



PLANNING AND EVALUATION SERVICE

**COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE
CENTERS PROGRAM:
FINAL REPORT ON THE EVALUATION**

VOLUME III: COMPREHENSIVE CENTER PROFILES

2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY
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**COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS PROGRAM:
FINAL REPORT ON THE EVALUATION**

Volume III: Comprehensive Center Profiles

Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of the Under Secretary

2000

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The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers Program at a Glance

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers help states, school districts, and schools meet the educational needs of children served under ESEA. As of September 2000, 15 regional centers are being operated under cooperative agreements by the following grantees. Telephone numbers and Web addresses follow their names and locations.

Region I (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont): New England Comprehensive Assistance Center, Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, Mass., (800) 332-0226, <http://www.edc.org/NECAC/>.

Region II (New York): New York Technical Assistance Center, the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education at New York University, New York, N.Y., (800) 4NYU-224 or (212) 998-5100, <http://www.nyu.edu/education/metrocenter/nytac/nytac.html>.

Region III (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania): Region III Comprehensive Center at the George Washington University, Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, George Washington University, Arlington, Va., (800) 925-3223 or (703) 528-3588, <http://r3cc.ceee.gwu.edu>.

Region IV (Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia): Region IV Comprehensive Center at AEL, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Arlington, Va., (800) 755-3277, <http://www.ael.org/cac/>.

Region V (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi): Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Metairie, La., (504) 838-6861 or (800) 644-8671, <http://www.sedl.org/secac/welcome.html>.

Region VI (Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin): Region VI Comprehensive Assistance Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wis., (888) 862-7763 or (608) 263-4220, <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi/>.

Region VII (Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma): Region VII Comprehensive Center, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla., (800) 228-1766 or (405) 325-1729, <http://region7.ou.edu>.

Region VIII (Texas): STAR (Support for Texas Academic Renewal) Center, Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, Tex., (888) FYI-STAR, <http://www.starcenter.org/>.

Region IX (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah): Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, New Mexico Highlands University, Rio Rancho, N.Mex., (505) 891-6111, <http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/swcc/>.

Region X (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming): Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Comprehensive Center, Region X, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Ore., (503) 275-9500, <http://www.nwrac.org>.

Region XI (Northern California): Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd, San Francisco, Calif., (800) 645-3276, <http://www.wested.org/cc/>.

Region XII (Southern California): Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Downey, Calif., (562) 922-6343, <http://sccac.lacoe.edu>.

Region XIII (Alaska): Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, Southeast Regional Resource Center, Juneau, Alaska, (888) 43-AKRAC or (907) 586-6806, <http://www.akrac.k12.ak.us>.

Region XIV (Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands): Region XIV Comprehensive Center, Educational Testing Service, Tampa, Fla., (800) 756-9003, <http://www.ets.org/ccxiv>.

Region XV (Hawaii, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Republic of Palau): Pacific Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, Honolulu, Hawaii, (808) 441-1300, <http://www.prel.org>.

Budget Allocations and Demographic Data for the 15 Comprehensive Center Regions

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of State Education Agencies	Number of Districts	Number of Title I Schools	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
						Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
I	\$1,260,615	4.55	6	1,302	2,256	380,000	17,000	79,000	2,000
II	\$1,974,681	17.38	1	706	2,593	841,000	11,000	247,000	5,000
III	\$2,320,022	17.28	7	1,814	5,175	1,183,000	19,000	85,000	1,000
IV	\$2,145,861	16	6	726	3,715	1,059,000	32,000	39,000	18,000
V	\$2,156,149	13	5	837	4,086	1,068,000	34,000	35,000	17,000
VI	\$1,881,624	13.65	6	2,268	5,977	801,000	27,000	103,000	70,000
VII	\$2,323,837	18.7	6	3,253	5,380	1,069,000	43,000	186,000	110,000
VIII	\$2,385,538	17.63	1	1,043	3,923	979,000	97,000	514,000	1,000
IX	\$1,618,371	13.1	6	624	2,160	496,000	30,000	260,000	121,000
X	\$1,264,964	9.2	5	1,148	2,669	324,000	56,000	113,000	49,000
XI	\$1,773,799	8.1	1	823	N/A	535,000	76,000	469,000	25,000
XII	\$2,593,355	7.5	1	232	N/A	918,000	131,000	913,000	8,000
XIII	\$849,294	5.5	1	53	205	18,000	12,000	35,000	31,000
XIV	\$2,375,262	11.75	3	69	2,274	1,104,000	57,000	290,000	0
XV	\$861,628	4.7	7	7	117	44,000	0	42,000	0

Sources: Budget Service, Office of the Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Education; Comprehensive Centers.

INTRODUCTION

This volume of the final report on the evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers includes profiles of each of the 15 Comprehensive Centers. Between November 1998 and February 1999, Policy Studies Associates (PSA) visited each Comprehensive Center, conducting in-depth interviews with center directors and staff members, including personnel from both host and partner organizations. In addition to the interviews, PSA also reviewed each center's annual plan, quarterly and annual progress reports to the U.S. Department of Education, budgets, and reports on evaluation activities. The profiles are based on information gathered as part of these two data collection efforts.

These profiles provide a snapshot of Comprehensive Center operations and activities in the winter of 1998-99. However, the Comprehensive Centers' portfolios change each year in response to client needs and evolving ED priorities. For example, at the time of data collection, only a few Comprehensive Centers counted the Reading Success Network (RSN) as one of their major activities. By the summer of 1999, the RSN was up and running in all 15 Comprehensive Center regions, and the project had become one of the program's most visible initiatives. In the summer of 2000, center directors began discussions with ED on making services to low-performing schools a priority area in their work, in response to a new presidential executive order on low-performing schools. These discussions are likely to lead to the development of a new set of Comprehensive Center initiatives during the 2000-01 school year.

The profiles include a brief summary of each center's mission and goals, a description of the center's organizational and staffing patterns, and a summary of each center's portfolio of services. All profiles were reviewed and approved by the Comprehensive Centers in the winter and spring of 1999.

Region I
New England Comprehensive Assistance Center
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
I	\$1,260,615	4.55	380,000	17,000	79,000	2,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region I is known as the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center (NECAC). NECAC has three long-term goals: (1) to create sustainable structures that promote achievement of all students to high standards; (2) to enhance the capacity of six state education agencies (SEAs) as technical assistance providers to accomplish the mission of all children learning to high standards; and (3) to enhance the capacity of school districts' administrators, parents, and teachers to accomplish the mission of all children learning to high standards. In support of these goals, the Comprehensive Center has organized much of its activity around key initiatives focused on the implementation of schoolwide programs and the use of data to drive decision making.

Organization and Staffing

NECAC is operated by the **Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)**, an international education research and development organization with a broad-ranging mission located in Newton, Massachusetts. NECAC has two partner organizations:

- **Learning Innovations**, a division of WestEd, contributes three staff members to the team at NECAC. Learning Innovations developed the Authentic Task Approach used by the center and co-developed the *Data Toolkit*.
- **The Urban Institute** conducts an external annual evaluation of the center.

Staffing and expertise. NECAC employs a full-time director and seven part-time professional staff members. Responsibilities are assigned by project and by state. Most staff members are coordinators or co-coordinators of one of the major projects at NECAC. In addition, most of the staff

members are assigned as the liaison or coordinator for a particular state, meaning that they serve as the contact person for that state and working most closely with that state department of education. All staff members contribute to organizing major events like the annual Schoolwide Congress.

In general, the staff members consider their expertise to be in systemic school reform, rather than in one particular program or area. In addition, two of the staff bring experience in technical assistance and leadership in reform of learning and teaching because of their prior work with the National Science Foundation's Statewide Systemic Initiative (SSI). One staff member has special expertise in teaching limited English proficient (LEP) students. Another specializes in safe and drug-free schools issues. One other has strengths in coaching schools on reform.

To ensure that particular expertise is available when needed, the center has cut time allocations for the staff in order to reserve funds to hire consultants in specific areas of need.

Relationship with host institution. NECAC was designed to cut across the different clusters within the EDC, allowing the Comprehensive Center to collaborate on product development and to draw from on-site expertise in different areas. The NECAC staff members represent different clusters within the EDC, including the Center for Family, School, and Community; Health and Human Development Programs; the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Technology; and the Center for Education, Employment, and Community. Because their time is divided between NECAC and their cluster, staff members are able to draw on knowledge and expertise within their clusters. The design is intended to foster a mutually beneficial relationship, where NECAC and the clusters within the EDC find common interests to address jointly.

In addition, NECAC's Advisory Group includes the president of EDC and the vice-presidents in charge of several of the clusters. This strengthens the connection between NECAC and the EDC.

Needs Assessment Strategies

NECAC conducts various formal and informal needs assessment activities in order to identify the needs of its constituencies. For the initial proposal, the center staff conducted focus sessions with key state education officials; interviewed LEA and school officials, parents, and community members; interviewed other service providers in the region; analyzed the annual comprehensive needs assessment conducted by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory; analyzed the new federal requirements that affect states, LEAs, tribes, and schools; and spoke with key players in the major categorical programs.

Ongoing needs assessment includes activities at the state and local levels. NECAC conducts a survey of the state departments of education in its region regarding the proposed scope of work for the upcoming year. NECAC also collaborates with SEA officials on activity plans for the upcoming year. At the local level, NECAC convenes an advisory group for its work on schoolwide programs that includes school representatives. NECAC also gathers evaluation and planning information from participants involved in other center activities.

Portfolio of Services

The two major initiatives of NECAC are the Schoolwide Programs Network and the Data Strategies Initiative, both of which are intended to provide intensive, ongoing assistance for comprehensive school improvement through the development of regional learning communities.

Schoolwide Programs Network. The Schoolwide Programs Network is open to elementary schools in the region that have a Title I schoolwide program or are planning one. Participation in the Network includes four major components:

- NECAC provides professional development opportunities, including an annual Schoolwide Congress, special topic workshops, spring “retooling” meetings, and a Leadership Academy for principals and coaches.
- State departments of education provide most core member schools with a facilitator to assist with planning and implementation. In addition, each school selects a coach to provide further support. Facilitators and coaches receive support and professional development from NECAC.
- NECAC arranges guided visits to schools that have been successful in raising student achievement.
- NECAC encourages communication through a monthly informational mailing and through electronic resources, such as on-line discussions.

In 1998-99, full participation in the Network—core membership—was limited to 24 schools. Schools can also choose to be general members.

At the annual Schoolwide Congress, school teams participate in three days of intense professional development with their coaches and state facilitators. An Authentic Task Approach provides structured time and targeted resources for team planning. Each school chooses a particular “task” prior to the Congress so that NECAC can gather resources to support team planning.

Data Strategies Initiative. The Data Strategies Initiative (DSI) helps school districts in the region to improve their systems of accountability. Its purposes are to (1) create a cadre of individuals in this region who can provide technical assistance to schools and districts in all aspects of managing data to support continuous school improvement; and (2) to create a community of districts committed to creating an accountability system that ensures high standards learning for all students. Membership in the Initiative is open to all high-poverty districts, state departments of education, institutions of higher education, and to other interested organizations. By December 1998, 11 school districts had joined.

The major events of the Initiative are the biannual Data Strategies Institutes, which follow an Authentic Task Approach similar to that of the Schoolwide Programs Network Congress. Each participating district works together on guided planning with a technical assistance team from that district's state. Among the tools and resources developed by NECAC is the *Data Toolkit*, a collection of materials to assist schools and school districts in looking at data to promote educational achievement.

Other Initiatives. Additional initiatives include professional development activities that respond to needs in the region using a "training of trainers" format, meaning that NECAC trains individuals to replicate the professional development for others.

Technology. NECAC uses technology, such as a World Wide Web site and listservs, to provide access to resources and information and to encourage the growth of learning communities among its clients. The World Wide Web site allows visitors to access information and to submit questions and requests. According to the *Year 3 Annual Report*, the site received approximately 3,000 "hits" per month on average in 1997-98. The most popular pages include educational technology, disabled/special education, technology planning, and schoolwide programs. Visitors to the site can also ask questions, to which the center generally responds within 24 hours. The site receives approximately 10 questions per month.

NECAC also sponsors five listservs: the National Schoolwide Discussion group, the Reading Success Network, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinators, the Data Strategies Initiative, and the Principals Network. The National Schoolwide Discussion group is open to the public, whereas the other listservs have restricted access. Limited access by schools to the Internet restricts the use of technology to deliver assistance at that level. For example, most of the schools in the Schoolwide Programs Network do not have access. As a partial remedy, NECAC provides hard copies of listserv conversations to clients who cannot access them electronically.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Centers. Within the national network of Comprehensive Centers, NECAC participates in committee work, information and product sharing, and some Web-based resource development. NECAC and the other centers share their products and newsletters with one another. Some development occurs across the centers, such as a PowerPoint presentation about the Principles of Effectiveness developed by the Safe- and Drug-Free Schools Program.

Other technical assistance providers. In its Schoolwide Programs Network, NECAC leverages its resources through partnership with the state departments of education, which provide facilitators for core member schools and share the costs of Network activities and materials.

In the Data Strategies Initiative, NECAC works with the Northeast Regional Alliance for Math and Science Education, the Northeast Regional Resource Center, and the Women's Education Equity Act Equity Resource Center. In addition, several people from state departments of education in the region participate on the technical assistance teams that work with the districts.

In collaboration with the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University and the state departments of education, NECAC is designing an initiative to support schools that receive or are applying to receive Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR/D) program funds.

Region II
New York Technical Assistance Center
New York

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
II	\$1,974,681	17.38	841,000	11,000	247,000	5,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region II is known as the New York Technical Assistance Center (NYTAC). NYTAC tailors its technical assistance activities to reflect ED priorities and those of the Commissioner of Education in New York, the only state it serves. The Commissioner’s priorities are (1) building local capacity in schools; (2) setting high standards and developing aligned assessments; and (3) reporting students’ academic performance to the public. NYTAC serves high-poverty, low-performing schools throughout the state but particularly targets the five largest school districts in the state—New York City, Buffalo, Yonkers, Rochester, and Syracuse—which serve approximately 80 percent of the state’s students. NYTAC delivers intensive and continuous technical assistance to these districts to help them meet federal and state expectations. In addition, the center works to build the New York State Education Department’s (NYSED’s) capacity to promote and support (1) comprehensive school reform and consolidated planning; (2) schoolwide planning; (3) instructional uses of technology; (4) parent involvement in schools; and (5) professional development that supports standards-based reform.

Organization and Staffing

NYTAC’s staff configuration, partner organizations, and initiatives complement one another in their efforts to support local, state, and federal education initiatives. Each partner organization contributes expertise in a specific programmatic area, which allows NYTAC to respond to a broad spectrum of requests for assistance. The center consists of five organizations:

- **The Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (Metro Center).** The Metro Center, the primary grantee, is an umbrella organization based in the New York University

School of Education that operates numerous projects that support school reform, primarily in urban areas. Metro Center's activities fall into three categories: (1) services to schools; (2) services to students and teachers, most notably tutoring programs for disadvantaged students and an Upward Bound program that targets physically disabled students; and (3) research and evaluation.

- **RMC Research Corporation (RMC).** RMC's office in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, contributes its expertise as a former Chapter 1 technical assistance center. RMC contributes 2.5 FTE staff, who apply their knowledge to help NYSED develop its consolidated plan and implement the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR) Program. Other RMC staff work on NYTAC regional teams, providing assistance to local school districts and groups of schools.
- **Hunter College.** Hunter College, located in New York City, previously operated a federal Title VII multifunctional resource center. It offers extensive expertise in services for students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Hunter College contributes 2.5 FTE staff and two part-time faculty members to assist the state and local districts in providing services to LEP students to help them meet the state's performance standards.
- **ORBIS Associates.** Based in Washington, D.C., ORBIS has more than 12 years of experience in Indian education, having previously operated an Indian education technical assistance center. ORBIS helps districts and schools develop programs and curricula that are sensitive to and appropriate for American Indian students. It also trains teachers and counselors to help American Indian students meet high performance standards. NYTAC partnered with ORBIS voluntarily to serve American Indian students in the northern and western regions of the state.
- **ESCORT (Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training).** Based at the State University of New York at Oneonta, ESCORT provides technical assistance to migrant education programs in 21 eastern states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. ESCORT was a migrant education program coordination center under the previous federal technical assistance system.

Staffing and expertise. NYTAC organizes its provision of technical assistance by service regions. Three regional teams serve eastern New York, western New York, and New York City. A specialized team provides assistance to NYSED. Each team consists of three to four members, including a team leader, configured to address the issues unique to that region. For instance, ORBIS works most closely with the western team because most American Indian students in New York are in that region, while ESCORT works most closely with the eastern team because migrant students are concentrated in that region. Similarly, the leader of the New York City team is a former superintendent of Community District #19, and many of the team members are former New York City administrators or teachers. Staff members from partner organizations are full members of each of the teams, and several of them serve on more than one regional service delivery team.

The center's management team consists of Metro Center's founder, who also serves as the center's director, and the directors of the Comprehensive Center work at RMC Research Corporation and

Hunter College. The management team meets periodically with key NYSED staff to discuss how to align its technical assistance services with the Commissioner's priorities.

Relationship with the host institution. The New York University School of Education oversees NYTAC's management processes, serves as a repository of information for research-based models, and gives NYTAC access to faculty and student tutors who play pivotal roles in some of NYTAC's activities. The associate dean of education provides oversight by meeting regularly with NYTAC's director to review planning and budget proposals and by serving on the executive review committee with the directors of the partner organizations. In addition, the associate dean reviews field reports, client surveys, and annual reports.

Needs Assessments Strategies

All teams rely on their network of contacts to identify the technical assistance needs in each region. Among the most important members of those networks are NYSED program directors and the associate commissioner for New York City; state Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs); regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES); the statewide Effective Schools Consortium Network; and leaders of the five largest districts in the state. NYTAC staff meet or talk regularly with these contacts to determine the needs in each region and to prioritize their activities. Moreover, NYTAC designed an electronic tracking log that documents every technical assistance activity, including the client, the kind of technical assistance provided (for example, professional development), the content of the assistance, and the participants. The NYTAC evaluation team uses this information to generate NYTAC's quarterly and annual reports. Other informal means of determining needs include feedback from conferences, direct mail, and referrals.

Portfolio of Services

NYTAC structures its technical assistance activities around the state commissioner's three priorities: building local capacity, developing standards and aligned assessments, and reporting results. The specific areas it has chosen to address, based on feedback from its network of contacts, are (1) comprehensive school reform and consolidated planning; (2) schoolwide planning; (3) technology; (4) parent involvement; and (5) curriculum alignment and development. The center's strategies for providing technical assistance entail (1) hosting institutes, workshops, and conferences; (2) training local staff to train their peers (the train-the-trainer model); (3) utilizing technology to disseminate information; and (4) establishing collaborative networks that include educators and other technical assistance providers.

