

## **Appendix A: Recruitment Materials**

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## **Appendix A1 – Complex Area Superintendent Emails and Phone Call Talking Points**

### ***Template for Complex Area Superintendent Email***

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific’s Secondary Writing Toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Complex Area Superintendent],

The U.S. Department of Education’s Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) has developed a Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively.

A select group of schools in Hawai’i will have the opportunity to try the Secondary Writing Toolkit in advance of public release. The Abt Associates research team will work with those schools to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine the impact of having access to the toolkit on grade 6–8 students’ writing ability and teachers’ use of effective strategies for teaching writing. The study will also examine how the toolkit is implemented in schools and what opportunities there are for improving the toolkit content.

#### **Will you consider supporting this important work?**

We would like to invite schools within your complex area to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit their priorities. We need your support and approval to reach out to the schools in your complex area. If they chose to join the study and can assure that 80 percent of eligible teachers and the administrator agree to participate, schools will be assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the first wave in Fall 2024 (treatment schools) or the second wave in Fall 2025 (comparison schools). If schools are assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit, teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers in treatment schools will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. Teachers and school administrators participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. We’re asking for your approval to reach out to the schools serving grades 6-8 within your complex area and, if possible, your support in facilitating introductions. If we don’t hear from you by [date], we’ll give you a call to follow up.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

### **Talking Points for Complex Area Superintendent Call**

- Introduction.
  - Detailed description of toolkit and alignment to Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) priorities.
  - How schools in the complex area were identified for participation and eligibility requirements.
  - Clarify Abt's role in toolkit evaluation.
- Review intervention and study.
  - Length of study.
  - Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students.
- Questions?
- Request for support/approval.
  - Next steps for reaching out to school administrators.
  - Best approach/approaches for demonstrating Complex Area Superintendent Support for study.
- Next steps.
  - Follow-up calls (if needed).
  - Ask for help in reaching out to school administrators—send letter to school administrators and convene information session, at which we'll speak.
  - Other.

## Appendix A2 – Preliminary Letters to School Administrators and Teachers

### **Template for Letter Complex Area Superintendents to School Administrators (to be edited as they see fit)**

Dear [School Administrator],

Effective writing is considered an important skill in Hawai'i. To support this effort, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific, in partnership with WestEd, has developed *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively: A Toolkit for Supporting Effective Practice* (Secondary Writing Toolkit). The Toolkit has been developed to help educators implement the evidence-based practices outlined in the Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively Practice Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/22>). In other words, it reflects a translation of the research to practice. The Hawai'i Department of Education has agreed to be the site for the Institute of Education Sciences' study on the toolkit's implementation and impact.

Conducting the evaluation in Hawai'i gives our educators early access to implement the evidence-based Secondary Writing Toolkit that includes support from the study team—all aimed at providing grade 6–8 English language arts (ELA) teachers professional learning experiences that initially help teachers understand their strengths and areas for growth in using the Practice Guide's recommendations. Over time, teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills for teaching writing as recommended, assess students' strengths and areas for growth in writing, plan instruction that incorporates recommended practices and addresses students' needs, and exhibit a sense of efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. Ultimately, the toolkit is designed to support teachers' adoption of evidence-based practices and thus improve student writing.

If [School Name] decides to participate in the study, your school will be assigned by lottery to either receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the first wave in Fall 2024 (treatment schools) or the second wave in Fall 2025 (comparison schools). If you are assigned to receive the toolkit in the first wave, this will allow your grade 6–8 ELA teachers to get early access to the toolkit and support for a teacher to serve as peer facilitator to help teachers learn the practices. Teachers and peer facilitators will participate in a professional learning community for approximately 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Teachers and peer facilitators will be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and instructional logs describing their experiences and to participate in a focus group to discuss perceptions of the toolkit. School administrators will be asked to complete a survey to provide information about the fidelity of implementation and contextual information. The survey and log activities will take no longer than 15 minutes each to complete (the log will be completed eight times during the study), and virtual focus groups will be no longer than 60 minutes.

Your school may also be assigned by lottery to not receive early access to the toolkit in Fall 2024, in which case your school will be compensated \$2,500 for participating in the study and receive access to the toolkit and a book study on the Practice Guide one year later, in Fall 2025. Study participation for comparison schools will involve grade 6, 7, and 8 ELA teachers completing instructional logs and school administrators completing a survey. All staff completing instructional logs and surveys will receive gift cards for participating in the study.

Please look for an email in the next day or so from REL Pacific, in which we will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Linda Caswell, Principal Investigator, Abt Associates, at [linda\\_caswell@abtassoc.com](mailto:linda_caswell@abtassoc.com) or 617-520-3022.

