools were informed by questions related to capacity building, but no rubric was included in the report.*	4	3

Source: Center evaluation reports, 2016.

\*Centers may have used rubrics that were not included in the 2016 evaluation reports.

## Effective Strategies

In interviews, Center staff and TA recipients were asked to describe project outcomes and identify TA Center strategies and activities that they found to be particularly effective in producing these outcomes. Exhibit D-21 shows that both Center staff and TA recipients identified centers' products and resources most often. Center staff were more likely than TA recipients to identify thought partnering, modeling, and training as effective strategies. Both respondent groups identified stakeholder engagement/facilitation as an effective strategy for over 40% of projects.

**Exhibit D-21. Effective Strategies and Activities as Reported by Interview Respondents**

Effective Strategies	Center Interviews			TA Recipient Interviews (N = 31 projects)
	Total (N = 36 projects)	Regional Centers (N = 25 projects)	Content Centers (N = 11 projects)	
Products and resources	67%	56%	91%	74%
Thought partnering	56%	68%	27%	35%
In-person training sessions	44%	44%	45%	29%
Stakeholder Engagement/ Facilitation	44%	52%	27%	55%
Modeling	42%	48%	27%	6%
Cross-state knowledge building	25%	20%	36%	35%
Data analysis	17%	12%	27%	6%
Linkages across policy areas	17%	16%	18%	0%

Source: Center staff and TA recipient outcomes interviews, 2017.

Percentages indicate proportions of projects for which the strategy was identified as effective in producing capacity outcomes. Respondents identified multiple strategies for some projects.

On the TA recipient survey, respondents were asked to write responses to the open-ended question, "Please describe the aspects of the services and/or resources that have been most helpful and why?" Exhibit D-22 shows that the patterns of responses were similar across years. There appeared to be some differences between Content Centers and Regional Centers. For example, TA recipients of Content Centers were more likely than those of Regional Centers to identify Centers' products and resources.

**Exhibit D-22. Most Helpful Center Services Reported by TA Recipients, By Year**

Service or Resource	Percentage of TA Recipients Reporting Service or Resource as Among the Most Helpful		
	All Centers (N = 215)	Regional Centers (N = 133)	Content Centers (N = 82)
<b>2015</b>			
Provision of products and resources	26%	23%	32%
Access to experts	20%	23%	16%
Responsiveness	15%	13%	20%
Meeting facilitation	13%	17%	5%
Support for product or plan	9%	10%	7%
Relationships	9%	10%	7%
Cross-state peer sharing	8%	8%	10%
Thought partnering	7%	6%	7%
Training	6%	7%	5%
No response	31%	31%	31%
<b>2016</b>	<b>(N = 214)</b>	<b>(N = 112)</b>	<b>(N = 102)</b>
Provision of products and resources	34%	25%	43%
Access to experts	20%	22%	18%
Responsiveness	10%	9%	12%
Meeting facilitation	11%	17%	5%
Support for product or plan	12%	15%	8%
Relationships	11%	11%	12%
Cross-state peer sharing	8%	8%	9%
Thought partnering	8%	7%	8%
Training	8%	5%	12%
No response	27%	25%	28%
<b>2017</b>	<b>(N = 231)</b>	<b>(N = 115)</b>	<b>(N = 116)</b>
Provision of products and resources	33%	26%	41%
Access to experts	20%	22%	18%
Responsiveness	11%	10%	11%
Meeting facilitation	8%	10%	7%
Support for product or plan	13%	17%	10%
Relationships	9%	8%	10%
Cross-state peer sharing	10%	11%	10%
Thought partnering	8%	10%	6%
Training	14%	10%	17%
No response	29%	32%	25%

Source: TA Recipient Survey.

Write-in responses were coded using codes described in Appendix C.

