

Appalachia Comprehensive Center • California Comprehensive Center • [Center on College and Career Readiness and Success](#) • Central Comprehensive Center • Florida and Islands Comprehensive Center • [Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes](#) • Great Lakes Comprehensive Center • Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center • [Center on Innovations in Learning](#) • Midwest Comprehensive Center • North Central Comprehensive Center •

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# COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS PROGRAM

2012-2017 Award Cycle

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[Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation](#) • Northeast Comprehensive Center • Northwest Comprehensive Center • [Center on Great Teachers and Leaders](#) • Pacific Comprehensive Center • South Central Comprehensive Center • [Center on School Turnaround](#) • Southeast Comprehensive Center • Texas Comprehensive Center • [Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity](#) • West Comprehensive Center



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# COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS PROGRAM

## U.S. Department of Education

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of School Support and Rural Programs

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<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/newccp/index.html>

## What is the purpose of the Comprehensive Centers Program?

The Comprehensive Centers Program is authorized by Title II of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002. The Centers provide technical assistance to State educational agencies (SEAs) that builds their capacity to:

1. Support local educational agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools, especially low-performing districts and schools;
2. Improve educational outcomes for all students;
3. Close achievement gaps; and
4. Improve the quality of instruction.

The Comprehensive Centers are five-year discretionary grants that operate under cooperative agreements. Fifteen Centers are regionally-based and seven provide expertise and services in specific, high-priority areas.

## What is the role of the Regional Comprehensive Centers?

The Regional Comprehensive Centers provide high-quality technical assistance that focuses on key initiatives, aligns with the work of the Content Centers, and builds the capacity of SEAs to implement, support, scale up, and sustain initiatives statewide. Additionally, they build the capacity of SEAs to lead and support their LEAs and schools in improving student outcomes. These Centers provide training and technical assistance in the implementation and administration of programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and in the use of research-based information and strategies.

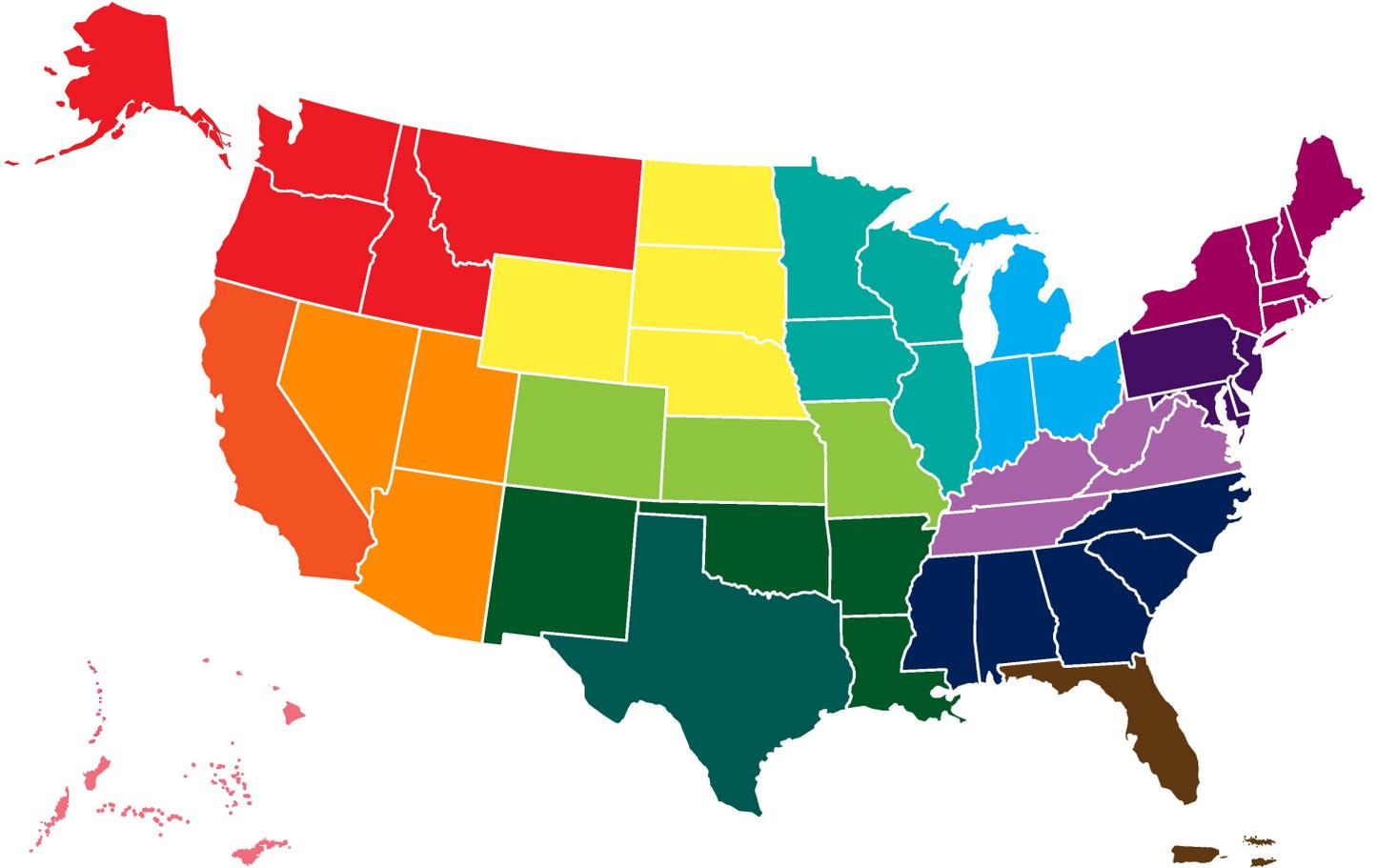
## What is the role of the Content Centers?