Comprehensive school reform. NYTAC played a pivotal role in helping NYSED implement the CSR Program and expand the number of Title I schoolwide programs statewide. Members of the NYSED team, led by RMC, have met with state officials to clarify the program's goals and objectives. NYTAC helped the state develop and refine its application for CSR subgrants and reviewed incoming proposals for grants. During the planning stage for CSR, NYTAC attended meetings with state contacts focusing on how to ensure that the program addressed the needs of migrant students; similarly, they reviewed the approved CSR models to determine how well each addresses the educational needs of LEP students. Recognizing the need for ongoing and collaborative assistance to make the program a success, NYTAC formed the CSR Think Tank, a group comprising members from NYTAC, NYSED, the Effective Schools Consortium Network, the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, and the New York City Board of Education. The think tank meets quarterly to discuss how to coordinate technical assistance among these service providers. Currently, the group is revising a scoring rubric for CSR applications and designing an evaluation of CSR schools across the state.

Curriculum development and alignment. The western regional team recognized that one key to the success of standards-based reform is the ability of local districts to align their curricula with state standards. Members of the western team developed a research-based perspective on curriculum alignment and presented their ideas to educators at a statewide conference for schoolwide programs. The presentation led to several requests for workshops, including one-day sessions in Buffalo for all district administrators and all reading specialists, totaling approximately 100 people. NYTAC is now in the process of developing a training manual to guide local facilitators through the process of aligning their curriculum with state standards.

Parent involvement. NYTAC's technical assistance efforts in New York City have focused on the 93 "Schools Under Registered Review (SURR)," the state's term for low-performing schools. At the request of NYSED and the New York City Board of Education, NYTAC offers a series of interactive workshops that have given about 400 parents with children in SURR schools the knowledge and skills to become more involved in the school improvement process. The initiative's goals are to (1) provide parents with resources to enhance their awareness of the educational process; (2) promote clear communication among districts, schools, and families about school programs and students' progress; (3) develop parents' leadership in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles; and (4) educate parents about working collaboratively in school-based management. NYTAC hosted a follow-up session for 55 participants from 12 SURR schools, including 25 parents and members of school-based teams. Sessions used role-playing and other strategies to build participants' conflict resolution and planning skills. Products from this initiative include: a video explaining the purpose and depicting the highlights of the training sessions, parent training resource packets, and a booklet for school improvement teams on building consensus and resolving conflicts.

Technology. NYTAC uses videoconferencing frequently to communicate with its clients, partner organizations, and the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and to complement workshops. The center's Web site highlights products developed from workshops and institutes, training schedules, workshop summaries, and other relevant materials.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

NYTAC collaborates with technical assistance providers at the national, state, and local level. These collaborators include: other Comprehensive Centers, the Equity Assistance Center, the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortium, the Northeast Regional Technology in Education Consortium, the New York City Board of Education, and other federally funded and nonfederally funded technical assistance providers.

Comprehensive Centers. NYTAC worked with other Comprehensive Centers to publish the Self-Assessment Guide for Excellent Services (SAGES). The guide was a collaborative effort among centers in Regions II, VIII, XIII, and XIV, along with the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth at the University of Texas. Nine staff members from these organizations conducted five months of exploratory research, supported by ED, to identify factors that contribute to high levels of academic success for homeless students. Based on interviews with school staff, service providers, and parents in New York, Alaska, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Texas, the research team identified seven themes and compiled a list of suggested resources. The research team met several times in Dallas and edited drafts of the final SAGES report via e-mail.

Other technical assistance providers. To a great extent, NYTAC co-sponsors technical assistance activities with NYSED. NYTAC also collaborates with the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University and New York's Effective Schools Consortium Network on the CSRD Think Tank. Moreover, the center works closely with the BOCES, BETACs, and the Migrant Education Outreach Projects to identify needs throughout the state and to plan conferences on bilingual and migrant education.

Region III
Region III Comprehensive Center at the George Washington University
Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
III	\$2,320,022	17.28	1,183,000	19,000	85,000	1,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region III is known as the Region III Comprehensive Center at the George Washington University. The Region III Comprehensive Center’s primary service delivery objective is to support continuous and comprehensive school improvement, which it fulfills by helping clients use data to inform decisionmaking, improve reading instruction, and increase opportunities for parents to become involved in their children’s education. The Region III Comprehensive Center serves a large and diverse geographical region with both large urban centers (for example, Baltimore, Cleveland, Newark, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.) and more sparsely populated rural areas. The individual demographic and political characteristics of each state shape the delivery of center services.

Organization and Staffing

The Region III Comprehensive Center is located in Arlington, Virginia. Its four partners work as an integrated unit and collectively bring to the center multiple years of experience and expertise as technical assistance providers:

- **The George Washington University (GW), Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE).** The primary grantee, CEEE, is part of GW’s Graduate School of Education and Human Development under the Institute for Education Policy Studies. CEEE, based in Arlington, Virginia, was a Title VII evaluation assistance center prior to the inception of the Comprehensive Centers.
- **RMC Research Corporation (RMC).** RMC is a private technical consulting firm specializing in research, training, and technical assistance. RMC’s offices in Arlington, Virginia, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, contribute staff to the center. RMC served

previously as a Chapter 1 technical assistance center and a Chapter 1 rural technical assistance center.

- **Research for Better Schools (RBS).** RBS is a private, nonprofit organization committed to the improvement of education through research development and technical assistance. Based in Philadelphia, RBS works with the center to facilitate partnerships in Pennsylvania.
- **ESCORT.** Operating since the mid-1980s, ESCORT has extensive training and consulting experience in programs for migrant and limited English proficient (LEP) students. Located at the State University of New York at Oneonta, ESCORT currently operates ED's National Migrant Education Hotline and supports ED's binational efforts with Mexico. ESCORT was a migrant education program coordination center under the previous federal system.

Staffing and expertise. The Region III Comprehensive Center employs 33 full- and part-time staff members, including 27 professional staff and 5 support personnel. Thirteen of these staff are funded by CEEE, eight by RMC, four by ESCORT, and two by RBS. Center staff share responsibility for delivering technical assistance across state, special project, and knowledge-based teams. Staff members, serving as "state contacts," facilitate the development of annual SEA work plans in the region's six states. State contacts identify resources and organize technical assistance activities based on the plans, which are updated as necessary to meet the changing needs of a state. Staff members may also carry out cross-state work through special projects and participation in knowledge-based teams. The center's knowledge-based teams provide services in five focus areas: (1) school reform and improvement; (2) standards and assessments; (3) teaching and learning; (4) parent involvement; and (5) safe and drug-free learning environments.

Although center staff maintain and cultivate their own areas of expertise, all are required to expand their technical proficiency in a knowledge base area by participating in at least one targeted professional development activity each year. In addition, each year, staff must participate in at least three "foundation days," which feature training by experts in critical knowledge areas.

To facilitate communication and coordination, the center director schedules bimonthly staff meetings in which staff members discuss issues, develop plans, share information, and provide updates on their individual state and regionwide work. In addition, the center involves staff in decisions about setting priorities and delivering services during annual meetings. Key staff, representing all partner organizations, convene twice a year to review the center's accomplishments and, if needed, to revise implementation strategies outlined in the annual operational plan.

Although state contacts have the freedom to negotiate services with their respective SEAs, they are supported in planning and implementing technical assistance through quarterly state contact meetings

with the center director, associate director, and representatives from partner organizations. During these quarterly meetings, which help the director review progress, provide guidance, and identify resource needs, state contacts review their accomplishments and preview activities for the coming quarter.

Relationship with host institution. The Region III Comprehensive Center benefits from its host organization on two levels. First, the center utilizes the expertise of staff members from CEEE, especially in the areas of bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL) education, and program evaluation. Second, the center benefits from the research capacities, faculty, and resources of The George Washington University. For example, faculty members from GW's Graduate School of Education specialize in various aspects of school reform and conduct cutting-edge research that can inform and enhance the center's work. Faculty may also work on special projects and produce articles and research syntheses for use by center clients. The dean of the GW's Graduate School of Education and the director of the Institute for Policy Studies serve as *ex-officio* members of the center's advisory board. In addition, the university maintains a comprehensive database of research articles and publications, which the center staff can access on-line, and provides financial stability and institutional credibility.

Needs Assessment Strategies

Needs assessments are done by state contacts on an ongoing basis during regular in-person consultations with SEA program staff. The center tries to balance being responsive to clients' needs with proactively helping them address issues related to comprehensive school reform.

Portfolio of Services

Through its needs assessments, the center identifies priorities for each of the states in its region. Because states' own capacities for reform, their political climates, and their organizational structures influence the level and type of services the center can provide, the center's portfolio of services varies from state to state. The center maintains that the majority of its work is comprehensive in nature, and its work is primarily long-term and intensive, with approximately 65 percent of staff time spent in consultation with SEA and/or LEA clients. This consultation includes professional development, facilitation, and information dissemination. Approximately 30 percent of staff time is spent on professional development activities—either stand-alone events or series of training opportunities—while the remainder of staff time is spent on convening and planning activities.

Delaware. State priorities for reform in Delaware include data-driven decisionmaking, literacy, and parent involvement—all of which occur within the context of school improvement. For example, the

center has worked with the Delaware Department of Public Instruction to implement the quality review component of the local consolidated application and school improvement process. The Region III Center assisted in the design of questions for the SEA to use as part of the reviews, observed SEA staff interact with LEA staff during pilot reviews, and gave feedback and recommendations to the SEA. In addition, the state contact has conducted presentations on schoolwide programs, helped schools analyze data to make decisions, worked with one school to adapt its kindergarten curriculum to better meet the needs of migrant students, and worked with the state's Title VII director to disaggregate the assessment data of LEP students.

District of Columbia. The Region III Center's involvement in the District of Columbia has been primarily in support of the D.C. Public Schools' reform agenda, which includes the adoption of content and performance standards, accountability and assessment measures, and an emphasis on reading and mathematics. A major portion of the center's work has been to support low-performing Title I schools that have been targeted for improvement by the school system. One example of support in this area is the center's work with the school district's Office of Educational Reform and the training of "change facilitators," who are responsible for the implementation of school reform models in individual schools. The center has also provided staff development and training in parent and community involvement, data-driven decisionmaking, and safe and drug-free schools; played a key role in the development of a framework for assessing service learning in the classroom; served on the school system's diversity task force; and helped design and conduct systemwide diversity training for school staff.

Maryland. The Maryland Department of Education has used the center as a resource in advancing state initiatives in the areas of comprehensive school reform, consolidated planning and funding, and the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. On the state level, the center has provided ongoing consultation and professional development to assist with the implementation of a new state comprehensive planning and funding initiative called School Accountability Funding for Excellence (SAFE). Linked to the SAFE initiative is the state's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRSD) program. Center staff support CSRSD by providing input to the state's request for proposals (RFPs), developing a scoring rubric for school applications, providing program information, and training district staff on comprehensive school reform. Center staff also helped establish a school mentoring program linking Blue Ribbon Schools with Title I schools in need of improvement, develop an *Even Start Transition Manual*, implement a migrant education summer program self-assessment, identify Title I Distinguished Schools, and train district staff in the Safe and Drug-Free Program's Principles of Effectiveness. On the local level, center staff have worked intensively with high-poverty districts and their school staffs on CSRSD, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Reading Success Network, schoolwide programs, and action research.

New Jersey. The top priority of the New Jersey Department of Education is to implement the terms of the Abbott decision, a settlement to equalize state funding for 28 high-poverty districts. The center's work at the local level has included working with two of these districts. In one district, the center has provided long-term focused assistance to three schools to build organizational capacity through vision-building exercises, teamwork, and communication among staff. In the other, the center has worked with the district's Title I office to provide training to schools—eligible for Title I schoolwide programs—on planning and writing a comprehensive improvement plan. The center also provided training to principals on selecting an appropriate program model suited to their schools' needs. At the state level, the center has provided technical assistance to the Title I office on schoolwide and CSRD programs and conducted regional workshops on both programs throughout the state. The center has also provided technical assistance to the department's Division of Student Services on accountability systems for districts and schools and is creating an accountability framework for use by Abbott districts.

Ohio. Education reform in Ohio centers on whole school reform and public accountability for results reinforced by the state's report card system. Within this context, the center provides ongoing assistance in continuous improvement planning to one school district and has developed a set of CSRD products that have been disseminated to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and interested districts. Center staff are also providing feedback to the state on its reading initiative framework, and as part of the center's involvement with the state's Superintendent's Advisory Committee for Parent Involvement, are advising individual districts on parent involvement issues. In addition, the center has provided intensive technical assistance to Ohio's migrant resource center in its efforts to develop, pilot, and evaluate integrated theme units.

Pennsylvania. The Region III Comprehensive Center's primary responsibility in Pennsylvania has been to help advance whole school reform and improvement related to newly adopted state standards, particularly those related to reading. The center has also provided direct assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in its implementation of comprehensive school reform. In addition, the center has helped two state-supported networks of school districts—the Pennsylvania Title I Big Cities Consortium and the Collegial Network for the Ongoing Improvement of North Central Pennsylvania Schools—to plan, implement, and document their collaborative improvement efforts. These activities have focused on such topics as improving reading and mathematics performance in schools, strengthening local assessments, and addressing the challenge of student diversity.

Technology. At the SEA level, the center is able to communicate with many of its clients through e-mail, videoconferencing, and telephone conferencing technologies. However, the center's ability to communicate with districts and schools via these media varies considerably and is generally limited. The Region III Comprehensive Center's Web site provides information about center services, products, and work in the region to its clients. It also contains information about the Reading Success

Network (RSN) and the CSRD Program, as well as links to other relevant Web sites, including those of the center's partner organizations and ED.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

The Region III Comprehensive Center collaborates with federal and state technical assistance providers. In these efforts, the center has found that the most successful collaborations are those that emerge from a discussion of clients' needs.

Comprehensive Centers. The center has worked with the other 14 Comprehensive Centers to plan Improving America's Schools conferences and implement RSN. The center participates in the RSN listserv hosted by the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center.

Regional Education Laboratories. Region III staff work with the two regional educational laboratories that serve the states in its region—Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL). Most of its work with the laboratories focus on the dissemination of information about CSRD models and on sponsoring CSRD designer showcases.

Region IV
Region IV Comprehensive Center at the
Appalachia Regional Educational Laboratory (AEL)
Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
IV	\$2,145,861	16	1,059,000	32,000	39,000	18,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region IV is known as the Region IV Comprehensive Center at AEL. The primary goal of the Region IV Comprehensive Center is to build state and local capacity to implement the provisions of ESEA and improve student learning. The center’s management and staff share a commitment to responding to the specific needs of their clients. As a result, the center does not have a standard menu of workshops that it offers to educators in its region; rather, it maintains ongoing relationships with key staff in state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs), working with them to identify their technical assistance needs and responding with appropriate support. When responding to state and local requests, the center is careful to further ED’s seven priorities: (1) reading, (2) mathematics, (3) promoting access to college, (4) challenging standards and accountability, (5) well-prepared teachers, (6) technology, and (7) school environment.

Organization and Staffing

The **Appalachia Regional Educational Laboratory, Inc.**, known as AEL and based in Charleston, West Virginia, is the primary grantee. AEL opened an Arlington, Virginia, office in September 1997, which houses the Region IV Comprehensive Center and the Appalachia Regional [Eisenhower Mathematics and Science] Consortium. Both programs also have staff operating out of the Charleston, West Virginia, location. The three subcontractors that round out the expertise and services offered by AEL include:

- **ESCORT.** Based in upstate New York, ESCORT has provided technical assistance to migrant education programs for more than 20 years.

- **ORBIS Associates.** Based in Washington, D.C., ORBIS specializes in providing technical assistance to Indian education programs.
- **The Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) Laboratory.** SERVE has expertise in Title I and experience working with SEAs and LEAs in North Carolina and South Carolina, which are part of Region IV but not part of the region served by AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory.

Staffing and expertise. The Region IV Center assigns staff based on their programmatic expertise, and all staff provide assistance in their designated area to clients in every state in the region. Each programmatic area has one staff member devoted to it. Together, center staff have expertise in every major categorical program area addressed by ESEA. Specialists employed by AEL are responsible for English as a Second Language (ESL)/bilingual issues, safe and drug-free schools, special education, math and literacy, and parent/family involvement. Staff from ESCORT, ORBIS, and SERVE work in the areas of migrant education, Indian education, and Title I, respectively. The center also has a director and associate director, an evaluation manager and research associate, and administrative staff. In addition to her management responsibilities, the associate director also works with clients engaged in establishing performance indicators and using data to make programmatic decisions.

The center director is involved directly in the day-to-day management of the center, and she seeks regular input from the three subcontractors through biannual meetings, monthly conference calls, and listservs. Twice a year, the center sponsors an Operations Team meeting for all center staff. The focus of these two- to three-day meetings is long-term planning, although staff also participate in professional development activities. Center staff analyze data on needs within their region and reexamine the center's work in the context of client needs, ED priorities, and the center's mission. In addition, all staff communicate informally using an e-mail listserv and telephone calls on an as-needed basis.

Center partners are free to establish their own contacts and relationships without relying on AEL to refer clients to them. Initially, AEL had envisioned having a central toll-free number that would refer potential clients to the staff member with the appropriate expertise, including those in partner organizations. However, that arrangement proved impractical because the partner organizations had pre-existing relationships with clients throughout the region. Now, clients are free to call staff from any of the partners to request services. To avoid duplicating services, all staff submit weekly updates on their activities to the director.

Relationship with host institution. The center is an integral part of AEL and relies on the organization for important administrative and support services, including personnel, accounting, purchasing, and product development. In addition, the center benefits from its collaboration with other AEL entities, including the regional educational laboratory, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural and Small

Schools, and the Appalachian Regional Consortium. This collaboration enables the center to draw on expertise it does not have in-house. Often, the center invites staff from other AEL projects to assist with particular assignments and clients; in fact, several center staff members split their time between the center and other projects.

Needs Assessment Strategies

The center attracts clients from a number of sources. It works closely with AEL to determine the needs of the states in its region. AEL's resident state directors maintain ties to SEA staff and often refer requests for assistance to the center. The center's program staff compile profiles of the states in their region to help identify particular needs. Finally, the center prepared a poster detailing its mission and services and mailed the poster to every local and state Title I coordinator in the region.

