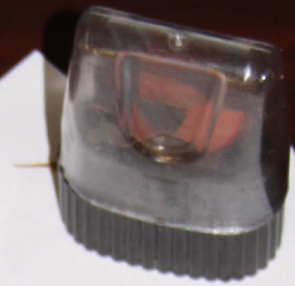


# Evaluating and Improving the SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support

with Rubrics, Explanations, and Exemplars

Susan Hanes, Thomas Kerins, Carole Perlman, Sam Redding, & Steven Ross



For each of the essential indicators your state has chosen, please select the description that best describes your state system of support (SSOS). Note that in order to attain a score of "III," the state SSOS must have met the conditions for getting a score of "II." Similarly, in order to attain a score of "IV," the SSOS has also met the conditions for attaining scores of "III."

**Part A: SSOS Plan and Design**

Essential Indicators	I Little or No Development or Implementation	II Limited Development or Implementation	III Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	IV Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
1. Specified comprehensive plan for SSOS				
1.1 Design and organization of a statewide system of support (SSOS)	There is no identifiable, clearly defined system of support for schools and districts with academic problems.	There is a written, available statement, including goals, objectives and timelines describing the SSOS.	The state has an operations manual, including an organization chart, describing the offices, both within and external to the SEA, that have responsibilities in implementing the SSOS.	The state has role descriptions for each person and office within the SSOS to formalize its integrated planning.
1.2 Oversight and coordination of the statewide system of support	There is no oversight or coordination of resources and services to schools and districts.	There are written plans for oversight or coordination of resources and services to schools and districts.	The state has begun integrated planning among programs in order to coordinate resources and services to schools and districts, but the integration is not yet fully operational.	A systematic process for coordinating planning and resource allocation across programs has been implemented. The state has evidence of greater efficiency in resource allocation and delivery of services.
1.3 Differentiating support to districts and schools	The state has no clearly defined procedures to determine which schools/districts receive SSOS services and resources and the amounts and types of services provided.	The state has developed clearly defined, written criteria (including a needs assessment) and procedures to determine which schools/districts receive services from the SSOS and the amounts and types of services provided.	The state has implemented clearly defined, written criteria (including a needs assessment) and procedures to determine which schools/districts receive services from the SSOS and the amount and types of services provided.	The state has evidence that it provides different levels and amounts of intensive support based on student performance and documented needs for improvement.

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Positive results for students will come from changes in the knowledge, skill, and behavior of their teachers and parents. State policies and programs must provide the opportunity, support, incentive, and expectation for adults close to the lives of children to make wise decisions.

The Center on Innovation & Improvement helps regional comprehensive centers in their work with states to provide districts, schools, and families with the opportunity, information, and skills to make wise decisions on behalf of students.

The Center on Innovation & Improvement is administered by the Academic Development Institute (Lincoln, IL) in partnership with the Temple University Institute for Schools and Society (Philadelphia, PA), Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies at Boise State University (Boise, ID), and Little Planet Learning (Nashville, TN).

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#### **Academy States**

Alaska  
Arkansas  
Idaho  
Illinois  
Louisiana  
Michigan  
Montana  
Oklahoma  
Virginia

#### **Regional Comprehensive Centers**

Alaska Comprehensive Center  
Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center  
Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center  
Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center  
Southeast Comprehensive Center  
Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center  
Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center  
Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center  
Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center



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## **The Growing Strength of Differentiated Systems of Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

**Sam Redding**

This guide for evaluating and improving a state's differentiated System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS) takes into account the current policy environment without overly emphasizing the specific regulations accompanying funding streams so as to be adaptable over time as policies and regulations are changed. The guide is based on sound and universal principles for coherent state support systems, applicable to a variety of state contexts.

As states ramp up their systems, they will be poised to establish internal mechanisms for ongoing, formative evaluation of their systems and to engage consultants in periodic, external evaluations. To assist with evaluation, formative and summative, internal and external, the Academic Development Institute, through its Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII) offers this guide, based on rubrics aligned with the framework presented in CII's *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support* (Redding & Walberg, 2008) and updated to reflect recent U.S. Department of Education (USDE) guidance.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2002, it carried forward from the previous authorization language requiring states to provide "statewide systems of support" for local education agencies receiving federal Title I funds. The statute directed states to apply a triage approach, channeling supports and interventions first to districts and schools where student performance was weakest, and it outlined three strategies to be included in the systems:

- ✦ distinguished educators, leaders, and teachers who have been successful in Title I schools, to consult and coach in districts and schools receiving assistance;
- ✦ school support teams to review improvement plans and recommend appropriate services to address deficiencies; and

- ✦ partner organizations and consultants to extend the reach of support beyond the state agency's own personnel.

With the USDE's 2011 announcement of a flexibility option for states to amend their ESEA programs, the Department set forth a bolder vision for what it now called a "state-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support" (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). This new approach welds together what had previously been perceived as separate systems—accountability and support. It adds the important element of recognition for progress and performance, and the scaling up of practices found effective in high-performing and rapidly improving schools. The new federal guidance also outlines turnaround principles for the lowest-achieving schools and different metrics for categorizing school performance and progress. The federal guidance addresses incentives, opportunity, and capacity as levers for change, the same levers CII presented in the *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support*.

### Background on CII's Work on State Systems of Support

CII began its work on state support systems with the 2008 publication of the *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support*. The *Handbook* presents a framework for an effective statewide system of support, built around incentives for change, opportunity for change, and capacity for change, with an undergirding process for monitoring the system's activities and evaluating its effectiveness. The *Handbook* rests this framework on an evidence review, provides profiles of four states (Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Washington), and includes reports from eight regional comprehensive centers on their work with states. The *Handbook* and related technical assistance tools have been used by regional comprehensive centers with more than half the states to hold each state's system up against the

framework, identify areas of strength and areas for further development, and make plans to strengthen the system.

Shortly after the publication of the *Handbook*, CII conducted a survey of school improvement leaders in state education agencies (SEAs) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The results of this survey were published in *Coherence in the Statewide System of Support* (Kerins, Perlman, & Redding, 2009), which also featured an additional state profile (Ohio) and interviews with federal and state personnel regarding the legitimate use of different funding streams to address improvement needs in districts and schools.

In 2009, CII published *Evaluating the Statewide System of Support* (Hanes, Kerins, Perlman, Redding, & Ross), with rubrics, descriptions, and exemplars for use by the SEA in internal or external evaluation. Later, CII published *Singing Out of the Same Songbook: The Standards-Aligned System in Pennsylvania* (Tanney, 2009), a case study of the Pennsylvania system of support and *Transforming a Statewide System of Support: The Idaho Story* (Lane, 2010).

From 2009 to 2012, CII published a series of studies and practice guides on state turnaround efforts and implementation of school improvement grants (SIG), including *Fulcrum of Change: Leveraging 50 States to Turn Around 5,000 Schools* (Rhim & Redding, 2011) and profiles of three states (Virginia, Montana, and Oklahoma) incorporating new school improvement grants into their systems of support. Other CII publications dealt with leader actions in turnarounds, staff dismissal, school closure, and successful turnaround stories.

In 2011, the USDE introduced the "state-based system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support" (Department of Education, 2011) in its guidance for ESEA flexibility requests from states. *Evaluating and Improving*



*the SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support* updates the original publication to account for lessons learned and the Department's new directions.

### **From Compliance to Change Leadership**

The more stringent accountability measures in the 2002 reauthorization of ESEA compelled SEAs to accelerate their transformation from compliance-oriented bureaucracies to improvement-focused technical assistance providers. This transformation reinforced a direction many states had already begun, stemming from the state-initiated reform and standards movements of the 1980s and 1990s. The 2011 flexibility guidance from the USDE, and federal programs such as the re-vamped SIGs and Race to the Top focused SEAs on high-leverage strategies, including:

- ✦ college- and career-ready standards and assessments;
- ✦ support for effective leadership and instruction, with performance-based staff evaluation;
- ✦ greater differentiation in measures of progress and supports provided;
- ✦ increased attention to high schools and graduation rates; and
- ✦ turnaround principles for the lowest-achieving schools.

To various degrees, SEAs have migrated from funnels for funding streams and enforcers of regulation to catalysts for district and school improvement, although responsibility for assuring compliance has not gone away. Increasingly, states are bringing coherence to disparate funding streams and programs, matching resources with operational need, and validating regulatory compliance with a sharper eye on effectiveness. Random acts of technical assistance, scattered programs and projects, and loose affiliations with external partners are being drawn into more intentional systems of recognition, accountability, and support. Examination of student learning

data is being balanced with careful scrutiny of the district or school's operational effectiveness, including the daily practices of adults that impact student outcomes.

### **Levers of Change in a System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

As catalysts for change, SEAs apply three levers—opportunity, incentives, and capacity. Evaluating the system requires examination of how these levers are applied, appraisal of the structure and coordination of the system itself, and assessment of the system's effectiveness in improving schools and increasing student learning. Well-designed and competently managed state systems are now strengthening the state climate for school improvement by:

- ✦ providing incentives (positive and negative) for districts and schools to take the reins in their own improvement;
- ✦ removing regulatory barriers to local ingenuity and encouraging innovation;
- ✦ enhancing the supply of high-quality leaders and teachers, especially for hard-to-staff districts and schools; and
- ✦ providing sophisticated planning and data systems as tools for improvement.

As these strategies improve the capacity of the education system throughout the state, the rising tide is gently lifting most boats. To elevate the trajectory of improvement in particular districts and schools, however, states are learning to more efficiently manage their school improvement resources by diagnosing operational effectiveness and providing supports to address gaps. Instead of chunking all districts and schools with similar student outcomes into broad categories to receive standardized assistance, states are targeting services to address specific operational and performance gaps identified through more rigorous local self-assessment, coached self-assessment, and external review. Capacity is built both systemically and through targeted assistance to specific local districts and schools.

Although the transformation of SEAs from regulatory/compliance bureaucracies to more agile and proactive catalysts for school improvement has succeeded in lifting the floor of performance for many districts and schools, each state continues to struggle with pockets of low performance often located in communities with weak or poorly organized capacities for change. The standard approach to improvement—diagnosing operational effectiveness and providing supports to address gaps—is insufficient in these situations. States are challenged to simultaneously:

- ✦ strengthen the foundational system of education, including the supply of human capital, and strong accountability, planning, and data systems;
- ✦ provide incentives and opportunity for districts and schools to drive their own continuous improvement, innovate, and get results;
- ✦ efficiently diagnose and remediate specific deficiencies in districts and schools making inadequate progress; and
- ✦ rid the state of the pockets of persistent low achievement.

In leading the charge to turn around persistently low-achieving schools, states must not relent in building the systemic capacity for continuous improvement or be deterred from perfecting their methods for determining and addressing specific local needs for districts and schools that are on a steady improvement trajectory. To do otherwise will only contribute to the number of schools that drift toward candidacy for turnaround.

### **Differentiated Systems of Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

States are moving toward differentiated systems of support that vary the type, intensity, and duration of assistance along two metrics: 1) the district or school's current level of performance as measured by student learning outcomes, especially on state standards

assessments and in graduation rates, and 2) the district's or school's particular operational strengths and weaknesses as determined by diagnosis of both disaggregated student learning data and patterns of practice in the operation of the district or school, particularly in areas of leadership, curriculum, and instruction.

Student learning outcomes are used to classify all the schools in a state as:

- ✦ Consistently high achieving;
- ✦ On a satisfactory trajectory of continuous improvement;
- ✦ Progressing at a significantly rapid pace;
- ✦ In need of rapid improvement in order to reach a satisfactory trajectory of continuous improvement;
- ✦ In need of turnaround—dramatic change to achieve significant improvement; or
- ✦ Candidate for closure or restart because of persistent low performance and lack of response to prior supports and interventions.

For schools and districts on a satisfactory trajectory of continuous improvement, the state may provide an improvement process based on **indicators of effective practice**, self-assessed by district and school improvement teams. For schools and districts in need of rapid improvement, the state may introduce interventions, including those consistent with turnaround principles, alongside an improvement process based on **indicators of effective practice**. For schools in need of rapid improvement, self-assessment may be insufficient and may require more guidance in diagnosing current practice and planning improvement. This guidance (coaching) in diagnosis and planning can be provided by the state, district, or external partner.

For schools in which dramatic turnaround is necessary, staff replacement is usually required, the nature of which may be determined by external review. External reviews

may be conducted by district- or state-provided teams. The means for diagnosing operational effectiveness (practices that contribute to student learning), then, varies according to the district's or school's current level of performance and capacity for change.

### **School Turnaround**

School turnarounds represent one strategy for a particular group of persistently low-achieving schools within a state system that differentiates its supports and interventions based on a district or school's current performance (student learning outcomes) and diagnosis of operational effectiveness. The possibility of a state-initiated turnaround or closure is an incentive for districts and schools to conscientiously engage in substantial improvement.

In a school closure, the students are reassigned to other schools, but in a turnaround the students remain in a school that is dramatically changed. In a district-managed turnaround, replacement of staff is part of the dramatic change, and that replacement may vary from a change in principals and strategic replacement of some teachers to wholesale replacement of staff. Although staff replacement may remove barriers to improvement related to the inadequacy of human capital (knowledge, skills, attitudes of personnel), the practices of the newly-assembled staff must be markedly more effective than those of the former staff. In a district-managed turnaround, a combination of leader-focused turnaround actions and coached self-assessment and planning are necessary following the staff replacement. In fact, the leader must be granted greater authority in further staff replacement and reassignment, after the initial turnaround method has been enacted.

Unlike district-managed turnarounds, in which the school remains within the scope of district operations but with new staff, greater leader direction, and coached self-assessment and planning, a "re-start" essentially removes the school from normal district governance.

The most common means of re-start turnarounds are performance contracting and charter schools. Depending upon statutory and policy requirements in the state and district, the district may itself serve as the charter authorizer (thus converting the school from district-managed to charter status) or it may, in effect, close the school as a district school while an externally authorized charter school opens.

The necessity for turnarounds and closures results, in part, from the ineffectiveness of the state system in elevating schools' improvement trajectories before they are determined to be chronically low performing. Therefore, instituting policies and procedures for turning around and closing schools must coincide with continued emphasis on strengthening the system of support's overall effectiveness.

Change in personnel or governing status is only the beginning of more fundamental change in practice that is necessary and that requires state and district support. Particularly, the decision-making structures (leadership and teams) must be sound, rigorous, and nimble; instructional planning and delivery must comport with effective practice; student learning time must be increased; teacher collaborative planning must be increased in time and rigor; supports for student academic, social, and emotional learning must be strengthened; and family engagement must be provided.

The ultimate goal in a state's system of support for school improvement is for the people associated with a school to drive its continuous improvement for the sake of their own children and students. The state offers incentives, provides opportunity, and builds both systemic and local capacity to reach this goal. Incentives, opportunity, and capacity are levers for change, and in a social system like education, change resides in the behaviors of people. Schools simply need the right people doing the right things for each student, and

doing them well. In some cases, the school needs people with different knowledge, skills, and attitudes than the current staff possesses. In most cases, the current staff needs new knowledge, skills, and processes for collegial learning, planning, and improvement.

The result of turnarounds and closures must be that the students previously served by these schools immediately find themselves in much better situations, and that their own learning trajectories are significantly improved. Thus, not only is the system rid of the pockets of low performance, but current and future students are saved from the predictable consequences of an inferior education.