The TA recipient survey also posed open-ended questions that asked respondents to write about the Center services that were least helpful and about needs that were not met by the

Centers. As shown in Exhibits D-23 and D-24, most survey respondents either left these blank or responded that all services were helpful and all needs were met. About 10 to 20 percent of survey respondents each year affirmatively noted a problem with some aspect of Centers’ services.

**Exhibit D-23. TA Recipient Reports on Least Helpful Services of Centers**

Responses regarding least helpful services	2015 (N = 215)	2016 (N = 214)	2017 (N = 231)
All helpful	47%	45%	44%
Relevance or quality concerns with certain services or products	13%	12%	10%
Had concerns about availability, accessibility or timeliness of Center staff	5%	1%	2%
SEA limitations made it difficult for respondent to use the Center’s TA	2%	3%	1%
Respondent is “Not Sure” or answer is unclear and cannot be coded	1%	2%	3%
No response	30%	36%	42%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Write-in responses were coded using methods described in Appendix C.

**Exhibit D-24. TA Recipient Reports on Needs Not Met by Center**

Responses regarding needs not met	2015 (N = 215)	2016 (N = 214)	2017 (N = 231)
All needs were met	56%	48%	43%
Would like more resources, connections, or TA in some priority areas	4%	5%	5%
Center staff changes caused confusion/would have liked more clarity or consistency	1%	<1%	1%
Don’t Know Yet/Other	1%	2%	<1%
No response	39%	52%	51%

Source: TA recipient survey.

Write-in responses were coded using methods described in Appendix C.

Center staff were asked on the survey to select the most significant supports (up to three) from a list provided for each project on which they worked (Exhibit D-25). Regional Centers and Content Centers had some differences. For example, Regional Centers were more likely than Content Centers to identify relationships with SEA staff and leadership, while Content Centers were more likely than Regional Centers to identify collaborations with Regional Comprehensive Centers. However, about half of respondents from both types of Centers identified collaboration with the other type of Center as a significant support (46% of respondents from Regional Centers identified collaborations with Content Centers, and 55% of respondents from Content Centers identified collaborations with Regional Centers).

**Exhibit D-25. Project Supports Reported by Center Staff**

Supports for Projects	Percentage of Projects for Which at Least One Center Staff Reported This Support		
	All Centers (N = 279)	Regional Centers (N = 171)	Content Centers (N = 108)
Content expertise among Center staff	87%	87%	87%
Knowledge of state context among Center staff	75%	79%	69%
Strong relationships between Center staff and SEA staff	62%	69%	52%
Strong relationships between Center staff and SEA leadership	58%	70%	40%
SEA Leadership commitment to the project	49%	55%	40%
Supportive leadership in Center	48%	46%	52%
Collaboration with Content Comprehensive Center	39%	46%	28%
Expertise among SEA staff	37%	41%	31%
Collaboration with Regional Comprehensive Center	33%	19%	55%
Collaboration with a subcontractor	14%	15%	12%
Collaboration with a professional association (e.g., ASCD, CCSSO)	10%	7%	15%
Collaboration with a Regional Education Laboratory	9%	10%	8%
Collaboration with an institution of higher education	7%	8%	5%
Collaboration with a government agency	6%	4%	10%

Source: Center staff survey, 2015-2017.

## APPENDIX E: Project Profiles

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Evaluators developed two case studies to illustrate how a project’s design, implementation, and outcomes played out within a specific state policy context. The two projects, one in each priority area, were purposefully selected from the pool of projects discussed in interviews with Center staff and TA recipients. These projects were selected because they spanned multiple years and were illustrative of the various needs, strategies, challenges, and results that were reported for Centers as a group in the report. However, these projects are not necessarily representative of all projects examined in the report, and these profiles should primarily be viewed as a source of richer description on design, implementation, and outcomes, to supplement the more general findings presented in the report.