Each Content Center focuses on one key priority:

1. Implementing college- and career-ready standards and aligned, high-quality assessments for all students;
2. Identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders;
3. Turning around the lowest performing schools;
4. Ensuring the school readiness and success of preschool-age children and their successful transition to kindergarten;
5. Building rigorous instructional pathways that support the successful transition of all students from secondary education to college (without the need for remediation) and to careers;
6. Identifying and scaling up innovative approaches to teaching and learning that significantly improve student outcomes; and
7. Increasing the capacity of States to implement their key initiatives statewide and support the school-level implementation of effective practices.

According to its area of expertise, each Content Center must provide technical assistance and identify, synthesize, and disseminate research-based practices and emerging promising practices that will lead to the increased capacity of SEAs to support districts and schools in implementing the key initiative. These Centers supply much of the research-based information and products in the specific area that Regional Content Centers use when working with SEAs.

# COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS PROGRAM



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|---|--|--|--|--|
| Appalachia<br>Comprehensive<br>Center   | California<br>Comprehensive<br>Center    | Central<br>Comprehensive<br>Center       | Florida and Islands<br>Comprehensive<br>Center | Great Lakes<br>Comprehensive<br>Center |
| Mid-Atlantic<br>Comprehensive<br>Center | Midwest<br>Comprehensive<br>Center       | North Central<br>Comprehensive<br>Center | Northeast<br>Comprehensive<br>Center           | Northwest<br>Comprehensive<br>Center   |
| Pacific<br>Comprehensive<br>Center      | South Central<br>Comprehensive<br>Center | Southeast<br>Comprehensive<br>Center     | Texas<br>Comprehensive<br>Center               | West<br>Comprehensive<br>Center        |

- Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
- Center on School Turnaround
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
- Center on Innovations in Learning
- Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
- Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
- Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation

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**T**HE Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) provides high-quality, relevant, and useful technical assistance that enhances the capacity of State educational agencies (SEAs) to: (1) undertake education reforms successfully, (2) support district implementation of reforms, and (3) maintain effectiveness once services are complete.