The turnaround principles set forth by the USDE (2011) are:

- ✦ **Leadership.** Providing strong leadership by reviewing the performance of the current principal, replacing the current principal or ensuring the principal is a change leader, and providing the principal with operational flexibility
- ✦ **Effective Teachers.** Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by reviewing all staff and retaining those determined to be effective, carefully selecting new teachers including transfers, and providing job-embedded professional development informed by teacher evaluation
- ✦ **Extended Learning Time.** Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration
- ✦ **Strong Instruction.** Strengthening the school's instructional program based on students' needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with state academic content standards
- ✦ **Use of Data.** Using data to inform instruction and for continuous

improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data

- ✦ **School Culture.** Establishing a school environment that improves safety and discipline and addressing students' social, emotional, and physical health needs
- ✦ **Family and Community Engagement.** Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement

### The District Role

Although incentives, opportunity, and capacity are the levers of change in a state system of support, they are also levers that can be applied by a district. Just as a state may incentivize constructive change by rewarding success and providing consequences for failure, so can a district. States provide greater opportunity for change by removing regulatory barriers, granting greater local autonomy, and encouraging innovation and "new space"; districts can do the same for their schools. States enhance the supply of human capital (leaders and teachers), and so can districts, especially in getting high-quality, motivated personnel in the schools that need them most. States provide rich and accessible data systems and planning processes, and districts can do likewise. Just as states differentiate supports to efficiently address diagnosed district and school operational deficits, districts can approach school improvement in the same manner.

Effective state systems include the district as a central player in the improvement of its schools. This requires attention at three levels (Lane, 2009):

- ✦ the operational effectiveness of the central office and board in taking care of district functions;
- ✦ the district's infrastructure for school leadership, teaching, and learning; and
- ✦ the district's support for the improvement of individual schools.



The state builds district capacity for improvement by providing supports at all three levels. Especially, the state ensures that the district applies its own differentiated supports for schools, including turnaround strategies and, in extreme cases, procedures for closure. When the state intervenes or provides support directly to a school, it includes the district as an integral participant in the activity, thus modeling an appropriate district role and building district capacity for school improvement.

### **Proximal Variables That Influence Student Learning**

A state system must have sufficient reach to influence the variables closest to the student without being so intrusive and cumbersome that it diminishes rather than builds local capacity and desire for improvement. The instructional core—student (with parents), teacher, content—contains the variables that ultimately impact learning, but this core is affected by multiple spheres of influence, all of which must be part of the state system’s calculations for fostering improvement. The proximal variables (see Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997) contributing to student learning include:

The student’s—

1. prior learning, which teachers have provided;
2. metacognitive skills, which can be taught;
3. motivation to learn and sense of self-efficacy, which a teacher nurtures;
4. effort and time on task, which a teacher expects;
5. interaction—academic and social—with teachers and other students;
6. family’s engagement and support for learning, which a teacher carries.

The teacher’s—

7. instructional planning and classroom management;
8. instructional delivery through a variety of modes;
9. personalization (individualization) of instruction for each student;
10. taught and aligned curriculum, designed by teacher teams.

Of these and other influences identified in the Wang, Haertel, and Walberg meta-analysis, instructional planning and classroom management proved to have the greatest effect on student learning. Not surprising that the teacher is central to learning.

The challenge for the statewide system of support is to skillfully apply its levers for change—incentives, opportunity, capacity—to influence the behaviors of people throughout the education system in ways that enhance the instructional core. Because the ultimate goal is for the people attached to the school to drive improvement, states (as well as districts) must take care not to create barriers to school-level initiative and innovation. Ideally, a “culture of candor” is established at each level of the system that fosters objective scrutiny of data about the performance of adults and of students, continuously learning and changing to get better results.

### **Conclusions**

Building a strong state system of recognition, accountability, and support requires pruning away ineffective programs, policies, and regulations as much as creating effective initiatives to spur district and school improvement. As states have adopted a systems approach to school improvement, they have realized the necessity of restructuring state offices, realigning relationships with intermediate units and external partners, and streamlining the coordination of the various personnel, departments, and organizations

that form the state system. Striving for coherence and clarity of purpose is a prime factor in improving the state system, and achieving efficiencies is another. Because the state's resources are finite, services to districts and schools must be carefully matched to the specific operational deficiencies they are intended to remediate. The more the state is able to build the capacity and desire of districts to support their schools' improvement, the more efficiently the state can allocate its own resources, especially its personnel. One way for the state to build district capacity is to work alongside district staff to assist one or more schools in need of substantial improvement, thus modeling improvement strategies while engaging the district in the process, a step toward greater district responsibility for the performance of its schools.

At both the state and district levels, caution must be exercised to avoid stepping on the school's ability to candidly assess its own practices, solve its own problems, and improve the learning outcomes for its own students. Incentives, the positive and negative pressures that induce people to raise their expectations of themselves, are often a low-cost and high-leverage improvement strategy. Likewise, giving opportunity for creative improvement by removing regulatory barriers, encouraging innovation, and granting more autonomy, can often inspire ingenuity and personal investment in the task at hand.

Both the state and the district enable schools to succeed by first doing their own jobs well—tending to the efficient management of their functions to provide a reliable climate for school improvement. The state's and district's dependable allocation of resources, coherent policies, and competent administration of programs and services are foundational for schools to make progress. So too are useful data and planning systems, standards of practice, and the supply of high-quality leaders and teachers.

Finally, the state and the district must be adept at intervening when progress is inadequate. The predictability of intervention is itself an incentive for the school to ramp up its improvement efforts. The actuality of intervention is that external supports can remediate specific operational weaknesses. Again, effective intervention and efficient application of state and district resources dictate that support services address diagnosed areas of operational deficiencies. While examination of disaggregated student learning data may point to areas in need of improvement, student data are only the consequence of ineffective practice. Diagnosis must discern the patterns of practice, especially in the zone of proximal contributors to student learning—curriculum, instruction, and formative assessment.

Because delivery of standards-aligned and differentiated instruction begins with instructional planning on the part of teacher teams and individual teachers, the teaming and planning practices should be examined, as well as the leadership that directs them. Schools with strong internal capacity for continuous improvement are able to assess their practice and plan for improvement based on their candid assessment of evidence-based practices. Providing these schools with indicators of effective practice, expressed in plain language, behavioral terms, and a continuous planning and improvement process rather than an annual reporting requirement enables schools with strong internal capacity to march forward with good results. Schools that require external support are more likely to need coached self-assessment and planning, a process that places a district or state coach in a position to provide guidance and feedback at each step of the self-assessment, planning, and implementation process. Again, the assessment, planning, and implementation process should be continuous, with a fully engaged improvement team coached by



the external consultant, rather than a requirement for annual submission of a plan.

Schools with weak internal capacity needing to embark upon a trajectory of rapid improvement most likely need a change in leadership and definitely require a change in leadership practice. In addition to the coached self-assessment, planning, and implementation that an improvement team may undertake, the leader needs strong support and preparation for setting the school on a dramatically changed course of operation.

Research on leader actions in rapid improvement and turnaround situations provides guidance on what the leader must do and what kinds of supports the leader must be given. When rapid improvement does not result from a combination of new leadership (or new leadership practices) and coached self-assessment, planning, and implementation, the school is a candidate for turnaround. This typically indicates a need for staff replacement beyond that of the leader. An external review of operational practices can determine the appropriate turnaround method and indicate which staff must initially be replaced or reassigned. In some cases, the need may be for staff with different skill sets than those currently available, which could be accomplished either with an increase in total staff or with replacement of some current staff (however competent) with staff who possess more needed skills. In any turnaround situation, even after initial turnaround measures are taken, the leader must be given authority to make further staff replacements and reassignments. Reassignment may mean moving strong teachers to grade levels or subjects where they are needed most, placing specialists in classrooms, or in other ways increasing students' access to those teachers who are best equipped to serve them.

Some turnaround methods dramatically change the way a school is governed and the conditions under which it operates. For

example, re-start to charter status frees the school from standard district policies and procedures while also placing higher accountability requirements that could result in forfeiture of the charter if performance is not sufficient. Performance contracting with an external management organization similarly increases both autonomy and accountability. This formula of greater autonomy and accountability can also be applied to charter-like district schools. The chief caveat in turnaround attempts is that autonomy and accountability only increase the incentives and opportunity for change; they do not guarantee that change is sufficient or productive. With staff replacement, the capacity for change may be improved, in terms of the human capital now available in the building, but again capacity does not always equate with performance. In all cases, the consequences of autonomy, accountability, and enhanced human capital must be seen in the routine application of effective practices in order to achieve learning results for students. In other words, the methods of turnaround are stage setters that alter school culture and increase the possibility for improved practices of leadership, curriculum development and alignment, instructional planning, and instructional delivery in ways that truly matter. But once the stage is set, the actors must act.

Sustaining the positive effects of interventions is assured when the internal operating practices of the school are changed (e.g., strong teaming practices and a "culture of candor" are in place) and the external supports are not precipitously removed. The district and state roles are essential in both achieving initial improvement and sustaining its results. Always, the right mix of incentives, opportunity (autonomy), and capacity for effective practice must be achieved and maintained.

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## Resources Available from the Center on Innovation & Improvement

Available for download at [www.centerii.org](http://www.centerii.org) (Download CII Publications). Books published by Information Age are also available through the publisher. For *Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*, download at [www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org).

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## **SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support Evaluation Rubric**





## Evaluating and Improving the SEA Differentiated System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS)

### Evaluation Rubric

This Evaluation Rubric is revised from the one originally presented to the staff of nine states in the summer of 2009. Several indicators have been added and the wording for others revised in order to stay current with Department of Education policies. For each of these essential fifty-two indicators, please select the description in the cell that best describes your state's profile in your present System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS). Note that in order to attain a score of "III," the state SRAS must have met the conditions for getting a score of "II." Similarly, in order to attain a score of "IV," the SRAS has also met the conditions for attaining scores of "II" and "III."

The Priority, Opportunity, and Index blanks in the first column enable SEA staff to declare the priority (how important is it to complete) as well as its opportunity (how easy is it to accomplish) for each indicator. Both ratings are on a "3" to "1" range. A "3" on opportunity means it is easier to accomplish since additional funds or legislative changes are not necessary. A "3" on priority means it is quite important for the SEA to work on this indicator. The Index Score is obtained by multiplying the opportunity and priority scores. The Index Score provides a way for SEA staff to sort these indicators for their planning in order to gain quick wins. More difficult items, and those of less priority, are still pursued, but the high-priority/high-opportunity items are given precedence.

### Part A: Design and Evaluation of the SRAS

#### 1. SRAS design and differentiation

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Partial Development or Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>1.1 Designing and organizing an SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS)</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no identifiable, clearly defined system of recognition, accountability, and support for schools and districts.	There is written, publicly available documentation, including the structure, goals, objectives, and timelines describing the SRAS and its available services and resources.	The SEA has documentation (e.g., an operations manual), including an organization chart and description of roles and responsibilities for offices and personnel, both within and external to the SEA, that have responsibilities in implementing the SRAS.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its design, structure, and organization of the SRAS.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Partial Development or Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>1.2 Engaging stakeholders to solicit input on the development and improvement of the SRAS</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no evidence that the SEA provides an opportunity for stakeholders to comment about the development and improvement of the SRAS.	There is written evidence documenting the initial input of key stakeholders in developing and improving the SRAS.	The SEA has a documented process for stakeholder input in considering modifications to the SRAS.	The SEA has a systematic process in place to obtain continuous feedback from key stakeholders in the development, improvement, and delivery of its SRAS.
<b>1.3 Managing the SRAS</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no documented description for the oversight and coordination of SRAS personnel, resources, and services.	There is a documented description for the oversight and coordination of SRAS personnel, resources, and services.	The SEA's document describing its oversight and coordination of SRAS personnel, resources, and services is fully operational in practice.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its system for oversight and coordination of SRAS personnel, resources, and services.
<b>1.4 Staffing the SRAS</b>	The SEA has no documented policies and procedures for selecting, training, assigning, and evaluating personnel in the SRAS.	The SEA has written policies and procedures for selecting, training, assigning, and evaluating personnel in the SRAS.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for selecting, training, assigning, and evaluating personnel in the SRAS.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for selecting, training, assigning, and evaluating personnel in the SRAS.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Partial Development or Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>1.5 Integrating the SRAS within the SEA</b>	There is no evidence of a process by which the SEA integrates the functions of the SRAS into and with other offices and functions of the SEA.	There is a documented description of the SEA's ongoing efforts to integrate the functions of the SRAS into and with other offices and functions of the SEA.	The SEA has integrated the functions of the SRAS into and with other offices and functions of the SEA.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its integration of functions of the SRAS into and with other offices and functions of the SEA.
<b>1.6 Differentiating support to districts and schools</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has no clearly defined procedures to determine which districts/schools receive SRAS services and resources and the amounts and types of resources and services provided.	The SEA has developed clearly defined, written criteria (including student achievement, graduation rates, and professional practice*) and procedures to determine which districts/schools receive resources and services from the SRAS and the amounts and types of resources and services provided.	The SEA has implemented clearly defined, written criteria (including student achievement, graduation rates, and professional practice) and procedures to determine which districts/schools receive resources and services from the SRAS and the amount and types of resources and services provided.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its criteria and procedures for differentiating the provision of SRAS resources and services to districts and schools.
* Professional practice refers to the district or school's practices of leadership, curriculum, assessment, instruction, family engagement, and similar operational practices relative to accepted standards.				

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Partial Development or Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>1.7 Improvement planning and implementation process for districts and schools</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no clearly defined process for the districts/ schools served by the SRAS to devise and implement plans to improve student achievement, graduation rates, and professional practice.	The SEA has a clearly defined written process for districts and schools being served by its SRAS to develop and implement plans to improve student achievement, graduation rates, and professional practice.	The SEA has implemented a system (perhaps electronic) to track local planning, implementation, and progress in meeting SEA performance targets and standards of professional practice so that districts/ schools served by the SRAS receive appropriate support.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the district and school planning process and the SRAS's monitoring and support of it.
<b>1.8 Providing differentiated services and resources to support district and school improvement</b>	There is no menu of available services and resources aligned to diagnosis of district and school performance, professional practice, and need.	The SEA has a written menu of available services and resources aligned to diagnosis of district and school performance, professional practice, and need.	The SEA's differentiated and aligned services and resources to support district and school improvement are fully operational.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its differentiated and aligned services and resources to support district and school improvement.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Partial Development or Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>1.9 Intervening in districts and schools that repeatedly do not meet targets for student achievement and graduation rates</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no clear policy authorizing the SEA to directly intervene with districts/schools based on persistently unsatisfactory achievement and graduation rates.	The SEA has written authority to intervene in districts/schools because of persistently unsatisfactory achievement and low graduation rates, but lacks clear criteria to determine when or how to intervene.	The SEA has a clear, documented policy and procedures for intervening in districts/schools with persistently unsatisfactory achievement and low graduation rates, including support for school turnarounds, and the policy and procedures are fully operational.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its intervention policies and procedures for districts/schools not demonstrating satisfactory achievement and/or graduation rates, including support for school turnarounds.

## 2. Supports and interventions for all students and subgroups

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>2.1 Helping schools and districts better serve students with disabilities</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no formal SEA policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose students with disabilities do not meet achievement targets.	The SEA has developed written policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose students with disabilities do not meet achievement targets.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose students with disabilities do not achieve targets.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose students with disabilities do not meet achievement targets.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>2.2 Coordinating services for students with disabilities across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no formal SEA policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance policies and programs to better serve students with disabilities.	The SEA has developed written policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve students with disabilities.	The SEA has implemented its written plan for integrating its district/school assistance policies and programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve students with disabilities.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve students with disabilities.
<b>2.3 Helping schools and districts better serve English language learners</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no formal SEA policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose English language learners fail to meet achievement targets.	The SEA has developed written policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose English language learners fail to meet achievement targets.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose English language learners fail to meet achievement targets.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and procedures for assisting districts/schools whose English language learners fail to meet achievement targets.



Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>2.4 Coordinating services for English learners across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no formal SEA policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs to better serve English learners.	The SEA has developed a written policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve English learners.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve English learners.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and procedures for integrating its district/school assistance programs, regardless of distinct funding sources, to better serve English learners.