## Mississippi Early Childhood: Southeast Comprehensive Center

Project Overview	
<b>Constituents</b>	Mississippi Department of Education (Office of Early Childhood, Office of Early Intervention Services, Office of Special Education, Federal Programs Office), Mississippi Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood Care and Development
<b>Major partner</b>	Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO, which is a Content Center)
<b>State policy goals</b>	Improve early learning statewide; ensure the success of the state-funded early learning collaboratives in Mississippi
<b>Center TA objectives</b>	Support state-funded pre-K in Mississippi with early learning guidelines and standards, a monitoring tool, and a continuous improvement approach to implementation of a state-funded early learning initiative

### Needs Assessment and Project Development

The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) began conducting needs sensing with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) at the beginning of the grant period in late 2012 to support the improvement of early learning programs in the state. Center staff conducted needs-sensing interviews with the state-level early childhood staff in Mississippi. They also used the results of their own needs-sensing survey and a needs-sensing survey administered by the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) to gain an understanding of the state’s current status in providing early childhood education and to clarify the state education agency’s (SEA) goals in this area.

MDE’s goals and requests for assistance from the Center were informed in part by the state’s participation in an early childhood regional “community of practice,” coordinated by SECC and supported by CEELO. Through the community of practice meetings and online discussions with other states, staff of MDE and the state’s Department of Human Services gained ideas for how they might develop a publically funded high-quality early childhood infrastructure in Mississippi, and also developed a relationship with the SECC and CEELO staff.

As the state’s plans evolved, its needs for specialized TA grew. Initially, MDE staff requested help from the SECC in facilitating an early childhood stakeholder workgroup and supporting the workgroup in reviewing and updating the state’s early learning guidelines, which at that time included guidelines (basic requirements regarding class sizes and teacher qualifications), standards (skill and learning objectives), and teaching strategies all together in one complex document.

In 2013, the state passed legislation to fund community-based collaboratives expected to start, support, and expand early childhood education services.<sup>25</sup> When MDE created its first Office of Early Childhood in 2014, and officially hired a director in 2015, the new staff identified emerging needs for building the state’s early childhood education infrastructure and improving

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<sup>25</sup> Mississippi passed the Early Learning Collaborative Act in 2013 and funded the first round of 11 collaboratives to support and facilitate the implementation of pre-K programs. Today, there are 14 collaboratives across the state. See <http://www.mississippifirst.org/education-policy/pre-kindergarten/early-learning-mississippi/>.

the implementation of the collaboratives. While SECC continued to assist with the revisions to the early learning guidelines and standards, the Center also offered support for selecting an early learning assessment, creating a tool to help MDE monitor implementation of the collaboratives, and developing a continuous quality improvement process for the collaboratives. Later, the Office of Early Childhood director also requested help with her work related to developing a high-quality early childhood workforce.

The Office of Early Childhood director explained that the SECC staff communicated regularly to ask about her needs and she “had a list for them.” Because MDE had never before had an Office of Early Childhood, “we just had this long list of things that we needed,” including information about “research, policy, definitions, and other states’ plans.” When working with the stakeholder group on the development of plans or proposals, the director would email the SECC and CEELO as needed and “in a day or so, we were able to get a document that would help support the work.”

### **Center TA Strategies and Activities**

Initially, at the request of the Chief Academic Officer at MDE, the SECC took the lead on facilitating the meetings of MDE’s early childhood stakeholder workgroup, an inter-organizational group focused on the goal of providing high quality early childhood education programs across the state. The Center provided support for MDE’s and the workgroup’s standards development and also developed additional resources for them to use. In SECC’s first year, they reviewed alignment of the MDE age 3 and 4 early learning standards with the Head Start early learning framework and recommendations from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and also with MDE’s K-12 standards. The Center also provided “mastery examples”—examples of child skill mastery—to guide teaching in six of eight teaching domains aligned with the early learning standards. In the second year, SECC continued to facilitate stakeholder meetings, focusing on the implementation of the early learning standards and teaching domains, and produced mastery examples for the final two teaching domains.