Portfolio of Services

Although center staff are organized according to their area of expertise, and many of its requests for assistance are categorical in nature, the center strives to provide comprehensive assistance. Staff recognize that many of their clients' requests for categorical assistance are often symptomatic of larger problems. Thus, they place a premium on fostering collaborative networks among administrators and teachers at the state and local levels and on connecting their clients with other educators facing similar challenges. Center staff also seek to link clients with contacts—either within or outside the federal assistance network—who have the knowledge and resources needed to address clients' concerns.

Most of the center's major initiatives are spearheaded from the state level. Because of its limited resources, the center prefers to work closely with SEAs or clusters of school districts to reach a broader audience.

South Carolina. Center staff helped the state's Title I office establish its measure of adequate yearly progress as required by the Title I legislation. It worked with state program staff to streamline the program's process for evaluating progress made by Title I schools; subsequently, the center trained LEA Title I coordinators to use data to evaluate the progress and identify problem areas in their schools. Based on the success of these activities, the South Carolina Department of Education asked the center to disseminate information about promising practices in schoolwide programs during five conferences throughout the state.

Tennessee. Officials from the Tennessee Department of Education requested assistance in putting together a consolidated state plan that combines Title I, Title II, and Title VI funds to support

comprehensive school reform. The center and the SEA piloted the redesigned plan in five districts, with center staff providing training to district officials in developing effective consolidated applications. With assistance from center staff, each of the pilot sites collected and analyzed data to identify district needs and participated in a series of work sessions to develop an action plan based on the needs assessment.

The Region IV Center has also been working with several collaborators to help improve student achievement in a habitually low-performing rural school district that has been threatened by a state takeover. Together with the Appalachian Regional Consortium, the regional laboratory, and the SEA, AEL has hired an on-site facilitator to visit each school in the district at least twice a month to help teachers align their teaching with content standards and implement Interdisciplinary Teamed Instruction, an instructional program developed by AEL. AEL is leading community strategic planning sessions in this district, and the center participates as a member of this team effort. The sessions, which occur every four to six weeks, give community members an opportunity to develop a 10-year strategic plan.

North Carolina. As part of its school district cluster initiative in North Carolina, the center applied its Lab School approach to improve ESL instruction in three districts. It provided teachers with training in how to develop lesson plans using effective ESL strategies. Part of the training involved observing other classes at the same grade level and piloting their lessons in a summer school setting. Center staff then conducted follow-up visits to teachers' classrooms during the school year to provide feedback on their implementation of the strategies they learned over the summer.

In a separate cluster, the center is working to improve services to students with limited proficiency in English in three districts whose programs are under review by ED's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Center staff, together with staff from the Southeastern Equity Center, are working with local officials in each of the districts to help them provide better programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Safe and drug-free schools. The center's specialist on the Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) program is developing a series of training sessions, PowerPoint slides, and a publication to provide local grantees with guidance on implementing the program's new Principles of Effectiveness. Under new guidelines issued by ED, SDFS grantees must now incorporate these principles into all of their funded programs. The principles state that programs must: (1) address problems identified by a thorough review of data on drug use and violence in their communities; (2) establish clear goals and objectives; (3) employ proven strategies; and (4) evaluate the program and make adjustments based on findings from the evaluation. Because many grantees complain that they lack the capacity and knowledge to implement the principles, this effort can have both regional and national significance.

Other services. Other center activities and projects include disseminating research-based briefs on providing adequate services to students with Attention Deficit Disorder and other special needs,

assisting school districts in conducting their own needs assessments, and aiding local efforts to enhance parent involvement.

Technology. The Region IV Center uses technology to augment its services to clients. Center staff use e-mail to maintain contact with many clients, partners, and collaborators. Staff teleconference with clients to a limited extent because most clients do not have access to teleconferencing facilities or equipment. The center's Web site describes its resources and services and provides links to other AEL projects, center collaborators, and other resources that may be of use to clients in the region.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Centers. Within the national network of 15 centers, the director of the Region IV Center leads the technology committee, which explores ways in which the Comprehensive Centers can use technology to carry out their missions. The director also maintains regular contact with other centers through the listserv that AEL established. Region IV worked with the Region X Center to host the National Safe and Drug-Free Schools Conference; Region IV handled most of the logistical arrangements while Region X coordinated the development of the conference agenda.

Other technical assistance providers. Many of the Region IV Center's activities involve partnerships with other technical assistance providers. The center's work in Tennessee involves AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory, the Appalachian Regional Consortium, and the SEA. Likewise, the center collaborates with the Southeastern Equity Center to help three districts in North Carolina comply with federal regulations governing services to LEP students. The center coordinated the original meeting that led to and later presented at a Family Learning Partnership Conference in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Education and the Goals 2000 Parent Information and Resource Center. The conference, attended by more than 200 educators and parents, presented workshops on child and brain development, special needs children, home-based learning, and cultural diversity.

Region V
Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center
Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
V	\$2,156,149	13	1,068,000	34,000	35,000	17,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region V is known as the Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center (SECAC). SECAC’s overarching mission is to provide technical assistance that addresses school reform and improves the education of low-achieving children at risk of educational failure. In seeking to impact children at risk of educational failure, SECAC specifically targets its services toward children who are poor, migratory, limited-English proficient (LEP), American Indian, or otherwise targeted by ESEA.

To reach these children, the center prioritizes its service to three types of institutions: (1) state education agencies (SEAs); (2) Title I and other schoolwide reform programs; and (3) local education agencies (LEAs) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools with the highest percentages of children in poverty. Because the center sees SEAs as important service providers to their states, as well as critical gatekeepers for SECAC services, the center has put special emphasis on working closely with the SEAs in the region. In doing so, SECAC hopes to build the service capacity of SEAs, while also nurturing a relationship from which it can better target its own services and learn of needs in the region.

Organization and Staffing

Located in Metairie, Louisiana, SECAC is composed three organizations—the primary grantee and two partners. Although SECAC’s home office is in Louisiana, these three organizations are based outside of the center’s service region. SECAC was originally associated with a fourth organization, the University of New Orleans (UNO), but it discontinued the relationship when center staff gained the technological expertise that UNO provided. The partner organizations include:

- **Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).** SEDL, located in Austin, Texas, is the primary grantee for SECAC and subcontracts with the other two organizations. It is an umbrella organization that serves the southwest and southeast United States by administering numerous grants, including SECAC; a regional educational laboratory; an Eisenhower Math and Science Consortium; a Regional Technology in Education Consortium, and the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research. SEDL's service area overlaps with SECAC's in two of five states in the center's region (Arkansas and Louisiana).
- **American Indian Research & Development, Inc. (AIRD).** Located in Norman, Oklahoma, AIRD is a private research and technical assistance firm that broadens SECAC's expertise base with its focus on Indian education, cultural issues, and community involvement. AIRD used to operate an Indian Education Technical Assistance Center.
- **Texas A&M University at Kingsville.** Texas A&M provides SECAC with expertise in the areas of migrant education, bilingual education, and Hispanic culture.

Staffing and expertise. SECAC maintains a core group of 13 full-time staff who are based in the Metairie, Louisiana, office or throughout the region. To facilitate services related to specific issue areas and population, SECAC maintains one part-time staff position at both AIRD and Texas A&M. The two subcontractors are located outside of SECAC's region and do not have decision making authority in the center; however, the staff member from each of the subcontractors attends the monthly center staff meetings at least once every two months.

SECAC has one full-time director, who is responsible for prioritizing and authorizing services, managing the tracking and monitoring of activities, facilitating relationships with clients, and maintaining relationships among the three partner institutions. To a lesser extent, the director provides technical assistance, particularly around his areas of expertise.

With the exception of the director, SECAC's 13 full-time professional staff are split into two groups. The first group consists of the five state team leaders, each of whom is responsible for service to one of the five states in the region. State team leaders, with the exception of one, are housed rent-free in their state's SEA (the Mississippi team leader is housed down the street from the SEA due to a lack of space in the SEA facility). All strive to establish and maintain a close working relationship with SEA staff that will enhance service within that state. Through this relationship, SECAC staff can learn about state, district, and school needs, and can coordinate and deliver services throughout the region more easily. Furthermore, the presence of state team leaders in the SEAs gives the center a face in the states, which heightens awareness of its activities. All service requests from states are channeled through the state team leader, although that individual is not necessarily involved in every service provided in his or her state. In addition to working closely with the SEA, the state team leaders also have areas of expertise and do occasionally provide services in another state in SECAC's region.

The second group of SECAC professional staff consists of six resource staff with expertise in particular specialty areas, such as safe and drug-free schools, technology, Title I, math/science, reading, LEP education, staff development strategies, and school reform. The resource staff work out of the center's home office in Metairie, Louisiana. They may work on regionwide projects in their specialty area or serve as a resource to a state, district, or school. Generally, resource staff services in the field are either coordinated by or requested through the state team leader.

SECAC's organizational structure enables it to provide comprehensive assistance while maintaining areas of expertise, therein offering both breadth and depth of service. State team leaders can broker and coordinate SECAC staff services in all areas and at all levels.

Relationship with host institution. The center derives several benefits from its relationship with SEDL. The primary role of SEDL, as related to SECAC, is that of fiscal agent. It has the capacity to manage fiscal operations for SECAC and approves fiscal decisions concerning more than \$1,500. Additionally, SEDL shares resources with SECAC, such as human resource staff and training materials. Center staff have attended professional development activities at SEDL, and, where their service regions overlap, SECAC and the Eisenhower consortium have participated in one another's conferences. Lastly, the SECAC director is on the SEDL Management Council, which meets biweekly to discuss issues and operations of SEDL and its programs.

Needs Assessment Strategies

The center's primary strategy for assessing needs in the region is to develop a close relationship between the state team leaders and SEA staff in each of their states. These relationships have been facilitated by housing state team leaders within the SEA facilities and focusing their responsibilities on needs assessment and service within a single state. Furthermore, each state team leader has formed a state coordinating committee, which consists of the heads of the categorical programs and oversees and guides SECAC's work in its state. Meetings with the committees help raise awareness of center activities, promote collaboration with the SEA, and ensure that center services are in line with state goals. Center staff report that meetings with coordinating committees are important to their success. SECAC staff also detect needs through relationships with clients at the district and school level and through reports generated from data on participant feedback forms.

Portfolio of Services

The center provides technical assistance that is comprehensive as opposed to categorical. The most obvious example would be SECAC's work with the Initiative Schools. The center seeks to identify the particular needs of a school, rather than focusing on categorical needs alone. Furthermore,

planning and implementation are founded in improvement strategies that focus on the whole school. Training at the Initiative Schools includes all school staff, as well as parents, community members, and business partners, when appropriate. Additionally, SECAC offers services that integrate math, science, and reading; inform clients about the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSR) program; explore the management of school improvement; and facilitate the growth of the RSN initiative.

Initiative schools. The center focuses intensive, needs-based, sustained, comprehensive services in one or two schools, called “Initiative Schools,” in each of the five states in its region. In general, the state team leader has the primary relationship with the schools, although he or she typically brokers resources for the school, such as recruiting other SECAC staff to fulfill special roles. Typical center services to Initiative Schools include a needs assessment, creation of an improvement plan, and assistance in implementing the plan. Professional development is often a substantial aspect of the plan and its implementation. To develop a deep and meaningful relationship with school staff, state team leaders make face-to-face contact twice a month for the first few months. Thereafter, center staff visits to the school may range from one to several times a month, although telephone and electronic communication are ongoing. Most Initiative Schools have been receiving SECAC services since the winter of 1998.

Assistance to the Mississippi Regional Service Centers. SECAC has undertaken the major responsibility of assisting and training several of Mississippi’s eight newly established Regional Service Centers (RSCs), which use SEA funds to provide technical assistance and professional development throughout the state. The Mississippi SEA requested that SECAC provide technical assistance and professional development activities for RSCs, particularly those struggling to provide the intended services. An ongoing relationship was established in which the center provided needs assessment and assistance in planning, with the ultimate goal of building the capacity of the RSCs to provide technical assistance throughout the state. SECAC provided 11 technical assistance activities to the RSCs between October 1997 and September 1998.

Reading Success Network. The Reading Success Network (RSN) is a strategy to improve the teaching and learning of reading through a network of teacher-coaches who support other teachers’ efforts to provide effective reading instruction. It relies on coaching as the service delivery model, focuses on students who are not reaching benchmarks, and can incorporate a variety of curriculum and assessment packages that are currently used. In Region V, RSN implementation is progressing at various speeds, depending upon the state or district that is participating. In May 1998, two center staff, staff from two state departments (Mississippi and Arkansas), and staff from one Georgia LEA received RSN training in San Antonio. Known as the RSN Regional Team, this group is responsible for training and aiding schools in implementing the program. By the beginning of the 1998-99 school year, two schools in Georgia, six schools in Alabama, and eight schools in Louisiana had received training and follow-up. Currently, the center is identifying potential RSN schools and continuing to collect baseline data.

Regional Institute on Curriculum Integration. In the summer of 1998, SECAC provided the Regional Institute on Curriculum Integration, which focused on integrating math, science, reading, and technology curriculum. The institute was a two-day training for school teams of three—including a principal, a math or science teacher, and a reading or technology teacher. The 200 participants were expected to implement and share what they learned when they returned to their schools. Although the activity is not sustained, a large number of people participated, increasing the potential for it to influence classroom teaching. Furthermore, the Institute necessitates four months of preparation and the involvement of all SECAC staff.

Technology. The center has worked to make its Web site more accessible to clients. The resources section includes center-developed documents and links in the areas of safe and drug-free schools, content reading, and migrant education. The center provides equity in accessibility by making its Web site accessible to the blind—one of the few in the world. By the winter of 1999, SECAC was not yet using teleconferencing or other advanced telecommunications technology to deliver services to clients.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Recognizing the center's charge to be part of a networked system of technical assistance, SECAC collaborates with technical assistance providers on both the federal and state levels.

Comprehensive Centers. SECAC attends the quarterly Comprehensive Center directors' meeting and participates in the Comprehensive Center RSN initiative.

Regional Educational Laboratories. SECAC has collaborated with both regional educational laboratories that provide service in the region. With SEDL, its host organization, it shares a limited amount of human and material resources and participates jointly to sponsor conferences. SECAC has worked with the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) regional educational laboratory to showcase CSRD models.

Mississippi Regional Service Centers. In addition to building its capacity to provide service in Mississippi, SECAC has co-sponsored professional development events with the RSCs.

Region VI
Region VI Comprehensive Assistance Center
Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
VI	\$1,881,624	13.65	801,000	27,000	103,000	70,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region VI is known as the Region VI Comprehensive Assistance Center. The Region VI Comprehensive Assistance Center has two broad goals. First, the center designs its activities and services to have maximum impact on student learning. Thus, many of the center’s services are targeted to teachers and other school-level personnel who are most directly involved in teaching and learning. Second, the center seeks to serve diverse student populations and highly impacted schools. Collectively, staff see their charge as improving education for those most in need.

The six-state region served by the center covers a large geographic area and is marked by considerable economic and cultural diversity. The region stretches from the Dakotas to Michigan, and includes remote farming communities and a number of urban centers. In addition, the region is home to several large American Indian populations.

Organization and Staffing

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, the Region VI Comprehensive Center is composed of four institutions that work together to provide a variety of training, professional development, and technical assistance in their region. The four institutions include:

- **Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.** The WCER, which is a 35-year-old education research institution at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, is the primary grantee for the Region VI Comprehensive Center. In addition to serving as the primary fiscal agent, the WCER provides administrative and logistical support to the center. Finally, and perhaps most important, the intellectual resources of the WCER are available to inform the work of the center.

- **Eastern Michigan University (EMU).** EMU is a subcontracting partner located near the eastern edge of the region in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Its location allows EMU to enhance the center's capacity to provide service in southeastern Michigan.
- **United Tribes Technical College (UTTC).** UTTC is a subcontracting partner located in Bismarck, North Dakota. The center relies on the UTTC to provide most, though not all, of its services to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools throughout the region. A recent focus of UTTC activities and services has been the implementation of schoolwide programs in schools that serve American Indian students. UTTC used to operate an Indian Education Technical Assistance Center.
- **Hamline University.** Located in St. Paul, Minnesota, Hamline University is the center's third subcontracting partner. Staff at Hamline are primarily responsible for coordinating center services in Minnesota and specialize in the areas of bilingual education and Title I. However, Hamline staff also provide services in other parts of the center's region.

Staffing and expertise. Each of the center's 14 professional staff members specializes in several topical areas. Staff members regularly exchange service referrals and requests and serve as resources for their colleagues. Typically, professional staff have had experience implementing programs, conducting research, or providing technical assistance and professional development in their respective specialty areas. The center maintains expertise in three broad areas, which the center classifies as Title specialties, federal priorities, or special projects. One or more staff is assigned to work in each of the following categories:

- **Title Specialties.** Staff have expertise in Title I, schoolwide programs, migrant education, delinquent and homeless education, math, technology, safe and drug-free schools, Title VI, bilingual education, immigrant education, Title VIII, Indian education, gifted and talented education, charter schools, and Title XI.
- **Federal Priorities.** Staff have expertise in reading, math, standards and accountability, access to college, professional development of talented teachers, urban education, rural education, desegregation, social studies, and special education.
- **Special Projects.** Staff have expertise in the CSRD Program implementation, Reading Success Network, dissemination, and parent involvement.

Five center staff also serve as state coordinators (with one state coordinator serving both North and South Dakota). State coordinators: (1) receive and process all service requests; (2) assist the SEA in identifying state technical assistance needs; (3) coordinate services provided to the state by the center, as well as other technical assistance providers; (4) provide direct services when appropriate; and (5) keep SEA contacts apprised of all centers services in their respective states. Although the state coordinator position is a recent addition new to the center's organizational structure, the position has become an important part of the center's overall approach to providing a comprehensive and coherent portfolio of services in each of the six states. Through state coordinators, the center raises awareness of its services

within the SEA and throughout the state, and center staff are able to develop a long-term sustained relationship with contact persons in the SEA.

Relationship with host institution. The center draws on both the management and intellectual resources of the WCER and the University of Wisconsin. WCER handles the center's finances and issues monthly financial statements to its director. Second, it facilitates and has ultimate authority regarding personnel decisions. Third, the host secured the center facility space from the University. Although the missions of the center and the WCER are different, center staff, particularly the director, are able to draw on the expertise of the WCER and the university in designing and conducting center activities. For example, WCER scholars who are nationally recognized experts have presented at the Cognitively Guided Instruction Institute and the Principal Leadership Institute, two of the center's premier activities. Finally, although center staff and the WCER director agree that there is room for improvement, efforts are under way to define the role of the center as the outreach arm of the WCER. Thereby, the research and practice communities will be brought together in a single forum where the center informs WCER about needs in the field, strategies for dissemination, and in-roads to schools and districts, and WCER informs the center about research and materials.