### 3. SRAS evaluation design

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>3.1 Documenting district/school activities provided through SRAS</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no written procedures to obtain documentation of how the SEA works with districts and schools through its SRAS.	There are written procedures to collect documentation of SRAS work with schools and districts, (e.g., evidence of interventions, training, coaching), but they have not been implemented.	The SEA has implemented its procedures to collect documentation of SRAS work with districts and schools.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of procedures for documenting SRAS work with districts and schools.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>3.2 Evaluating the SRAS</b>  <b>Priority</b> _____ <b>Opportunity</b> _____ <b>Index</b> _____	There are no written evaluation policies and procedures to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the SRAS.	There are written evaluation policies and procedures, but they have not been implemented. Evaluation criteria include student achievement outcomes and district and school evaluations of SEA services.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of its SRAS and releases periodic evaluation reports that are publicly available.	The SEA has evidence that it has used the results of the evaluation process to improve its SRAS.
<b>3.3 Evaluating the SEA's assessment program</b>  <b>Priority</b> _____ <b>Opportunity</b> _____ <b>Index</b> _____	There is no evidence that the SEA has policies and procedures to systematically evaluate its assessment program.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to evaluate its assessment program, including alignment with the SEA's content standards that would prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post- secondary institutions or for a career and district/school use of data in improvement planning.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for ongoing evaluation of its assessment program to ensure reliability and alignment with the SEA's content standards and district/school use of data in improvement planning.	The SEA systematically evaluates its assessment program to ensure the rigor, reliability, and validity of its test and that the test results can be meaningfully interpreted. Based on evaluations, it modifies assessments by using varying formats or modifying questions to improve rigor.

## Part B: Resources and Services Provided to Districts and Schools

### 4. District and school staff needs

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>4.1 Enhancing the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies</b>  Priority ____ Opportunity ____ Index ____	The SEA does not have formal policies and procedures to enhance the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies.	The SEA has written policies and procedures for increasing the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures using a variety of strategies (e.g., incentives, statutes, policies, and partnerships with institutions of higher education) to increase the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to increase the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies.
<b>4.2 Providing incentives and strategies for addressing a more equitable distribution of well-qualified and effective teachers within and across districts</b>  Priority ____ Opportunity ____ Index ____	The SEA has no policies and procedures to address the equitable distribution of well-qualified and effective teachers within and across districts.	The SEA has policies and procedures to encourage well-qualified and effective teachers to teach in schools identified as low achieving or having low-achieving subgroups and to ensure an equitable distribution of well-qualified and effective teachers within and across districts.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to place the well-qualified and effective teachers in schools identified as low achieving or having low-achieving subgroups and to ensure an equitable distribution of well-qualified and effective teachers within and across districts.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to achieve more equitable distribution of qualified and effective teachers within and across districts.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>4.3 Recruiting and retaining well-qualified and effective teachers</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of well-qualified and effective teachers.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of well-qualified and effective teachers.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of well-qualified and effective teachers.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of well-qualified and effective teachers.
<b>4.4 Recruiting and retaining effective district and school leadership personnel</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of effective district and school leadership personnel.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of effective district and school leadership personnel.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of effective district and school leadership personnel.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to enhance recruitment and retention of effective district and school leadership personnel.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>4.5 Engaging Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to better prepare new teachers and leadership personnel</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no written policies and procedures for the SEA and IHEs to jointly ensure that teacher and leadership programs prepare their students to understand relevant state policies, assessments, standards (e.g., the SEA's college and career ready content standards), and effective professional practice.	There are written policies and procedures for the SEA and IHEs to jointly ensure that future teachers and leadership personnel understand state standards, curricula, assessments, and effective professional practice.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for the SEA and IHEs to jointly ensure that future teachers and leadership personnel understand state standards, curricula, assessments, and effective professional practice.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for the SEA and IHEs to jointly ensure that future teachers and leadership personnel understand state standards, curricula, assessments, and effective professional practice. The SEA collects information annually from newly placed teachers and administrators to evaluate if their collegiate experience has adequately provided them with the information to understand and implement SEA requirements. The summary information is shared with the IHEs.
<b>4.6 Providing guidelines for the evaluation of teachers and principals</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no evidence that the SEA provides an opportunity for stakeholders to comment about the development of the SEA's guidelines for teacher and leadership evaluations.	As a result of stakeholder consultation, the SEA has developed and disseminated comprehensive and coherent information regarding teacher and leadership evaluation.	The SEA holds awareness workshops to explain the evaluation guidelines (including consequences) and holds training programs to assist educators to use valid and reliable processes for staff evaluations.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools with staff evaluation.

## 5. Funding of improvement efforts

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>5.1 Coordinating state and federal funding streams and programs</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no apparent policies and procedures to efficiently coordinate programs with different funding sources that are aimed at improving schools receiving SRAS services.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to integrate multiple SEA and federal programs aimed at school improvement.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to integrate multiple programs with common goals but different funding streams in areas such as planning, resource allocation, training, reporting, and compliance monitoring.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to integrate planning, resource allocation, training, reporting, and compliance monitoring across multiple programs with common goals but different funding streams.
<b>5.2 Assisting districts in assessing their use of financial resources to fund improvement efforts</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no process and procedures in place to help districts analyze their budgets to align financial resources with identified needs.	The SEA has a documented process and procedures for facilitating local analysis of budgets, including written guidance on aligning financial resources with identified needs.	The SEA provides budget advice, training, and support for districts to allocate their financial resources to improve student learning.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures of the SRAS services to help local staff evaluate, analyze, and reallocate resources to improve student learning.



## 6. Data analysis and use

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>6.1 Providing a comprehensive SEA data system</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has a data system that meets minimum reporting requirements.	The SEA is developing an integrated data system that reduces redundancy in data collection and that provides timely, accurate, and user-friendly data to inform school and district improvement.	The SEA provides a timely, accurate, and integrated data system that reduces redundancy in data collection and which informs school and district improvement. The system provides a wide variety of indicators, (e.g., longitudinal trends for student subgroups, personnel, school report cards, attendance, graduation rates, and professional practice).	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its data system (and the reduction of redundancy in data collection) that districts and schools use to inform improvement decisions.
<b>6.2 Using assessment data</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA provides minimal guidance to districts and schools on use of assessment data in their improvement planning.	The SEA has a clearly documented process for how district and school personnel can use both local and SEA assessment results for improvement.	The SEA has implemented a training program to explain how district/school staff can use assessment results to determine subgroup needs, provide differentiated services, and improve the educational program.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in using assessment data in their improvement planning.

## 7. Support Teams and Improvement Consultants

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>7.1 Matching districts/schools with support teams and district/school improvement consultants</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no systematic procedures for matching schools and districts with support teams and school improvement consultants based upon identified district/school needs and the qualifications of support teams and consultants.	There are written policies and procedures for systematically matching districts/schools with support teams and consultants based upon needs identified from student data and diagnosis of current professional practice and the qualifications of support teams and consultants.	There is a systematic matching of schools and districts with support teams and consultants based on needs identified from student data and diagnosis of current professional practice and the qualifications of support teams and consultants.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for matching support team and consultant qualifications with identified district and school needs, including evidence from district/school surveys and other data about the impact they have had in helping districts/schools to plan and implement strategies and structures for raising student achievement.
<b>7.2 Training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and district/school improvement consultants</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no documented policies and procedures for training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and district/school improvement consultants.	The SEA has documented policies and procedures for training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and consultants.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and consultants.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and district/school improvement consultants.

## 8. External partners and providers

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>8.1 Managing and coordinating organizational partners</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There is no evidence that the SEA has formed partnerships with other organizations to further the goals of its SRAS.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to create partnerships with entities outside the SEA, (e.g., universities, non-profit groups, businesses, civic organizations, and intermediate educational units).	Multiple partnerships with entities outside the SEA have been implemented. These partnerships include clear guidance from the SEA regarding their role in school and district improvement.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for creating and managing partnerships to assist districts and schools with improvement.
<b>8.2 Providing guidance for tutoring and extended-learning time</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no policies and procedure to assist districts and schools in providing tutoring and extended-learning time for students.	There are written policies and procedures for SRAS assistance to districts and schools in how they can provide tutoring and extended-learning time for students.	The SEA policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools with tutoring and extended-learning time include materials and training opportunities for district and school staff and have been implemented.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in providing tutoring and extended-learning time for students.

## Part C: Implementation

### 9. Removal of barriers to change and innovation

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>9.1 Removing barriers to change</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has not developed policies and procedures to assist districts and schools in identifying and removing barriers to change.	The SEA has formal, documented policies and procedures to assist schools and districts in identifying and removing barriers to change, (e.g., legislation, SEA board rules, facilitating alternate routes to certification, etc.).	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to assist schools and districts in identifying and removing barriers to change, (e.g., legislation, SEA board rules, facilitating alternate routes to certification, etc.).	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in identifying and removing barriers to change.
<b>9.2 Creating options for new types of schools, including charter schools</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has not taken actions to create options for new types of schools via legislation and/or development of a written policies and procedures.	Written policies and procedures have been developed for creating new types of schools (e.g., charter schools, pilot schools, lighthouse schools, schools within schools).	The SEA has implemented policies and procedures for creating new types of schools (e.g., charter schools, pilot schools, lighthouse schools, schools within schools).	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for creating new types of schools in the state.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>9.3 Expanding access to college level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses, or other accelerated learning opportunities implemented</b>	The SEA has not developed policies and procedures to work with districts, high schools, and IHEs to expand access to college level courses or prerequisites or other accelerated learning opportunities such as dual enrollment.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to work with districts, high schools, and IHEs to encourage them to expand access to college level courses or prerequisites or other accelerated learning opportunities such as dual enrollment.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to work with districts, high schools, and IHEs to encourage them to expand access to college level courses or prerequisites or other accelerated learning opportunities such as dual enrollment.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures to work with districts, high schools, and IHEs to encourage them to expand access to college level courses or prerequisites or other accelerated learning opportunities such as dual enrollment. The SEA reports annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups in each LEA and each public high school.

## 10. Incentives for change

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>10.1 Setting consequences for low student achievement and low graduation rates</b>  Priority ____ Opportunity ____ Index ____	The SEA has no consequences for low performing districts/schools.	Written policies and procedures have been developed to levy consequences for low student achievement or graduation rates.	Written policies and procedures have been implemented, and clear information has been provided to districts/schools regarding consequences for low student achievement and graduation rates.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to consequences for low student achievement and/or graduation rates.
<b>10.2 Providing positive incentives for improvement</b>  Priority ____ Opportunity ____ Index ____	No positive incentives are provided districts or schools for improved academic achievement and graduation rates (e.g., special recognition, financial or other awards, and/or greater autonomy).	The SEA has written policies and procedures for rewarding positive incentives to districts or schools for improved academic achievement and graduation rates, including the closing of achievement gaps for all subgroups of students.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for positive incentives to reward districts and schools with improved academic achievement and graduation rates, including the closing of achievement gaps.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for positive incentives to reward districts and schools with improved academic achievement and graduation rates, including the closing of achievement gaps.



	I	II	III	IV
Essential Indicators	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>10.3 Publicly disclosing district and school performance</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA annually discloses school and district performance data.	Limited school and district data are sent to parents or are available at a public website.	Data and reports are sent to parents, and the SEA's website includes user-friendly and timely information. Communications to parents are made in multiple languages as appropriate.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to public disclosure of district and school performance.

## 11. SRAS Communications

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

	I	II	III	IV
Essential Indicators	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>11.1 Communicating with clear and systematic communication paths within the SRAS</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no documented policies and procedures for a statewide communication system among those who provide support such as SEA employees, regional offices, universities, and other members of the SRAS.	There are written policies and procedures for communication among those who provide support such as SEA employees, regional offices, universities, and other members of the SRAS.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for communication among those who provide support such as SEA employees, regional offices, universities, and other members of the SRAS.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to communication among those who provide support such as SEA employees, regional offices, universities, and other members of the SRAS.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>11.2 Implementing clear and systematic communication paths between the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools as well as significant others</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	There are no documented policies and procedures for communication among the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools.	There are written policies and procedures for communication among the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for communication among the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to communication among the SEA/SRAS and districts and schools.

## 12. Technical assistance

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>12.1 Delivering training to districts and schools in school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA does not have formal, documented policies and procedures for training and assisting districts and schools in improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.	The SEA has documented policies and procedures for training and assisting districts/schools with improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for training and assisting districts/schools with improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for training and assisting districts/schools with improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>12.2 Providing technical assistance to improve professional practice</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA does not have formal written policies and procedures for how it provides technical assistance to districts/ schools to improve professional practice.	The SEA has written technical assistance policies and procedures describing its technical assistance services relative to the improvement of professional practice, how the services are differentiated, and how districts and schools access them.	The SEA has implemented its technical assistance policies and procedures for technical assistance services relative to the improvement of professional practice, how the services are differentiated, and how districts and schools access them.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for providing technical assistance to districts and schools to improve professional practice.
<b>12.3 Building parent involvement into school improvement</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no written policies and procedures to provide guidance and training on how to include parents in the school improvement process.	The SEA has written policies and procedures to provide guidance and training opportunities for districts and schools on how to include parents in the improvement process.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to provide guidance and training opportunities for districts and schools on how to include parents in the improvement process.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for providing guidance and training for districts and schools on how to include parents in the improvement process.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>12.4 Evaluating external providers</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has no policies and procedures to conduct its own rigorous review of external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support district and school improvement and to assist districts and schools in doing the same.	The SEA has policies and procedures to conduct its own rigorous review of external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support district and school improvement and to assist districts and schools in doing the same.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures to conduct its own rigorous review of external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support district and school improvement and to assist districts and schools in doing the same.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for conducting its own rigorous review of external providers used by the SEA and its LEAs to support district and school improvement and assisting districts and schools in doing the same.
<b>12.5 Implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has no policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career.	The SEA has written policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career.

### 13. Dissemination of knowledge

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>13.1 Disseminating knowledge and/or research-based practices</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA does not have policies and procedures for making products and resources available to help districts and schools with school improvement (e.g., manuals on curriculum alignment, instructional improvement, and parental involvement).	The SEA has policies and procedures for making products and resources available to help districts and schools with school improvement (e.g., manuals on curriculum alignment, instructional improvement, and parental involvement). These products may be available from multiple sources.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for making products and resources available to help districts and schools with school improvement (e.g., manuals on curriculum alignment, instructional improvement, and parental involvement).	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for making products and resources available to help districts and schools with school improvement (e.g., manuals on curriculum alignment, instructional improvement, and parental involvement).
<b>13.2 Producing products and resources to help districts and schools improve</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA does not produce and disseminate products and resources to help districts and schools improve	The SEA has policies and procedures for the production and dissemination of products and resources to help districts and schools improve.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for the production and dissemination of products and resources to help districts and schools improve and routinely produces and disseminates such products and resources.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for the production and dissemination of products and resources to help districts and schools improve.

#### 14. Monitoring, program audits, and diagnostic site reviews

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>14.1 Conducting state monitoring, program audits, and diagnostic site reviews</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has no policies and procedures for monitoring, conducting program audits, and providing diagnostic site reviews (including professional practice) in schools and districts identified as needing substantial improvement.	The SEA has written policies and procedures for monitoring, conducting program audits, and providing diagnostic site reviews (including professional practice) in schools and districts identified as needing substantial improvement.	The SEA has implemented its policies and procedures for monitoring, conducting program audits, and providing diagnostic site reviews (including professional practice) in schools and districts identified as needing substantial improvement.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for monitoring, conducting program audits, and providing diagnostic site reviews (including professional practice) in schools and districts identified as needing substantial improvement.
<b>14.2 Documenting the status of districts/schools</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	Districts/schools needing substantial improvement in student achievement and/or graduation rates have been identified, but it is not clear for how long or the rationale for placement.	There is an annually updated identification of districts/schools needing substantial improvement, the number of years they have been identified, and an explanation of how they were identified, that is, the criteria the SEA used to identify these districts and schools.	There is publicly available documentation explaining the criteria to remove districts and schools identified as low achieving or having low graduation rates, evidence documenting the number that have been removed, and analysis of the effectiveness of SRAS interventions and supports.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for identifying districts/schools needing substantial improvement and reporting results of interventions and supports.



Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
	No Development or Implementation	Limited Development or Partial Implementation	Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
<b>14.3 Monitoring the progress of individual districts/schools</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has no process in place to monitor the progress of districts/schools identified as needing substantial improvement in student achievement and/or graduation rates.	The SEA has written policies and procedures for SEA staff and consultants to monitor identified districts/schools to ensure that they are implementing their improvement plans and receiving high-quality supports.	The SEA has implemented its written policies and procedures for SEA staff and consultants to monitor identified districts/schools to ensure that they are implementing their improvement plans and receiving high-quality supports.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for SEA staff and consultants to monitor identified districts/schools to ensure that they are implementing their improvement plans and receiving high-quality supports.

## Part D: Outcomes for Districts and Schools Served by the SRAS

Priority Score: 3—highest priority, 2—medium priority, 1—lowest priority; Opportunity Score: 3—relatively easy to address, 2—accomplished within current policy and budget conditions, 1—requires changes in current policy and budget conditions; Index Score: Priority Score x Opportunity Score

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
<b>15.1 Establishing student achievement performance targets</b>  Priority _____ Opportunity _____ Index _____	The SEA has not established performance targets for districts and schools, nor has it established criteria on how to use the state assessment to identify the highest performance and the high-progress schools.	The SEA has established high performance targets for districts/ schools and criteria on how to use the state assessment to identify the highest performance and the high-progress schools, and targets and criteria include reliable and valid measures for determining student growth as well as the annual progress of schools and districts.	The SEA has implemented its high performance targets for districts/ schools and criteria on how to use the state assessment to identify the highest performance and the high-progress schools, and targets and criteria include reliable and valid measures for determining student growth as well as the annual progress of schools and districts.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to setting high performance targets and criteria for identifying the highest performance and the high-progress schools, and its means for reliable and valid measures for determining student growth as well as the annual progress of schools and districts.
<b>15.2 Addressing subgroup achievement gaps</b>	The SEA has a data system that can document subgroup achievement gaps over time but there is no systematic process for the SEA or districts to use that data.	The SEA has a documented process and requirements for how schools and districts can use subgroup achievement gap data in district/ school improvement.	The SEA has implemented its documented process and requirements for how schools and districts can use subgroup achievement gap data in district/ school improvement.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assisting districts and schools in closing achievement gaps.

Essential Indicators	I	II	III	IV
<b>15.3 Establishing student attendance performance targets</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has not established attendance performance targets for districts and schools.	The SEA has established high attendance performance targets for districts/schools and has evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student attendance.	The SEA has implemented its high attendance performance targets for districts/schools and provides evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student attendance.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for setting attendance targets and providing evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student attendance.
<b>15.4 Establishing graduation rate performance targets</b>  <b>Priority _____</b> <b>Opportunity _____</b> <b>Index _____</b>	The SEA has not established graduation performance targets for districts and schools.	The SEA has established high graduation targets for districts/schools and has evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student graduation.	The SEA has implemented high graduation targets for districts/schools, has evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student graduation, and provides a reliable and valid data system to document high school graduation rates and that information is made available to the public.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures for setting high graduation targets for districts/schools, showing evidence that it can reliably and validly measure student graduation, and providing a reliable and valid data system to document high school graduation rates and make this information available to the public.

## **Evaluating and Improving the SEA SRAS**

### **Planning Based on the Evaluation**

The completion of the Evaluation Rubric is a necessary first step for SEA staff as they organize their efforts to improve their System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support for districts and schools. However, the next step is to take these data and move toward a plan for action. The Academic Development Institute has created an online tool to help with this process. The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of how the main components of the SRAS online tool are meant to be used. The online tool also includes other resources such as live reports and a Meeting/Agenda set up feature.

#### **SRAS Online Tool Overview of Assessing, Planning, and Monitoring:**

##### **STEP 4—Assessing Indicators**

Assessing the 52 indicators is the initial step of the SRAS process. The Evaluation Rubric lists 52 indicators, along with the rubric information to score implementation status and a place for the SEA team to decide on the opportunity and priority scores for planning purposes. Teams use the Wise Ways®/Exemplars and the rubric to rate their current level of implementation (No Development, Limited Development, or Full Implementation) on a scale of 1 to 4. Since a rubric score of 2 and 3 are both in the middle of the scale, they both fall in the 'Limited Development' category in the online tool. The information in the Evaluation Rubric is nearly identical to the information found in Step 4 of the online SRAS tool. SEA teams can use the Evaluation Rubric to guide discussion, and a process manager can enter information regarding implementation and evidence into Step 4. The information will need to be entered into Step 4 so that all indicators that are not fully implemented will move into Step 5 where the team can begin creating plans for improvement.

##### **STEP 5—Creating Plans**

Once the team has assessed the indicators, Step 5 will rank the indicators (now called objectives) by the Index score. The Index score is the product of the priority score and the opportunity score. The SEA team will decide on the order to plan for and implement their objectives at this point. For each objective that the team works on, they will assign a team member to manage the work, create a vision of what the objective will look like at full implementation, and set a target date. The team will then create tasks that will help them reach full implementation.

##### **STEP 6—Monitoring Progress**

In Step 6, teams track progress and implementation of their SEA level plan. As objectives and tasks are met, the team discusses evidence of full implementation to determine if they have reached their objective. Indicators and objectives can be continually planned and monitored, as this is meant to be a continuous improvement model.

If your SEA would like more information about training and use of the online SRAS tool, please contact Tom Kerins at [tkerins@adi.org](mailto:tkerins@adi.org) or Stephanie Benedict at [sbenedict@adi.org](mailto:sbenedict@adi.org).

## Explaining the Rubric

Susan Hanes, C. Thomas Kerins, Carole Perlman, & Steven Ross

### Introduction

Most of the indicators listed in the Evaluation Rubric are explained using examples from multiple sources, but especially the CII documents: *Coherence in Statewide Systems of Support* and the *Handbook on Statewide Systems of Support*.

This section explains each Essential Indicator more fully by using examples of activities researchers found when visiting Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington. CII completed additional studies of Montana, Virginia, Idaho, and Oklahoma, so these reports are also referenced. Additional information from a national survey conducted by CII is also included for illustrative purposes. For example, Indicator 4.2 states that an SEA provides: “incentives and strategies for addressing a more equitable distribution of well qualified and effective teachers within and across districts.” A detailed example derived from interviews in Ohio explains what the authors mean by this indicator statement. For each indicator, the state that is the source of the information has been identified. Some of these states’ practices may have changed or expanded since the original information was provided. Also included are examples from 2012 flexibility waiver requests that were submitted to the USDE for approval.

The second section provides illustrations to help users understand the issues involved in deciding how to score their SEA’s placement on the rubric’s scale. Of particular importance are the issues involved in differentiating between Categories II and III as well as III and IV. The SEA responses to the CII survey of all state systems of support provide the basis for the exemplars. However, for many of the indicators, the responses did not provide sufficient information to create a meaningful example. In these cases, we provide elaborations to create richer illustrations. For that reason, individual SEAs are not always referenced.

The authors believe that by supplying this level of detail, users will be able to make reliable and valid judgments of the status of their SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS). The rubric can be used over time to document positive changes by individual indicator and section as well as a documentation of changes throughout the overall SRAS.

## Illustrating the Indicators

### Part A: Design and Evaluation of the SRAS

#### 1. SRAS design and differentiation

##### *1.1 Designing and organizing an SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS)*

The performance levels for this indicator range from having no identifiable, clearly defined system of support for schools and districts with academic problems to the SEA having role descriptions for each person and office within the SRAS as well as a process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its own structure.

Alabama faced the daunting task of trying to unify and coordinate the state's support services. The goal was to ensure that all Alabama schools needing improvement received coordinated assistance from a unified delivery system.

To accomplish this, the Deputy Superintendent charged the directors of several departments to work together. She then organized an Accountability Roundtable whose mission was to provide a coordinated, seamless system of continual technical assistance and support to schools in the areas of curriculum, instruction, fiscal responsibility, management, and leadership. Technical assistance to schools as defined by the state accountability legislation is coordinated through this Accountability Roundtable and provided by the State Support Team (SST).<sup>1</sup> The SST provides technical assistance and support to all districts/schools with focused assistance to districts/schools that do not make performance targets.

##### *1.2 Engaging stakeholders to solicit input on the development and improvement of the SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no evidence of opportunities for stakeholders to review and comment about the development and improvement of the SRAS to the SEA having a systematic process in place to obtain continuous feedback from key stakeholders.

In Kentucky, the process of improvement planning focuses school and district improvement

efforts on student needs by bringing together all stakeholders to plan for improvement, by focusing planning efforts on priority needs and closing achievement gaps between subgroups of students, by building upon school and district capacity for high quality planning, and by making connections between the funds that flow into districts.

##### *1.3 Managing the SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from having no clearly identifiable plan for oversight or coordination to a systematic process for coordinating planning and resource allocation, including evidence of effects.

Kentucky has implemented integrated planning among programs to coordinate services including their system of Highly Skilled Educators (HSEs). They organize identified schools around a common focus of improved student learning using the Kentucky Scholastic Audit and Review process—a comprehensive analysis conducted by the HSEs—of the learning environment, efficiency, leadership, culture, and academic performance of schools and districts.

In terms of organizing people, Kentucky has the Instructional Support Network to build the capacity of district administrators to provide leadership in making connections between planning for instruction and planning for professional development; it is these connections that provide the foundation for continuous school improvement. One example of coordination is the Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams. These teams focus on the districts most in need of assistance. SEA staff, along with an HSE, join a school board member, selected by the Kentucky School Board Association, and an administrator, chosen by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators, to make up a team. All the members of each team are from districts that have succeeded in raising student achievement. The superintendent of the struggling district is the chair of the group.

Finally, Kentucky has a Bureau Leadership Planning Team composed of the commissioner, the deputy, and all associates. They meet at least monthly to discuss, review, and evaluate the

<sup>1</sup>The State Support Team (SST) is comprised of the SEA staff of the Instructional Services Division as well as the Alabama Math and Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI) Site Directors and Math and Science Specialists, Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) Regional Partners and Regional Reading Coaches, Regional School Improvement Coaches, and Peer Mentors.



SRAS. Additionally, two key associate commissioners share the responsibility for day-to-day activities around statewide support. The SEA relies heavily on its approach of cross-agency decision making, maximizing limited resources, and shared ownership of initiatives and responsibilities.

#### *1.4 Staffing the SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from a lack of documented policies for selecting, training, and assigning personnel into the SRAS to the SEA having an ongoing process for the selection, training, assignment, and evaluation of SRAS staff.

Due to the lack of local capacity, the use of coaches is a central feature of Montana's improvement process. The coach position is designed to facilitate the changes at the local level by empowering community members to lead the changes. The Montana management team called upon a number of retired principals, administrators, school board members, and consultants to fill some of the positions. Other coaches, who were employed by districts at the time, took a leave of absence from their current positions to temporarily serve as coach in one of Montana's Schools of Promise.

These on-site field staff positions require knowledge of effective schools research in teaching and learning and successful instructor designs, classroom implementation and school administration, along with the ability to deliver appropriate K-12 education to diverse students. Montana leaders recruited and placed on-site field staff not only based on their skills, but also on the ability to fit within the local communities (Corbett, 2011).

#### *1.5 Integrating the SRAS within the SEA*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no evidence of a process by which the SEA integrates the functions of the SRAS into other SEA offices to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its integration of functions with other SEA offices.

Colorado uses a cross-functional team of SEA staff to forge three-year partnerships with a number of their districts. In Wyoming, special education personnel are part of the support

system. They align RtI and technical assistance delivery with the results from special education monitoring. Special education personnel are members of Wyoming's technical assistance teams and consult with School Improvement personnel. In Arizona, English Learner facilitators participate in all LEA Resource Team District visitations.

Idaho developed and implemented a coordinated SRAS that involves IHEs as intermediate agencies and consists of multiple support strategies, networking opportunities, a revamped planning process, and specific processes to identify needs and target services in high need sites. Sixty-one schools and 30 districts are formally part of the Idaho Building Capacity project, which serves as the hub of support for targeted districts and schools. Additionally, 467 schools and 76 districts are accessing key features of this SRAS, including the Wise Tool (ADI's web-based school improvement process) and networking opportunities such as the Principals' Leadership Academy and the Superintendents' Network. This was made possible by coordinating Title I and Special Education programs in the same department (Lane, 2010).

#### *1.6 Differentiating support to districts and schools*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no clearly defined procedures to determining which districts/schools receive SRAS services and resources to the state having evidence of an ongoing process illustrating that it provides different levels and amounts of intensive support based on student performance. This process is constantly being evaluated to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its procedures.

Tennessee implemented a sophisticated approach to providing differentiated services. First, the state launched a program of Exemplary Educators (EE) who serve as mentors to principals and teachers, analyze student performance data, connect with professional development providers, and build capacity for continuous school improvement. A major part of their training prepares them to provide different degrees and levels of support according to the needs of the districts/schools.

Secondly, Tennessee relies on its publication, *What is a Good School Appraisal Guide and Rubric*, as the focus of its work with districts

on curriculum, instruction, organization, and assessments (both formative and summative). This *Guide* is used as the basis of site visits which result in an individual school profile of strengths and areas of planning needs. The EE personnel use these profiles to guide their assistance. The *Appraisal Guide* employs a set of criteria defining effective schools as well as a connected set of standards and measurement statements with matched rubrics.

Districts identified as not meeting the required accountability benchmarks must annually address certain components in their consolidated application for federal funds. To help local personnel do this, EEs are assigned to these districts and schools based on their specific needs. Training enables the EEs to provide differentiated services. EEs help identified districts organize their priorities and respond to a series of questions about important issues such as the gap between their present curricular practices and what they believe they should do to increase student learning. This analysis includes reflective questions for staff on how they can better use their time, money, personnel, and other resources to make necessary changes. The subsequent analysis of the data provides an opportunity to pinpoint where technical assistance and differentiated services are needed.

The Tennessee process requires these local personnel to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and synthesize the data to focus on improving student achievement. Subsequently, every local goal must be linked to data. Tennessee provides EE services to assist these local educators until the school is off the high priority list.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Florida noted that it uses technical assistance from regional Differentiated Accountability instructional coaching staff to help districts/schools in the areas of reading, mathematics, science, data, RtI, Career and Technical Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), Florida Continuous Improvement model, Effective Instruction, Content Area Literacy, and Effective Coaching (Florida, 2012).

### *1.7 Improvement planning and implementation process for districts and schools*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no clearly defined process for districts/schools served by the SRAS for devising and implementing plans to improve student achievement, graduation rates, and professional practice to the state showing evidence that schools and districts served by its SRAS have an effective planning process, and the SEA continuously monitors it.

The state of Washington uses the *School Improvement Planning Process Guide* to lead principals and school communities through a cycle of continuous improvement. The *Guide* provides a variety of processes, resources, and graphic tools to engage all stakeholders in developing deeper, sustainable change in schools. The Washington SEA, in partnership with the Washington Association of School Administrators, produced a companion document for districts, *School System Improvement Resource Guide*, to assist districts with their improvement efforts.

Washington enters into a two-year Performance Agreement contract with identified schools that shows how the school, school district, and the SEA will support the successful implementation of the school's improvement plan. Prior to the development of this plan for improvement, the district, school staff, and the SEA consider ways in which the district can support the school and staff during the planning process. The agreement is organized around a template of 30 district commitments and 8 state commitments. The template serves as a guide for dialogue between the district and the SEA. Participants consider types of evidence that would demonstrate support for each of these agreed-upon commitments. One example of a district commitment is: The district agrees to provide supplemental funding for specific professional development activities for instructional staff based upon strategies identified in the school improvement plan.