The technical assistance provided to SEAs enhances their substantive knowledge and skills related to key State reforms, and provides opportunities to build sustainable organizational strength. The Center's major activities include: (1) conducting comprehensive need and capacity assessments and triage; (2) developing technical assistance plans; (3) delivering technical assistance; (4) benchmarking progress; and (5) evaluating outcomes. ARCC pursues continuous improvement through the use of formative evaluation data reflected in annually revised Statements of Work executed with each SEA in the region.

Additionally, ARCC coordinates external technical assistance resources with other federal and State technical assistance services to provide the most cost-effective solutions. Finally, ARCC's active participation in the Comprehensive Center network enables staff to remain engaged with relevant research and disseminate tools and other useful resources to serve clients and colleagues.

# CALIFORNIA COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**C**ALIFORNIA'S Comprehensive Center provides technical assistance to the California Department of Education (CDE) in the following areas:

1. Establishing a quality schooling framework to guide, motivate and support effective instruction and student outcomes;
2. Planning and successfully implementing Common Core State Standards;
3. Ensuring educator excellence; and
4. Increasing capacity to support productivity, effectiveness and efficiency.

To provide a comprehensive network of support, the Center plans to utilize: consultation; professional learning, convening and facilitating; dissemination and sharing of information, analysis and review; and leveraging of evidence-based research sources and technical assistance networks. Proposed outcomes include increasing the CDE's capacity to:

1. Set and support expectations for high quality schooling;
2. Identify and share research-based and promising practices; and
3. Support high-quality local implementation of improvement strategies.

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**T**HE Central Comprehensive Center uses its High Impact Technical Assistance (HI-TA) Model to provide high quality technical assistance that focuses on key initiatives, aligns with the Content Centers, and builds the capacity of State educational agencies to implement, scale up, and sustain key initiatives to lead and support their local education agencies in improving student outcomes. The HI-TA Model focuses on four critical roles: building relationships across organizations, facilitating problem-solving, brokering technical assistance services, and providing information in response to needs. The HI-TA Model incorporates capacity building elements to increase human, organizational, structural, material, and political capacity resulting in positive outcomes.

The Central Comprehensive Center anticipates the following outcomes: (1) closing achievement gaps among diverse groups and ensuring all students are college- and career-ready; (2) creating highly effective teachers capable of meeting the instructional needs of diverse learners; (3) effectively promoting leadership; (4) developing rigorous instructional pathways and improved instructional practices; and (5) changing the educational system at all levels. The Central Comprehensive Center at the University of Oklahoma partners with WestEd, the Academic Development Institute, the Neuhaus Education Center, and Northrop Grumman Information Systems.

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**T**HE Florida and Islands Comprehensive Center implements a technical assistance plan that builds State educational agency capacity to plan, implement and evaluate services to local educational agencies. Managed by Educational Testing Service, the Center creates an organizational culture of continuous improvement and student achievement. Project outcomes include:

1. Increasing the number and percentage of students who enter postsecondary training without the need for remediation;
2. Improving teacher and leader quality by working with States to create recruitment, training, and retention policies and strategies that establish quality teachers and leaders, especially in low-performing schools;
3. Improving principal quality by creating collaboration mechanisms among SEAs, universities, and local school systems to select and prepare effective school leaders;
4. Improving student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science by providing professional development that focuses on using data and leading-edge research, as well as innovative approaches to turn around low-performing schools; and
5. Improving the performance of every student by facilitating the delivery of professional development for teachers and leaders to help them recognize and address the unique needs of special populations.

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**G**REAT Lakes Comprehensive Center provides technical assistance and subject-matter expertise to State educational agencies (SEAs). The Center utilizes six principles to guide technical assistance:

1. Supporting key reform initiatives;
2. Identifying promising and proven practices;
3. Sharing high-quality resources;
4. Promoting collaborative learning within and across SEAs;
5. Leveraging familiar and emerging technologies; and
6. Engaging diverse stakeholders and experts.