Needs Assessment Strategies

The center assesses the needs of clients in its region primarily through ongoing interactions between SEA contacts and the center's state coordinators. Often, the SEA contact will identify state needs, and in some instances center staff participate in SEA planning and needs assessment processes. The SEA's agenda and articulation thus informs the center's organization of services at all levels. Somewhat more informally, center staff also rely heavily on telephone requests for services, observations while in the field, and conversations with stakeholders and participants in center activities to collect information about needs.

The center conducts a more comprehensive and formal needs assessment as part of a close working relationship with three schools in Detroit. Center staff talk with school stakeholders about school improvement with the goal of creating and implementing a school-level professional development plan.

Portfolio of Services

The center's portfolio includes services to SEAs, school districts, and schools. Within this portfolio, there are priorities on services that are practical, client-driven, and aimed at building participants' capacity to sustain success. The center also places a priority on activities that, in the judgement of the center staff, are likely to have a "multiplier effect" among participants. Finally, all of the center's signature activities are explicitly grounded in cutting-edge research, much of which was

conducted at the WCER and the University of Wisconsin. Examples of these activities include the following:

Cognitively Guided Instruction. Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) is a problem-solving math program developed by researchers at the University of Wisconsin. CGI seeks to enable K-3 teachers to tailor instruction around students' cognitive processes to build on students' abilities. The program is based on developmental theory and requires individualized assessment strategies. Training spans five days in the summer. Participants include teams composed of two teachers and one resource specialist/trainer. The center intends for the resource specialist, with the assistance of the teachers, to take CGI back to his or her school and train others in it. The center monitors implementation of the program strategies by collecting student achievement data (including baseline data), sending out a teacher survey that focuses on behavior changes, and communicating with participants through follow-up calls, e-mail, and in some instances, on-site consultations. It provided its first CGI training to 60 educators in 1998. Advanced training for the first cohort and initial training for a new cohort of teams was scheduled for the summer of 1999.

Principal Leadership Institute. Presented by a University of Wisconsin faculty member and other center staff, the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI) is attended by school administrators from throughout the region. Participants learn how to identify underlying norms, build school culture, create a communication and action plan, and change the inertia of their schools. The program focuses on both the cultural and structural aspects of the school environment and sees the principal as the lever of change. PLI occurs over two and a half days in the summer, and center staff follow-up through e-mail or, in cases where there is a concentrated group of administrators, through face-to-face interaction. About 50 participants attended the second PLI training in summer 1998.

Reading Success Network. In Region VI, the center provided LEA and SEA personnel with initial informational meetings in the RSN model. Following these meetings, 80 people from six districts asked to participate in the first Region VI training, which took place in February 1999. Districts were asked to send team of school personnel (three teachers, an assistant principal, and a reading specialist) and district personnel (a professional development support staff, a literacy support staff, and two Title I support staff).

Technology. The Region VI Comprehensive Center uses technology as a means to disseminate information and deliver assistance. Through its Web page, the center disseminates *Reform Talk*, a monthly Region VI newsletter of reform issues, as well as other publications. The Web page is also used to provide information about services and links to resources. Furthermore, center staff use e-mail to respond to client questions or requests, and specialists in the CGI, PLI, and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs maintain listservs for follow-up and consultation.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

As a matter of policy and strategy, the Region VI Comprehensive Assistance Center engages in collaborative activities that emerge from ongoing work and when the center staff identify other providers who are conducting similar work or work that targets common participants. For example, the center collaborated with the Region VII Comprehensive Center to provide an RSN conference in February 1999 for school and district teams from both regions. The two centers worked together to arrange logistics and program presentations, which included presentations by staff from the Region XII Comprehensive Center. In a second example, the center collaborated with the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) to link with their CSRD Web page and disseminate a monograph on charter schools. It has also invited NCREL and other service providers to several staff meetings to discuss services and client needs.

Region VII
Region VII Comprehensive Center
Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
VII	\$2,323,837	18.7	1,069,000	43,000	186,000	110,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region VII is known as the Region VII Comprehensive Center. The Region VII Comprehensive Center’s overarching goal is to build the capacity of education institutions throughout the region, moving them toward systemic reform espoused in ESEA legislation. To fulfill this goal, the center favors modeling and “showcasing” comprehensive reform efforts and strategies. Center staff articulate a commitment to providing “high-impact” technical assistance that models cross-categorical, comprehensive planning throughout the implementation process. In addition, staff use clients’ initial requests for focused, “one-shot” assistance as the basis for providing more in-depth, sustained services.

The center serves 3,428 diverse school districts, including those that encompass major urban centers (for example, Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City), as well as small, rural districts. The region is also characterized by a high number of Indian students (80,655). Its demographics have shaped center priorities, resulting in specialized initiatives aimed at serving these unique constituencies.

Organization and Staffing

The Region VII Comprehensive Center is located at the University of Oklahoma’s College of Continuing Education, Public and Community Services division, in Norman, Oklahoma. The center is composed of staff from five organizations, three of which served as former categorical technical assistance providers:

- **University of Oklahoma, College of Continuing Education, Public and Community Services.** Based in Norman, Oklahoma, the primary grantee has a long history of providing technical assistance. Previously the university operated a desegregation

assistance center (1966-81), a Title VII multifunctional resource center (1987-95), and a drug-free schools and communities regional center (1987-95).

- **PRC, Inc./Education and Evaluation Services.** Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, PRC, Inc., formerly operated as a Chapter 1 technical assistance center. Staff bring expertise in Title I technical assistance and technology to the center.
- **Texas A&M University at Kingsville.** Based in Kingsville, Texas, the university previously operated a migrant education program coordination center and a Title VII multifunctional resource center. Staff bring professional experience and affiliations in the areas of bilingual and migrant education.
- **Inter-Tribal Associates.** Based in Noble, Oklahoma, Inter-Tribal Associates provides support to Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and American Native tribes in the region and nationally.
- **Phi Delta Kappa International.** Based in Bloomington, Indiana, partners from this professional network provide expertise in school reform and professional development.

Staffing and expertise. The center's 17 professional staff members are organized into multi-disciplinary technical assistance teams that vary from project to project, depending upon staff members' expertise and the needs of clients. Staff areas of expertise include bilingual, Indian, and migrant education; evaluation, assessment, and research; parent involvement; professional development; Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities; school reform; technology; and Title I. Technological resources enable center staff to work together despite geographical barriers; they use an in-house electronic calendar and teleconferencing capabilities to keep one another informed about schedules and ongoing center activities.

Relationship with host institution. The center has access to resources at the University of Oklahoma such as training facilities, food services, television services and videographers, and transportation, including private airplanes. When staff travel to remote areas, the center leases a jet or prop plane, which is more efficient and cost effective than purchasing commercial airline tickets and paying for overnight stays. Several staff members, including two directors and a network specialist, share their time between the center and responsibilities in the division of Public and Community Services at the College of Continuing Education.

Needs Assessment Strategies

Region VII has developed a set of guiding principles designed to help staff make decisions about the services they provide. These principles provide a foundation for the center to determine how to best meet the region's needs with limited resources. The principles call on staff to assess and research the identified needs, current state of affairs, available resources, and desired outcomes of clients. Staff use demographic and programmatic data to determine areas of need and to inform planning with their clients.

The center also uses regional workshops to combine needs assessment with training opportunities. For example, the Urban Superintendent's Symposium served as a vehicle for informally assessing needs across participating states, as well as a mechanism for identifying LEAs and schools within those states in need of further technical assistance. In another example, the Schoolwide Showcase provided training to SEA Title I administrators regarding state and local implementation of schoolwide Title I programs and served as an opportunity to assess states' interest in receiving further center assistance in this area. Both workshops have resulted in sustained assistance to SEAs, LEAs, and schools.

Portfolio of Services

Staff use an internal classification process designed to improve the center's coordination of services, placing a priority on offering comprehensive, longer-term consultations, service, and institutes. The process classifies technical assistance services into three categories: Level I, Level II, and Level III, with Level III services being the most resource-intensive.

- **Level I services** include activities such as information dissemination workshops, newsletter, Web site, and other mass distribution efforts.
- **Level II services** typically serve regional needs through workshops, symposia, teleconferencing, computer conferencing, and video conferencing.
- **Level III services** consist of what the center considers to be intensive, high-impact technical assistance, defined as a specialized delivery of services that increase capacity and, ultimately, bring about systemic reform. Level III services delineate desired outcome goals at the onset and incorporate follow-up.

Center staff try to build on clients' requests for "one-shot" or Level I/II services to catalyze more comprehensive reform efforts throughout the region. They favor service delivery models designed to reach wide audiences (including trainer-of-trainer sessions, showcases, leadership cadres, and learner academies) and to maximize the impact of technical assistance provided to the region.

Learning Facilitators' Academy. The Learning Facilitators' Academy provided training to 12 schools (eight elementary and four middle schools), each represented by a six-person, cross-disciplinary team, consisting of administrators; Title I, bilingual, and content area teachers; and guidance counselors. The academy, a five-session series, developed participants' skills in the change process, team building, student learning styles, curriculum alignment, and instructional strategies. The series was conducted over five weekend sessions, in a three-month period of time. Participants met for six hours on Saturdays, concluding each session with a service delivery plan that they tried in schools and classrooms between sessions and reported on at the following session. The first series' sessions took place in spring 1998; the second series occurred in the fall with nine additional schools. The Learning Facilitators' Academy is an example of how the center used a client's request for "one-shot" training as an opportunity to provide more intense, cross-categorical assistance. It evolved from a request made by the St. Louis Public Schools' director of bilingual education to the center for training specific to bilingual education services for children. Center staff worked with district program administrators to broaden the scope of the technical assistance to focus on all children, including gifted and talented, bilingual, and ESEA program participants, to move the district toward increased consolidated planning across categorical programs.

Urban Superintendents' Symposium. In a region with many large urban centers, the Urban Superintendents' Symposium served as a vehicle for informally assessing needs across all participating states, as well as a mechanism for reaching LEAs and schools within those states that are in need of assistance. The symposium, conducted in 1998, was designed to introduce center services to the region's urban district superintendents and their central office teams. The center presented strategies to promote the Title I schoolwide option and consolidated planning. The symposium was also a forum for discussion about school climate issues, curriculum and instruction, assessment and school performance, professional development, and challenges faced by urban districts. Approximately 25 people participated in the first symposium, held in July 1998; approximately 40 people attended a follow-up symposium in October 1998. Follow-up has been initiated in Kansas City, Kansas; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Chicago, Illinois.

Schoolwide Showcase. The Schoolwide Showcase was designed to inform SEA representatives about Region VII's support for state and local implementation of Title I schoolwide programs. Twenty-five SEA federal programs staff members, including federal program directors and Title I staff from four states, attended a three-day meeting with center staff. The meeting provided participants with a regional forum to discuss common challenges and concerns with respect to the expansion and improvement of schoolwide programs. The teams also developed preliminary action plans using data on the number of schools that qualified to be schoolwides in their states. The plans defined their vision for schoolwide programs, and identified states' technical assistance needs. The Region VII team continued its direct consultations to interested SEA teams through follow-up telephone conversations. As a result of the initial workshop and follow-up communication, Region VII staff continue to assist Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri with Title I schoolwide program implementation. For example, Nebraska has assembled a

statewide task force to promote schoolwides to which Region VII offers consultation, and center staff provide direct consultation to school and state team members in Missouri.

Title IX Indian Education Technical Assistance Workshops. The center assists ED's Office of Indian Education and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools in their efforts to develop high-quality content and performance standards. This is a major opportunity for the center to support its commitment to BIA schools, its "seventh" state. It also enabled the center to develop training materials on determining the quality of standards that could be used in other state or local contexts where they are developing and reviewing standards. The center has sponsored several planning meetings and consultations, including an intensive two-day training at the National Indian School Board (NISB) meeting. About 35 BIA representatives from 22 of the 50 states participated in the NISB training.

Technology. One of the center's top priorities is to upgrade the technology services it offers the region. Two technology experts work full-time to assess center and regional technology needs and to broaden the scope of the center's technology services. Under the team's direction, the center hosted two Technology Learning Institutes, which were planned and conducted in collaboration with the South Central Regional Technology Educational Consortia (SCR*TEC).

The technology team also pilots online products, including Profiler, a database software that school technology specialists can use to assess and prioritize internal technology needs and to build technology capacity among teachers. Another product is a language instruction CD-ROM that teaches the Choctaw language. A third technology initiative, developed by PRC, Inc. for the Nebraska State Department of Education, is a prototype tool to help SEAs and LEAs access complex rules and regulations about implementing federal and state statutes and policies. This tool, referred to as KnowledgeBase, computerizes statutes and provides examples of policies and procedures for developing and implementing services to limited English-speaking students.

All center staff communicate regularly with clients electronically. As a routine service, center staff offer electronic copies of PowerPoint presentations so that SEA clients can customize and reuse them in LEAs and schools. The center also hosts online listservs, an online newsletter, and discussion forums on "hot" topics and regional priorities.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Centers. The Region VII Center has served on various committees in the Comprehensive Centers network, including planning and research and development committees. The center's director, in collaboration with Regions VI and XII, helped design and implement the initial

phases of the Reading Success Network (RSN), and center staff coordinated the logistics of one of the national RSN conferences.

Other Federal Technical Assistance Providers. The Region VII Center collaborates with the regional educational laboratories that serve its states—the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), the North Central Educational Laboratory (NCREL), and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)—to assist states with comprehensive planning and program fund distribution under the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. With the region’s federal technology provider, SCR*TEC, the center conducts the Technology Learning Institutes and develops products such as the Profiler database software and the Choctaw language CD-ROM.

Region VIII
Support for Texas Academic Renewal (STAR) Center
Texas

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
VIII	\$2,385,538	17.63	979,000	97,000	514,000	1,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region VIII is known as the STAR Center, or Support for Texas Academic Renewal. The mission of the STAR Center is to facilitate systemic change that leads to high achievement for all students, particularly those at risk of educational failure. Although the center’s intent is to never refuse a request for service, it often tailors its services to ensure that they reflect the center’s 13 priority areas, are cost-effective, and are consistent with the mission of the Comprehensive Centers outlined in ESEA.

Because the center closely aligned its mission and priorities with ESEA, it concentrates much of its work on providing intensive services to schoolwide programs, many of which serve students with special language needs. Furthermore, to ensure that its technical assistance activities have a long-term effect, the STAR Center offers professional development and technical assistance that focuses on capacity-building, teaming, networking, and maximizing the use of technology for instructional services and facilitating change.

Organization and Staffing

Based in San Antonio, Texas, the STAR Center is a joint enterprise among three partner organizations that share responsibility for managing the center. Each of the partner organizations contributes particular expertise and experiences as technical assistance providers. The partners include:

- **The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA).** San Antonio-based IDRA, a 25-year-old, nonprofit training, technical assistance, and development organization, is the primary grantee. IDRA has served as a desegregation assistance center since 1975 and was a Title VII multifunctional resource center under the former

federal technical assistance system. The organization contributes special expertise in the education of LEP and economically disadvantaged students.

- **The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin.** The Dana Center works extensively in the areas of math, science, and technology education. Its research on factors contributing to success in high-poverty schools has enhanced the STAR Center’s technical assistance activities.
- **RMC Research Corporation.** The Denver office of RMC served Texas as a Chapter 1 technical assistance center prior to the institution of the Comprehensive Centers. In addition to its expertise in the Title I program, RMC brings a wealth of experience in product development to the STAR Center.

Staffing and expertise. The executive directors of IDRA, the Dana Center, and RMC serve as co-principals and contribute equally to the center’s policy and administrative decisions. Day-to-day management of the center rests with three site directors representing each of the partner organizations. The center’s professional staff members serve on one or more cross-organizational service delivery teams—school renewal, circles of support, and technology. By organizing staff into cross-organizational teams, the STAR Center encourages its technical assistance providers to serve as both generalists and specialists and enhances the quality of its work by pooling the strengths and resources of staff from three distinct organizations.

Relationship with host institution. IDRA’s reputation as a technical assistance organization provides credibility to the Region VIII Center. In addition, its staff members—including those who are associated with the STAR Center and those who work on other projects—are knowledgeable about bilingual and equity issues and serve as resources for center activities.

Needs Assessment Strategies

Needs assessment is an integral part of determining the type and intensity of services the STAR Center provides to the state, districts, and schools. During the center’s planning stage, it surveyed school district administrators to determine their needs and the needs of schools in their districts. This survey information helped guide the center’s initial work plan, which is revisited annually. When designing strategic plans and tailoring services, the center considers information gathered through several kinds of ongoing needs assessment activities, including discussions with staff from the state’s regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA); focus groups with district administrators; consultations with school-level staff about their school’s strengths and weaknesses; and meetings with school support teams.

Portfolio of Services

The STAR Center organizes its activities primarily around four priority areas: (1) schoolwide programs; (2) high-performing, high-poverty schools; (3) coordination of funds and programs; and (4) improving instruction through technology. The center favors service delivery strategies that enhance clients' own capacities for providing services and foster networking among districts and schools. These strategies include developing training related to reports, toolkits, and resource guides that offer models, planning processes, and examples of best practices; sponsoring institutes, workshops, and conferences; and holding trainer-of-trainers sessions. The following highlights of center services illustrate the ways in which the STAR Center strives to provide assistance in a comprehensive manner:

Schoolwide programs. The STAR Center's emphasis on schoolwide programs addresses a particular need in Texas, where more than one-half of all schools are eligible to apply for the schoolwide option under Title I and where campus improvement plans are required of each school. To help schools integrate both types of plans, the center developed *A Toolkit for Assessing and Revising the Integrated Campus Improvement and Title I Schoolwide Plan* and sponsored two schoolwide institutes. The toolkit features a side-by-side comparison of the requirements of the Title I schoolwide plan and the state's campus improvement plan. It also provided school support teams with a tool for developing their capacity to assess the effectiveness of schoolwide reform efforts and to assist campuses in the implementation and evaluation of school reform efforts aimed at enhancing student achievement. The schoolwide institutes, a joint effort between the STAR Center and ESCs in Regions XIII and XX, took place during the fall of 1997 and served staff from 20 to 30 school districts. The two- to three-day institutes sought to develop school improvement teams' capacities to assess the effectiveness of schoolwide reform efforts and to help schools implement and evaluate such efforts.

High-performing, high-poverty schools. Since 1996, the center has worked extensively with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to help that district's high-poverty schools become more successful. The STAR Center directed its technical assistance activities to principals, organizing a series of leadership institutes in June 1997. The institutes featured discussion about the characteristics of high-performing schools, as identified by the Dana Center in its study of 26 highly successful, high-poverty Texas schools, the Successful Texas Schoolwide Programs Study. In HISD, two-thirds of the schools that were low-performing in 1996 were rated "acceptable" by the state's accountability system in 1998.