In SECC’s third year, MDE hired a director of the Office of Early Childhood who took over the facilitation role for the stakeholder workgroup, so the Center’s role changed to that of being a thought partner for the new director. As such, the Center provided consultation on issues identified by the director, including continuous improvement of the collaboratives and other early childhood services, research on best practices, and examples from other states. To support continuous program improvement, SECC staff reviewed and guided the design of a program monitoring tool and processes for providing programs with feedback and coaching. SECC and CEELO also provided information on high-quality early childhood programming, how to define school readiness, and how to select an early learning assessment.

In the Centers’ fourth year, SECC assisted MDE in bringing teachers and administrators into the early childhood stakeholder workgroup meetings, and revising the early learning standards and mastery examples based on their input. SECC, CEELO, and the MDE director of early childhood continued to meet monthly to brainstorm on implementation of these standards.

Over time, the Center’s work expanded to include educator workforce development. MDE and SECC worked collaboratively with institutions of higher education to align early childhood teacher preparation programs with the early learning standards. To support this collaboration, SECC supported CEELO with facilitating a “learning table” (learning community) that brought universities and MDE together in discussions.

### **Project Challenges and How the Center Addressed Them**

The SECC and MDE faced challenges on this project. The challenges and the Centers’ approach to addressing them include:

- **Changing priorities, cuts in MDE staffing/budgets, and timeline constraints.** MDE staff faced time, budgetary, and staff constraints. They also dealt with competing priorities among early learning staff, especially with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) planning going on at the same time. The Center adjusted the pace of work to accommodate MDE staff availability and provided resources, such as guidelines for supporting students with disabilities and dual language learners, and summaries of early childhood policies in other states, to save MDE staff time. Center staff supported MDE staff to write a grant for more staffing and helped them to delegate tasks.
- **Limited Center resources and meeting diverse needs.** The SECC staff member with the greatest early learning expertise was also working on several other projects and had limited time available. SECC brought in their Mississippi state liaison and subcontractor staff to adequately support the early learning work with MDE. The collaboration with CEELO also enabled SECC to draw on additional staff and resources.

### **Effective TA Strategies and Activities**

Center staff and TA recipients reported that the TA strategies and activities listed below were particularly effective. Through these strategies, the Center served as a flexible thought partner and facilitator of stakeholder workgroup meetings, provided tools, and helped overcome project challenges.

- **Meeting facilitation and stakeholder engagement,** especially by increasing the number of teachers on the stakeholder workgroup. TA recipients reported appreciating that facilitators from the SECC treated them as intelligent professionals who, with the right information, could solve their own problems. Workgroup members were encouraged to come up with solutions and measure the results. TA recipients also appreciated that SECC staff could be available in-person for meetings and consultations.
- **Modeling facilitation strategies.** The SECC modeled facilitation strategies for the early childhood director and gradually turned facilitation of the stakeholder workgroup meetings over to the director. As one TA recipient explained, the Center would also model how district leaders could engage with their peers over the data.
- **Cross-Center collaboration to provide extensive early learning resources and cross-state knowledge building.** The SECC and CEELO provided MDE and the stakeholder workgroup with resources on early learning standards and assessment, guidance materials, and continuous improvement processes. Some of these materials drew on

evidence-based early learning practices from other states. The Center also provided opportunities for SEA staff to meet with their counterparts from other states as well as provided state agencies' contact information, so SEA staff could initiate conversations as needed.

- **Thought partnering and ongoing consultation.** Center staff said that monthly calls between SECC staff and SEA staff were effective in building a collaborative relationship. TA staff reported that they valued the availability and the quality of the information provided, and used the information to inform their work.