The Center assists SEAs with implementing college- and career-ready standards and assessments; ensuring highly effective teachers and leaders; turning around low-performing schools; transitioning preschool-age children to kindergarten; transitioning secondary students to college and careers; implementing innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and using data based decision-making to improve outcomes. The American Institutes for Research partners with WestEd, RMC Research Corporation, and the Center for Applied Linguistics to operate the Great Lakes Center.

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**T**HE Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center assists State leadership as they advance their educational priorities, especially in the key reform areas of standards and assessments, educator and leader effectiveness, school turnaround, early childhood school readiness, college and career readiness, scaling up innovative approaches that improve student outcomes, and effective use of data to improve educational endeavors. WestEd operates the Center with partners RMC Research Corporation and Quill Research Associates. IMPAQ International is the Center's external evaluator.

Guided by an annual work plan negotiated with each State's Chief State School Officer, Center staff identify, organize, and ensure accessibility to information and a range of services to meet States' needs. The work plan for each State displays each Chief's top improvement priorities and how they will be addressed through a mix of strategies such as conferences, webinars, focus groups, site visits, phone consultations (using video chat as appropriate), emails, written documents, threaded online discussions, in-person help, peer-to-peer conversations, and the brokering of others' products as appropriate. The Mid-Atlantic Center draws on products and expertise of the Content Centers and on staff at Research for Action, the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins, the Community Training and Assistance Center, and TERC for their specialized expertise.

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**T**HE Midwest Comprehensive Center serves the State educational agencies (SEAs) in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Six principles guide the technical assistance that the Midwest Comprehensive Center provides:

1. Supporting key reform initiatives;
2. Identifying promising and proven practices;
3. Sharing high-quality resources;
4. Promoting collaborative learning within and across SEAs;
5. Leveraging familiar and emerging technologies; and
6. Engaging diverse stakeholders and experts.

The Center's goal is to build the capacity of SEAs to make systemic reforms that promote increased student achievement. Its technical assistance aligns with the seven key priorities identified by the U.S. Department of Education. The Center collaborates with the national Content Centers to connect SEAs with current research and high-quality resources related to these key initiatives.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) partners with WestEd and Bowman Performance Consulting to operate the Midwest Comprehensive Center.

# NORTH CENTRAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**B**Y building the capacity of State educational agencies (SEAs), the North Central Comprehensive Center provides technical assistance that helps states implement reform initiatives. The overarching goals for the Center are: (1) building capacity to implement State initiatives and to support local initiatives designed to improve educational outcomes; (2) sharing collections of resources with SEAs, districts, and schools; and (3) maintaining the engagement of SEAs to devote time, leadership and personnel needed to implement the technical assistance plan and achieve SEA goals.

To meet the needs of the region, the Center: (1) provides on-site and virtual support and coaching; (2) facilitates activities to improve organizational structures and processes; (3) draws upon the expertise of the seven Content Centers; (4) facilitates SEA interactions with districts and other stakeholders; (5) helps SEAs implement research-based practices and emerging promising practices; and (6) provides opportunities for SEAs to learn from each other. As a result, States have increased capacity to implement, support, scale up, and sustain their improvement initiatives, and they are equipped to lead and support districts in improving student outcomes. The Center is operated by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL).

# NORTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**T**HE Northeast Comprehensive Center provides high quality technical assistance to State educational agency teams that are currently implementing key reform initiatives. The Center helps States create and expand their capacity to effectively manage complex, systemic reforms. Additionally, the Center supports States in providing support and assistance to their districts. The Center also brings in “Resource Partners” to provide additional expertise and resources for their clients. The Northeast Center is operated by RMC Research with a team of partners including Learning Innovations at WestEd, Community Training and Assistance Center, and the New York Institute for Technology.