Sincerely,

[Complex Area Superintendent]

***Template for Letter from School Administrators to Staff (to be edited as they see fit)***

Dear [Teacher],

Effective writing is considered an important skill in Hawai'i. To support this effort, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific, in partnership with WestEd, has developed *Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively: A Toolkit for Supporting Effective Practice* (Secondary Writing Toolkit). The Hawai'i Department of Education agreed to be the site for the Institute of Education Sciences' study on the toolkit's implementation and impact.

Schools in Hawai'i will have advance access to a new toolkit to provide grade 6–8 English language arts (ELA) teachers professional learning experiences that initially help teachers understand their strengths and areas for growth in using the Practice Guide's recommendations. Over time, teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills for teaching writing as recommended, assess students' strengths and areas for growth in writing, plan instruction that incorporates recommended practices and addresses students' needs, and exhibit a sense of efficacy as writers and teachers of writing. Ultimately, the toolkit is designed to support teachers' adoption of evidence-based practices and thus improve student writing. I hope that you will be a part of this effort.

If our school is assigned by lottery to implement the toolkit in Fall 2024, then grade 6–8 ELA teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community focused on the Secondary Writing Toolkit. School staff will be invited to complete online professional learning trackers and instructional logs and invited to participate in a focus group. Staff will receive additional details about data collection in a future communication. Staff will, of course, receive gift cards for their completion of evaluation activities as an added benefit to receiving the supports from the toolkit team. If our school is not assigned to implement the toolkit during the 2024/25 school year, staff will receive access to the toolkit and a book study on the Practice Guide one year later in Fall 2025. Study participation during the 2024/25 school year would involve grade 6, 7, and 8 ELA teachers completing instructional logs. All staff completing logs will receive gift cards for participating in the study.

Please look for an email in the next day or so from REL Pacific, in which we will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Linda Caswell, Principal Investigator, Abt Associates, at [linda\\_caswell@abtassoc.com](mailto:linda_caswell@abtassoc.com) or 617-520-3022.

Sincerely,

[School Administrator]

## **Appendix A3 – School Administrator Recruitment Emails, Phone Call Talking Points, and Agendas for Information Session and Webinar**

### ***School Administrator Recruitment Email***

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [School Administrator],

The U.S. Department of Education’s Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) has developed a Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively.

A select group of schools in Hawai‘i will have the opportunity to try the Secondary Writing Toolkit in advance of public release. The Abt Associates research team will work with those schools to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine the impact of having access to the toolkit on grade 6–8 students’ writing ability and teachers’ use of effective strategies for teaching writing. The study will also examine how the toolkit is implemented in schools and what opportunities there are for improving the toolkit content.

#### **Will you consider being a part of this important work?**

We are inviting [School Name] to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school’s priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope that you will accept. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the first wave in Fall 2024 (treatment schools) or the second wave in Fall 2025 (comparison schools). If the school is assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit, teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). If schools are assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit, teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers in treatment schools will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. Teachers and school administrators participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions and a memo of understanding, but could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don’t hear from you by [date], we’ll give you a call to follow up.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

## **School Administrator Recruitment Follow-Up Email**

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [School Administrator],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) on the efficacy of their Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively, as evaluated by the Abt & Associates. **Will you consider being a part of this important work?**

We are inviting [School Name] to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school's priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope you will accept. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the first wave in Fall 2025 (treatment schools) or the second wave in Fall 2024 (comparison schools). If your school is assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit, teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers in treatment schools will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. Teachers and school administrators participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions and a Memorandum of Understanding. Could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit study further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don't hear from you by [date], we'll give you a call to follow up.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

### **Talking Points for School Administrator Recruitment Call**

- Introduction.
  - Detailed description of toolkit.
  - Clarify Abt's role in toolkit evaluation.
- Review intervention and study.
  - Length of study.
  - Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students.
- Questions?
- Request to participate.
  - Overview of activities (professional learning tracker, instructional log, focus groups, administrator survey).
  - Incentives.
- Next steps.
  - Follow-up calls, if needed.
  - Ask for help in reaching out to teachers—send letter to teachers and convene information session, at which we'll speak.
  - Other.



***Cross-School Informational Webinar Agenda (if needed)***

- Introduction by complex area superintendent.
- Toolkit demonstration.
- Overview of study.
- Next step: school-level meetings.

***School Staff Q&A Meeting Agenda (if needed)***

- Introduction by school principal.
- Overview of toolkit.
- Overview of study.
- Benefits and responsibilities of participation.
- Timeline.
- Q&A.
- Next steps.

## Appendix A4 – Teacher Recruitment Emails

### *Teacher Recruitment Email*

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Teacher],

The U.S. Department of Education’s Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) has developed a Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively.

A select group of schools in Hawai’i will have the opportunity to try the Secondary Writing Toolkit in advance of public release. The Abt Associates research team will work with those schools to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine the impact of having access to the toolkit on grade 6–8 students’ writing ability and teachers’ use of effective strategies for teaching writing. The study will also examine how the toolkit is implemented in schools and what opportunities there are for improving the toolkit content.