### Project Outcomes

Both the Center staff and TA recipients reported that Center work had enhanced MDE staff's knowledge and skills, and organizational, policy design, and policy implementation capacity in the early learning area. In addition, the Center helped MDE achieve the goals of its initiative. Center staff and TA recipients credited the Center's TA with the following project outcomes:

- **Knowledge and skills.** Center staff reported MDE staff gained content and policy knowledge, greater awareness of the complexity of the work, and learned how to plan. TA recipients reported gaining knowledge, with the Center's help, of early learning policies in other states that informed their approach.
- **Organizational capacity.** Center staff reported that MDE refined its internal division of labor for early learning, which increased interagency communication and collaboration. Both Center staff and TA recipients reported that MDE developed its capacity to involve stakeholders in decision making; MDE recruited stakeholders and established a facilitated process to obtain their input.
- **Policy design capacity.** Center staff said MDE implemented a process to review and refine documents, and noted that MDE had received national recognition for aligning its early learning and ESSA plans. TA recipients reported MDE used information provided by the Center and its partners about other states to avoid mistakes in policy development, and that MDE worked with Head Start and other childcare providers in the state to bridge early learning policy and increase alignment.
- **Policy implementation capacity.** Center staff reported MDE carried out a deliberate, inclusive, and staged rollout of the early learning policy and implemented a continuous improvement process. TA recipients said that MDE is still using its Center-influenced continuous improvement process.

In addition, the TA recipients reported that the Center helped them achieve state policy goals. With materials and support provided by the Center, MDE implemented policies, procedures, monitoring tools, and assessments to evaluate and continuously improve collaboratives and to position the program for growth. In SECC's fifth year, the state early learning collaboratives met all 10 benchmarks for minimum state preschool quality standards from the National Institute for Early Education Research. Center-provided support and tools supported this achievement.

## Arizona Educator Effectiveness: West Comprehensive Center

Project Overview	
<b>Constituents</b>	Arizona Department of Education (ADE)
<b>Major partners</b>	Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West, Center for Great Teachers & Leaders (GTL, which is a Content Center)
<b>State goals</b>	Strengthen educator workforce, identify needs of teachers and leaders for support and professional development; ensure equitable access to effective educators; develop strategies for recruitment and retention to address a severe teacher shortage and shrinking pipeline
<b>Center objectives</b>	Build knowledge of evidence-based practices for improving teacher effectiveness, build organizational and policy capacity to help ADE better organize itself and use its resources effectively to accomplish state goals

### Needs Assessment and Project Development

Staff of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) participated in a regional collaborative on educator effectiveness organized by the West Comprehensive Center (WCC) to identify and address common needs. WCC brought state education agency (SEA) teams from five states together two to three times per year (beginning in 2010), with additional meetings or webinars as needed to focus on state priorities such as educator evaluation systems and the development of equity plans or Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plans. WCC supplemented the collaborative meetings with calls or meetings with SEA staff and chief state school officers to identify state-specific needs, and to plan and implement Center TA for each state.

Center staff met each year with the Arizona superintendent, associate superintendents, and SEA lead staff to review the state’s priorities, identify how WCC would assist ADE, and develop specific action plans to guide the Center’s work on teacher effectiveness with the state. Each annual plan was treated as a “living document,” according to one SEA staffer, and was adapted throughout the year as needed. Over time, WCC also helped ADE staff identify needs based on data such as results of pilot studies of the new teacher evaluation system, and an examination of geographic distribution and trends in teacher shortages throughout the state.

ADE initially requested help with improving its educator evaluation system to meet state statute, state board policy, and Race to the Top requirements. Over time ADE also asked WCC for advice or assistance in implementing a new evaluation system with local education agencies (LEAs), especially by training evaluators, and using evaluation data for feedback and teacher professional development. ADE staff also asked for TA to help them plan equitable access to high-quality educators across schools and to consider new initiatives on recruitment and retention to address the state’s teacher shortage.

### Center TA Strategies and Activities

Between 2014 and 2016, WCC facilitated a pilot study of the implementation of Arizona’s state teacher evaluation framework. The Center created an initial plan for the study and brought in REL West researchers to develop the study design and do the analysis. WCC collected the interview and survey data used in the study from districts and schools, worked with REL West

to report on findings, and worked with ADE to develop lessons and recommendations based on the study. Study findings were used to inform the training of principals and other evaluators. Each year, the Center also worked with ADE to plan an educator summit on teacher/leader effectiveness, bringing together about 400-500 LEA staff from around the state. The Center brought in speakers and facilitated sessions at the summit.