Washington uses external facilitators who are paid by the SEA to provide direct services to schools. For example, School and District Improvement Facilitators assist local educators to implement the improvement process (including a needs assessment and education audit). They

help craft the Performance Agreements mentioned above as well as the subsequent revision of local improvement plans. While they mentor principals, the plan is to build capacity and not reliance. The Facilitators have no authority, but they carry significant responsibilities as external change agents. They work with the SEA, the district, and a School Improvement Leadership Team to develop and revise a current plan to address identified needs and prepare and implement the jointly developed Performance Agreement. They help the school staff identify and eliminate barriers to change and promote necessary school consensus for change.

Among the evidence showing the effect of Washington's process are outcomes from several evaluations. One finding indicated that fidelity of implementation of school improvement efforts has been strong for each of the three cohorts of schools that have gone through the Performance Agreement process using the Facilitators. Another is that student achievement increased during their three years as measured by the percent of students meeting the standards on the Washington state reading and math tests.

#### *1.8 Providing differentiated services and resources to support district and school improvement*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no menu of available services and resources aligned to a diagnosis of the district to the SEA having an ongoing process of evaluating and improving its differentiated and aligned services and resources to support district/school improvement.

Ohio's policy is to use a Tri-Tier model of school improvement support to deliver differentiated technical assistance based upon need to all districts with the greatest emphasis on the districts that have been identified by the SEA as being of the highest priority (Tier 1).

The Tri-Tier Model requires districts to go through a cycle. They begin by identifying critical needs and developing a focused plan; district personnel must then implement their plan and demonstrate that they have monitored their improvement process. These Tier 1 districts receive support through 16 State Support Teams (SSTs) that are located in regions throughout the state. Each SST uses the single school

improvement plan and process developed by Ohio in their work with the districts.

Ohio has narrowed the scope and prioritized the SST work. Previously, the professional development offered by the SSTs lacked a coherent focus and varied from region to region. Each SST is responsible for implementing a tiered-service delivery model identified in the goals and strategies articulated in the Performance Agreement between the ODE and each SST regional fiscal agent. Among many responsibilities, the SSTs must focus on developing the capacity of Tier 1 district leaders to develop and implement plans for effective school improvement systems around the themes of leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school climate. Subsequently, the state evaluates the effectiveness of its intervention policies and procedures.

#### *1.9 Intervening in districts and schools that repeatedly do not meet targets for student achievement and graduation rates*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state not having a policy authorizing the SEA to directly intervene with districts/schools based on persistently unsatisfactory achievement and graduation rates to the SEA having an on-going process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of its intervention policy. Since School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools are institutions that have persistently low performance, the example below should be useful.

In *Lead Turnaround Partners: How the Emerging Marketplace of Lead Turnaround Partners is Changing School Improvement*, Corbett (2011) describes how Lead Turnaround Partners (LTPs) are working with SEAs to successfully implement SIG. She notes that "Persistently low-achieving schools are inevitably a reflection of their districts, and any improvements made at the school level are not sustainable without systemic changes and improvements" (p.5). For example, Virginia's SEA created a more involved state role when it became clear that LTPs, districts, and schools were all trying to figure out how to successfully do this work simultaneously but separately. As a result, the Commonwealth sponsors a series of trainings, webinars, conference calls, and technical assistance sessions. Attendance of the LTP, the district liaison, and the school principal is



required. LTPs report that attending trainings with the district and school staff is helpful and ensures that everyone is on the same page.

Virginia also developed a new position to support the improvement efforts. Five state facilitators were hired to act as the main liaisons between the districts and the state. These state facilitators monitor progress and are able to problem solve with the local teams as issues arise. The state facilitators share common issues across the state. Since the state learns about issues as they emerge, staff members are able to resolve any problems in a timely manner<sup>2</sup> (Corbett, 2010).

## **2. Supports and interventions for all students and subgroups**

### *2.1 Helping schools and districts better serve students with disabilities*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no formal state plan for assisting districts/schools whose students with disabilities fail to meet achievement targets to a fully implemented plan for assisting these districts/schools whose students with disabilities do not meet achievement targets.

Through a Personnel Development Grant, Ohio is providing an opportunity to test the integration of its special education and general education improvement models. Ohio leaders believe that the best way to make academic gains for all students is to ensure a high quality educational system in which all students participate. Therefore, the SEA integrated its two existing support systems into unified State Support Teams (SSTs). A priority goal of these SSTs was to ensure that special education students would have access to teachers who understood the academic content standards and curriculum implications as well as regular classroom teachers. Ohio combined federal Title VI-B special education discretionary funds with state general revenue funds to provide a single system of support to address the needs of all students.

### *2.2 Coordinating services for students with disabilities across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication*

For this indicator, the cells range from no state plan for integrating its district/school assistance policies to the state having fully implemented a plan for integrating its district assistance policies, regardless of funding sources, to better serve students with disabilities.

Ohio worked with federal officials to obtain maximum flexibility in using federal funds as a support system for all students. Ohio modeled how cooperation between special education and school improvement staff can be accomplished so that funds and requirements can be integrated. This caused school personnel to think about how they can most effectively combine funds for improvement as well. This particular approach originally concerned parent advocates who were worried that special education services might be lost. The SEA maintained that a student-centered approach, rather than a programmatic or funding-centered approach, would be the best for children.

The Ohio SEA brought all its departments together instead of operating in silos. The goal was to blend special education and regular education services together in a unified effort to say “kids are kids,” and the SEA is going to make sure they are all served. One outcome of this process is a single point of contact at each SST who is the focus of one-stop-shopping for local personnel about school improvement issues.

In Delaware, “Special education staff is core to our SRAS. Schools under improvement have first priority for services provided through SRAS. We include in this prioritization all of the special education indicators. Our application, evaluation, and monitoring systems are being revamped so they provide the infrastructure to support the SRAS. We revised the district and school improvement Success Plans. They articulate the completed strategic plan for the agency—one plan that encompasses all students.”

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<sup>2</sup>See “Conditions for Grant Award, School Division Support” on page 4 of Corbett, J. (2010, October, 30). *The Virginia story: Forging strong working relationships among the state, district, school, and external lead partner for the implementation of school improvement grants*. Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute/Center on Innovation & Improvement.

In Maryland, “The strength of our system is the inclusion and coordination of cross-divisional and external agency support and expertise, including special education. The first step in the process is the review and triangulation of various needs assessments to identify pervasive as well as isolated needs...The system works to build foundational strength in core areas of needs and provide enrichment support in more focused areas, such as special education. Special education staff will have a critical role to play in both areas (foundational and enrichment) and are inextricably linked in structure and delivery to this system.”

### *2.3 Helping schools and districts better serve English language learners*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no existing formal plan to assist districts/schools whose English language learners fail to meet achievement targets to full implementation of a plan for assisting districts/schools whose ELL pupils fail to meet achievement targets.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education encourages schools to share successful practices through presentations at state and local workshops. For example, teams from 27 schools gathered for a morning session to hear presentations from two schools on how they raised achievement for ELLs over a four-year period. In the afternoon, members of the presenting schools worked alongside the other 27 teams to practice using diagnostic screening tools and rethinking intervention strategies. Afterward, the Pennsylvania SEA posted a summary of the strategies presented on their website.

### *2.4 Coordinating services for English language learners across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no formal state plan for integrating district/school assistance policies and programs to better serve ELL pupils to the full implementation of such a plan.

In Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, and North Carolina, the ELL personnel work closely with school improvement staff to provide regional services and to ensure that improvement teams are knowledgeable about best practices in this area.

In New Mexico, the ELL personnel are linked in two ways. The first is through participation on a cross-functional professional development work group. The work group is focused on coordinating both the needs and the provision of professional development for schools and districts. The second way is through close collaboration with the Assessment and Accountability staff and linking the federal Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives with the progress of schools toward AYP goals.

In Washington, the Migrant/Bilingual Education staff work closely with other units to guide districts whose ELLs are not making AYP. The SEA provides districts with technical assistance in evaluating their current ELL service delivery plans, using data to make adjustments to their plans, and in identifying necessary professional development. This technical assistance is often the result of collaboration among the different units at the state level including Title I, special education, assessment, and school improvement staff. ELL personnel participate in the efforts of the SRAS to update school improvement rubrics for districts to ensure that the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners are addressed.

In Rhode Island, District Corrective Action Plans and District Negotiated Agreements contain plans that delineate SEA services including ELL for the designated district. Each district is provided a Joint Capacity Team, which includes members representing general education, special education, and ELL staff from both the SEA and LEA levels.

## **3. SRAS evaluation design**

### *3.1 Documenting district/school activities provided through SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from there being no written plan to document SRAS work with districts and schools to the level where the SEA has a fully operational system for documenting and evaluating the effectiveness of its SRAS work.

The Ohio SEA has an Office of Field Relations that collaborates with other offices within the SEA and various regional providers to coordinate a Statewide System of School Improvement Support. Using the Tri-Tier Model, Ohio provides

aligned resources, information, tools, professional development, and technical assistance to all districts with the greatest intensity to those districts in Tier 1.

Each of the State Support Teams (SSTs) is responsible for implementing a tiered-service delivery model identified in the goals and strategies articulated in the Performance Agreement between the Ohio SEA and the fiscal agents that manage the SSTs. This model outlines how all districts are serviced through a differentiated technical assistance structure with high need districts receiving the greatest intensity of service.

Stage 1 of the Ohio Improvement Process begins with a comprehensive assessment of student data and identifies academic weaknesses that must be addressed using the Decision Framework tool. This decision-making process is designed to assist districts using a state-developed data warehouse in making informed decisions about where to spend their time, energy, and resources in order to make significant and substantial improvements in student performance. The SSTs work with these districts through all four stages of the Ohio Improvement Process, including the last one in which everyone monitors and documents the impact of the implemented improvements. In fact, Ohio's SSTs perform quarterly Partnership Agreement reviews with all Tier 1 districts to document evidence of implementation and impact and to revise strategies as needed based upon data. An annual summary of technical assistance provided to each Tier 1 district and the impact of those services on the district is provided by each SST in June. This summary captures the district's efforts and changes in practices and helps guide ongoing work while documenting history and progress. These results are reviewed at the regional and state levels.

### *3.2 Evaluating the SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no written evaluation policies and procedures to determine the effectiveness of the SRAS to the SEA's evidence that it has used the results of the evaluation process to improve its SRAS.

Alabama evaluates their SRAS based on the analyses of local personnel about the effectiveness of the collaborate efforts of the state support teams. In particular, it evaluates peer mentors and

Regional School Improvement Coaches (RSIC) at mid-year and at year end. This appraisal presents task statements, such as whether the RSIC personnel are providing effective on-site support, coaching, and guidance to local personnel. Evidence is requested to support ratings. Finally, there are "listening post" opportunities offered to all superintendents for voicing concerns as well as positive comments at regional meetings with the Deputy Superintendent and key staff.

The Ohio SEA collects customer satisfaction data. Techniques include surveys, interviews, and portfolios for individual districts that include a history of what services the SSTs provide.

In addition to independent evaluations, the state of Washington works with the Center for Educational Effectiveness, which annually provides a perception survey, entitled the Educational Effectiveness Survey.

Edvantia evaluated Tennessee's Exemplary Educator (EE) program based on document reviews, surveys, and achievement data. As part of the evaluation, Tennessee established a system in which each EE completes an end-of-year status report for each school or district assisted. Edvantia staff examined and evaluated these status reports to determine progress in meeting performance expectations and to identify the broadest areas of need for the high priority schools and districts as well as the actions of the EEs. At the same time, the EEs evaluated the tools and training provided to them.

In all these states, summative evaluation criteria include student achievement outcomes.

### *3.3 Evaluating the SEA assessment program*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no policy in place to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessment program to evidence that the SEA systematically evaluates its assessment program to assure the rigor of its test yields reliable and valid interpretations.

In order to give credibility to its new, more rigorous standards, Tennessee notes in its 2012 flexibility waiver request that it revamped its state assessment system to provide a more accurate indicator of student performance, including resetting its cut scores to more closely align with national standards for NAEP and the ACT.



Tennessee acknowledged using inflated scores for years but touted its new standards and more demanding graduation requirements as the path toward raising expectations for all students. By way of example, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the 7th grade math test dropped from 90.3 percent in 2009 to 28.5% in 2010 (Tennessee, 2012).

Florida noted in its 2012 flexibility waiver that it recently modified its Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) to make it a value-added model for measuring student growth. This process for measuring student learning growth is being used in all district teacher and principal evaluation systems during the 2011-2012 school year. In addition, Florida believes its own value-added model lays the foundation for a new way of measuring student growth.

Florida is also addressing the issue of what has become known as “non-tested” grades and subjects by developing a statewide item bank in all grades and subjects. The item bank will include items for core courses in grades K-12 and Spanish with software to facilitate high quality test development as well as a vetting process to ensure the items themselves are high quality and aligned with Common Core State Standards (Florida, 2012).

## Part B: Resources

### 4. District and school staff needs

#### *4.1 Enhancing the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state not having any formal strategies to enhance the supply of teachers and administrators skilled in school improvement to the state having evidence that it has increased the supply of educators skilled in school improvement.

Kentucky has an agreement with the University of Kentucky to provide leadership certification for its Highly Skilled Educators (HSEs) through the completion of three courses. This program was designed to select and reward the most outstanding teachers and administrators with recognition for excellence, a salary incentive, and an opportunity to assist other teachers, administrators, and schools. Schools whose scores declined

have been assigned an HSE. A key element of this program is that the HSEs remain employees of their home district and after their tenure as a HSE, they return to their district and become a resource to build internal district capacity. Of the 105 HSEs who entered the program as teachers, 81 accepted leadership positions beyond that of classroom teacher after exiting the program.

In addition, the Kentucky State Department joined with the Kentucky Association of School Administrators to start the Kentucky Leadership Academy to provide an opportunity for Kentucky educational leaders, at all levels of leadership skill and development, to receive the necessary support to assist them in positively impacting whole school improvement and advancing student learning through ongoing professional growth opportunities. The core values of the Leadership Academy include: effective leaders have high expectations for themselves, their staff, and students; high expectations are evidenced in the work of the district/school and in student achievement; and that highly effective leaders recognize and communicate the district's/school's deficiencies and collaboratively work for improvement with the learning community.

Ohio developed eLearning modules to standardize professional development. These modules are designed to strengthen instructional strategies and are focused toward schools that demonstrate the greatest need. The goal is to link professional development to data and then offer customized professional development opportunities via these modules. Ohio believes that eLearning is an effective way to disseminate consistently high-quality professional development content statewide.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver proposal, Florida discusses its plan to prepare aspiring school leaders to effectively address the teaching and learning challenges of chronically low-achieving high schools and their feeder patterns. The primary objective is to create a pool of the most promising candidates that can turn around schools through an innovative, problem solving-based program of study. The objective will be achieved by working with seven districts to recruit and train a minimum of 80 to 100 new principals and assistant principals to serve in Florida's persistently low-est-achieving schools (Florida, 2012).

*4.2 Providing incentives and strategies for addressing a more equitable distribution of well qualified and effective teachers within and across districts*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no plan to address the quality of teachers in schools identified as needing improvement to the state having systematically implemented and evaluated its plan to achieve more equitable distribution of highly qualified elementary and high school teachers within and across districts.

The Ohio Department of Education developed a Teacher Distribution File (TDF) in response to its own research which showed that often the children in the low-performing schools who need the most experienced, educated, and skilled teachers instead had the least effective educators. School districts use the TDF to determine where their teacher inequities exist. The TDF can:

- ✦ Identify the percentage of minority and economically disadvantaged students who are taught core subjects by inexperienced (less than three years' experience) teachers vs experienced teachers;
- ✦ Identify by core subject area and by school where more than 10% of the core subject courses in schools are taught by teachers who are not highly qualified;
- ✦ Identify the percentage of inexperienced vs experienced teachers in high-poverty schools vs low-poverty schools; and
- ✦ Identify the percentage of highly effective vs non-effective teachers in high-poverty schools vs low poverty schools.

