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# **Fourth Draft OMB Package, Version Two**

## **Appendix B – District Coordinator Interview Protocol**

### **PPSS TO 10: Studies of Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) Grantees Subtask 3.5: Prepare Fourth Draft OMB Clearance Package**

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## **Study of the Needs and Experiences of REAP Grantees School District Coordinator Interview Protocol**

*Note: Instructions to interviewer are in italics. These instructions include any questions that need to be tailored to the type of grantee, RLIS or SRSA, and how they should be tailored. Throughout the protocol, use the actual school district name in lieu of "your school district" as appropriate.*

### **Role with REAP**

1. *[Check role in the school district from Survey Q1]* Tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been in \_\_\_\_\_ school district? What are your roles and responsibilities regarding the REAP program?
  - a. How frequently do you work with the school(s) in your school district regarding REAP? What does this work consist of? Are there other school district staff involved in the program? *[If yes:]* What position are they in and what are their responsibilities?
  - b. (If not answered above) How frequently do you communicate with the school(s) in your school district regarding REAP? What does this communication consist of?
  - c. Do you have other job responsibilities beyond the REAP program? *[If yes]* What do they include?
2. How long have you been the coordinator for the REAP program in your school district? Have your roles or responsibilities changed over time? *[If so]* Please describe.

*[If respondent has had responsibilities related to REAP for six months or less and ends up not being able to answer many questions then go back and ask if the person who was previously responsible for the REAP program in the school district is available to talk.]* Could you please go ahead and answer our questions to the best of your ability? We understand if your knowledge of past decisions or activities is incomplete.

### **Goals and priorities**

3. Does your school district have particular local goals or priority areas which you are using REAP funds to help support? *[If so]* Please describe them.
4. Do you use any of your REAP funds to support particular state goals or priority areas?  
*[If yes]* Which ones and why these?
  - a. How does your state communicate these goals and priorities to you?
  - b. Do these goals and priorities align with your own goals in a consistent way? Do you have any priorities that are either differently aligned or, in your opinion, misaligned with those of the state?

## REAP ELIGIBILITY AND PLANNING

5. Next, we'd like to talk about the eligibility determination process for REAP funds. Do you feel your school district understands how eligibility for REAP is determined? Do you feel your school district understands how the amount of REAP funds it receives is determined?
  - a. The U.S. Department of Education prepares spreadsheets to collect data (e.g., poverty rate) in order to determine eligibility for REAP funds. Does your state provide your school district the opportunity to review the accuracy of data used to determine your annual eligibility for REAP funds?
    - i. *[If yes]* Which of the following data elements does your school district review: *contact information, locale codes of the schools in your district, information used to determine state designation as a rural district, average daily attendance, county population density, percent of children in poverty.*
    - ii. What challenges, if any, have been associated with determining if your school district is eligible for REAP funds?
    - iii. Does your state have a process in place that your school districts finds helpful in determining eligibility? What suggestions do you have for improving this process?
  - b. What challenges, if any, have been associated with determining if your school district is eligible and how much REAP funding you will receive? *[If respondent lists challenges]* What suggestions do you have for improving this process?
6. Now we'd like to talk about how your school district plans for the use of REAP funds. Can you please describe your school district's planning process for the use of these funds?
  - a. *If multiple actors are indicated in Survey Q12, ask:* How do the different people in your school district work together to determine how the funds will be used? How many people are involved? Who makes the final decision about how funds will be used? Do you see these decisions as being driven by consensus?
  - b. *If respondent indicated in Survey Q4 that the school district submitted a needs assessment or consolidated application or plan related to the use of federal funds, ask:* How useful did your school district find the process of preparing any information or documents you submitted to the state or federal REAP office related to the use of federal funds, including REAP funds? Why?
    - i. *If respondent had indicated in Survey Q3 such a needs assessment or consolidated application or plan had not been required by the state or federal REAP office, probe as to why the school district chose to go through this process.]*
  - c. Did your school district face any challenges in preparing the information or documents you submitted to the state or the federal REAP office related to the use of REAP funds? If so, please describe. *[Probe on any subitems the respondent indicated took "A Great deal" of time and effort in Survey Q6]*
    - i. What, if any, other challenges are associated with planning for the use of REAP Funds? *[Probe on any planning-related challenges noted in Survey Q23 or Q33, particularly around timing of notification of award amount, and award receipt]*

- d. Has your school district received any assistance to help plan how to use REAP funds? *[If yes] From whom? [Probe for each of the technical assistance providers respondent indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers (Regional or Content Centers), and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - i. How useful has your school district found this assistance to be? How did the assistance change the way your school district uses REAP funds?
- e. During the application and planning phases, how many hours would you estimate you (and as applicable, your team) spent in total this year (2014–15) on preparing for REAP funds (this includes such activities as conducting a needs assessment, planning for the use of REAP funds, submitting an application or eligibility-related data)?
  - i. Do you think the REAP funding is worth the effort required? Why or why not?