#### **Will you consider being a part of this important work?**

[School Name] was invited to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school’s priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope you will accept. Schools will be assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the first wave in Fall 2024 (treatment schools) or the second wave in Fall 2025 (comparison schools). If the school is assigned by lottery to receive the toolkit, teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers in treatment schools will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. Teachers and school administrators participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

**Abt researchers will not share any individual-level data.** The study will not be used to evaluate you or your school. Your school administrator has already agreed to let us contact you.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Please let us know if you have any questions either by emailing the study team at [toolkiteval@abtassoc.com](mailto:toolkiteval@abtassoc.com) or by calling me at the number below.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

**Teacher Recruitment Follow-Up Email**

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Teacher],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively. As a reminder participants will receive gift cards for completing study activities. Abt Associates researchers will not share any individual-level data. The study will not be used to evaluate you or your school. Your school administrator has already agreed to allow us to contact you.

We hope that you will join your colleagues in using the toolkit and sharing your experiences in the study.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Again, please let us know if you have any issues either by emailing the study team at [toolkiteval@abtassoc.com](mailto:toolkiteval@abtassoc.com) or by calling me at the number below.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

## Appendix A5 – Frequently Asked Questions

**How was my school selected for this study?** The study team selected the state of Hawai'i because the toolkit and evaluation activities directly address a need in Hawai'i to increase English Language Arts (ELA) achievement, which includes a significant focus on writing.

**Does the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) know about the study?** Yes. HIDOE supports this study and has approved the research plan. You can view the approval letter and learn more about the study at [REL Pacific website].

**What information is being collected from participants as part of this study?** Teachers and school administrators will participate in the study in the following ways:

Participants	Activity	Who?		Duration	Timing
		Treatment Group	Comparison Group		
Peer Facilitators	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	✓		10–12 minutes after each PLC session	October 2024–February 2025
	Focus Group	✓		60 minutes	March–April 2025
Teachers	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	✓		10–12 minutes after each PLC session	October 2024–February 2025
	Instructional Log	✓	✓	15 minutes per day for 10 days (five days in fall; five days in spring)	1 <sup>st</sup> week – September 2024 2 <sup>nd</sup> week – February 2025
	Focus Group	✓		60 minutes	March–April 2025
School Administrators	Survey	✓	✓	10 minutes	March–April 2025

In addition, test scores and other administrative data will be collected from existing sources, such as HIDOE.

**How will privacy and confidentiality of all data be ensured?** Information collected for this project

Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific Toolkit Evaluation

comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). The research team will store your completed surveys and interview records in locked filing cabinets and electronic files will be stored on password protected computers. The study team will replace personally identifiable information (PII) with study-specific identifiers immediately after receiving all data and all PII will then be destroyed. Abt will never include your name or your individual information in any report. Responses to this data collection will be used for statistical purposes only and responses will not be associated with a specific school or individual. Abt will report findings only at the district level and will name HIDOE as the district. Abt will not use your information for any other purpose than this study. Abt will destroy all data stored at Abt in 2031, five years after the end of the study, as required by ED.

**How will REL Pacific express appreciation for my participation in the study?** Both treatment and comparison teachers will each receive \$10 for every day they complete the instructional log (\$100 total if teachers complete all five days in fall 2024 and all five days in spring 2025) in the form of gift cards. Toolkit teachers and peer facilitators will receive a \$50 gift card after the last professional learning tracker (PLT) session for completing the professional learning tracker at each PLC session. Toolkit teachers and peer facilitators will also receive a \$30 gift card if they participate in a focus group. Both toolkit and comparison administrators will receive a \$15 gift card as a thank you for completing the administrator survey.

**What is the purpose of the study, and how will the results be used?** As you may appreciate, there is often a gap between knowing an education practice works for students and being able to use that practice in the complex, demanding world of schools. This toolkit is designed to make it easier for teachers to internalize evidence-based practices, and the study is designed to determine how well the toolkit works to change instruction and learning. We will use study findings to help other districts and schools—including but not limited to study schools—use these resources effectively.

**Who is conducting the study?** REL Pacific, a federally funded research and technical assistance organization, is developing and studying the toolkit. Our partners at WestEd has developed the toolkit, and another organization (Abt Associates) will study implementation and impact.

**Who will get the study results?** The study results will be summarized across all study participants, and REL Pacific will develop a report of results for the federal Department of Education. The results will also be shared with participants and HIDOE. The report will be reviewed against What Works Clearinghouse standards and will be made publicly available through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The study findings will also be shared with the toolkit development partners, and the toolkit will be made publicly available on the IES website.

**Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns about the study?** If you have general questions, you can contact Linda Caswell. She is available by email ([linda\\_caswell@abtassoc.com](mailto:linda_caswell@abtassoc.com)) or by phone (617-520-3022). If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant, contact Abt's Human Subjects Protection Committee (which is responsible for the protection of project participants) at 877-520-6835.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about the toolkit?** If you have questions about the toolkit, its content, or components, please contact Sheila Arens at REL Pacific by email at [sarens@mcrel.org](mailto:sarens@mcrel.org).

## Appendix A6 – Hawaii State Department of Education Research Approval Letter

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO**  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF STRATEGY, INNOVATION AND PERFORMANCE

May 26, 2023

Dr. Linda Caswell  
Abt Associates, Inc.  
10 Fawcett St.  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Re: Research Application Decision

Dear Dr. Caswell,

I am pleased to approve your Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) research application for the study "Evaluation of Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively: A Toolkit for Supporting Effective Practice (Secondary Writing Toolkit Study)" (Application RES2023040).

This approval will expire May 31, 2027. If you require additional time to complete your study, you must submit a request for an extension or another application before this approval expires. If you intend to make changes to your project, you must submit the change request to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch prior to implementing the change. These changes include but are not limited to (1) any changes that require approval from your Institutional Review Board and (2) any changes that are in conflict with or not included in this approval letter. Significant changes may need to be reviewed by the Research Review Committee at their next scheduled meeting. If changes are approved, a modified approval letter will be issued to the researcher, the targeted schools, and affiliated state/district office staff.

As described in your application, the objective of your study is:

- To conduct an evaluation of the impact and implementation of the Secondary Writing Toolkit developed by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific in Hawai'i to support access to high-quality writing instruction in HIDOE.

You have indicated that you will be inviting 116 schools to participate in your research (see attached "Targeted SchoolsOffices-forResearchApp\_Secondary Writing Toolkit Evaluation").

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Dr. Linda Caswell  
May 26, 2023  
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You must present this letter to the appropriate Department administrator(s) upon invitation to participate in your research.

You have also indicated that you will be inviting the following individuals at these targeted schools to participate in your study:

- Complex Area Superintendents
- Administrators
- Teachers/Peer Facilitators
- Data Governance and Analysis Branch (if school staff cannot provide)

The number of participants is contingent upon how many schools agree to participate in your project.

Complex Area Superintendents who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team - 15 minutes.

Administrators who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team - 15 minutes;
- Recruitment informational session of approximately 1 hour;
- Virtual training of approximately 1 hour;
- Diagnostic review of approximately 30 minutes;
- Cognitive testing of data instruments: 45-60 minutes each for a total of 12 hours; and
- Online surveys for evaluation data for approximately 10 minutes.

Teachers/Peer Facilitators who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team: 15 minutes;
- Training sessions: 120 minutes;
- Monthly coaching for a total of approximately 420 minutes;
- Professional development participation of approximately 16-20 hours over a 4 to 5 month period;
- Cognitive testing of data instruments: 45-60 minutes each for a total of 12 hours;
- Online surveys for evaluation data of approximately 10 minutes;
- Instructional logs for evaluation data: 150 minutes; and
- Focus group interviews: 60 minutes.

Data Governance and Analysis Branch (if school staff cannot provide)

- Provide administrative school-level student data.

As you proceed with your study, please be aware of the following:

- Should you wish to use any non-public Department data beyond those described above, please submit a research application modification request to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch.



Dr. Linda Caswell  
May 26, 2023  
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- The participation of Department schools, offices, students, and personnel in your study is strictly voluntary. Participant consent is required.
- All study activities must take place at dates, times, and locations agreed upon by the administrators of the participating Department schools and offices.
- Any compensation provided to Department personnel for participation in your study must be for activities completed outside of instructional and work hours and must be in compliance with the Hawaii State Ethics Code. Any questions about this topic should be referred to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch.
- You are required to conduct your study in accordance with both the conditions of approval described in this letter and the document "Affirmation and Acknowledgement of the Processes, Procedures, and Conditions for Conducting Research in the Hawaii State Department of Education."
- You are responsible for ensuring that all individuals involved in this study - both those affiliated with your organization and those contracted by your organization and affiliated with external entities or vendors - adhere to all of the conditions of my approval, including those detailed in this letter and those stipulated by the Affirmation Form for Researchers.
- A final report of your findings must be submitted to the Department.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ke'ala Fukuda, Data Governance and Analysis Branch, via email at [DOEresearch@k12.hi.us](mailto:DOEresearch@k12.hi.us) or by phone at (808) 784-6061.

Best wishes for a successful study. We look forward to receiving your findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Cara Tanimura  
Interim Assistant Superintendent

CT:kf  
Attachment: Targeted SchoolsOffices-forResearchApp\_Secondary Writing Toolkit Evaluation

c: Data Governance and Analysis Branch