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**T**HE Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (NWCC) supports State educational agencies (SEAs) in planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and sustaining initiatives in priority areas. The Center works with SEAs to develop internal structures and processes; increase capacity to implement, support, scale up, and sustain initiatives statewide; and improve capacity to support district and school-level implementation of effective practices.

The following performance goals guide the Center’s work: (1) providing technical assistance that is useful, relevant, and timely; (2) providing technical assistance to build the capacity of SEAs to implement state-level initiatives and support district- and school-level initiatives that improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, and improve instructional quality; (3) coordinating and collaborating with national experts, technical assistance providers, and the U.S. Department of Education to ensure technical assistance is informed by leading-edge research and innovative approaches and avoid duplicating efforts; (4) sharing high-quality and useful information, materials, and resources to support States’ and districts’ reform priorities for significantly improving student outcomes; (5) contributing to the field’s theoretical and practical understanding of capacity building, strategies for technical assistance delivery, and approaches to the instruction of American Indian/Alaska Native students; and (6) effectively managing the Center to meet objectives within time and within budget. The Center is operated by Education Northwest.

# PACIFIC COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**A**T the Pacific Comprehensive Center, staff have identified a cluster of closely related, high-leverage needs areas that focus on improving learning. These areas are sensitive to the needs of the students in the region, many of whom are English Language Learners (ELLs). They include:

1. Supporting ELLs,
2. Strengthening teacher effectiveness,
3. Investing in early-learning systems,
4. Effectively engaging families and communities in the education of their children, and
5. Enhancing career and college readiness.

The Pacific Resources for Education in Learning (PREL) and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Education in collaboration with regional State educational agencies work collectively to increase State capabilities to support schools, improve the quality of instruction, close achievement gaps, and bolster educational outcomes for all students. The Center uses a customized framework for monitoring and evaluating implementation and impact of all technical assistance activities. Contextualized, evidence-based practices are at the core of both the systemic nature of the Center's work and of its evaluation.

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**B**UILDING the capacity of State educational agencies (SEAs) to implement, support, scale up and sustain key initiatives that support local educational agencies and schools in improving student outcomes is a crucial goal of the South Central Comprehensive Center. Using its model of High Impact Technical Assistance, the Center assists SEAs in: (1) increasing their human capacity; (2) building their structural capacity-systems, practices, plans, and policies; (3) strengthening organizational capacity-communication, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration; (4) building material capacity-technologies, capital resources, and educational resources; and (5) developing political capacity by engaging stakeholders, understanding policies, and working with political systems to significantly improve teaching and learning.

The Center anticipates the following activities: (1) data-based assessment of district and school needs; (2) the building and sustaining of a systemic support system to close achievement gaps and transition students to college and career; (3) enhancement of tools and systems; and (4) differentiated levels of services to SEAs that meet universal, targeted, and intensive needs.

The University of Oklahoma partners with WestEd, the Academic Development Institute, the Neuhaus Education Center and the Northrop Grumman Information System.

# SOUTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**F**OR its region, the Southeast Comprehensive Center proposes a five-year technical assistance plan encompassing multi-state and state-specific technical assistance projects and ongoing, broadly-focused activities. SEDL's approach to the work of the SECC is:

1. Systemic, addressing both States' internal capacity and external supports;
2. Data-driven, with technical assistance and State initiatives implementation based on ongoing data analyses, and with strong provisions for building State, intermediate, and local capacity to monitor performance and assess the impact of improvement initiatives;
3. Responsive to both federal and State-identified needs and priorities;
4. Grounded in research; and
5. Leveraged, through the engagement of their partners and relationships with other Comprehensive Centers, regional educational laboratories, and other members of the Department of Education's national system of technical assistance providers.

SEDL and their subcontracting partners, RMC Research Corporation and the American Institutes for Research, will provide technical assistance to plan, implement, and sustain State systems and initiatives that can strengthen education and reduce achievement gaps.

