National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers

Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

Part B: Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

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Contents

Part B: Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

B.1   Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

This evaluation will collect data from each of 21Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers (CTACs).

To gain an understanding of each Center's activity, on-site visits will take place by senior evaluation staff at each Center in Spring/Summer 2007. During the site visits, we will conduct interviews using the Regional Center Site Visit Interview Protocol or the Content Center Site Visit Interview Protocol. The primary respondent for these interviews will be CTAC directors, but may also include other key CTAC staff who play a prominent role in the delivery of technical assistance.

Given limited resources, it is not possible for the evaluation team to submit each Center project to an independent review panel to rate quality and relevance; therefore, we propose here a sampling strategy that will provide a broadly representative set of projects for expert panel review from each Center.

To gain an understanding of the range of products and services undertaken each year by each CTAC, we will request each Center complete the Project Inventory Form. The Project Inventory Form will provide a complete list of Center projects[1] carried out in each program year (July 2006-June 2007, July 2007-June 2008, July 2008-June 2009). Quality, relevance and usefulness of CTAC products and services represent the key outcomes for the evaluation.[2] Expert review panels created by the evaluation team will each be asked to rate each of the projects sampled from the Project Inventory Form.

The Project Inventory Form is central to the evaluation team's effort to sample a representative group of projects for each Center. To select projects, we will employ the following sampling plan:

- One-third of the projects for each Center (2-3 projects) will be self-nominated by Center staff as best representing the work they have undertaken each year. Center staff will indicate which projects they are nominating for review on the Project Inventory Form.

- Two-thirds of the projects (4-7) for each Center will be selected using stratified random sampling methods described below.

Strata that will be used for random sampling will be developed in two stages. First, using the Project Inventory Form included in this submission, Centers will list all of their projects, within predetermined topic areas (defined in Exhibit 1)[3]. Second, evaluation staff will estimate relative "level of effort" for

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[1] For the purposes of the evaluation, projects are defined as a group of closely related activities and/or deliverables designed to achieve a specific outcome for a specific audience.

[2] The usefulness of Comprehensive Center products and services will be assessed through an annual survey of clients using a Client Survey Form. Request for approval of the Client Survey Form will be included in a second OMB submission (anticipated July 2007).

[3] Estimates of the universe of projects and the topic areas they cover were developed through an examination of each Center's management plan and a pilot test of the Site Visit Protocol and Project Inventory Form with six Centers in fall 2006. Across all Centers, projects fit into 14 principal topic areas (see Exhibit 1 for the list of topic areas and their definitions). However, there is considerable variation across Centers in terms of the number of projects overall and the topic areas covered. Some Centers are

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each topic area in which a Center is conducting work as part of the Site Visit Protocol during the first year of the evaluation. After removing the self-nominated projects from the Project Inventory Form, topics from each Center will be sampled proportionate to the level of effort for each Center for each topic area[4].

For example, suppose a Center's work falls into five topic areas. The Center self-nominates two projects that fall into two of those areas and together those projects constitute about 30 percent of their total level of effort. The remaining projects comprise 70 percent of their level of effort. We will compute the distribution of the Center's level of effort across these remaining projects for sampling purposes. In this example, if the Center's work is evenly distributed across three remaining topic areas, we will select an equal number of projects from each. However, if the Center spends a disproportionate amount of its effort in one or two of these topic areas, we will over-sample projects from those areas. The final sample for each Center will reflect the breadth of its products and services for each year. However, our reliance on a combination of stratified random selection and Center nominations is not designed to result in a statistically representative sample of projects by Comprehensive Center.