Beginning in 2016, the Center supported ADE in delivering a “Qualified Evaluator Academy” for principals, assistant principals, and other educators involved in educator evaluation. WCC staff sat in on sessions and gave feedback to ADE. The Center planned and led a workshop for ADE and LEA staff on using educator data to design “talent management,” including decision-making about coaching and professional development, retention, and promotions. The Center facilitated a retreat with staff of ADE’s Effective Teacher and Leader Division to discuss division goals and objectives, strategies, expected outcomes, and performance metrics.

Also in 2016 WCC invited ADE staff to join a cross-regional state collaborative led by the GTL Center, which brought together states that had developed evaluation systems and sought to share information about lessons learned and generate ideas on how to move forward with the next iteration of these systems. WCC continued to follow up with ADE staff on these issues between meetings.

WCC worked with all of the states in the region on their equity plans during regional meetings, and consulted independently with ADE by helping them review data on teacher shortages and connecting them with REL West to examine state workforce trends. The Center also helped ADE plan meetings with LEAs to discuss implementation of equitable access including how to retain quality educators through opportunities for career advancement and leadership development.

Upon the passage of ESSA, WCC met with the ADE superintendent, associates, and staff to work on development of the state ESSA plan. The Center led several discussion sessions with ADE staff to help them determine how they would define teacher effectiveness, address equitable access, and guide LEAs in implementing evidence-based strategies.

### **Project Challenges and How the Center Addressed Them**

The WCC faced challenges on this project and addressed these challenges as detailed below:

- **SEA turnover and cutbacks.** During the course of the project ADE experienced staffing and leadership changes, including a new superintendent. This turnover challenged the momentum of the project. ADE also experienced staff cutbacks. One ADE staff member said, “I had to cut four positions last year and then [for this year] four more positions ... So I went from five directors to two directors and from ten program specialists to six program specialists, yet the work has increased due to the dire needs of effective educators.” WCC and TA recipients described the Center’s consistent communication and follow-through as critical to sustaining effort throughout SEA turnover and cutbacks. A TA recipient said, “They are the solid steel cable that keeps us all connected, moving on the same track, getting us up to speed so that there are no glitches.” Another

TA recipient said, “In a very proactive collaborative way, they contact me frequently so I don’t have to contact them.” A TA recipient commented that the Center helps by “giving us history, helping us look at the initial goals, keeping us on that same path, with some tweaking.” Center staff said, “We understand the SEA job and how difficult it is. All Center staff previously worked for an SEA.”

- **Shifting priorities.** ADE’s priorities shifted over time due to changing educator effectiveness requirements under ESSA and challenges posed by the state’s teacher shortage. As the teacher shortage became more severe in Arizona (with projected greater shortages in coming years), priorities shifted from focusing on improving educator effectiveness to trying to maintain and improve it at the same time; as one TA recipient put it, “trying to *keep* current staff [of schools] as well as trying to improve the effectiveness of staff.” Both Center staff and TA recipients reported that the Center responded promptly, even proactively, to shifting priorities. The Center staff also noted that the WCC supported ADE in using data to improve the quality of the existing workforce and to develop a leadership pipeline “moving teachers up, not out.”