# TEXAS COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**T**HE Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) uses research-based approaches and related training and consultation to support the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), and Regional Education Service Centers. TXCC works with the TEA to plan, implement, and sustain State systems and initiatives aligned with their priorities:

1. Turning around the lowest performing schools;
2. Providing support for all schools not meeting State or federal standards;
3. Supporting key initiatives related to instructional pathways for college and career readiness; and
4. Improving the quality of teachers and leaders.

Operated by SEDL and its partner RMC Research Corporation, TXCC supports TEA in aligning Career and Technical Education teacher certification standards with college- and career-ready student standards, and facilitates TEA's efforts to increase student engagement in rigorous instructional pathways that prepare them for college and careers. TXCC also supports TEA's work to improve teacher and leader preparation programs and to examine effective teacher and principal appraisal practices prior to the implementation of new evaluation systems. Additionally, TXCC assists TEA and TCDSS in moving toward the State's 2020 goal to close the achievement gap so that all students are prepared for success in post-secondary settings.

# WEST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER

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**T**HE West Comprehensive Center provides high-quality technical assistance to improve State educational agency (SEA) organizational management, capacity, and productivity. The Center works to build capacity in two primary areas:

1. Strengthening SEA internal organizational capacity to implement, support, scale up, and sustain statewide initiatives; and
2. Building SEA leadership capacity to support districts and schools in improving student outcomes.

The technical assistance approach includes leveraging research-based and promising practices, resources, and expertise through regional collaboratives as well as enhancing existing relationships of trust with each of the State chiefs and their SEA teams. WestEd uses five strategies and accompanying activities (e.g., onsite consultation and coaching, web-based professional development, and convening communities of practices) to effectively build SEA capacity and address the priorities of the Center.

## CENTER ON COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS AND SUCCESS

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**I**n partnership with their Comprehensive Center colleagues, the Center on College and Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) helps states better inform, align and support efforts to ensure that all students are ready for success in college and careers. The Center serves as a dynamic technical assistance hub for Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs), State educational agencies (SEAs), and other stakeholders that promote CCRS knowledge development. Additionally, it increases collaboration through interactive learning community activities. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) has engaged five lead partners, including the American Youth Policy Forum, the College Board, Quill Research Associates, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium, and the Forum for Youth Investment.

A three-tiered differentiated technical assistance approach is accomplished through (1) a cache of new CCRS resources and tools, webinars, and national symposia at the universal level; (2) communities of practice, responsive technical assistance, and collaborative projects involving a subset of RCCs and States at the targeted level; and (3) rapid research, development and dissemination projects at the intensive level.

# CENTER ON ENHANCING EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

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**T**HE Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes will strengthen the capacity of State educational agencies to lead sustained improvements in early-learning opportunities and outcomes for children from birth through third grade. Five objectives drive the work of the Center:

1. Improving States' knowledge about and use of early childhood comprehensive assessment systems,
2. Enhancing the use of assessment data and other information to improve program quality,
3. Increasing the knowledge and skills of the early learning workforce,
4. Strengthening the alignment of birth through third grade educational policies and systems, and
5. Increasing the coordination of resources and policies across State and local systems.

The overall project outcome is to work in partnership with SEAs to promote innovation and accountability in early childhood education that leads to increased school readiness and success. The Center is operated by Rutgers University's National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) in partnership with the Education Development Center (EDC) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

# CENTER ON INNOVATIONS IN LEARNING

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**C**ENTER on Innovations in Learning (CIL) provides technical assistance for Regional Comprehensive Centers and State educational agencies (SEAs) to build the capacity of SEAs to achieve the following objectives:

1. Stimulating learning innovation through SEA policies, structures, and programs that encourage and incentivize the development of learning innovations in the SEA, districts, and schools;
2. Selecting and adopting learning innovation by applying criteria and processes;
3. Implementing learning innovation through planning and performance management methods and tools to ensure sustainability; and
4. Scaling-up learning innovation through multifaceted dissemination and technology.