Exhibit 1. Topic Areas and Definitions

Topic Area	Definition
1. State Systems of Support for Schools and Districts Identified for Improvement	Work that supports an SEA and/or its service delivery system carry out state-level responsibilities related to supporting district and schools identified for improvement. Service may target School Support Teams (SSTs), Distinguished Educators (DEs), or regional education service centers (RSCs, ESCs).
2. Building District/Local Capacity to Support School Improvement, or Address Corrective Action and Restructuring	Includes any work designed to build district- and school-level capacity to carry out school improvement and to make AYP, as required under NCLB, including remedies taken for schools or districts in "corrective action" or "restructuring."
3. Assessment	Design and implementation of local assessment systems, such as benchmark assessments aligned to state assessments; classroom assessments designed to support instructional change; or support for analysis and use of data to drive instructional change. Includes consultation on the design and implementation of state assessment systems. Does NOT include alternate assessments for SPED or ELL.
4. Language Arts Curriculum,	Includes all work at all levels that addresses ELA, reading, and literacy. Includes projects on adolescent literacy. May include work related to

engaged in many projects spread across 10 or 11 topic areas whereas other Centers focus their work in fewer projects across 5 or fewer topic areas (see Exhibit 2). This variation reflects, to some extent, the varying levels at which each of the Centers is funded (see Exhibit 3 for a list of Centers and their FY2006 estimated funding).

[4] In subsequent years, the evaluation team will review Center management plans it will obtain from ED to determine level of effort by topic area.

Topic Area	Definition
Instruction, and Professional Development	curriculum alignment, research-based models or programs, standards and policy reviews, and teacher professional development.
5. Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development	Includes all work at all levels that addresses mathematics and numeracy. May include work related to curriculum alignment, research-based models or programs, standards and policy reviews, and teacher professional development.
6. Other Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development including Standards-Based and Research-Based Instructional Frameworks	Includes all work at all levels that addresses specific content areas other than language arts or math, such as science and social studies. May include work related to curriculum alignment, research-based models or programs, standards and policy reviews, and teacher professional development and any work on curriculum alignment and policies related to academic standards that are not content area-specific.
7. High School Reform	Includes work related to smaller learning communities, 9th grade or high school transition, dropout prevention, high school policies.
8. Special Education	Includes all work related to special education, such as alternate assessments for the "1 percent and 2 percent students" or instructional/assessment strategies that target needs of students with IEPs.
9. English Language Learners	Includes all work related to ELL (i.e. LEP) students, such as work on Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for ELL students and instruction/assessment of ELL students.
10. Highly Qualified Teachers	All work addressing the NCLB requirement that states have 100 percent of teachers licensed to teach in their subject area and 100% of paraprofessionals with 2-years of college.
11. Parent and Community Involvement	All work with parents and community members EXCEPT outreach regarding Supplemental Educational Services or opportunities in association with schools in corrective action or restructuring
12. Supplemental Educational Services	Includes work related to helping SEAs evaluate and monitor Supplemental Education Services, as well as setting up systems for notification and outreach to districts, schools, and parents.
13. Other NCLB-related TA	Completing miscellaneous federal applications or reports, convening SEA staff to address miscellaneous NCLB topics; ongoing consultation on NCLB topics.
14. Other	Includes projects that do not fit under any other topic area, including websites, membership on SEA committees, and ongoing phone support. Does not include internal or network meetings—these types of activities should not be included in the project inventory.

Exhibit 2: Topics Areas by Center

	ACC	ARCC	CACC	FLICC	CLICC	GLWCC	MACC	MCCC	NECC	NYCC	NCCC	NWRCC	PCC	SECC	TXCC	SWCC	AACC	NRCC	—	—	NCCTQ
1. State Systems of Support for Schools and Districts Identified for Improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
2. Building District/Local Capacity to Support School Improvement, or Address Corrective Action and Restructuring	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		
3. Assessment		✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
4. Language Arts Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
5. Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	
6. Other Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development including Standards-Based and Research-Based Instructional Frameworks						✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	
7. High School Reform		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓		✓			
8. Special Education		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓					✓			✓	✓
9. English Language Learners			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
10. Highly Qualified Teachers		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓					✓
11. Parent and Community Involvement		✓		✓				✓	✓	✓					✓						
12. Supplemental Educational Services								✓	✓		✓				✓				✓		
13. Other NCLB-related TA		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓			✓	✓		
14. Other	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
TOTAL # TOPIC AREAS BY CENTER	3	11	5	9	7	9	8	11	11	7	8	8	6	8	10	10	4	5	3	4	3