Building on the Dana Center's study of successful schools, the STAR Center partnered with the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin to conduct research on the characteristics of effective school districts. Under this collaborative effort, 15 doctoral candidates training to become district superintendents and STAR Center staff conducted a study of 10 districts throughout Texas in which a high percentage of high-poverty schools received "recognized" or "exemplary" ratings from the state.

The center is participating in the Reading Success Network (RSN), through which it trains K-3 teachers on how to interpret student data and encourages them to reflect on their instructional practices. Under a pilot project, the center is working with 12 high-poverty schools in three Texas school districts, chosen to represent varying degrees of urbanicity and size. In Texas, RSN emphasizes peer coaching and data-driven decisionmaking.

Coordinated funding. Along with the ESC in Region II, the STAR Center developed the Coordinated Funding Resource Guide and the “Show Me The Money” game, a simulation activity in which players work in teams to coordinate funding sources in a budget. To build the capacity of the state’s technical assistance system in this area, the center provided training for more than 200 ESC staff in the use of these materials and helped the ESC in Region II provide day-long training sessions for district and school staff that focused on the coordination of program funds.

Excellence and Equity Through Technology Network (EETNet). A major focus of the STAR Center’s activities is to enhance instruction through technology. Through EETNet, the center works with ESC staff and school teams to develop and implement technology plans for their schools. When appropriate, the center encourages schools to incorporate technology plans into their Title I schoolwide and campus improvement plans. EETNet institutes, which are two-day professional development opportunities for campus improvement teams, feature such activities as conducting online needs assessments and engaging in long-range technology planning. Participants receive ongoing support from the STAR Center, including a two-day follow-up institute within a year of the initial institute. Each school that participated in EETNet institutes and submitted a technology plan for funding was awarded state or federal funding.

Other uses of technology. STAR Center’s Web site provides various center products to clients, including the *Teachers’ Internet User Guide*, that supports the alignment of technology and standards-based reform and guides teachers in designing Internet-based lessons aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The center also uses e-mail to communicate with clients throughout the state.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Recognizing and embracing its charge to be part of a networked system of assistance, the STAR Center has done a considerable amount of collaboration with fellow technical assistance providers on both the federal and regional levels.

Comprehensive Centers. In addition to participating in RSN, the STAR Center has coordinated with other centers to sponsor an institute, develop a training session, and share materials. In 1998, the

STAR Center sponsored an institute on Title VII of ESEA, the Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement, and Language Acquisition Program. Principals, other administrators, and bilingual directors participated in the institute, along with staff from the Region IX, XI, and XII Comprehensive Centers. One center staff member is involved in the school-environment group, a cross-Comprehensive Center collaborative working to design a training session around the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program's Principles of Effectiveness. Staff from Comprehensive Centers in Regions V, VI, VII, VIII, X, and XIII comprise this team. Finally, the center shares its toolkits, resource guides, and other materials with other Comprehensive Centers, encouraging them to adapt the materials according to their region's needs.

Other federal technical assistance providers. The STAR Center has collaborated with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to plan and sponsor a set of regional workshops on comprehensive school reform and to conduct a study on how to create a learning community. In addition, the center worked with the desegregation assistance center located at IDRA to organize an early childhood conference.

Education Service Centers. The ESCs are the technical assistance "arm" of the Texas Education Agency but operate in a relatively autonomous fashion. The extent to which the Region VIII Comprehensive Center works with ESCs depends on the needs of a particular region, and initial contact may come from either the ESC or the STAR Center. The center is able to reach more people through its relationships with the ESCs because (1) the ESCs enable the center to leverage its resources and have a ripple effect on districts and schools through training and professional development, and (2) the ESCs provide a network for information dissemination.

As part of its focus on building the capacity of the state's technical assistance system, the STAR Center works closely with the ESCs to provide training, develop materials, and sponsor workshops, institutes, and conferences. Moreover, when responding to requests for assistance, the center involves the regional ESC in the delivery of services whenever appropriate.

Region IX
Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
IX	\$1,618,371	13.1	496,000	30,000	260,000	121,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region IX is known as the Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center (SWCC). The ultimate goal of the Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center (SWCC) is to improve the academic achievement of all students, particularly those served by ESEA programs. The center’s strategies aim primarily to strengthen ESEA programs in state departments of education, school districts, and schools, including Tribal Education Agency and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools. SWCC is one of five Comprehensive Centers specially charged to meet the needs of American Indian students. Thinly spread over a five-state area, center staff concentrate on enhancing state and local capacity to develop and manage comprehensive reform, linking resources across programs to form coherent support for students.

Organization and Staffing

SWCC is a partnership among four organizations, each of which brings particular skills to the venture:

- **The center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) at New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU).** Located in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, CESDP hosts the SWCC. A former Title VII evaluation assistance center, CESDP has expertise in bilingual education and the assessment of LEP students. CESDP is organized into five divisions: Training and Technical Assistance, home to SWCC; Contracted Services and Product Development; Research and Development; Community Services; and Special Projects.
- **WestEd.** WestEd, which has an office in Phoenix, Arizona, has a long history of disseminating examples of best practices in teaching and learning; supporting state and

district reforms in curriculum, assessment, and school organization; and encouraging collaboration as a tool for leveraging resources.

- **Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL).** Located in Aurora, Colorado, McREL has extensive experience in the areas of school improvement and student assessment.
- **Indigenous Institute for Educational Excellence (IIEE).** IIEE, located at NMHU's main campus in Las Vegas, New Mexico, implements the Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico Rural Systemic Initiative (UCAN-RSI). UCAN-RSI is a National Science Foundation (NSF) initiative designed to involve community members in efforts to improve science, mathematics, and technology education in selected rural school districts in the four-corner states.

When the partnership was established, it was agreed that SWCC services would be organized regionally, with CESDP serving New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah; WestEd serving Arizona; and McREL serving Colorado. To expand its work with American Indian communities in Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, the center also decided to partner with IIEE's UCAN-RSI initiative.

Staffing and expertise. CESDP receives 48 percent of the SWCC budget and employs the majority of SWCC staff, including the director and an associate director. Several of these staff members are shared among related CESDP contracts, allowing the center to draw on a broad base of human resources. WestEd receives 28 percent of the budget, and its staff members include a full-time associate director, a director of outreach, and two part-time professionals. McREL receives 19 percent of the budget and employs a full-time associate director and two professionals shared by the center and laboratory. In comparison, the center's work with IIEE comprises a small percentage of the SWCC budget—5 percent.

The center emphasizes the importance of joint decisionmaking, both for administrative decisions and for those that affect service delivery. The center has a management team responsible for handling decisions that affect the center as a whole. The management team consists of six people—the SWCC director, three associate directors, a center staff member, and a representative of IIEE. The three associate directors are representatives of CESDP, WestEd, and McREL. A center staff member responsible for overseeing special projects at the Rio Rancho office and the UCAN-RSI director are the remaining two members. The center's Rio Rancho office, which serves New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah, relies on a facilitation team to filter requests for service. The facilitation team consists of the director; the associate director for the Rio Rancho office; the special projects manager for the Rio Rancho office; and three staff, each of whom serves as a liaison to a single state. Upon receiving requests for technical assistance from its states, the facilitation team meets to discuss the requests in light of the center's overall mission and priorities. Once services are filtered, the facilitation team brings a roster of requests to the rest of the Rio Rancho staff, who then collectively determine the most appropriate division of responsibilities. Staff

expertise and prior relationships are determining factors in the process. The Phoenix and Aurora offices, which serve one state each and have fewer staff, do not rely on facilitation teams.

Center staff have expertise in bilingual, Indian, and migrant education; the education of diverse populations; Title I program implementation and administration; reading; standards development and implementation; and assessment and evaluation. While most center staff have a strong foundation of technical skill in one of these areas, they recognize the need to be flexible and have expanded their knowledge base by working on center projects outside of their specialty areas.

Relationship with host institution. SWCC derives several benefits from its relationship with NMHU. With a 150-year history of educating New Mexico's linguistically and culturally diverse population, the university adds to the credibility of the SWCC and provides staff with access to the resources of the university. This access promotes leveraging and collaboration among organizations that share a similar mission and complement one another's work. For the university, the center is both an avenue for enriching the training and services provided to and by NMHU education students and faculty and a mechanism through which NMHU can fulfill its goal of becoming an increasingly public service- and research-oriented university. The university has earmarked funds to ensure the continuity of CESDP and built a satellite campus at Rio Rancho to accommodate its offices. The campus is wired to support state-of-the-art technology necessary for distance learning and professional collaborations.

Needs Assessment Strategies

When developing the proposal for the Comprehensive Center, CESDP conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, which consisted of record reviews; test data analysis; and in-depth interviews and surveys of state department staff, district program directors, educators, parents, and program directors. For each of the five states, it created maps showing concentrations of American Indians, students living in poverty, and LEP students. The needs assessment revealed significant overlaps of these factors, demonstrating the need to coordinate and integrate services. To assess needs on an ongoing basis and adapt services to better meet these needs, the center's state liaisons for New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah, as well as center staff in the Phoenix and Aurora offices, work closely with state single points of contact, an individual from each state who represents the needs of the state's multiple constituencies. In addition, the center's management team meets regularly in each of the five states on a rotating basis and seeks input from key stakeholders in its region. Center staff also consider feedback from the clients they have served and try to improve services by taking suggestions and comments into account.

Portfolio of Services

The content of center services is concentrated in four priority areas: (1) developing literacy; (2) acquiring English language skills; (3) improving Indian education; and (4) developing comprehensive school reform and school improvement plans. To fulfill its overall goal of improving the academic achievement of all students, particularly those served by ESEA programs, the center organizes its work into four arenas:

- **Public awareness**—to promote awareness of the center and showcase the center’s services;
- **Proactive change facilitation on a broad scale**—to promote change through a series of highly focused and coordinated center-initiated functions;
- **Reactive change facilitation on a broad scale**—to promote educational change by responding to technical assistance requests; and
- **Proactive change facilitation in a focused environment**—to promote educational change through sustained, intensive projects that focus on a single district or school.

For each arena, established criteria help staff determine the value of an activity relative to SWCC’s central mission. While most requests for large-scale public awareness and technical assistance activities come from state education department staff, long-term, intensive services to districts and schools are often suggested by center staff. These services, in which the center proactively seeks to promote educational change, are focused on districts and schools that perform poorly on state achievement tests.

Literacy. The Reading Success Network (RSN) is a major focus of center activity in literacy. In New Mexico, SWCC staff are developing materials for intensive RSN training and have been working with pilot cadres in two schools since September 1998. In Arizona, center staff are working in partnership with Phoenix’s Isaac School District to implement the RSN initiative. The district is characterized by a large number of limited English proficient students whose scores on state assessments are extremely low and students whose families live in poverty. The center’s RSN trainer for that state has adapted the program to meet students’ special needs. Isaac’s superintendent and assistant superintendent are committed to working in partnership with the SWCC, adjusting their financial resources to share the cost of the project.

From July 1 to October 31, 1998, SWCC staff provided inservice training in literacy instruction to 16 collaborative peer teachers (CPTs) and district and school administrators. Through pre- and post-testing that included videotaped classroom scenarios, the center documented significant growth in participants’ ability to analyze and critique reading instruction. During phase two, from November 1998

through August 1999, the RSN trainer provided professional development to CPTs as they implement the coaching process at their schools. Phase three extended that training.

English as a Second Language. The center works extensively with Colorado to provide professional development for the state's teachers of LEP students. State policy requires teachers to have adequate preparation to serve such students, but acquiring the necessary endorsement has been logistically difficult for teachers who most need the training. To facilitate teacher learning and help teachers overcome barriers to professional certification, the center works with the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) to sponsor a graduate-level, district-based, English-as-a-Second Language endorsement program. Districts that have a high concentration of LEP students are invited to participate, along with districts that have been cited by ED's Office of Civil Rights for the inadequacy of services to this student group. The center created toolkits for the first four of the six required three-credit courses, identified local instructors to serve as UNC adjunct professors, and pilot-tested the program in the Aurora (CO) Public School District. SWCC and Aurora Public Schools shared program expenses, and UNC discounted tuition costs for the 17 teachers participating in the pilot. The center has also collaborated with the University of Colorado's BUENO Center to provide a similar program for teachers in Utah.

Indian Education. The center staff provides guidance and support to a professional who has filled the newly established Indian Education position in the Nevada Department of Education. The center's work with Indian educators in Nevada prompted the state to create this position and a similar one for multicultural education. Center staff have also worked intensively with Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools, Bernalillo Public Schools, and Taos Public Schools—three school districts in New Mexico that have sizable American Indian populations—and San Juan School District in Utah, a district that includes the only two-way bilingual (Navajo-English) program funded through a Title VII systemwide grant. In Colorado, SWCC staff promoted the re-establishment of the Colorado Indian Education Association, which then facilitated passage of a Colorado law mandating that American Indian history be included in all district curricula. The center helped the association successfully petition for the re-institution of an Indian Education position in the Colorado State Department of Education. In October 1998, the SWCC staff completed *A Guide for Planning Indian Education Programs: Meeting Federal Program Requirements*, which it shares with school staff in all five states and uses in workshops on Title IX proposal writing and program implementation. The center also works very closely with BIA schools throughout the five-state region.

Comprehensive School Reform/School Improvement. SWCC staff have provided support in the area of school improvement to state departments of education, school support teams, and individual schools. For example, center staff in the region's western area responded to the needs of the Arizona Department of Education's Academic Support Division by providing Standards Advocacy-Team Training across the state to teams of teachers, administrators, parents, and school board members. The training, a series of two-day events, focuses on raising achievement through standards and requires that participating

teams develop a plan of action to implement standards-based reform in their schools. Similarly, the center has collaborated with the New Mexico Office of School Improvement and Support and CESDP to produce a schoolwide program manual. Center staff have disseminated the manual and discussed its application with Title I School Support Team members and other participants of SWCC-sponsored Schoolwide Forums. Through a state Goals 2000 grant, SWCC staff have promoted development of strategies that help teachers address the states' new standards. In Nevada, the center has provided training on reform topics, including coaching strategies and schoolwide programs, to the state's Title I School Support Team, known as the Outstanding Nevada Educators (ONE) Cadre. In Colorado, SWCC staff have partnered with Fountain Elementary School, one of six schools identified by the state as an exemplary schoolwide program, to pilot *Title I Schoolwide Data Decision-Making*, a data-driven computer software product developed by McREL. SWCC staff visit the school on a monthly basis to meet with teachers and discuss how they can apply the software to improve student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Technology. In collaboration with CESDP, SWCC used technology to support New Mexico's standards-based reform efforts. Under a Goals 2000 grant, CESDP and SWCC have involved 20 teachers across New Mexico in a "Standards Online Group." Each teacher in the group was provided with a laptop computer so that they could share information and questions about standards with each other and access standards-related Web sites co-developed by CESDP and SWCC. In a series of conferences around the state, SWCC partnered with CESDP to provide professional development on using technology in the classroom.

Technology is also an integral component of the center's work with the Title I Schoolwide program at Fountain Elementary School. SWCC staff work closely with teachers to assist them in using a computer software program to interpret student performance and the factors related to it, and then develop a plan for increasing student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Collaboration with other technical assistance providers is an integral component of SWCC's work. For example, the center participates in staff exchanges with other Comprehensive Centers and maintains a partnership with UCAN-RSI. In addition, SWCC has collaborated with the Eisenhower Regional Math and Science Consortium hosted at WestEd, McREL, and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Comprehensive Centers. Region IX staff have shared their expertise in assessment, Indian education, and addressing the educational needs of LEP students with several of the Comprehensive Centers. By invitation, SWCC staff have gone on three occasions to Region VI, and have gone once each to Region VII, Region VIII, Region X, Region XII, Region XIII, and Region XIV Comprehensive

Centers. In return for SWCC's work in Wisconsin, Region VI will send a noted expert in school administration to conduct a leadership institute for selected principals in Region IX.

Other federal technical assistance providers. SWCC partnered with McREL to develop and install the *Title I Schoolwide Data Decision-Making* software for Fountain Elementary School. In coordination with the Eisenhower consortium housed at WestEd, a center staff member worked on implementing the Tribal Innovations Project, a multi-year professional development plan for American Indian populations in science and math education.

The center also collaborates with UCAN-RSI, an NSF-funded initiative, to provide services to Indian tribes in the four-corner states. Because each tribe is a sovereign nation that must re-approve contracts with outside agencies annually, the two agencies share contacts and work together to offer assistance efficiently and with sensitivity to local needs and customs. For example, when in the course of conducting a session on state testing, a SWCC staff person discovers a school or district that needs extra help in math or science, he or she makes a referral to UCAN-RSI. Adapting to the requirements of BIA, community-controlled, and regular public schools on reservations demands sustained attention to ties with different agencies and governing bodies. UCAN-RSI and SWCC share a commitment to enable communities to effectively manage their educational systems.

Region X
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Comprehensive Center, Region X
Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
X	\$1,264,964	9.2	324,000	56,000	113,000	49,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region X is known as the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL's) Comprehensive Center, Region X. NWREL's Comprehensive Center is a training and technical assistance center dedicated to serving Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs in the Northwest. The service area includes many isolated and rural communities, a large American Indian population, and several large and small urban areas with highly diverse student populations. Because of the region's diversity, the center faces the challenge of having to build capacity in widely varied state and local contexts. It concentrates its services on improving teaching and learning, especially for students most at risk, including those living in poverty, immigrants, American Indians, LEP, homeless, neglected, or delinquent students. Through intensive inservice, direct consultation, and electronic and video communications, the center seeks to build the professional capacity of state and local education agencies, schools, tribes, and community-based organizations in the states in its region.

Organization and Staffing

NWREL's Comprehensive Center is located in Portland, Oregon, at the **Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory**. The primary grantee, NWREL, also houses several other Department of Education-funded technical assistance providers, including, among others, centers on: school safety; equity; community and education volunteer service; mentoring; technology; and mathematics and science education. NWREL's Comprehensive Center partners with two regional organizations to support its work with Indian communities. The partner organizations focus on building the leadership and program implementation capacity of educators serving BIA/tribal contract schools and public schools serving reservation lands. The two partners are:

- **Salish-Kootenai College (SKC).** Located in Pablo, Montana, SKC provides services to the region's BIA schools and tribal contract schools. These schools benefit from assistance that NWREL's Comprehensive Center, SKC, and the National Indian School Board Association (NISBA) provide collaboratively. The three organizations pool their resources to offer schools comprehensive, long-term training that assists schools in reviewing, revising, and implementing their school improvement plan. The annual budget for SKC in 1999 was \$39,410.
- **Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI).** With headquarters in Portland, Oregon, ATNI concentrates on helping tribal education departments establish and improve collaborative working relationships between tribes and local school districts. It also serves schools and school districts on reservation lands through training, networking, and consultation. The annual budget for ATNI in 1999 was \$33,493.