After conducting these analyses, Ohio school district personnel write their District Teacher Equity plans. As part of its statewide equity plan, Ohio is developing a system in which it will continuously monitor and improve the distribution patterns of Ohio's teachers to ensure that poor and minority students are not being taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

*4.3 Recruiting and retaining well-qualified and effective teachers*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state has no plan to enhance recruitment

and retention of highly effective teachers to the state has a fully implemented plan to enhance recruitment, as well as evidence that recruitment and retention have improved.

Ohio has the Council Attracting Prospective Educators (CAPE) to identify and attract young, talented people from diverse backgrounds to a career in teaching with the goal of increasing minority representation in teaching. The CAPE Teacher Academy is a five-day summer academy experience designed to introduce Ohio high school students to teaching as a career possibility. The academy provides an opportunity for 50 high school students from diverse backgrounds to experience a university environment, develop leadership skills, explore a career in education, and interact with peers and professional role models.

In addition, there is the Ohio Future Educators Association (OFEA), a statewide organization for middle and high school youth who are interested in a career in education. Along with Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), OFEA works with advisors and officers of local PDK chapters to recruit members, plan projects, share program information, and provide a statewide communication network to motivate students who are interested in a career in education. OFEA encourages students to set educational career goals early in life, focus on academic achievement, explore teaching through direct experience in the classrooms, and become citizen leaders through school/community service.

However, the major Ohio program for this indicator is its Career Lattice Framework. This Framework expands teacher leadership opportunities and drives collaboration between teachers and administrators on school design, leadership, and school policy. The goal of the Framework is to create a common culture of teacher professionalism, improve teacher retention, and ultimately enhance student achievement. It also provides a framework for teachers to create and sustain a community of professional practice where they have opportunities to collectively reflect upon their teaching, consider the progress their students are making, learn about and apply new knowledge in their fields, and help each other improve.

#### *4.4 Recruiting and retaining effective district and school leadership personnel*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state has no plan to enhance recruitment and retention of highly effective school leaders to the state has a fully implemented plan to enhance recruitment with evidence that recruitment and retention have improved.

Through the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership program (PIL), Pennsylvania made a large effort to train every principal in the state so principals of all schools are more effective, not just those leading schools in need of improvement. Every novice principal is required to take a principal induction program within the first five years of service. The induction program must address the three core standards:

- ✦ The leader has the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.
- ✦ The leader has an understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader's job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school.
- ✦ The leader has the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.

This training models the behaviors it wants leaders to foster in schools and districts. Participants discuss concrete problems of practice in their jobs and are supported by coaching and expert modeling in applying the content towards solutions in their daily work. The Pennsylvania Department's goal was to create comprehensive standards-based continuing professional education programs designed around what the research says is good professional development. Participants complete evaluations after each PIL training. A local university analyzes these evaluations and uses them to produce an annual summative report.

#### *4.5 Engaging institutions of higher education (IHEs) to better prepare new teachers and leadership personnel*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no written policies with IHEs to jointly ensure that teacher and

administrator leadership programs adequately prepare their students to the SEA and IHEs having an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of their policies for jointly ensuring that future educators understand state standards, curricula, assessments, and effective professional practice.

Ohio requires both public and private teacher preparation programs to provide pre-service instruction on the state's accountability system, including standards and assessments. The state also requires school leader preparation programs to provide pre-service instruction for school leaders on the state's accountability system.

Alabama has an official connection with teacher pre-service institutions that require IHE's to assure that teachers know and are able to implement state initiatives. Universities receive feedback from novice teacher evaluations with results published in a report card. There are consequences to the institution if the graduates do not perform at the established standard.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Tennessee noted that by the 2014-2015 school year, all new public school teachers and principals who received training at Tennessee institutions of higher education will be prepared to teach the CCSS (Common Core State Standards). The state will also revise its licensure requirements by: requiring new teachers and principal candidates to demonstrate mastery of CCSS content through a skills assessment or portfolio project; updating reciprocity procedures to ensure that out-of-state teachers wishing to gain Tennessee licensure have received appropriate training in CCSS content; requiring teachers entering the school system through alternative certification pathways to be trained in CCSS content (Tennessee, 2012).

#### *4.6 Providing guidelines for the evaluation of teachers and principals*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not having evidence that stakeholders had an opportunity to comment about the development of SEA guidelines for teacher and leadership evaluations to the SEA having an ongoing process to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies for assisting districts and schools with staff evaluation.



In July 2011, Tennessee became one of the first states in the country to implement a comprehensive student outcomes-based state-wide educator evaluation system. The Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) is a comprehensive evaluation tool designed to improve instructional practices through frequent observation of teachers and principals. Under the TEAM model, 50% of the educator's final effectiveness rating is based on observations conducted by trained officials; 35% of the rating is based on a student growth measure; and 15% of the rating is based on an achievement measure that is cooperatively agreed upon between the educator and evaluator (Tennessee, 2012). Tennessee continues to make adjustments to the TEAM evaluation model through their structured process for gathering feedback. Staff members have already met with nearly 5,000 educators across the state; a third party process is also collecting substantial feedback from stakeholders.

Tennessee also convened twelve development teams of teachers and content specialists in the non-tested grades and subject areas to make recommendations around alternative growth measures in the new teacher evaluation system. As a result, four observational models of teacher evaluation were developed and piloted (Tennessee, 2012).

In Ohio, legislation required standards for teachers, principals, and professional development. These standards guide training, provide a tool in developing coaching and mentoring programs, and support high education in developing and providing content and requirements for pre-service training and ongoing professional development.

Florida documents in its 2012 flexibility waiver request that when it won the Race to the Top grant, it developed and issued specific guidelines for districts for developing teacher and principal evaluation systems. These guidelines provide the criteria for how participating districts substantiate that their new teacher evaluation systems meet all requirements of existing Florida law (Florida, 2012).

## 5. Funding of improvement efforts

### *5.1 Coordinating state and federal funding streams and programs*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state's SRAS having no plan to efficiently coordinate programs with different funding sources that are aimed at improving schools to fully implementing a program to integrate planning and documenting evidence of greater efficiency in planning resource allocation and compliance monitoring.

One of Ohio's main strategies was to integrate a variety of state and federal programs for seamless and efficient delivery of services. The Ohio Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan moved districts from multiple program requirements for improvement planning and compliance into one planning tool where resources are aligned with needs and plans of actions. Prior to the CCIP, schools were required to create separate plans for each of their state and federal programs. The CCIP integrated the many plans into a single document aligned with fiscal resources that serve as a guide to districts and schools in their improvement efforts.

When asked, "What are some lessons learned from your state's experience with a statewide system of support that would be helpful to other states?" Ohio staff responded that they are now using a student-centered rather than a program-centered approach. They began to model internally how cooperation among departments can be accomplished so that funds and requirements can be integrated. Among the first goals was to integrate special education with school improvement activities. Their philosophy was that by improving the whole system, they improved the learning of special education students.

Ohio combined federal Title VI-B special education discretionary funds with state general revenue funds to provide a single system of support that addressed the needs of all students.

While RtI is a federal special education initiative, Pennsylvania is defining it as an instructional program beneficial to all students. All students, including students with disabilities, are to be given high-quality instruction against the same standards, and all students are administered the same progress monitoring and benchmark

assessments. As a result, RTI in Pennsylvania is considered fundamentally about school improvement.

### *5.2 Assisting districts in assessing their use of financial resources to fund improvement efforts*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no clearly defined process in place to help districts analyze their budgets to align financial resources with identified needs to the state showing that its budget staff systematically is part of the monitoring process to help local staff with these fiscal problems.

Ohio has school finance staff join school improvement personnel in their State Diagnostic Team on-site review process. The philosophy is that everyone needs to know how the money is being spent. Each team reviews low-performing schools to ensure that their budgets are aligned with identified needs. As a team they work together to ascertain how schools can become more effective with their programs and more efficient with their financial resources. When these school improvement teams develop a list of recommendations, the finance representatives can immediately help the districts identify which funds are available to implement the recommendations, and they can also point out which recommendations are too costly to start immediately.

## **6. Data analysis and use**

### *6.1 Providing a comprehensive SEA data system*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having a data system that meets minimum reporting requirements to one that provides timely, accurate, and integrated data that reduces redundancy and is useful for districts/schools to inform improvement decisions.

Pennsylvania established a permanent statewide student identifier for its 1.8 million Pre-K through high school students. In addition, all teachers and certified staff were assigned Professional Personnel Identifiers. By fall 2008, the SEA had integrated data from seven of its eight former standalone databases so it now collects data on 72 unique elements, including extensive student and staff information, course enrollment, and attendance. The state department can now determine the proportions of highly effective teachers from one district to another. The Pennsylvania Department of Education now possesses the ability to

answer a host of questions that before were left to guesswork. The state continues to build a longitudinal database to ascertain whether its investment in numerous programs is working.

Tennessee noted in its 2012 flexibility waiver that it is currently developing robust data systems which will allow teachers, schools, districts, and the state to track and learn from student progress and other indicators at each level. Their primary focus is on teacher evaluation, a more robust student information system, an expanded Tennessee Value Added Assessment System, and a P-20 statewide longitudinal data system. The data systems will allow the state to monitor the ways in which CCSS (Common Core State Standards) instruction drives student progress, learn from the CCSS-aligned field test items how well students are achieving the standards, and study the extent to which teachers are delivering CCSS quality instruction (Tennessee, 2012).

### *6.2 Using assessment data*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state providing minimal guidance to educators on the use of assessment data in their improvement planning to the SEA having an ongoing policy and process for assisting education personnel in how to effectively use assessment data in their improvement planning.

Ohio's SSTs devote a considerable amount of time helping district staff understand assessment data and how to use it for improvement planning. Local personnel can access item analysis data by classroom. The Ohio Department of Education staff believes improvement is highly focused, begins with an honest assessment of student data, and identifies academic weaknesses that must be addressed. A state-developed data warehouse allows relevant data to be readily available to districts and buildings. These data are organized in such a way as to allow district and school leadership teams to answer essential questions and make decisions about their greatest needs related to improving student performance.

Data are examined in relation to student performance in content areas, identifying the weakest grade levels, subgroups with poor performance, and the extent to which the problems are present throughout the district. Once the student performance needs are identified, the district then

looks at performance in relation to instructional management (curriculum, instruction, and assessment), professional development, and educator quality.

## **7. Support teams and school improvement consultants**

### *7.1 Matching districts/schools with support teams and school improvement consultants*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state not having a systematic procedure in place to match schools and districts with consultants based upon qualifications and identified needs to the state using data to evaluate these improvement consultants and support teams as well as the state having evidence that these experts have had a positive impact.

Alabama has a system of peer mentors and regional school improvement coaches (RSIC). Peer mentors serve schools in year four or more of school improvement status. The RSICs work with districts on a regional basis. Members of the Alabama Roundtable annually select these change agents. Many of them are already employees of the districts in school improvement status. They are selected for special year-long training, so they can help their own districts and others in need of support. After their time in this role has finished, most go back to full-time status with their own districts. In this way, the capacity of the district has been enhanced.

These Alabama peer mentors work full time and are assigned to no more than two schools. However, the goal is clear that the state expects these mentors to also build capacity at the district level so central office staff can write better plans for improvement. "Change at the school level requires continuous district support."

### *7.2 Training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and district/school improvement consultants*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no documented plan for training, supervising, and evaluating support teams/improvement consultants to the existence of a comprehensive training program that addresses identified needs along the way and is formatively revised.

In Tennessee, the key providers of technical assistance to schools and districts are the exemplary

educators (EEs). In high-priority schools and districts, EEs provide support in school improvement planning, use of data, curriculum, and effective instructional and organizational practices. Tennessee contracts with an external firm to hire the EEs and provide their training. The EEs are trained during the summer and for five weeks throughout the year to keep them current. The consultants are assigned based on the identified needs of schools or districts and the expertise of the EE. The training enables the EEs to provide differentiated services.

## **8. External partners and providers**

### *8.1 Managing and coordinating organizational partners*

The performance levels for this indicator range from having no evidence that the state has formed partnerships with other organizations to further the goals of the SRAS to evidence that external partnerships have been actively implemented and resulted in increased resources and services for school and district improvement.

Ohio's SSTs involve various partners in the review of data and identification of needs. These partners may include, but are not limited to: institutions of higher education, Ohio Education Service Centers, and Information Technology Centers. Partners provide services based upon their existing relationships or content/process knowledge expertise.

In Oklahoma, university staff participates on the School Support Teams that make site visits, observe classrooms, provide feedback to teachers and administrators, and interview parents, students, teachers, and administrators. They also provide feedback to School Support Team Leaders for reports to building administrators.

In Pennsylvania, university personnel are part of content expert teams; in North Carolina, university personnel deliver professional development to turnaround administrators. In Missouri, university personnel provide research capabilities and statistical data analyses for their student achievement data and demographic information.

Kentucky identified its state's education associations as critical in the evolution of its system. Kentucky works with over 60 agencies to support school improvement. One example is the



Partnership for Successful Schools. This Partnership is a coalition of Kentucky businesses, educational groups, and government officials who believe that business has both a stake and role to play in helping children learn. The Kentucky Department of Education is a leading member of the Educational Leadership Development Collaborative, an association of educational organizations in Kentucky working together to improve student learning through leadership. The group's mission is "to advance student learning through a collaborative focus on leadership development."

### *8.2 Providing guidance for tutoring and extended-learning time*

The performance levels range from having no clearly defined procedure to assist districts/schools in providing tutoring and extended learning time for students to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies for assisting districts/school in providing tutoring and extended learning time.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Florida notes that it strongly believes in extending the instructional day, week, and year as a strategy to increase student achievement. Florida provides Supplemental Academic Intervention (SAI) funding based on the number of students needing an extended school year program. These funds are provided to all LEAs prior to the beginning of each school year allowing schools to establish academic intervention programs at the moment students begin to struggle with subject content. In addition to SAI funds, schools have access to school improvement and Title I funds to extend instructional time (Florida, 2012).

## **Part C: Implementation**

### **9. Removal of barriers to change and innovation**

#### *9.1 Removing barriers to change*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no process or efforts underway to identify and remove barriers to change to evidence that districts and schools have availed themselves of increased opportunities, and the process is constantly being evaluated.

Washington State has a process for districts to request waivers from specific state requirements. For example, a district may apply for less than

the full instructional year of 180 days after the community approves. The days are often used for professional development. Districts may request waivers from provisions in teacher contracts if a school improvement plan calls for that.

Tennessee has established a systematic review process to determine what state policies and other barriers hinder improvement efforts in districts and schools. The SEA has a Project Management Oversight Committee that provides the necessary coordination to conduct these reviews. Tennessee also provides for alternative certification routes.

Under the Mandate Waiver Program, Pennsylvania law allows public school districts, along with vocational-technical schools, Intermediate Units, and groups of schools to seek exemption from certain provisions of the Public School Code. Though regulations surrounding teacher contracts or the certification requirements for principals and teachers cannot be waived, applicants can seek waivers on other matters if they can demonstrate one of two things: 1) that a waiver would improve instructional programs, or 2) that a waiver would result in more efficient, effective, or economical operations.

#### *9.2 Creating options for new types of schools, including charter schools*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state taking no action to create options for new types of schools to evidence that there are a variety of new types of schools, and the SEA is constantly evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies.

In 1997, Pennsylvania state law authorized the creation of charter schools. In 2002, a law passed allowing cyber charter schools. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is the authorizer for all cyber charter schools, but local school boards must authorize brick and mortar charter schools. There is no cap on the number of charter schools that may be authorized in Pennsylvania.