### USE OF REAP FUNDS

*[Note to interviewer: Ask Questions 7a – 7g as appropriate based on interviewee’s responses to Survey Q14 regarding the school district’s use(s) of REAP funds.]*

- 7a. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving academic achievement?
  - a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district?
  - b. What other funds are you using to address academic achievement and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?
 

*[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
  - c. Have you received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
    - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
    - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to improve academic achievement? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
    - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
    - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district?

- 7b. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving teacher retention and recruitment? Is the emphasis more on teacher recruitment or retention? (“Both” is an acceptable answer.)
- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district?
  - b. What other funds are you using to address teacher retention and recruitment and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?  
*[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
  - c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
    - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
    - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for teacher retention and recruitment? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
    - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
    - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district?
- 7c. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on providing professional development for teachers or administrators?
- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district?
  - b. What other funds are you using to address professional development for teachers or administrators and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?  
*[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
  - c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
    - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?

- ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for professional development for teachers or administrators? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
- iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
- iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district?

7d. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving or expanding access to technology?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address access to technology and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
  - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to improve or expand access to technology? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
  - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
  - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district?

7e. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on addressing drug abuse and/or violence in your community? Is the emphasis more on drug abuse or violence? (*"Both" is an acceptable answer.*)

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting your school district in its strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community?
- b. What other funds are you using to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*

- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
  - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
  - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
  - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support your school district in its strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community?

7f. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on addressing English language acquisition?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address English language acquisition and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
  - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds to address English language acquisition? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
  - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
  - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district?

7g. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on increasing parental involvement?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address parental involvement and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with*

*enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*

- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
  - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to increase parental involvement? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
  - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
  - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district?
  
8. Has your school district received any assistance to help you meet accounting or reporting requirements concerning your school district's use of REAP funds, or on other aspects of administration? *[If yes] From whom? [Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
  - a. How useful have you found this assistance to be? *[Probe for concrete examples.]*
  - b. Did the assistance change the way you reported or addressed accounting requirements concerning your school district's use of REAP funds? *[If so, probe for concrete examples]*

#### **REAP FLEX [SRSA district only]**

9. Now we want to talk with you about a provision under SRSA called REAP Flexibility. You may also know it as SRSA Flexibility, REAP Flex, SRSA Flex, REAPing, or Flexing.
  - a. How familiar are you with the REAP Flex provision? *[If respondent is not familiar with REAP Flex, offer a brief description.] What is REAP Flex called in your school district? [Use respondent's preferred terminology going forward.]*
  
  - b. *If respondent's school district is currently using REAP Flex ("Yes" to Survey Q27), ask: How are you using REAP Flex in your school district? [Probe for details, including reasons for choice of particular federal Title programs they plan to supplement with Title IIA funds.]*
    - i. Has your school district received technical assistance regarding your use of REAP Flex in the current school year? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance on whether to exercise REAP Flex authority and how to use it.]*
    - ii. What kind of technical assistance has your school district received? How helpful has it been? How did it change your school district's use of REAP Flex? *[Probe for concrete examples.]*
    - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved? Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in deciding whether to use REAP Flex or how to use it?



- c. If respondent's school district is not currently using REAP Flex ("No" to Survey Q27), ask: Did your school district receive technical assistance regarding whether it could use REAP Flex or how to use it in the current school year? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance on whether to exercise REAP Flex authority and how to use it.]*
- i. What considerations factored into your school district's decision not to use REAP Flex? *[Probe for any reasons indicated in Survey Q29]*
  - ii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved? Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for your school district in deciding whether to use REAP Flex or how to use it?
- d. Do you have any suggestions for changes in REAP Flex that would make it easier to use? That would make your school district more likely to use it?

### **Recommendations for Change**

10. How would you describe your school district's overall satisfaction with the REAP program? How would you describe your school district's overall satisfaction with the administration of the program *[for SRSA grantees: "by the U.S. Dept. of Education REAP office"; for RLIS grantees: "by your state"]*?
11. What recommendations do you have to improve the REAP program? *Probe for*
- *eligibility process?*
  - *formula used to allocate funds? [assuming respondent knows at least something about the allocation formulas]*
  - *allowable (for RLIS and SRSA) or authorized (for SRSA using Flex) uses of funds?*
12. What recommendations do you have to improve the administration of the program *[for SRSA, ask about national level administration; for RLIS, ask about state-level administration]*? *Probe for timing of eligibility notification, timing of fund distribution.*