Staffing and expertise. The Region X Center is staffed by nine full- and part-time professional staff, three support staff, and one management assistant, in addition to two part-time staff in the partner organizations. The center shares part-time staff with other NWREL programs, including the Technology Center and the Assessment and Evaluation program. Individual staff members have specialized expertise in the areas of Title I, Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs, Indian education, early childhood and parent education, testing and evaluation, and comprehensive school reform. The center staff are experienced educators, having served as teachers, school administrators, and professional development and program evaluation specialists, and they have speaking proficiency in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Relationship with host institution. As one of NWREL's 12 programs and centers, the Comprehensive Center benefits from the services of the laboratory's offices of Finance, Human Resources, Development and Communications, and Planning and Program Development. These offices provide the center with the organizational infrastructure to support staffing and personnel services, conference arrangements, and publications and dissemination. The center's director is an integral part of the laboratory structure, contributing to the monthly program directors' meeting to integrate center and laboratory priorities and services with other NWREL management activities. The center uses the NWREL Professional Activity Reporting System (PARS), the laboratory's internal activities management and tracking system, to evaluate its activities and to meet ED reporting requirements. Finally, the center draws on the laboratory's membership of more than 800 agencies to recruit the center's Advisory Committee members, help define the annual program agenda, and pilot new center activities.

Needs Assessment Strategies

There are four components to the center's continuing needs assessment. The first is the formal institutional needs assessment that NWREL conducts biennially. Every two years, the center tracks the region's changing demographic characteristics and educators' concerns, and assesses their match with the center's activities and services. Second, staff record the results of the PARS activity evaluations and receive data about program impact and clients' expressed needs. Third, the center's 12-member advisory board meets four times annually to review regional trends and emerging needs and to identify priorities. Fourth, other contributions to the center's continuing needs analysis include information from the center's state liaisons, workshop evaluations, and regular contacts with state-level staff in the region.

Portfolio of Services

The center's dual commitments to improving coordination of federal programs and to school reform are achieved through four categories of technical assistance events. According to the center's 1997-98 Annual Performance Report, these services are distributed in the following proportions:

- **41 percent** for individual, agency, or LEA consultations;
- **31 percent** for information dissemination services;
- **15 percent** for professional development activities such as institutes, workshops, and presentations; and
- **13 percent** for technical assistance collaborations and facilitating or convening events.

The center's workshop directory lists a range of technical assistance options that the region's schools and districts may request, including workshops on integrating federal and local education programs, involving families and the community, developing assessment systems, measuring program performance, and data-based planning. The workshops are designed as modules so that they can be presented in varying lengths, over several days or weeks, or in short sessions.

State initiatives. Each staff member is a lead contact for one state within the region and assists in serving other states. The center's work with the region's five SEAs is customized to the characteristics of each state.

- Idaho consultation has focused on improving services to LEP and migrant students and on comprehensive planning for schoolwide programs. Consultation themes addressed standards, teaching strategies for LEP students, and serving LEP students in schoolwide programs.

- In Oregon, the center assisted with various statewide conferences, including the 1998 Summer Institute for the Oregon Association of Compensatory Educators, and it helped prepare a plan for involving Oregon's distinguished educators in School Support Teams. School climate, Indian education, student resiliency, and collecting and using data for planning are other themes addressed in Oregon consultations and training activities.
- The center provided the Montana Office of Public Instruction and school districts with workshops addressing standards, assessments, and the ESEA adequate yearly progress requirements; assisted with statewide video conferences on completing consolidated ESEA and Goals 2000 applications; and provided direct assistance to Montana educators in collecting data and strategic planning.
- Services to Washington included helping the SEA conceptualize its consolidated plan and support local implementation of the plans through schoolwide planning conferences and training sessions for distinguished educators. The center also assisted the Washington state education staff prepare for ED's integrated review.
- In Wyoming, the center facilitated planning and participated in the state's Regional Program Integration Workshop to demonstrate how cooperation, coordination, and collaboration enable ESEA programs to improve districts' consolidated applications and the work of school improvement teams.

Follow-up activities for one state often lead to broader regional services. For example, support to several states led the center to plan a regional Distinguished Educator Symposium in March 1998 that addressed the goals and purposes of Title I school support teams and strategies for implementing sustained, research-based schoolwide programs. The center also modified and customized school "profiling" tools, created by the NWREL's School Improvement Program, to help schools and districts initiate schoolwide program needs assessments and evaluate implementation.

Building capacity in districts and schools. The center created a unique relationship with one district from each state in the region to build capacity within one of its schools and to offer lessons learned from their experiences to other developing schoolwide programs. Five partnerships were initiated; internal organizational changes in two original sites caused them to drop the partnership; three of the partnerships continue actively. These districts and schools, known as "partner sites," work under Memorandums of Agreement to define a two-way collaboration in which the center provides an array of services, and each site contributes to the center's understanding of what it takes to implement effective schoolwide programs. Technical assistance is customized and includes such activities as developing culturally specific instruction; designing responsive programs; building interdisciplinary teams; and training staff to use data-based "profiling" to summarize, disaggregate, and analyze student assessment data for instruction. Partner sites have also participated in jointly sponsored center/NWREL conferences on integrating programs, gaining parent and community support, responding to cultural diversity, and using computers to profile and track schools' achievements.

Technology. NWREL provides the center with a strong technology system that supports its work. The center's Web site, established in March 1996, has become a dependable source of information for educators in the Pacific Northwest, with almost 34,000 hits recorded in 1998. It features bilingual linkages, Spanish-language publications, and online access to the center's publications and resource collection, database, and lending library. The site is constantly updated to provide new links in specialized areas, such as Indian and bilingual education and comprehensive school reform. The center has also developed a variety of listservs to help link professional peers and educators with common interests. It has also collaborated with the Northwest Educational Technology Consortium to provide technical assistance to schools and districts on technology and teaching.

Information dissemination. The center's resource library, reached by e-mail, Web site, or telephone, lends educators within the region resource materials for 21 days at no cost, and staff are available to conduct electronic database searches and to answer clients' research questions. A monthly online newsletter, also distributed in hard copy, features a distinguished school from the region and up-to-date information on other reform and improvement topics.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

The center's 1997-98 Annual Performance Report cites more than 40 examples of technical assistance conducted with other technical assistance providers, including many other federally funded technical assistance providers. With NWREL, the center has formed a Regional Services Providers Network to share information and offer school improvement assistance within the region's service area.

Comprehensive Centers. The Region X Center serves on the Comprehensive Centers' resource and development groups and helps design and implement national activities with other Comprehensive Centers. This work involved assistance to the Improving America's Schools (IAS) Conference in October 1998, in which center staff coordinated planning activities for the 1998 Portland IAS meeting. A Region X team is participating in the Comprehensive Centers' Reading Success Network and has enlisted trainers to help implement the program regionally. It also has collaborated with the Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center (AKRAC) to implement a series of audio-conferences on integrating ESEA programs. The Region X Center developed and disseminated among other centers the document, *Cross Program Analysis: Links and Commonalties Among IASA Programs*, to identify common features of multiple ESEA programs.

Regional Educational Laboratories. Center staff are presenters, trainers, and collaborating program or institute developers with NWREL, and its clients are invited to conferences and institutes that are jointly planned by the center and other laboratory programs. Example programs include Work Now

and In the Future; the annual School Improvement Conference; and the Distinguished Educators' symposia, among others.

In support of ED's CSR Program, the center and the NWREL conducted two regional showcases and provided technical assistance to states and schools that were preparing proposals. Center staff also developed and distributed nationally the *Catalogue of School Reform Models*, a resource describing features of various national reform models, and disseminated videotapes and research on reform from its online library.

Other federally funded technical assistance providers. With the NWREL's Equity Center and with ED's Office of Civil Rights, the center has offered workshops to upgrade professional and paraprofessional skills in working with LEP students and to assist districts that were out of civil rights compliance. The center has also collaborated with the Eisenhower consortium to develop program performance indicators and to offer national and regional workshops on performance measurement.

Region XI
Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center
Northern California

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
XI	\$1,773,799	8.1	535,000	76,000	469,000	25,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region XI is known as the Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center. The center serves 50 counties in Northern California. The center’s primary focus is on schoolwide programs and comprehensive school reform, and it promotes collaborations among educational teams to broaden the region’s capacity to systemically advance comprehensive school improvement and change. A significant portion of the center’s effort involves assisting the California Department of Education (CDE) develop policies, resource materials, and field strategies to ensure that the best practices are implemented to achieve the goals of ESEA programs.

Organization and Staffing

The Region XI Comprehensive Center is made up of five partner organizations:

- **WestEd.** The primary grantee, WestEd is a nonprofit education research, development, and service agency located in San Francisco. Formerly the Far West Laboratory, WestEd has satellite offices in Northern and Southern California with which the center also collaborates. WestEd, with more than 30 years of experience in research, development, and evaluation, lends the center a high level of credibility for carrying out large-scale school and institutional improvement initiatives in the region.
- **Education for the Future (EFF).** EFF, located at California State University at Chico, offers expertise in school database development and portfolios to promote school reorganization, improvement, and change. EFF is also the center’s contact point for California’s northern regional school support teams.
- **MAITRAN Associates, Inc.** MAITRAN, based in Potomac, Maryland, offers expertise in issues related to diversity and equity with a focus on Southeast Asian children. It also

sponsors workshops on multicultural education for paraprofessionals, educators, and teachers.

- **Win-Visions.** Based in San Jose, Win-Visions specializes in family involvement and English as a Second language (ESL) instruction, parenting and cultural training, telecommunication networks, management training, and translation. Win-Visions conducts a series of weekly radio broadcasts directed to Southeast Asian families in Northern California.
- **San Jose State University.** Located in San Jose, California, San Jose State is working with the center to develop a Web site to provide the region's underrepresented populations with information about teacher certification. The web site also will help districts recruit multilingual teachers.

Staffing and expertise. The center's 17 full- and part-time professionals are experienced teachers, administrators, and technical assistance providers with expertise in promoting school improvement and change in diverse communities. In their capacities as both specialists and generalists, Center staff collectively are able to provide services in assessment and accountability, professional development, curriculum and teaching, linguistic and cultural diversity, strategic planning, evaluation, technology applications, and materials development. In addition, several staff members speak languages other than English, including French, Spanish, Vietnamese, and sign language.

Collaboration among the center's partners is fluid: individuals increase or decrease their time commitment to center activities according to clients' needs and staffs' workloads. Each center staff member serves as a contact for one of California's regional Statewide System School Support (S-4) directors and provides support, as needed, to the regions in the center service area.

Relationship with host institution. The seamless collaboration among the center's partners substantially expands the range of services the center offers the region. WestEd's established programs in assessment and standards development, equity, mathematics and science education, linguistics and culture, and technology in education increase the center's capacity to tailor programs to serve its varied client base. At the same time, the center's expertise in categorical and schoolwide programs and comprehensive school reform enhances WestEd's capacity to support school improvement initiatives.

Examples of joint center and WestEd programs are numerous and wide ranging. Recent and continuing activities include (1) conceptualizing and developing the linkages between the state's standards and evolving assessments with the Western Assessment Collaborative and producing the widely disseminated resource, *New Accountability System for California Schools*; (2) offering institutes and consultation that focuses on language, culture, poverty, and race, in collaboration with WestEd's Center for Language and Cultural Diversity, (3) and helping CDE and LEAs implement Proposition 227, the California initiative to rapidly mainstream LEP students; (4) adapting technology tools designed originally for the Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Consortium, including the Center's

Information Management System (IMS), its activity tracking, and EdGateway, a “virtual” community of educational professionals with interlinked information systems.

Needs Assessment Strategies

The center conducted a formal needs assessment when it prepared its original proposal for funding. After receiving funding, center staff contacted the CDE, county offices, and the S-4 regional directors to assess needs systematically and to set priorities. In the early phases of program planning, the center obtained from CDE a list of high-poverty schools and districts, which the center uses to focus its services to schools and communities that are most at risk.

In addition, the center uses its IMS and staff members’ records of client requests to track its activities and ensure that services connect to the center’s internal needs assessment and evaluation efforts. IMS data are analyzed by content area, geographic region, venue, and mode of delivery. Following each technical assistance event, center staff enter evaluation information into the IMS tracking system to determine changing regional needs. Periodically, the center examines and weighs competing service requests, assesses the distribution of services, reflects on practices, and identifies areas for improvement.

Portfolio of Services

The Region XI Center organizes its portfolio of services around five objectives: (1) building school and LEA capacity through schoolwide planning and school portfolios; (2) helping CDE promote improved teaching and learning; (3) ensuring students’ language and cultural diversity needs are integral to center and regional programs; (4) maintaining a formative and summative system of evaluating programs; and (5) offering comprehensive assistance through a collaborative system of providers. Center activities are designed to achieve multiple objectives using a combination of long-term and intensive technical assistance, consultation and convening of collaborators, and the dissemination of products through mixed media, including print publications, the Internet, videos, and radio.

Materials development and dissemination are also a major aspects of the center’s work. Staff members have produced publications in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian on numerous reform subjects, including standards-based accountability, parent education in multilingual communities, the special educational needs of linguistically diverse students and communities, serving the region’s Indian populations, and schoolwide and comprehensive reform programs.

Schoolwide Program Planning. Supporting schoolwide program planning and implementation is the centerpiece of the center’s service agenda. More than 250 schools have participated in intensive

schoolwide institutes. The institutes, which promote schoolwide planning and implementation, are organized around *Schoolwide Reform: A New Outlook*, one of the first products produced by the Region XI Center. In addition to institute participants, 1,600 individuals have requested and received copies of the materials to use in conducting their own schoolwide program training. Although the institutes are customized for each audience, they generally follow a common outline. Teams of district administrators, principals, parents, and teachers convene under the center's direction between four and eight times during the school year for half or full-day sessions. Institute sessions address needs assessment, team building, data collection, disaggregation, analysis, plan writing, and obstacles to implementation. Throughout the process, center staff members arrange additional individual or small-group consultations for school and district teams to address specific issues or problems. In addition, they suggest research-based print, video, or Web site resources available from the center and other technical assistance providers to enhance understanding of comprehensive school improvement and change. To strengthen parent involvement in schoolwide program planning, the center has developed, translated, and disseminated information for parents in five languages.

Capitalizing on EFF's expertise in school portfolios, the center integrated the School Portfolio Process into its schoolwide program planning activities. School portfolios are a resource for documenting, analyzing, and continually monitoring the implementation of schoolwide reforms. Region XI Center staff have helped teams in approximately 100 schools and districts use school portfolios to incorporate information from parent, student, and staff surveys into their comprehensive planning effort. The center uses a trainer-of-trainers model to encourage S-4 regional directors to use school portfolios in their work with schools and districts.

Center staff periodically create new products and materials to support schoolwide programs in response to needs that surface in the field. For example, they developed a paper entitled *A New Accountability System for California* for a state superintendents' symposium and subsequently distributed it to county and district offices and to other statewide technical assistance providers. These materials have since been incorporated into workshops for LEAs, schools, and various state-level panels to show participants how to collect and use multiple data sources in schoolwides.

State-level program activity. To build statewide capacity for leading school improvement and change, the center works under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CDE that outlines its support for statewide implementation of ESEA and related state programs. Among the centers' activities are: facilitating advisory groups; developing policies, resources, and training materials; advocating for specialized migrant and Indian education needs in schools and districts; making conference presentations; and convening meetings, ad hoc groups, and training institutes.

The center is also committed to helping state educators meet the challenge of serving LEP students under the restrictions imposed by California's Proposition 227. Staff members participate in a statewide task force that is defining strategic responses for supporting students. It also sends

representatives to the state's Bilingual Coordinator Network, which provides guidance for schools and county offices of education to use in planning services for LEP students.

Specialized institutes and services. The center conducts seminars, institutes, and specialized trainings on emerging issues to increase local awareness of ways of comprehensively implementing categorical programs. In addition to the schoolwide institutes described above, the center conducts in-depth programs on an array of topics for professionals serving special population groups, the S-4 regional directors, and CDE administrators. When called on to offer program-specific assistance, the center responds with a comprehensive orientation. For example, at two superintendents' institutes addressing the challenge of underachievement among the region's children of color and language minority children, the center focused on examining and understanding the issues of serving the specialized educational needs of these groups through comprehensive programs. Center staff were also available to participants to plan follow-up initiatives locally.

Technology. The center hosts an innovative Web site, with internal state, local, and national linkages and a national calendar of educational events and activities available within and outside the region. The Web site describes its own services and offers links to numerous sites, online documents and resources, and service providers. A unique feature of the Web site is a series of descriptive scenarios that depict real-life examples of how technical assistance from the center promotes educational solutions to important and difficult practitioners challenges. The scenarios are a creative strategy for engaging viewers in understanding the center's broad portfolio of services and working approaches. In addition, the Web site features profiles of each center staff member and indicates their areas of expertise. The Web site sponsors occasional online discussion groups that link regional programs together.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

The Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center has collaborated with both national and statewide organizations that are spearheading school change initiatives. It takes the lead in creating new capacity building initiatives for its specialization areas, such as comprehensive school improvement, technology, and serving poor students of diverse language and cultural backgrounds. It also lends its staff and expertise to support ongoing activities of other technical assistance providers.

Comprehensive Centers. The Region XI Comprehensive Assistance Center plays a leadership role among the centers as a participant in various research and development groups. As a member of the technology working group, the center developed and piloted the IMS tracking system and made it available for all centers to use in tracking events and services. Although only three other centers are fully using the database, all centers are using the common on-line calendar to post significant educational

events and activities in their region. In addition, the Region XI Center contributed to Comprehensive Center working groups on schoolwide programs and the school environment group, and offered consultation on combining Title IX and schoolwide programs.

Region XI staff participated in the Reading Success Network (RSN) trainer-of-trainers session organized by the Region XII Comprehensive Center. Recognizing that the RSN materials did not adequately address the needs of LEP students, the importance of writing in the literacy process, or the needs of upper elementary and middle school students, center staff created supplementary materials for LEP and Indian populations, expanded the definition of literacy to include writing activities, and expanded the materials to serve students through the eighth grade.

