

SEA Omnibus Protocol¹

During this interview, we would like to talk with you about your SEA's work and any role the comprehensive centers might play to help meet the requirements of NCLB. Based on answers to the senior state manager surveys implemented in 2007 and 2008, we will be focusing on two areas indicated as priorities for your SEA in terms of NCLB responsibilities. These two areas are **State Systems of Support/School Support Teams** and **X Priority Area**.

1. What is your primary role within this organization? How much of your time is spent on activities related to NCLB? Describe the tasks you might perform or decisions you might make related to NCLB during a typical one- or two-week period. [A B C]
2. What are the primary divisions or units or offices within this SEA which have direct responsibility for implementing aspects of NCLB? What are the responsibilities of each relative to NCLB? To what extent do these units or divisions work together on NCLB-related goals? [A B C]
3. Describe how this SEA communicates and interacts with the Comprehensive Centers. Who typically initiates contact? How frequently do you yourself communicate with someone at one of the Centers? What kinds of things do you talk about? What about this SEA as a whole – how frequently does this SEA communicate with the Centers? [A B C]
4. We would like to hear about the contextual factors that impact the effectiveness of the work that this SEA does with regards to SSOS/SST and **Priority X**. These factors might be political, social, legal, economic, institutional or demographic. What factors enhance your ability to be effective in your work on SSOS/SST? What factors constrain your SEA's ability to be effective in its work on SSOS/SST? What factors enhance your ability to be effective with **Priority X**? What factors constrain your ability to be effective with **Priority X**? [A B C]

We would like to discuss the extent to which your work with the Comprehensive Centers – both **X Regional Center** and the Content Centers – has had the effect of influencing your SEA's abilities to meet the requirements of NCLB in these two areas. The process of influencing abilities is sometimes called capacity-building. We think of capacity-building as *those activities that improve an organization's ability to achieve its mission*

¹ Three levels of SEA respondents will be questioned using this protocol. Questions followed by an **A** will be directed toward respondents such as the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, or Associate Commissioner of Education. Those followed by a **B** will be directed toward Respondents at the next level down – e.g., the Title One Coordinator, Director of School Improvement, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Those followed by a **C** will be directed toward someone at the next level down – individuals detailed to work on the activities or projects associated with States Systems of Support/School Support Teams and other key topics that will serve as the focus of the case studies.

over the long-term without direct assistance from external agencies. **(SHOW CARD WITH DEFINITION OF CAPACITY BUILDING.)**

1. Does your SEA have a different definition of capacity or capacity building? Please explain. [A]
2. In thinking about building the capacity of the SEA, are there particular actions, activities, or resources that you believe are needed to build capacity? **IF YES:** What are the actions, activities, or resources you believe are needed to build the capacity of the SEA? What are the outcomes in SEA capacity that should be expected from each action, activity, or resource you mentioned? [B C]

In discussing this SEA's abilities to meet NCLB requirements and any work that is needed or has been done to increase the SEA's capacity, we want to organize our discussion around 3 major dimensions of capacity **THAT WE BELIEVE MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY AN SEA'S WORK WITH THE CENTERS**. Those 3 areas are *infrastructure (e.g. technology or other systems); the expertise of SEA staff; and the SEA's access to outside expertise*. On this card, you can see the types of things we believe fit within each dimension. **(DISPLAY CARD WITH 3 DIMENSIONS)**

3. Do you agree that these 3 dimensions are the primary dimensions of capacity for your SEA? Are there any others, which might be influenced by assistance provided by the Comprehensive Centers, that should also be included? What are they? [B C]
4. Now we are going to talk about needs assessment. Has this SEA conducted a needs assessment looking at its capacity for conducting the work needed in the area of SSOS/SST? **IF YES:** How was this needs assessment conducted? Were any Centers or other agencies involved? Who were they? How useful were these outside agencies, including the Centers, during this needs assessment? What needs have been identified through these assessments? For each identified need, what dimension of capacity is it most closely related to? [B C]
5. Has the SEA conducted a needs assessment on its capacity for **Priority X**? **IF YES:** How was this needs assessment conducted? Were any Centers or other agencies involved? Who were they? How useful were these outside agencies, including the Centers, during this needs assessment? What needs have been identified through these assessments? For each identified need, what dimension of capacity is it most closely related to? [B C]
6. Apart from any formal needs assessment, have other needs for building capacity been identified for your SEA within the areas of SSOS/SST or **Priority X**? How did you discover these needs? What were they? For each identified need, what priority area and dimension of capacity is it most closely related to? [B C]