### Effective TA Strategies and Activities

WCC staff and TA recipients reported that the Center’s consistent communication, long-term relationship with ADE, access to expertise, and skill in bringing stakeholders together were particularly effective in building ADE’s capacity and advancing their work. Among strategies that respondents highlighted were:

- **Thought partnering through consultations and data review or analysis.** Center staff maintained ongoing close communication with key ADE staff, through monthly calls at a minimum, increasing to weekly calls during periods of high activity. The Center analyzed state documents, task force reports, research reports, and evaluations to help the SEA set priorities and use data.
- **Cross-state knowledge building and access to expertise.** TA recipients valued the connections to other states and to a variety of experts provided by WCC. Cross-state sharing enabled ADE to come up with ways to address gaps in their evaluation system. A TA recipient said, “The Qualified Evaluator Academy would never have happened except that this idea came up in one of these meetings, talking with other states,” because the states shared common problems and brainstormed about how to provide leadership training at scale. ADE staff also noted the quality of expertise available to them through the Center, which provided experts from WCC, GTL Center, and REL West, as well as from other states, to do presentations and training (and in the case of REL West, to conduct pilot studies).
- **Cross-policy coordination through meeting facilitation.** The Center emphasized breaking down silos and fostering cross-team and cross-agency communication within the SEA and with other partners. WCC brought together school improvement, Title I special programs, and teacher/leader effectiveness teams. As one TA recipient said “They [Center staff] have a way of getting us all together in the same room to talk about common needs and strategies ... because they know us and what our challenges are, and we know them.”

- **Modeling.** The Center described “co-construction” of the educator summit, ultimately leading to ADE being able to take over leadership of the summit. The Center first took a strong lead, and gradually the SEA staff learned the process, the structure, and ways to facilitate and organize the meetings.

### Project Outcomes

Center staff and TA recipients credited WCC’s TA with contributing to multiple areas of SEA capacity, including:

- **Knowledge and skills.** SEA staff learned to “identify problems in their system that they need to address, and come up with actions to address those,” as reported by Center staff. TA recipients said the Center activities built knowledge among a core group of ADE staff, and that their knowledge advanced because the Center provides “another set of eyes and ... we get new ideas from talking to other states.”
- **Organizational capacity.** Both Center staff and TA recipients stated that the Center contributed to improved coordination across SEA programs and divisions. ADE began to integrate educator evaluation across other areas; for example, school improvement policy now includes observation and feedback, educator support, and data use to inform professional learning. Based on WCC’s work, ADE began realigning systems of support for low-performing schools and educator effectiveness, creating a coordinated system at the state level so that LEAs have one place to go for questions about initiatives in these policy areas. Because multiple people were involved in making changes, capacity was built across the agency, beyond a few individuals.
- **Policy design capacity.** Center staff said the SEA improved its capacity to identify and address gaps in systems. ADE staff realized that a “gaping hole was support for principals; they began planning for building the capacity of principals to conduct effective observation and feedback to promote professional learning and growth.” Center staff also reported that ADE staff learned to continually re-assess their systems and improve them. As ADE staff realized they couldn’t directly train all principals in evaluation, they developed a strategy for working with districts so districts can train their own principals.
- **Policy implementation capacity.** Both Center staff and TA recipients agreed that ADE improved its capacity to provide technical support to LEAs on teacher evaluation so that “we can have this implementation that is valid and reliable,” as one staff commented. The SEA also increased its outreach to principals in the state, “supporting districts in order to support principals.” A TA recipient said, “The [Center] significantly impacted my division’s ability to support educators” in implementing an evaluation system, “thoroughly understanding it, and ... embedding it in the culture.”

SEA staff also reported that the Center’s TA was integral to helping the state meet its teacher/leader effectiveness goals. In particular, WCC’s TA helped the state make progress in improving their educator evaluation system and its use for professional development. The state met Race to the Top requirements through adoption of a rigorous evaluation model. Beyond meeting the legal requirements, TA recipients emphasized that the Center helped them

develop an understanding among educators across the state that “this isn’t just a compliance piece, it is about improving teacher practice.” Training and support for evaluators has included at least 150 participants and is continuing, working on honing principals’ skills for gathering data, analyzing it, and having conversations about it with teachers focusing on professional learning and growth. SEA staff also reported that WCC’s facilitation improved their ESSA planning and helped ensure that ADE can meet their ESSA goals.

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