Exhibit 3. List of Comprehensive Centers and Estimated FY 2006 Funding

Regional Centers	Abbreviation	Estimated FY 2006 Funding*
Alaska Comprehensive Center	ACC	$850,000
Appalachia Region Comprehensive Center	ARCC	$3,426,413
California Comprehensive Center	CACC	$5,979,778
Florida and Islands Region Comprehensive Center	FLICC	$3,831,075
Great Lakes East Region Comprehensive Center	GLECC	$3,633,348
Great Lakes West Region Comprehensive Center	GLWCC	$3,729,967
Mid-Atlantic Region Comprehensive Center	MACC	$3,426,413
Mid-Continent Region Comprehensive Center	MCCC	$2,135,071
New England Region Comprehensive Center	NECC	$1,663,372
New York Comprehensive Center	NYCC	$2,919,576
North Central Region Comprehensive Center	NCCC	$1,301,025
Northwest Region Comprehensive Center	NWCC	$1,649,237
Pacific Region Comprehensive Center	PCC	$850,000
Southeast Region Comprehensive Center	SECC	$4,167,531
Texas Comprehensive Center Region Comprehensive Center	TXCC	$3,983,816
West/Southwest Region Comprehensive Center	SWCC	$2,519,465
Content Centers		
Assessment and Accountability Content Center	AACC	$1,466,096
National High School Center	NHSCC	$2,446,096
Innovation and Improvement Center	CII	$1,466,096
Instruction Content Center	COI	$2,446,096
Teacher Quality Content Center	NCCTQ	$2,446,096

*Source: http://www.ed.gov/programs/newccp/index.html

B.2   Information Collection Procedures

Prior to conducting the site visits with Center staff, respondents will be notified about the study via an introductory letter, which will include the purpose of the study. Evaluation team members will meet in person with each Center Director and other relevant staff. During the meetings, evaluation staff will conduct interviews with the Center Director using the Site Visit Interview Protocols included in this submission. Also during these meetings, evaluation staff will respond to questions raised by Center Directors and relevant staff about completing the Project Inventory Form.

B.3   Methods to Maximize Response Rates

To ensure 100% response rate from the Centers, the Department of Education has stressed to the Centers the importance of the evaluation. The Department of Education has explained the purpose of the evaluation at several meetings of Center Directors (e.g., September 11-12, 2006 and December 5-6, 2006). In addition, the evaluation team is working in conjunction with the Centers to design the data collection forms in ways that are clear, logical and that make use of available Center documents. The results of the data collection will be analyzed and written in reports that will be useful to the Centers as

they seek to improve their own operations and effectiveness. Site liaisons will be available to each Center to provide technical assistance in filling out the data collection forms. Site visits will take place with each Center.

B.4   Test of Procedures

We have piloted the data collection forms with staff from six current Regional and Content Comprehensive Centers and their feedback was taken into consideration in refining the data collection forms. The piloting of the data collection forms and worksheets did not involve more than 9 individuals for each document being developed.

B.5   Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects of Design

These data collection plans were developed by Branch Associates, Inc., Decision Information Resources, Inc. and Policy Studies Associates. The research team is led by Alvia Branch, Project Director. Other members of the evaluation team who worked on the design include: Brenda Turnbull (PSA), Kate Laguarda (PSA), Russell Jackson (DIR), Carol Pistorino (DIR), Cynthia Sipe (Branch Associates), and Barbara Fink (Branch Associates). Contact information for these individuals is provided below.

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