Region XI Center, with WestEd and the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center, planned and participated in two Education Fairs on comprehensive school reform models. Although the Governor put the state's CSRD Program application on hold in late 1998, the center anticipated offering technical assistance to districts and schools that will apply for CSRD funding in 1999. With the Western Regional Educational Laboratory, operated by WestEd, the center completed an ED-commissioned comprehensive resource and planning package on implementing CSRD for state and national distribution.

State technical assistance providers. With the state's California School Leadership Academy, the center piloted standards-based accountability training modules and other resources. In partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Region XI Center facilitated sessions and contributed to a recent school-to-work conference. It is also a member of the Bay Area Title IX Indian Education Council, a seven-county consortium that shares information about encouraging Indian students to remain in school and to take advantage of higher education opportunities. Finally, in collaboration with Win-Visions, the center sponsors radio programs targeting Southeast Asian families in North California. The pilot broadcasts included the development of two new radio programs that are broadcast to 65,000 Hmong residents of the Central Valley counties and to many thousands of Vietnamese families in the San Jose area.

Region XII
Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center
Southern California

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
XII	\$2,593,355	7.5	918,000	131,000	913,000	8,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region XII is known as the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (SCCAC). The mission of SCCAC is to improve teaching and learning for all children by (1) coordinating staff development and technical assistance; (2) establishing a network of assistance within its service region; and (3) assisting school districts to implement schoolwide reforms. Shortly after the SCCAC was established, the advisory board, which includes the superintendents of the eight county offices of education in its region, established three priority areas for services: (1) standards, assessments, and accountability; (2) the Reading Success Network; and (3) family involvement.

In each of these areas, the SCCAC leverages local resources, coordinates services within and across the counties; provides professional development and technical assistance to the county offices, and, with and through those offices, provides direct services to schools and school districts. In addition to addressing the priorities set by ESEA, center activities explicitly reflect the goals and priorities of the California State Department of Education, the California State Board of Education, county offices of education, and school districts.

Organization and Staffing

The defining feature of the SCCAC is that it is a partnership of eight southern California county offices of education, including those in Imperial County, Inyo County, Los Angeles County, Mono County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, and San Diego County. The county offices serve as California's intermediate service units. As part of a state infrastructure, they are responsible for providing an array of technical support and professional development to the districts in their counties. These services may be provided to school district staff or directly to schools. Thus,

among the comprehensive assistance centers, the SCCAC is unique in its organizational proximity to its stakeholders and its clients as well as its formal alignment with the goals and priorities of California State Department of Education and the California State Board of Education.

Relationship with host institution. The Los Angeles County Office of Education, the largest county office in the state, serves as the host organization and fiscal agent for the SCCAC. The center director and four full-time professional staff work out of the center's main office. The Los Angeles office of the center retains about 45 percent of SCCAC resources to cover general operations and to support major center initiatives. The remaining funds are apportioned to each of the county offices of education following a formula based on the number of students in each of the counties. Within the parameters set by the SCCAC's mission and goals, the county offices may use these resources in ways that they deem most appropriate for meeting their needs and the needs of schools and districts.

In addition to center staff in the Los Angeles County Office of Education, there is a center "lead" in each of the other seven county offices. Center leads, who divide their time between work for the center and other work for county offices of education, coordinate SCCAC activities in each of the counties and provide training, technical assistance, and professional development. All center staff members and leads have extensive experience as trainers and providers of professional development. Individual staff members also have substantive expertise in one or more of the center's priority areas.

Needs Assessment Strategies

Four regional committees, organized and facilitated by SCCAC/Los Angeles County Office of Education staff, identify specific needs and activities and services to meet these needs in each of the four priority areas. Staff from each of the county offices who have interests and expertise in the priority areas serve on the committee and generally assume responsibility for communicating their county's needs to the committee and keeping their county offices of education apprised of the resources available through the SCCAC. In addition, regional committee members frequently assume responsibility for at least some of the development work supported by the SCCAC in each of the priority areas. Together, the county partners and the regional committees help knit the county offices together into a system of support for the region. They also serve as regular sources of information about regional, county, district, and school needs.

Portfolio of Services

Working with and through the eight-county partnership, the SCCAC provides a variety of activities and services to the county offices of education, districts, schools, and communities in the four priority areas listed above. The SCCAC provides direct services, including professional development, training, and dissemination. It also supports county activities by developing materials for use in local training and dissemination activities. Finally, the SCCAC uses its resources to leverage county and local resources for professional development, training, and technical assistance. Examples of SCCAC activities include the following:

The Reading Success Network. The Reading Success Network (RSN) is a signature activity of the SCCAC. Designed as an intervention to improve reading instruction and student achievement in K-3, the RSN includes approximately 500 coaches in 300 schools in the eight-county region. The RSN strategy includes five components:

- Diagnosis of reading skills
- Intervention strategies
- Data analysis to inform instruction
- Coaching for results
- Support networks

To participate in RSN, schools must complete an application process, which requires them to:

- Identify a school team, including the principal, a literacy coach (a classroom teacher or literacy coordinator), a classroom teacher, and a parent or parent coordinator
- Complete a short profile describing the school's current schoolwide and classroom intervention strategies, assessment indicators, and grade levels served, with copies of the School's Accountability Report Card and Reading/Literacy Plan attached
- Enclose a letter attesting to the school and district's commitment to participate in the RSN

The SCCAC gives priority to Title I schoolwide programs in making selections for the RSN. RSN services include ongoing training and support for coaches. The training informs school coaches and other staff members about how to use the RSN components, including reading assessment tools, data analysis, intervention strategies, and coaching for results. Coaches are expected to work with their colleagues to analyze student achievement data and other information to diagnose learning problems and develop instructional strategies to remediate them.

Coaching in schoolwide programs. In San Diego County, county office of education staff and the regional director of the Statewide System of School Support (S4) Office, which is part of California's state system of support for Title I schoolwide programs, combine SCCAC resources, county resources, and S4 resources to support a program of coaching and technical assistance to schoolwide programs across the county. The assistance focuses on (1) standards and assessments; (2) comprehensive school planning; (3) governance; and (4) student-centered decision making. In six schools, the coaching services focused on implementation of the Accelerated Schools Model and the Comer School Model, with special attention to help in (1) developing a shared vision; (2) identifying the school's current strengths and needs by collecting and analyzing data; and (3) incorporating "powerful learning."

Standards, Assessment, and Accountability. Within the framework set by the priority on standards, assessment, and accountability, the SCCAC provides a variety of training, technical assistance, and professional development activities for district and school staff. The centerpiece of this work is a three-day assessment institute designed to build the capacity of districts to strengthen their assessment systems and align them more tightly with state and local standards. Participants include teams of district administrators, site administrators, and teachers. The training focuses on identifying the components of an effective districtwide assessment system, revising districts' current assessment systems, and developing districts' plans for developing and implementing assessment systems. A second center institute under this priority area is designed to help teachers and administrators who work in English as a Second Language programs (1) identify trends and gaps in schoolwide assessment data; (2) generate hypotheses regarding the factors that affect student achievement; (3) use assessment data to inform curriculum instruction; and (4) recognize the value and limitations of norm-referenced tests.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

The SCCAC is, by design, a collaborative organization. Staff in the eight county offices of education work together on tasks in each of the SCCAC's priority areas, and SCCAC resources often serve as the glue that binds individual COE contributions into more extensive services. The SCCAC also collaborates with other Comprehensive Centers in a national effort to expand and develop the RSN as a model of coordinated assistance. Within California, the SCCAC works closely with the Western Assessment Collaborative (WAC) at WestEd.

Comprehensive Centers. The RSN is rapidly becoming a major activity within the national Comprehensive Center network. The SCCAC has been both a leader and a partner in this effort. SCCAC staff have provided training and technical support to staff from other centers to facilitate implementation of the RSN model nationwide. In 1999, the SCCAC staff and staff from several other centers we are also collaborating on a plan for a comprehensive evaluation of the RSN.

Western Assessment Collaborative. SCCAC also works closely with the WAC at WestEd in the area of standards, assessments, and accountability. Indeed, a number of the institutes and other training activities described in the previous section benefit from this partnership. Staff from the two organizations work together and with the California State Department of Education to develop materials for training and dissemination. In addition, SCCAC and WAC collaborate as trainers and facilitators at events across the state.

Region XIII
Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
Alaska

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
XIII	\$849,294	5.5	18,000	12,000	35,000	31,000

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region XIII is known as the Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center (AKRAC). AKRAC’s primary mission is to help districts with the highest poverty and lowest student achievement to implement school reforms designed to improve academic performance. AKRAC’s work is shaped in part by the cultural and geographic diversity of its region and in part by its membership in a close-knit education community. The needs of schools in Anchorage and those of schools in the bush—where communities are not connected by roads—are quite different. Geographically distant villages may also be culturally distant, inasmuch as Alaska has several distinct and vital indigenous populations. The isolation of such districts leads to high turnover among professional staff. Thus, activities that build the capacity of both the school and community to sustain the quality of educational programs take a high priority in AKRAC.

Organization and Staffing

With offices in both Juneau and Anchorage, AKRAC is composed of two organizations:

- **Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC).** SERRC opened its doors in 1976 as one of seven intermediate agencies authorized by the state to improve local special education services; its focus was districts in southeast Alaska. SERRC has since grown into a statewide resource. In addition to sponsoring AKRAC, SERRC provides help to districts in the areas of administration, technology, adult and vocational education, instructional support services, and facility planning and maintenance. SERRC has offices in Juneau, Anchorage, and Ketchikan.
- **Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL).** As part of its work with the center, NWREL works closely with the Alaska Department of Education to design and provide support in the development of state standards and assessments. As an agency

with extensive expertise in these areas, NWREL is contracted by AKRAC to serve the state directly. AKRAC views NWREL as a partner in a variety of other technical assistance projects aimed at improving school programs.

Staffing and expertise. The director, one full-time technology and reading specialist, and a second professional shared between AKRAC and SERRC work out of the Juneau office. Two full-time professionals and another person shared by AKRAC and SERRC work out of the Anchorage office. AKRAC maintains a roster of consultants—often teachers who have taken advantage of the state’s incentives for early retirement—who are paid to participate in training for special AKRAC projects and then accept assignments as needed.

Some staff members are specialists with advanced training and experience in one or more areas, while others are generalists. In Anchorage, for example, one professional has extensive training and experience in bilingual education and teaching English as a second language; he also works with the Alaska Onward to Excellence (AOTE) program. In Juneau, a former principal helps districts with schoolwide reform projects, but also serves as a technology trainer. Although staff may work together on projects and service delivery where circumstances permit, field work in bush schools is done individually because travel is cumbersome and costly.

Relationship with the host institution. SERRC provides a backup system for service requests outside of AKRAC’s mission. Services within AKRAC’s mission are provided by its staff for free, while other services can often be provided by SERRC. Examples of SERRC services to schools and districts include writing proposals, providing special education evaluation, or training staff in the use of particular computer software. SERRC will arrange for one of its staff or a consultant to do the work, although it might entail some cost (for example, per diem, travel, and/or consulting fees). The accessibility of SERRC means that AKRAC can respond to requests to help the state’s poorest, lowest-achieving schools and refer all other requests to someone else who can help. The executive director of SERRC has oversight responsibilities for all programs within the agency, including AKRAC.

Needs Assessment Strategies

The center conducts ongoing needs assessment on an informal level. For example, the center director and the state commissioner consult with each other about ongoing collaborations, and center staff solicit input from superintendents and school board members from remote districts in the bush or the islands during their visits to Anchorage.

However, AKRAC staff do not only respond to requests for assistance; they also offer help to their highest-priority customers. AKRAC set up a grid that enables them to rank districts in Alaska according to criteria such as achievement, poverty, the number of Native Alaskan students, and the

number of bilingual students. The process helps to identify the pool of districts that get top priority for service. Although the staff are almost fully occupied responding to requests, they nonetheless allocate time regularly to reach out to schools that are in need of assistance but have not requested it.

Portfolio of Services

To ensure that service delivery supports comprehensive planning, each AKRAC staff member walks prospective clients through a service request analysis. This initial interview determines whether the client is in the center's targeted population and whether the service has reasonable promise of improving student learning and is connected with the district's consolidated plan. If the prerequisites for contributing to a comprehensive plan are not in place, and the district is eligible for service, the staff member negotiates to begin service by implementing the work necessary to establish a solid foundation.

Three areas of service engage most of AKRAC staff time: Alaska Onward to Excellence (AOTE), reading (including Reading Success Network), and technology.

AOTE. Because staff turnover is so high in rural schools, investments in professional development and programs that rely on resident staff expertise may dissipate at the end of each school year, making it difficult to sustain forward reform momentum. Furthermore, isolation nurtures higher rates of social problems in the community, which adds to the challenge of building a solid, generative foundation for continuous progress. AOTE is the response to that challenge. With the help of NWREL, AKRAC collaborates intensively over a period of at least two years with schools and districts selected because of their need for stable, effective support for educational improvement. During this period, staff help the communities set up broadly representative advisory groups that tackle the hard questions about what students should know and be able to do at the end of their elementary and secondary schooling and how to measure student progress. In Lower Kuskokwim School District, for example, certified teachers meet with village elders for several weeks in the summer, recording their ideas about curriculum goals and assessment strategies. Then the educators map those goals onto the state standards to ensure accountability to the broader educational agenda.

Reading. The center is training parents and volunteers to be reading tutors and actively participating in the Reading Success Network (RSN). The tutor-training teaches prospective volunteers what skilled readers do and how to identify and use text cues that help discover meaning. Through RSN, teams of teachers with a "literacy leader" from each participating school receive training from AKRAC staff in implementing schoolwide improvements in reading instruction. The training lasts 10 days and includes a balanced literacy approach, materials (text and electronic), and ongoing support. Native language maintenance and recovery are major concerns of village schools, so literacy has long been a paramount concern to technical assistance providers, including AKRAC. In addition, technology

workshops often address reading objectives to demonstrate technology applications to everyday teaching and learning.

Technology. AKRAC uses technology to disseminate information relevant to the needs of Alaskan schools, to present new information about programs and policies more effectively, and to maintain contact with the far-flung districts that it serves. For example, it set up and hosts four listservs for the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. The center’s Web page includes “bookmarks” that facilitate access to other databases, such as the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (funded by ESEA Title II).

AKRAC also demonstrates how to use technology in classrooms, including a series called Integrating the Internet into the Curriculum that involved several hundred teachers and students in learning to find online ideas and information directly related to Alaska’s state standards. In planning service delivery, the center’s technology specialists find out how the technology is to be used—in aid of which objectives in which core subjects—and then design training that embeds technology applications in everyday teaching. In response to calls, staff who do technology training first establish which of the state’s standards for technology will be addressed in the proposed training. Then they review the district’s comprehensive and technology plans and highlight the objectives to which the training could link. The center recently helped Alaska schools acquire 328 “web TVs”—TVs that can be used to search the Internet—at no cost to schools or the center.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Centers. AKRAC collaborates with other Comprehensive Centers in refining RSN and developing materials. In addition, it has worked with the Region IX Comprehensive Center, exchanging training and expertise on bilingual education and Indian education. Face-to-face collaboration with other Comprehensive Centers requires expensive, time-consuming travel, so most sharing is done by telephone and e-mail.

Other technical assistance providers. In addition to the related programs in SERRC, its host organization, AKRAC collaborates most extensively with the Alaska State Department of Education (ADE) and NWREL. With ADE, the center is working on school improvement plans, identification of schools and districts to be targeted for intensive assistance, and activities that promote greater attention to the new state standards, which have recently become the basis for graduating from high school. NWREL, one of the early developers of the AOTE, continues to be an ally in the AOTE training efforts and a partner with AKRAC and ADE in implementing state standards.

Region XIV
Region XIV Comprehensive Center
Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
XIV	\$2,375,262	11.75	1,104,000	57,000	290,000	0

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region XIV is known as the Region XIV Comprehensive Center. The Region XIV Comprehensive Center’s overarching goal is to “get to the learner” to improve achievement. By developing model schools, providing on-site training and consultation, and disseminating information, the center influences students’ experiences by building professional capacity at the state, district, and school levels. Where possible, the center uses technology to inform and link schools, homes, and communities.

The center serves three distinct geographical areas, each with its own demographic and political environments. Florida’s expanding student population, particularly in school districts in the southern part of the state, is characterized by high numbers of students for whom English is a second language. Language issues are also prevalent in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and their locations in the Caribbean pose additional travel barriers for center staff. The center works with federal program officers in each of the state education agencies (SEAs) to determine priorities for services and to align the center’s efforts with those on the state and local levels.

Organization and Staffing

Based in Tampa, Florida, the Region XIV Comprehensive Center is composed of six partner organizations:

- **Educational Testing Service (ETS).** ETS, based in Princeton, New Jersey, is the primary grantee and offers expertise in federal program implementation, student assessment, policy analysis, and research design. ETS was a Chapter 1 technical assistance center under ED’s former system of technical assistance.

- **ESCORT.** Located at the State University of New York at Oneonta, ESCORT has extensive experience in programs for migrant students. It operates ED's 1-800 information service number and was a migrant education program coordination center under the previous federal system.
- **Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).** CAL contributes expertise in the areas of multicultural education and programs for second-language learners. The Washington, D.C.-based organization was a Title VII multifunctional resource center prior to the inception of the Comprehensive Centers.
- **Litton/PRC, Inc.** Formerly a Chapter 1 technical assistance center for Puerto Rico, Litton/PRC is well respected in the commonwealth as a nonpartisan organization with expertise in programs for disadvantaged students, particularly Title I and Even Start. Litton/PRC is based in Puerto Rico.
- **Developing Resources for Education in America (DREAM), Inc.** Based in Jackson, Mississippi, DREAM works primarily in the areas of school climate and safe and drug-free schools.
- **David C. Anchin Center at the University of South Florida.** The Anchin Center, located within the university's school of education, developed and disseminates the Continuous Progress school reform model. The Tampa, Florida-based center contributes expertise in teacher education and whole school reform.

Staffing and expertise. In a unique collaborative arrangement, representatives from ETS, ESCORT, and CAL work full-time in the center's office in Tampa, under the leadership of the center director. In addition, personnel from the Anchin Center are easily accessible in Tampa. After an initial period during which they met quarterly, the executive directors of the partner organizations now meet twice a year with the center director to plan and identify strategies for comprehensive assistance.

Staff at the Region XIV Comprehensive Center consider themselves generalists who have special areas of expertise. Each is responsible for helping implement whole school reform in selected schools and serves with a partner as primary contact for those schools; however, staff members call on one another freely for advice and help in providing technical assistance in particular specialty areas. For example, a staff member with expertise in the education of migrant students facilitates comprehensive planning at one of his assigned schools. He can provide preliminary inservice education on some aspects of instruction, such as multiple intelligences and in-depth assistance in migrant issues, but he can also call on colleagues for help with other dimensions of reform. Because of Puerto Rico's unique needs, two Tampa-based center staff members work closely with Litton/PRC to coordinate activities in Puerto Rico, visiting contacts there monthly. Staff periodically receive requests for assistance specific to federal programs, particularly in the areas of migrant and English as a Second Language (ESL) education. Tampa-based staff meet monthly to share new strategies, conduct cross training, and plan for the short and long range.