The CIL is a partnership between Temple University's Institute for Schools and Society and the Academic Development Institute.

# CENTER ON STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS IMPLEMENTATION

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**T**HE Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation (CSAI) is guided by four specific project goals: (1) improving State policies, practices, and support to districts for implementation of college- and career-readiness standards and assessments; (2) increasing the capacity of the Regional Comprehensive Centers to meet the technical assistance needs of States to increase the capacity of teachers to deliver effective instruction and of principals to serve as effective instructional leaders; (3) continuously improving the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the CSAI to support the long-term sustainability of reform efforts; and (4) expanding the reach of the CSAI through successful collaboration with national associations, other research and technical assistance centers, and other organizations.

To reach these goals, WestEd, in partnership with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, provides a comprehensive set of services, tools, and other resources to Regional Centers and to States by applying innovative uses of technology and social media to expand their reach and enhance technical assistance and dissemination platforms.

# CENTER ON GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS

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<http://www.gtlcenter.org>

**T**HE Center on Great Teachers and Leaders outlines six focal areas: (1) building systems to develop the knowledge and skills of teachers and leaders with an emphasis on improving instruction to help students meet new college- and career-ready standards; (2) building systems to ensure the equitable distribution of effective teachers and to meet demand in hard-to-staff schools and subjects and in rural areas; (3) building systems to recruit, reward, retain, and support effective teachers and leaders; (4) building human capital management systems for teachers and leaders; (5) creating safe school environments and increasing academic engagement for all students through behavior management and appropriate discipline; and (6) using data from human capital management systems to guide professional development and improve instruction.

To address these areas, the Center brings Regional Center and State educational agency staff together with researchers, experts, innovators, and practitioners via Web-enabled convenings and networked communities of practice to share solutions and strategies. The Center also provides tools and resources to build SEA knowledge on educator effectiveness issues, as well as deploying coaches to provide timely feedback and support. The Center, operated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with partners Council of Chief State School Officers and Public Impact, engages in needs-sensing and technical assistance with a focus on teachers of students with disabilities and career and technical education teachers.

# CENTER ON SCHOOL TURNAROUND

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turnaround.org

**T**o turn around chronically low-performing schools and build their capacity, the Center on School Turnaround focuses on the needs of State educational agencies (SEAs). The Center's four objectives are:

1. Assisting SEAs to develop and align policies, procedures, and resources to create a pro-turnaround statutory and regulatory environment;
2. Building capacity of SEAs to effectively administer and manage school turnaround related programs;
3. Supporting SEAs to deliver targeted and timely technical assistance to districts and schools working on turnaround efforts; and
4. Assisting SEAs to build the political will to overcome reluctance and resistance to making the difficult decisions and doing the hard work to turn schools around.

To meet these objectives, the Center intends to use four research-supported technical assistance strategies: information creation and dissemination, networks of practice, tools and systems, and demonstration projects. The Center is operated by WestEd and its partners: the Academic Development Institute, the Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education at the University of Virginia, and the National Implementation Research Network.

# CENTER ON BUILDING STATE CAPACITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

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**E**NABLING States to transition to a more active role in managing performance, the Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity provides States with high quality information, tools, and implementation support. The Center builds the capacity of State educational agency (SEA) staff through:

1. Developing new leadership skills to transform the SEA and guide improvement of districts;
2. Creating new organizational structures to support assessment, intervention and innovation;
3. Adopting new systems to assess performance and productivity, communicating expectations and opportunities across all levels of the organization, and intervening with districts;
4. Acquiring new expertise in fiscal analysis, district intervention and external partnerships; and
5. Adopting new policies that bolster flexibility and incentivize productivity and performance gains.

Edvance operates the Center in partnership with the Academic Development Institute, the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, and the Fiscal Analytics Unit at Georgetown University.



**COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS PROGRAM**

2012-2017 Award Cycle

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