Ohio allows charter schools to open in areas where schools are continually underperforming. However, if a charter school is classified as being in a state of "academic emergency" for three years, the charter has to close.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver application, Florida recognized the role that charter schools can play in operating a turnaround school or opening a new school within the feeder pattern of a chronically low achieving high school, so they created a separate strand within their new leadership preparation program (see indicator 4.1 for more information.) There will be leadership training for 20-25 current or aspiring charter school leaders in Florida's lowest achieving seven districts. The charter school strand will emphasize knowledge and behaviors that enable school leaders to promote successful teaching and learning, collaborative decision-making strategies, distributed leadership practices, a culture of collegiality in analysis and use of data and instructional technologies to guide school improvement activities. In addition, the strand will focus on the effective use of the flexibility and autonomy provided to charter schools (Florida, 2012).

*9.3 Expanding access to college level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses or other accelerated learning opportunities*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not developing policies and procedures to work with high schools and IHEs to expand access to college level courses to the SEA having an ongoing process to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies to work with high schools to expand access to college level courses or their prerequisites as well as other accelerated learning opportunities.

One proxy for expanding access for high school students to college level courses is to increase the number of high schools offering AP (Advanced Placement) tests. (AP has become a gold standard because any school can slap the label "honors" on any class but AP requires outside validation.) To offer official AP courses, teachers and principals must develop a curriculum that the College Board attests meets standards set by college faculty. Many AP teachers also undergo special training since AP involvement pushes schools and policymakers to talk about raising the "ceiling" thus elevating students beyond the bare minimum and pushing them toward college.

Six states now require high schools to offer AP: Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. An additional six

states require schools to offer either AP or other rigorous classes such as dual-enrollment or International Baccalaureate.

States encourage AP in other ways. Indiana gives schools bonuses for AP performance and factors AP into the state's accountability formula and performance goals. (Indiana has also established a statewide goal of 25% of graduates earning AP credit.) Florida pays bonuses to teachers for each student earning a qualifying score. Seven states require public colleges to award credit or placement based on AP exam scores. Students, meanwhile, usually get extra weighting on their GPAs and improved chances for admission to selective colleges (Pope, 2012).

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Tennessee noted that it intends to incentivize districts to work with their local IHEs to expand postsecondary credit offerings and is working to expand dual enrollment and dual credit. Secondary and post-secondary institutions have received grants to implement workable articulation, dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities (Tennessee, 2012).

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Florida noted that a \$50 bonus is earned by an AP teacher for each student in each AP course who receives a score of 3 or higher on the AP examination. An additional bonus of \$500 is earned by the AP teacher in a school designated with a performance grade category "D" or "F" who has at least one student scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam (Florida, 2012).

## **10. Incentives for change**

*10.1 Setting consequences for low student achievement and low graduation rates*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state using only the required sanctions for low performance and/or low graduation rates to evidence that consequences for low performance and graduation rates are evaluated and subsequently revised and improved.

Alabama's system of academic standards, assessments, and accountability is a single system that applies to all LEAs and all schools irrespective of their receipt of Title I funds. All LEAs and schools are subject to the state's definition of performance targets for achievement and graduation of all

students and each subgroup. Alabama's system of sanctions for schools identified for improvement adheres to the following principles:

Sanctions should result in increased learning opportunities for students:

- ✦ The state's primary response to schools that are not making academic progress should be intensive support to the instructional programs.
- ✦ Sanctions should establish a priority for state support to LEAs as they provide appropriate levels of school improvement guidance beginning in the first year of failure to make performance targets.
- ✦ The magnitude of sanctions should reflect the magnitude of the need for academic improvement.

Districts in Alabama with schools that have been on the list for needing improvement for four or more years must hire a school improvement specialist at the district level.

Ohio places a public spotlight on districts that show continued low performance in its federal and state blended accountability system. Ohio has five designations as well as a federally required special education IDEA annual determination based on a district's ability to implement IDEA.

### *10.2 Providing positive incentives for improvement*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no incentives provided for districts or schools for improved academic achievement to evidence that positive incentives provided by the state promoted an increased number of district/school programs and conditions for raising student achievement.

Alabama employs one or both of the following criteria to identify schools and LEAs for academic recognition and/or rewards:

- ✦ The school or district "significantly" closed the achievement gap between subgroups of students and made progress toward performance targets. "Significantly" is based on year-to-year analyses of test scores with input from the state's Accountability Advisory Committee.

- ✦ The school or district made its performance targets for two or more consecutive years.

Principals and teachers in Alabama who are highly effective and have been instrumental in closing the achievement gap and/or successfully making their performance targets will be identified to serve as peer consultants on State Support Teams.

A major incentive in Alabama is the selection of Torchbearer schools, recognizing high performance among Alabama's high poverty schools.

In Ohio, there is public recognition for schools that show improved results, especially "Schools of Promise" that have high achievement and high poverty and "Schools of Distinction" that have high achievement and a high percentage of special education students.

In Ohio, legislation provides teachers a \$20,000 signing bonus or loan forgiveness in return for a commitment to teach in a hard-to-staff school for at least five years. Ohio also has special assistance available to districts with high concentrations of poverty. One portion of this funding is provided to districts where the percentage of schools in academic distress is higher than the state average. A district can receive a 3.5% increase in funds if they reduce that percentage.

### *10.3 Publicly disclosing district and school performance*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state disclosing school and district performance data only as required to evidence that the reports and website are used and helpful to users. Refinements are made based on user feedback.

In Washington State, the school report card, accessible through the SEA website, gives disaggregated state assessment results by subgroup and content area. The state's data carousel process has been instrumental in school and district improvement planning. For example, when staff at one school wanted to see what schools with similar student populations were doing to help their students succeed, they were able to use the data filters on the website to identify schools that they later visited.

In Tennessee, education personnel interviewed indicated that the state provides a wealth of data



at their website that districts and schools can use to develop their improvement plans, including value-added data. One of the principals describe the value-added data as a “wonderful, wonderful tool from the state...they’re online, they’re accessible. The value-added really helps me as a principal to look at individual teacher growth.”

## 11. SRAS Communications

### *11.1 Communicating with clear and systematic communication paths within the SRAS*

The performance levels for this indicator range from no documented plan for a statewide communication system among those who provide support such as state education department employees, regional offices, universities, and other elements of the SRAS to evidence that the communications are being used to improve services and support. The state formatively evaluates the quality and accuracy of the communication to the field and service providers.

Alabama’s Accountability Roundtable’s mission is to provide a coordinated, seamless system of continual technical assistance and support to schools in the areas of curriculum, instruction, fiscal responsibility, management, and leadership. Technical assistance to schools is coordinated through this Accountability Roundtable and provided by the State Support Team. The Accountability Roundtable meets regularly with representatives from all departments. Table Talk is a bimonthly newsletter disseminated by the Roundtable to members of the State Department of Education.

In Washington State, there are nine regional Educational Service Districts (ESDs) across the state. They are funded through state, local district funds, and grants. The ESDs provide representation at each of the monthly meetings of the school improvement facilitators.

Kentucky has a Bureau Leadership Planning Team composed of the commissioner, the deputy, and all associates. They meet at least monthly to discuss, review, and evaluate the statewide system of support. Additionally, two key associate commissioners share the responsibility for day-to-day activities around statewide support. The SEA relies heavily on its approach of cross-agency decision making, maximizing limited resources, and shared ownership of initiatives

and responsibilities. The State Department of Education is a leading member of the Educational Leadership Development Collaborative, a unique association of educational organizations in Kentucky working together to improve student learning through leadership. The group’s mission is “to advance student learning through a collaborative focus on leadership development.” This group meets monthly to discuss current issues in education and address programs and strategies being used by their respective organizations to improve student learning.

### *11.2 Implementing clear and systematic communication paths between the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools as well as significant others*

The performance levels for this indicator range from having no documented procedures for communications between the state/SRAS and districts/schools to evidence that the communications are being used to improve services and support. The state formatively evaluates the quality and accuracy of its communication to the field and service providers.

Louisiana brought local superintendents and local school boards to the forefront of accountability by including them in discussions related to interventions in specific schools. “The movement toward increased state intervention would be more difficult if the LDE did not involve the local superintendent and their boards in preparation of possible interventions and sanctions.”

In Tennessee, the nine Field Service Centers assist schools and systems in school improvement planning and other functions. The Director of the Field Service Centers is based at the State Department of Education and reports to an Assistant Commissioner. This enhances the communications with the field.

In Washington State, local school personnel interviewed noted that a key resource for the schools and districts is the State Department of Education website, which they consult for data, professional development materials, grade level expectations, and other resources.

## 12. Technical assistance

### 12.1 *Delivering training to districts and schools in school improvement planning; implementation, and monitoring*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state not having a formal, documented process for training and assisting districts/schools in school improvement planning to having a plan fully implemented, the quality of services regularly evaluated, and evidence that delivered services have a positive impact on school improvement planning and implementation.

In the State of Washington, the School Improvement Planning Process Training Guide is written as a planning document that leads the principal and school community through a cycle of continuous improvement. The guide provides a variety of processes, resources, and graphic tools to engage all stakeholders to develop deeper, sustainable change in each school.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Systemwide Planning Process (TCSPP) provides the infrastructure for sharing and coordinating resources. All 136 districts submit their plans to be approved by a cadre of SEA staff. In each plan, local personnel develop priorities for improving schools using a template and share the process by which they arrived at their priorities.

Kentucky created a Comprehensive Improvement Planning system that streamlined district funding requests. While the system addresses compliance requirements, the planning document is more about strategies that the district will use to address its documented needs. Kentucky provides annual performance reports to help guide the district and school planning process. The Kentucky website provides multiple tools such as sample plans, the role of a school council, etc. Kentucky's *District Improvement Planning Roles and Responsibilities* training document begins by noting that the process is designed to include stakeholders (such as parents, staff, and administrators) in creating a plan that promotes and supports school improvement efforts. Critical steps for improvement planning are outlined in the document.

### 12.2 *Providing technical assistance to improve professional practice*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not having policies for how it provides technical assistance to districts/schools about how to improve professional practice to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating and improving its policies for providing technical assistance to improve professional practice.

In order to continuously assess the effectiveness of its system of recognition, accountability, and support as well as the efficacy of the strategies it recommends for schools, Oklahoma holds What Works in Oklahoma Schools institutes twice a year for all schools needing serious improvement. The presentations highlight strategies employed by Oklahoma schools that have demonstrated effectiveness, including strategies related to: instruction; school culture, leadership, motivation, and discipline; professional learning communities; and collection, analysis, and use of data (Corbett, 2011).

### 12.3 *Building parent involvement into school improvement*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no written plan to provide training on how to include parents in the school improvement process to the state having evidence that the districts/schools have implemented the strategies promoted in training, and the state refines the plan based on systematic evaluation of the effects of the training.

A principal interviewed in Kentucky noted that parental involvement and special education were two areas in which the administrators received especially beneficial assistance. They noted that the state has helped them quite a bit with parental involvement. "In the development of our district improvement plan, they were very picky about our parent involvement activity, and they have provided us support to structure communication with parents about holding high expectations for all students."

Kentucky's *District Improvement Planning Roles and Responsibilities* document begins by noting that the process is designed to include all stakeholders (parents, staff, and administrators) in creating a plan that promotes and supports school improvement efforts.

#### *12.4 Evaluating external partners*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no policies to conduct a rigorous review of external providers to support district/school improvement to the SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of its policies for reviewing external providers.

Corbett (2011) notes that Hawaii designed a restructuring framework to assist the state's growing number of persistently low-achieving schools. The Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) recognized the need for additional (and external) supports and expertise to turn around the schools and issued an RFP for vendors. Ten vendors responded, and a five-person committee evaluated the applications. The state selected three Lead Turnaround Partner-type organizations to manage the restructuring effort in 20 schools. In subsequent years, RFP responses were vetted by a committee of 25 professionals. The RFP and procurement process is run by HIDOE's Special Programs management section. This division significantly reduces the amount of work and time needed to select and contract with the external providers. The state monitors the partnerships regularly; one of the original providers was removed due to insufficient gains in schools.

#### *12.5 Implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA having no policies for assisting districts/schools in implementing content standards for post secondary experiences to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of its policies for assisting local educators to implementing content standards for helping to prepare students for post-secondary institutions.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Tennessee noted that it committed to raise standards and expectations for all students by adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Tennessee is using this adoption with aligned assessments and training as the stimulus to improve instruction with emphasis on rigorous content and critical thinking thereby subsequently improving student achievement.

The state's approach in implementing these new content standards is to develop a more effective model of professional development. It established a Leadership Cabinet (that will work in partnership with the SEA's division of Curriculum and Instruction) that will be comprised of 10 district leaders and will oversee the design of teacher trainings and communication across the state over the next 3 years. They will work with a body of Master Teachers, comprised of three teachers per grade level for each Field Service Center region. Together, the Leadership Cabinet and Master Teachers will develop and facilitate trainings for school-level coaches on CCSS. In addition, Tennessee will provide video and online modules specific to each grade level and content area for review by teachers and parents (Tennessee, 2012).

### **13. Dissemination of knowledge**

#### *13.1 Disseminating knowledge and/or research based practices*

The performance levels for this indicator range from not having a process at the state level for making products available to help districts and schools with school improvement to evidence that the SEA evaluates the use by districts/schools of the knowledge disseminated by the state to improve student achievement.

In Alabama, several newsletters are disseminated on school improvement. Regional in-service centers based in universities publish newsletters. Regional school improvement coaches develop and disseminate newsletters to districts within their regions, providing notification of current training opportunities and plans for future training. Professional development is a key area of state support, delivered via intermediate centers, peer mentors, online training, and state conferences. The local administrators describe the professional development as being ongoing, of high quality, and tailored to their specific needs.

The Washington SEA developed a statewide math and science instructional coaching program, including a coach development institute, coaching seminars, and coaching activities within schools. Evaluation findings showed that the role, support, and responsiveness of the SEA have consistently received high marks; 90% of staff indicated that professional development provided by



the state resulted in changes in their classroom instruction. In addition, Washington produces resource guides to assist the external facilitators and local staff. *The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* (2007) is a research-based framework for school improvement in Washington. Each of the studies that serve as the basis for this guide was analyzed to determine which characteristics were found most often among high-performing schools.

Kentucky's plans for the statewide longitudinal data system includes a Knowledge Management Portal that will provide a wealth of targeted instructional resources, including standards-based units of study, lesson plans, curriculum maps, assessments, and other educational resources. The portal will offer collaborative workspace that teachers can use to share best practices, develop test items, and expand their professional skills.

### *13.2 Producing products and resources to help districts and schools improve*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no products to help districts and schools with school improvement to having evidence that the districts and schools are using the available products and find them to be beneficial. To receive the highest rating, the state must also evaluate and modify those products. The evaluation also guides the state in its search for additional relevant resources.

In the State of Washington, a key resource for schools and districts is the State Department of Education website where they provide data, professional development materials, grade-level expectations, information from the *Nine Characteristics of Effective Schools*, and the *School System Improvement Resource Guide*, which provides a systematic framework for those embarking upon school and district improvement. Educators interviewed singled out curriculum, increasing parental involvement, and assistance in serving ELLs as areas in which the state has provided especially helpful materials and training.

## **14. Monitoring, program audits, and diagnostic site reviews**

### *14.1 Conducting state monitoring, program audits, and diagnostic site reviews*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no system in place to conduct program audits in schools and districts to evidence that the SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies for monitoring, conducting program audits, and providing diagnostic site reviews.

Tennessee has relied on its 2007 publication, *What is a Good School Appraisal Guide and Rubric*, as the focus of its work with districts on curriculum, instruction, organization, and assessments (both formative and summative). This document provides a consistent message to local staff that "... teams of educators visit schools across Tennessee to determine if teachers are really teaching and if all students are really learning to the best of their potential." The site visits employ a set of criteria for effective schools and a connected set of standards and measurement statements with matched rubrics. The site visits result in an individual school profile of strength and areas of planning needs.