Relationship with host institution. The Region XIV Comprehensive Center derives several benefits from its relationship with ETS. First, the center relies primarily on ETS for its financial and administrative functions, which are often handled through an online server. Second, center staff make extensive use of ETS's online library that allows them to download the most current research and publications, as well as the wealth of ETS expertise in education reform, research design, assessment, and policy analysis. Third, ETS and the Region XIV Comprehensive Center share a common mission to improve teaching and learning and to disseminate research to help teachers and administrators make informed decisions. Finally, the center benefits from ETS's distinguished reputation as both a technical assistance provider and expert in assessing student achievement. As an ETS-sponsored project, the center maintains ETS standards for equity and fairness, professional quality, and auditing procedures.

Needs Assessment Strategies

In 1995, before submitting its proposal, the center consulted with education professionals in the region's SEAs, LEAs, and schools to determine their needs and priorities. Based on this information, the center developed an initial set of goals and objectives, which it revisits annually. During the first two years of its contract, the center continued to conduct needs assessments through quarterly meetings with federal program directors in the Florida Department of Education, with which it still maintains regular but less formal contact. In Puerto Rico, Litton/PRC periodically convenes the SEA's directors of federal programs and a sample of clients to determine their needs. In the Virgin Islands, where practical responsibility for planning rests with the districts, the center meets with administrators from the St. Croix and St. Thomas School Districts to set direction and establish priorities.

Portfolio of Services

The Region XIV Comprehensive Center's priority areas are comprehensive school reform, schoolwide programs, literacy, and services to migrant and LEP students. It meets these priorities through several major activities, including the Model Schools Project, Continuous Progress schools, in-depth technical assistance to individual schools, broad dissemination of center products, and presentations at regional and state conferences. All the center's activities are consistent with state priorities for reform. The center strives to allocate its time in the following manner:

- **40 percent** for intensive, long-term assistance to 8 to 10 high-poverty schools;
- **25 percent** for staff preparation, collaboration, and information dissemination;

- **20 percent** for short-term technical assistance (for example, assisting districts and schools implement ESEA provisions, planning or presenting at large-scale workshops); and
- **15 percent** for technical assistance to the three SEAs in the region.

Model Schools Project. In 1996, the center selected eight Title I schools with schoolwide programs to serve in its Model Schools project. The Model Schools, six of which are located in six counties throughout Florida and two in different regions in Puerto Rico, share a common set of characteristics: high rates of poverty, mobility, and disciplinary suspensions; high concentrations of targeted populations (for example, LEP, migrant); and low achievement. Under their three-year partnership with the Region XIV Comprehensive Center, Model Schools set goals and priorities, develop and implement school improvement plans to meet those goals, evaluate results, periodically revise goals to incorporate remaining challenges, and share experiences and expertise with other schools. Center staff, who function as coaches for school-level teams, help Model Schools plan their programs, provide information on research-based programs and professional development strategies, facilitate teacher collaboration, provide assistance with specific federal program provisions, assist with program evaluation, and document and disseminate the schools' successes. Model School institutes, sponsored quarterly by the center, provide a forum for staff from the Model Schools to share ideas and expertise. Two center staff members serve as primary contacts for each Model School, ensuring continuity and familiarity.

Continuous Progress Model. Through the Anchin Center at the University of South Florida, the Region XIV Comprehensive Center is working with 12 Tampa-area schools in Hillsborough County, Florida, to implement the Continuous Progress model for school reform. The Anchin Center's school improvement model revolves around several basic principles for reinventing schools:

- Continuity of caring for students and families;
- Developmentally appropriate instruction;
- Flexible, multi-age grouping;
- Curriculum integration and application of learning; and
- Continuous assessment to inform planning for individual growth and program enhancement.

Multigrade instructional teams from participating schools volunteer to adopt the model, which features team teaching and planning in open classroom settings. At the school level, the model involves only those teachers who volunteer and the students whose parents agree to participate. Each year, the Anchin Center sponsors two to three Continuous Progress Academies, in which teams at various stages of implementation share lessons learned and promising practices. Region XIV Center's partnership with the

Anchin Center enabled 12 Title I schools with schoolwide programs in Hillsborough County to adopt the model, bringing the county total to 33 Continuous Progress schools.

St. Thomas School District. During the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, the Region XIV Comprehensive Center worked intensively with the St. Thomas School District in the U.S. Virgin Islands to establish a school-within-a-school model at its largest high school. The district recommended the school for assistance because of its high dropout rate and large size (more than 2,000 students). The center provided training to 50 ninth-grade teachers and administrators on block scheduling, teaming techniques, getting the most out of limited resources, and using effective strategies in reading, metacognition, and critical thinking. Other areas of targeted services to the St. Thomas School District include professional development to all elementary schools to assist in implementing the territory's new reading program and a trainers-of-trainer session on effective strategies for working with LEP students.

Reading Success Network (RSN). To pilot RSN in region XIV, the center identified 6 of the 12 Continuous Progress schools it is working with in Hillsborough County, Florida. These schools designate a team of K-3 teachers to attend workshops and training on balanced reading programs, diagnostic tools, strategies for prevention and intervention, using data in the classroom, and coaching methods and peer study teams. The center held three training sessions for school teams in the fall of 1998 and facilitated monthly networking meetings.

Services to limited English proficient students. To meet the needs of its clients in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Region XIV Comprehensive Center retains staff with particular expertise in bilingual/ESL education. Some of the activities in this program area include training school administrators and bilingual paraprofessionals, implementing two-way bilingual reforms in select schools, and disseminating center products, especially the newsletter, *From Theory to Practice*. The newsletter, which is issued five times per year, translates current research findings in bilingual education for practitioners.

Technology. The Region XIV Comprehensive Center uses technology to communicate with clients and deliver technical assistance whenever possible; however, many clients have limited access to the Internet, impeding those efforts at communication. The center's Web site, which posts materials and other relevant information, has been an effective mechanism for producing and distributing materials in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Collaboration with other technical assistance providers—on both the national and regional levels—is a key feature of the Region XIV Comprehensive Center's work. On the national level, the center is working with the other 14 Comprehensive Centers to implement RSN, has participated in a study

of homeless education among three other Comprehensive Centers, and takes advantage of the networking resources of its partner organizations. On the regional level, the center works closely with Florida's system of technical assistance. In addition, the center regularly disseminates resources to other federal and state technical assistance providers.

Comprehensive Centers. In addition to serving on the planning team for RSN, the Region XIV Comprehensive Center has worked with other Comprehensive Centers to publish two studies—*The Self-Assessment Guide for Excellent Services (SAGES)* and the *Help! They Don't Speak English Starter Kit for Primary Teachers*. SAGES was a collaborative project among centers in Regions II, VIII, XIII, and XIV, as well as the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth at the University of Texas. Nine staff members from these organizations conducted five months of exploratory research supported by ED to identify factors that contribute to high levels of academic success for homeless students. Based on interviews with school staff, service providers, and parents in New York, Alaska, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Texas, the research team identified seven themes and compiled a list of suggested resources. The research team met several times in Dallas and edited drafts of the final SAGES report via e-mail.

The Help! Kit, a resource guide for educators of limited English proficient migrant students, was a joint effort of the Region IV and Region XIV Comprehensive Centers. The kit was first published in 1989 and revised by the centers in 1998. It is designed to provide teachers with instructional strategies and materials; provide cultural information; offer suggestions for involving parents; propose alternative evaluation strategies; and provide additional resources and references.

Florida's Technical Assistance System. Region XIV Comprehensive Center staff collaborate with Florida's system of technical assistance to help address the needs of districts and schools. This collaboration promotes cost effectiveness, fosters the capacity of the regional providers, helps the center target services based on need, and helps ensure that services are not duplicated. The state's system includes Area Centers for Educational Enhancement, which provide technical assistance in implementing the state's standards and curriculum frameworks in six regions; Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System offices, which serve multicounty regions in the area of special education; Title I technical assistance centers in five regions; and the Office of School Improvement, which supports improved student achievement efforts and works with critically low-performing schools. When working with regional technical assistance providers, the center often provides training and resources.

Region XV

Pacific Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center

Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau

Region	Comprehensive Center FY99 Budget	Total Professional FTEs	Number of Students (rounded to the nearest thousand)			
			Title I Eligible	Migrant	Limited English Proficient	Indian
XV	\$861,628	4.7	44,000	0	42,000	0

Mission and Goals

The Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center that serves region XV is known as the Pacific Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, or Pacific Center. The Pacific Center has two main objectives: to provide ongoing training and technical assistance to educators in the region and to collaborate with technical assistance providers to provide coordinated services. The center works toward these two objectives in four focus areas that were identified by the Pacific Center’s advisory board, based on the needs of the region: (1) school reform; (2) family and community involvement; (3) leadership development; and (4) literacy and cultural diversity.

The goals of the Pacific Center are unique in several ways. Building capacity and developing leadership are particularly important in region XV since travel expenses are great, the student population is small, and educators work in the historical context of colonialism and dependency. While the goal to serve high-need, high-poverty populations is common among all Comprehensive Centers, the Pacific Center is uniquely challenged. In addition to the region’s isolation and “developing nation” status, most of its inhabitants live below federal poverty levels and support themselves through a combination of wage earning and subsistence living. The Pacific Center’s goal to focus on language and cultural diversity is unique since region XV consists of a “majority minority” and a majority of students who are learning English as a second, third, or fourth language.

Organization and Staffing

The Pacific Center is housed at **Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)**. PREL is an umbrella organization that houses the center, a regional educational laboratory, an Eisenhower Math and Science Consortium, and a Star Schools program.

The Pacific Center has three partners:

- **University of Guam Multicultural Education Resource Center (MERC)**. MERC provides expertise in multicultural education, bilingual education, and reading and language arts. Guam is 3,800 miles from the Pacific Center.
- **RMC Research Corporation**. Located in Denver, Colorado, RMC specializes in training and technical assistance in Title I. Under the previous federal system of technical assistance, RMC housed a Chapter I technical assistance center.
- **WestEd**. Located in San Francisco, California, WestEd contributes expertise in curriculum development, alternative assessment, program evaluation, and technology.

Staffing and expertise. The primary grantee maintains a “project-oriented subcontract relationship” with its three partners. Two partners are not located in the region, and none have decisionmaking authority in the Pacific Center. The partners provide project-specific services (for example, training school support teams, leading workshops, and organizing conferences) upon request.

Staff at PREL are shared between the numerous technical assistance providers it houses. Therefore, those staff members who comprise the primary Pacific Center staff also work part-time for the regional educational laboratory, the Eisenhower consortium, the Star Schools program, and other technical assistance providers. PREL staff who work primarily for the laboratory, the Eisenhower consortium, or the Star Schools program are also shared with the Pacific Center. Five staff members are primarily responsible to the Pacific Center, and seven PREL staff members work for the center part-time. The unique arrangement allows the Pacific Center to leverage staff expertise in many areas. For example, one PREL staff member who does not have primary responsibility to the Pacific Center assists the Pacific Center with publications; another does so with technology.

Staff at the Pacific Center are generalists and specialists. Staff specialty areas include safe and drug-free schools, bilingual education, Title I, and literacy development. In addition, the Pacific Center’s diverse staff provides expertise in the numerous cultures and languages of peoples served by the center. However, all staff are expected to develop capacity in the areas necessary to meet regional technical assistance needs.

Relationship with host institution. As mentioned above, the center is housed at PREL, which also houses the Pacific region’s regional educational laboratory, the Eisenhower consortium, the Star

Schools program, and numerous other technical assistance grants. Unlike in other regions of the country, the center, laboratory, and Eisenhower consortium serve the same area, which facilitates collaboration on projects. Having multiple federal grants housed at PREL also allows for the sharing of resources, products, knowledge, and expertise in areas such as graphic design, finances, technology, editing, and program evaluation.

In addition to the staff housed at the Pacific Center, PREL has five service centers located throughout the region (in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands). The Pacific Center, which contributes one-fifth of the costs to run the service centers, has access to additional staff through these service centers.

Needs Assessment Strategies

Because the Pacific Center serves a region with numerous cultures and needs, staff are committed to providing services that are applicable and useful for participants. In collaboration with other PREL staff, Pacific Center staff conducted strategic planning dialogues in each entity they serve in 1995. Teachers, administrators, higher education representatives, parents, traditional leaders, community leaders, political leaders, and legislators participated in discussions about the entity's educational needs, core community values, and the ways the Pacific Center and PREL could best provide assistance to support community priorities for education. Information from these meetings was synthesized and used to structure Pacific Center and PREL services. Another round of strategic planning meetings began in 1998.

The Pacific Center's advisory board, the Pacific Curriculum and Instruction Chiefs (PCIC), is made up of educators from each entity in the region. The advisory board sets priorities for the Pacific Center, based on the needs of the region. PREL's advisory board, which also oversees the Pacific Center, is made up of the superintendent of education in each entity, teachers, and community members. The configuration ensures that the work of the Pacific Center—and PREL—is relevant to and aligned with the educational priorities of each entity.

Portfolio of Services

The Pacific Center's priority areas are school reform, family and community involvement, leadership development, and literacy and cultural diversity. In designing activities, the Pacific Center places a great priority on developing capacity because of the high cost of travel.

Much of the Pacific Center's work is comprehensive, which is less of a change than it is in other Comprehensive Center regions because most political entities in region XV do not receive categorical funds. In these entities, as well as in the three U.S. Territories, the Pacific Center has focused on assistance related to planning, school reform, and leadership development. In such situations, service is expected to impact the education of all children in the school or LEA. In Hawaii, the Pacific Center has invested its efforts in Title I schoolwide planning and implementation; Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program planning and implementation; and leadership development and support.

Ebeye Public School Partnership. Al Maron—The Ebeye Public School Partnership is a comprehensive school improvement program at Ebeye Public School in the Marshall Islands. It is a collaborative effort between the Pacific Center and the local government. Originally, the Pacific Center was asked to take over and administer the school; instead, the Pacific Center chose to work with school staff to develop capacity and work with the community to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. The school, which serves students in grades 1-8, is located on an island that is 1.5 square miles and has a population of 13,000 people. The Pacific Center's ongoing assistance focuses on the issues of instruction, facilities, leadership, and community involvement. Pacific Center staff have helped convene community meetings to create a school plan; structure the school into clusters; and organized and facilitated a four-week summer academic improvement program for 120 students that also served as a teacher training institute. Although the Pacific Center coordinates technical assistance work at Ebeye, many others have provided services. A staff member from the Eisenhower consortium serves as a math specialist, a staff member from the Marshall Islands' Department of Education works on parent involvement, and the community contributes money to help fund travel costs. The project, which was cited by numerous staff members as the most comprehensive work done by the Pacific Center, falls under the Pacific Center's work in school reform.

Hawaii Title I Schoolwide Initiative. The Hawaii Title I Schoolwide Initiative began in 1995-96 with assistance to Title I schools in writing schoolwide plans. The initiative has grown to include workshops on planning, waivers, and reading strategies; peer review of plans; assistance with adequate yearly progress (AYP) plans; and training for school support teams. Among other things, the initiative is designed to build capacity within the Hawaii Department of Education. The initiative falls under the Pacific Center's work in school reform.

The Pacific Educator in Residence Project (PEIR). PEIR brings educators from entities served by the center to the Pacific Center for one year to complete entity-specific plans and to inform the Pacific Center about their local needs. When they return to the region, they act as local coordinators for technical assistance and as advocates for the Pacific Center. PEIR falls under the Pacific Center's work in leadership development.

Technology. Because of the vast geographic distances between entities served by the Pacific Center, it sees technology as an important tool for communicating, reducing isolation, and developing cultural literacy. E-mail and fax reduce the barriers of time difference, an extremely slow postal system, and high telephone costs. The Pacific Center also relies on technology to disseminate information. Ninety percent of the products produced by the Pacific Center are available in PDF format on its Web site, which includes numerous resources and a calendar of services. Additionally, the Pacific Center is working on two dissemination projects that will make resources available to entities on CD-ROM and audiotapes. Unfortunately, many entities do not have easy access to advanced technology; the lack of funds prohibits the purchase of expensive materials, and a humid climate makes it difficult to maintain hardware. The Pacific Center hopes to use video-conferencing to deliver services once a satellite that reaches each entity is established.

Collaboration and Coordination with Other Technical Assistance Providers

Staff at the Pacific Center collaborate with other technical assistance providers on a daily basis within PREL. However, because the Pacific Center is located 2,400 miles from the continental United States, it is challenging to collaborate outside of the Pacific Region.

Comprehensive Centers. According to the center's director, staff from the Pacific Center use the expertise of staff from other centers. The Pacific Center has used Title I materials developed by the STAR Center and has adapted the Onward to Excellence program developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and implemented in both Alaska and Oregon. The Pacific Center has also adapted and used Title IV training materials developed by NWREL's Comprehensive Center. Although staff from the Pacific Center offer their assistance to other centers and center network activities, the cost of attending meetings on the mainland often prohibits them from participating. Recently a staff member worked with staff from four other centers to present a workshop on the principles of high-quality professional development. The Pacific Center is also working with the other 14 Comprehensive Centers to implement the Reading Success Network.

Other federal technical assistance providers. Because the Pacific Center is housed at PREL, coordination with other federal technical assistance providers is a part of everyday life. Staff at PREL understand that the best way to provide services to the Pacific Region is to work together and share

resources. Accordingly, Pacific Center staff report that it is common to walk down the hall and ask a laboratory staff member for research on a particular topic or for several staff members to meet over mutual interests to see what services they can provide. Additionally, because travel costs are so high, a PREL staff member who is traveling to an entity will often meet with people on various projects while in town, thus furthering the work of the Pacific Center, the laboratory, the Eisenhower consortium, and the Star Schools program.

The Pacific Center has worked with the Pacific Mathematics and Science Regional Consortium and the regional educational laboratory to develop a statewide cadre of assessment trainers, who help teachers in strengthening the assessment components of the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards and Title I schools in submitting AYP reports. Several PREL staff members were trained in the laboratory-developed *Improving Classroom Assessment—A Toolkit for Professional Developers*, and then held a trainer-of-trainers session for 40 educators from the region. Follow-up sessions involved the original 40 educators and 40 new educators. Like many of the activities undertaken by the Pacific Center, the project aims to build local capacity.