7. At any point, did the Centers identify a need for this SEA within the areas of SSOS/SST or **Priority X** that you and your colleagues here didn't agree with? What was the identified need? What made the Center(s) think this was a need for your SEA? Can you explain how that happened? For each identified need, what priority area and dimension of capacity is it most closely related to? [B C]
8. For all of these needs that were identified for building SEA capacity, was a plan created for meeting them? **IF YES:** Did your SEA create a timetable for meeting these needs? Were any of the Centers involved in planning how to address those needs? Were any other agencies or entities involved? Who were they? How useful were these outside agencies, including the Centers, in creating a plan for addressing these needs? [B C]

Let's talk about how the **X Regional Center** and the Content Centers may have worked with you in building capabilities in aspects of need you have just talked about with me in the priority area of **State Systems of Support/School Support Teams**.

[Note: for the remaining protocol questions, ask only about those priority areas and dimensions of capacity for which there was an identified need, as stated by the respondent for Questions #7, 8, 9, 10.]

SSOS/SST

Infrastructure (e.g., Technology and other Systems)

Activities

9. Did any of the Centers engage in activities with your SEA to improve capabilities around the dimension of *infrastructure (e.g. technology or other systems)*, particularly in the area of SSOS and SST? **[IF NO: skip to next dimension for which there was an identified need, as stated by the respondent for Questions #7, 8, 9, 10].** **IF YES:** What were the activities? For each of these activities, what goals did you have in mind? [B C]
10. Did these activities help you meet NCLB requirements for SSOS/SST in the short-term? **IF YES:** Is there any evidence you can point to? What processes, activities, or practices were particularly useful? For each of these processes, activities, or practices, what about them made them useful? **IF NO:** why do you think that was the case? Is there something the Centers could have done differently? [B C]
11. Did the Centers work with you "leave behind" or create any capabilities, or build your SEA's capacity for its work in the longer-term? **IF YES:** Is there any evidence you can point to? What processes, activities, or practices were particularly useful for building capacity? For each of these processes, activities, or practices, what about

them made them useful? **IF NO:** why do you think that was the case? Is there something the Centers could have done differently to build SEA capacity? [B C]

Additional TA sources

12. Beyond your work with the Centers, has your agency taken any other steps to build your capacity in the area of *infrastructure* (e.g. *technology or other systems*) as they relate to SSOS/SST? **IF YES:** Were any other agencies or organizations involved, helping you to reach your goals? **IF YES:** Was there one primary agency that worked with you on capacity-building? Who were they? [B C]
13. Why did you choose **X Agency** in addition to or instead of a Comprehensive Center? [B C]
14. Did you and **X Agency** have a plan and timeframe in mind for their work with you? What were your goals for working with them? What did **X Agency** provide in terms of materials and supports? [B C]
15. What activities did you engage in? Did these activities help you meet NCLB requirements for SSOS/SST in the short-term? **IF YES:** Is there any evidence you can point to? What processes, activities, or practices were particularly useful? For each of these processes, activities, or practices, what about them made them useful? **IF NO:** why do you think that was the case? Is there something **X Agency** could have done differently? [B C]

Future needs/plans

16. Do you still perceive a need to improve your *infrastructure* (e.g. *technology or other systems*) as they pertain to SSOS/SST? Have you developed plans to meet these needs? What are your key plans for the future in this area? [B C]

Okay, let's talk about how the **X Regional Center** and the Content Centers may have worked with you on **[next identified dimension]**. **(DISPLAY CARD WITH 3 DIMENSIONS)**

Repeat

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Questions 12 – 19 repeated for each of the areas below as needed [B C]

SEA Staff Expertise

Activities

Additional TA sources

Future needs/plans

SEA Access to Outside Expertise

Activities

Additional TA sources

Future needs/plans

Priority Area X

Infrastructure (e.g., Technology or Other Systems)

Activities

Additional TA sources

Future needs/plans

SEA Staff Expertise

Activities

Additional TA sources

Future needs/plans

SEA Access to Outside Expertise

Activities

Additional TA sources

Future needs/plans

FINAL QUESTION: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about these issues we discussed today – your relationship with the Centers, capacity-building, SSOS/SST, **X Priority Area**, etc.?