Washington State's School and District Improvement Division has implemented a School Performance Review (ED Audit) system. School performance reviews are conducted with all schools that have volunteered to receive School Improvement Assistance Program services. ED Audit teams, consisting of six to ten professionals, spend four to five days on-site looking at curriculum and instruction through the lens of the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* and alignment with the research on high-performing districts. Data sources that support the School Performance Review include classroom visits and observations, interviews, focus groups, and other documentation. The School Performance Review final report is one component of a data portfolio that staffs consider and discuss for data-driven decisions and the revision of the school improvement plan. Within two weeks of the visit, the School Performance Review team leader presents the report to the full staff; the school is responsible for sharing the report with their community for input. The final report becomes one part of the school improvement process.

Montana staff adapted the Kentucky Department of Education's model to develop its statewide system of support. Priority schools all undergo a scholastic review to assess three areas: academic performance, environment, and efficiency. The purpose of the review is to analyze the strengths and limitations of the school's instructional and organizational effectiveness. The findings are used to make specific recommendations to improve teaching and learning.

### *14.2 Documenting the status of districts/schools*

The performance levels for this indicator range from districts/schools needing substantial improvement in student achievement and/or graduation rates have been identified, but it is not clear for how long or the rationale for placement to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies for identifying districts/school and reporting results of interventions and supports.

Florida, in its 2012 flexibility waiver request, documents its process for displaying the number of schools needing assistance as well the evaluation results illustrating the effectiveness of its intervention policies (Florida, 2012).

### *14.3 Monitoring the progress of individual districts/schools*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the state having no process in place to formatively evaluate the progress of districts/schools on ESEA sanctions lists to using formative evaluation data, monitoring the progress of districts/schools, suggesting modifications in local staff practices, and providing evidence that such modifications have been implemented by districts/schools.

In Delaware, the application, evaluation, and monitoring systems provide the infrastructure to support the SRAS. Delaware has revised the District and School Improvement Plans (now District and School Success Plans) so that they articulate the complete strategic plan for the agency—one plan that encompasses all students.

The Ohio Department of Education assigns State Diagnostic Teams (SDT) to review districts in need of the most support. They conduct thorough examinations of districts and their schools including, among other things, walk-through

observations and focus groups, and then report their findings. School Support Team (SST) members make an effort to attend review meetings between local staff and the SDTs, serve as a liaison between the local staff and the SDT, and help the districts design action plans that address the weaknesses identified in the SDT's reports. With regard to monitoring progress, the SSTs measure impact after training and follow up with the districts to see what changes in practice have taken place and the effects of those changes.

Oregon's SRAS facilitators meet regularly with the school improvement staff and monitor evidence of implementation to determine where additional assistance may be needed.

## **Part D: Outcomes for Schools Served by the System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

### **15. Outcomes/results**

#### *15.1 Establishing student achievement performance targets*

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not establishing performance targets nor criteria on how to use the assessment results to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies relative to setting high performance targets and criteria to identify the progress of all its schools.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Tennessee stated that it had set rigorous proficiency goals to measure its progress as a state and used those goals to set district performance targets. "These goals are our line in the sand. They represent significant, steady growth in student achievement that would change Tennessee's educational trajectory as a state. We have proposed increasing our reading and math proficiency rates by around 20% over a five year arc." Tennessee is calling upon each district and school to grow from its current starting point, continuously improving each year (Tennessee, 2012).

#### *15.2 Addressing subgroup achievement gaps*

The cells in this indicator range from the SEA not having a process for districts/schools to use their achievement gap data as part of their improvement strategies to the SEA being able to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and procedures in

assisting districts and schools to implement strategies to reduce subgroup achievement gaps.

Kentucky has a statewide network of local District Assessment Coordinators as well as a separate group of District Achievement Gap Coordinators (DAGCs)—five highly effective educators assigned to work in selected regions of the state to eliminate achievement gaps. The DAGCs collaboratively develop individual work plans for each assigned district based on the results of the district's Scholastic Audit. In addition, these DAGCs serve as members of five-person teams that assist districts identified as needing serious assistance and who request Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams. Receiving help from these teams is one of the three options the state has made available to districts that have failed to meet adequate yearly progress for four years.

The Office of Achievement Gap Elimination (AGE) was established by the Tennessee legislature in 2007. AGE consists of an urban specialist and several consultants, all employed by the SEA. AGE consultants provide assistance to Tennessee's High Priority School Improvement schools. The focus of this office is to close achievement gaps for the following subgroups: students with disabilities; economically disadvantaged; limited English proficient; African American males; other subgroups as appropriate.

In addition, AGE consultants are assigned to Title I schools in their first year of improvement to provide them with direct technical assistance on the development and implementation of their improvement plans. To begin this process, AGE consultants partner with trained distinguished educators to conduct thorough audits of the schools using the practitioner guide: *What is a good school?* From the results of these audits, the AGE consultants guide the schools through the development of their Title I school improvement plans, including the targeting of resources available through the Title I school improvement grant funds.

#### 15.3 Establishing student attendance performance targets

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not having established attendance performance targets for districts/schools to the

SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies for setting attendance targets.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Florida lists student attendance as a key factor to be addressed when the regional Differentiated Accountability instructional coaching staff makes site visits to schools.

#### 15.4 Establishing graduation rate performance targets

The performance levels for this indicator range from the SEA not having established graduation performance targets to the SEA having an ongoing process for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies for setting high graduation targets and showing evidence that it reliably and validly measures student graduation results.

Tennessee notes in its 2012 flexibility waiver that it has set an AMO (Annual Measurable Objective) for graduation for all students (90% by 2014-15) as well as AMOs for sub-groups. Their overall goal is for all subgroups of students to reach a graduation rate of 90% over time. Since presently different sub-groups of students are graduating at different rates, the SEA has set differentiated targets through 2018-19.

In its 2012 flexibility waiver request, Florida noted that high schools with graduation rates calculated to be the lowest in the state or subgroup graduation rates that are significantly lower than the overall school, district, or state rate will be reported to their regional centers, and the school and district will be required to include specific strategies in their district/school improvement plans to increase the graduation rates.

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## Illustrating the Scoring System

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### SRAS Rubric Exemplars

(Mostly from states' open-ended questionnaire responses)

#### Part A: SRAS Plan and Design

1	Specified comprehensive plan for SRAS	
1.1	Designing and organizing an SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS)	<p>The state education agency (SEA) has been working to advance an agenda that it outlined in a key planning document that was released nine months ago, titled <i>Forward Thinking</i>. This plan articulates a mission, goals, and timelines for SEA staff to provide better service to the field in support of enhanced student results. To disseminate this message, the Commissioner of Education visited 85 of 178 districts. In these visits, he worked with superintendents one-on-one to explain how this change would help them.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. Although the planning document was viewed as a good beginning toward creating a fully documented SRAS system, still lacking is documentation (to achieve Level III) of a document, such as an operations manual, that more explicitly describes the roles and responsibilities of offices within and external to the SEA as well as some evidence that SEA staff are implementing actions based on this new plan.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SRAS operations manual</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organizational chart for SRAS functions</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Role descriptions of key SRAS staff</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence of new SEA actions based on the SRAS plan</li> </ul>



1	Specified comprehensive plan for SRAS	
1.2	Engaging stakeholders to solicit input on the development and improvement of the SRAS	<p>In order to be consistent in its proposals, the state established both a process and a list of important stakeholders to include in the development of both proposals as well as state program efforts, such as its SRAS. The process includes mailings, establishment of a website, regional meetings and a host of presentations at media gatherings. The personnel include K-12 educators, IHE representatives, Civil Rights groups, representatives from advocacy organizations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. As a matter of policy, the state summarizes the major supporting statements as well as objections. The state then acknowledges what changes it has made because of comments by stakeholders as well as which ones it has not adopted and for what reasons.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level IV</b> on this indicator. The state has taken involvement of stakeholders seriously and has evidence to prove it.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of organizations included in the dissemination</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of presentations and the audiences</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document noting what changes have been made as a result of input by stakeholders</li> </ul>
1.3	Managing the SRAS	<p>To ensure that resources are leveraged in a way that aligns with the new mission of increased service to the field, the Commissioner authorized a study (conducted by an external organization) that has identified how SEA resources can better align with priorities. Based on that study, SEA staff devised a written plan for coordinating services. Last fall, SEA staff, representing several federal and state programs, began using the plan to identify high-priority service areas (e.g., early literacy) identified as most in need of higher efficiency in resource allocation.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> based on its development and implementation of a written plan for coordinating resources. To achieve Level IV, a more systematic and full implementation of the plan, with evidence of positive outcomes in achieving greater efficiency, would be needed.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written plan for oversight and coordination of resources</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting agendas and other records of communications (with districts/schools)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/school data demonstrating implementation of state plan</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey data from districts/schools regarding use of plan, outcomes, etc.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statewide or case specific data demonstrating reduction of duplicated services, greater efficiency in services, cost savings, etc.</li> </ul>



1	Specified comprehensive plan for SRAS	
1.4	Staffing the SRAS	<p>The SEA has established criteria for the selection and hiring of personnel for its SRAS. It has carefully matched the abilities of staff with the responsibilities defined in its operations manual. In addition, training programs have been developed and implemented to assure local education personnel that SRAS staff has the knowledge and skills to provide technical assistance.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> because it has not yet established an evaluation process to see if local personnel who are receiving help from SRAS personnel have an ongoing opportunity to evaluate these individuals. As local needs change, the question is whether the SRAS staff will receive updated training and materials.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ List of criteria for SRAS staff selection</li> <li>☑ Operations manual with specific job responsibilities</li> <li>☑ Ongoing survey data from school personnel evaluating the quality of the technical assistance they receive from SRAS staff</li> </ul>
1.5	Integrating the SRAS within the SEA	<p>The state has a written plan demonstrating how various programs within the SEA can work together to more efficiently provide services to districts. Because of a recent reduction in the number of employees, it has become imperative that the SRAS provide services more efficiently. To do this, staff from various departments were brought together to write a plan for joint sharing of data, monitoring responsibilities, and the development of training programs.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> for this indicator since the results of the joint planning had not yet been implemented. There were only examples of how the cooperative efforts would work.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ The written plan showing how cooperative efforts would take place and a schedule documenting when this would begin</li> <li>☑ A plan documenting how the state would notify local personnel of the proposed changes</li> <li>☑ An evaluation plan to document whether the changes are working internally and whether local personnel are receptive to the changes</li> </ul>

1	Specified comprehensive plan for SRAS	
1.6	Differentiating support to districts and schools	<p>The state has developed a set of criteria that prioritizes districts/schools according to need. Student achievement is given the highest weighting, but other factors include graduation rates, student mobility, and teacher qualifications. Rather than developing a single, quantitative index, the state uses these data to categorize schools and districts into four “need” categories (critical, high, moderate, and low). Based on an analysis of need and services already rendered, support is tailored to meet the unique needs of each high-priority school based on the school’s comprehensive needs assessment and school improvement plan.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level IV</b>. Evidence showing that support was being implemented differentially according to school and district needs and that results are evaluated was judged to meet the criteria for the highest performance level on this indicator.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan documenting criteria for differentiating support</li> <li>☑ Data showing differentiation of districts/schools (e.g., tiered listings of status by needs)</li> <li>☑ Data describing the provision of differentiated services to districts/schools in relation to specific criteria (e.g., priority level, percentage of disadvantaged students, etc.)</li> <li>☑ Evaluation reports documenting the changes that have occurred as a result of the support provided by the SRAS</li> </ul>
1.7	Improvement planning and implementation process for districts and schools	<p>The state has developed a document, <i>Improvement Planning for Raising Achievement</i> for use by districts/schools. The document essentially provides a checklist of key areas to target, such as conducting a needs assessment, using data to drive improvement, recruiting/hiring highly effective teachers, selecting evidence-based programs, etc. The document is posted on the SEA’s SRAS website, and all districts and schools are encouraged to use it.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b>. Although the state has a clearly defined and documented planning process for districts/schools, it still needs to develop and begin an implementation program (including training and materials) to reach Level III and show evidence of schools’ and districts’ participation to achieve Level IV.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Documented district and school improvement planning processes</li> <li>☑ Training materials/tools for developing improvement plans</li> <li>☑ Agendas, handouts, and participation lists for training sessions</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools supporting usage of the process</li> <li>☑ District/school data demonstrating systematic improvement planning (e.g., a sampling of actual district and school improvement plans, identified reform interventions, etc., which could be accomplished more easily if the state had an electronic planning system such as Indistar®)</li> <li>☑ Plan for monitoring districts’ and schools’ implementation of their improvement plans</li> </ul>

1	Specified comprehensive plan for SRAS	
1.8	Providing differentiated services and resources to support district and school improvement	<p>The state has a plan to provide different levels of assistance and resources to support district and school improvement. A formula has been developed to document the depth of services necessary to help the most needy districts/schools. The SRAS is organized to focus on these priority districts/schools while still providing important resources to districts/schools that have particular needs, such as improving the performance of Hispanic students in middle school math.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> because it did not have an evaluation plan to document that it was making the right decisions in providing certain districts with the most comprehensive services.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ List of districts/schools receiving the most comprehensive services as well as documentation of what resources they have receive for what period of time</li> <li>☑ Survey results from all the districts/schools receiving differentiated services to ascertain if they believe the right match has been made between services and their needs (with specific examples given)</li> </ul>
1.9	Intervening in districts and schools that repeatedly do not meet targets for student achievement and graduation rates	<p>SEA has a written plan and authority for intervening with the lowest-performing schools as well as high schools with low graduation rates. Two critical elements of the plan are the (a) systematic tracking of school needs for SRAS and services received, and (b) use of school improvement consultants to help schools conduct needs assessments and implement appropriate “turnaround” interventions. In addition, the SEA has brought local superintendents and local school boards to the forefront of accountability by including them in discussions related to interventions in specific schools.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> based on its creation and implementation of a systematic plan. The involvement of the superintendents was viewed as a positive step toward putting in place a formal corrective action process and an evaluation (needed for Level IV).</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written policy, plan, and specific criteria for intervening in low-performing districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Description of services provided to identified sites by school improvement teams</li> <li>☑ Agendas/descriptions of meetings with “turnaround” district/school leaders</li> <li>☑ Communications/records regarding corrective actions planned with targeted sites</li> <li>☑ Documentation of actions/interventions taken with each district/school and subsequent results</li> </ul>

2	Defined evidence-based programs/interventions for all students & subgroups	
2.1	Helping schools and districts better serve students with disabilities	<p>To assist schools and districts in raising the achievement of students with disabilities, SEA uses an assessment tool, the LRE Assessment, in its SRAS to increase regional and LEA capacity to serve special education students. It provides additional help on an as-needed basis via site visits, consultants, and workshops.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as still operating at <b>Level I</b> due to the absence of a formal, documented plan for assisting districts/schools in serving special needs students. Once a plan is developed, the rating could rise to Level III due to the ongoing implementation of the service activities described.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for assisting districts/schools failing to meet targets for students with disabilities</li> <li>☑ Description of actual services provided in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ Communications/records showing efforts to provide assistance to districts/schools in serving students with disabilities</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools regarding usefulness of the state assistance provided and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

2	Defined evidence-based programs/interventions for all students & subgroups	
2.2	Coordinating services for students with disabilities across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication	<p>The SEA has held several meetings to engage the various departments in discussing ways of coordinating work efforts to support the needs of districts. Special education personnel are members of the School Improvement Roundtable, which coordinates the inter-departmental school improvement efforts, and helped to write the formal state plan for integrating special education services to districts. As part of the plan, special education specialists participate in all LEA Resource Team District visitations. The special education personnel and the Learning Resources Services in the regions collaborate with regional support teams to provide special education intervention and improvement services to schools.</p> <p>The special education personnel work with the school improvement personnel by coordinating special education monitoring with System Performance Reviews and share monitoring data with the Assessment of Performance on School Standards analysis teams.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as approaching <b>Level IV</b>, but still operating at <b>Level III</b>. Although there is a documented plan and many coordination activities are taking place, the review team did not see evidence indicating how successful this coordination has been. No criteria to judge success have been developed.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for integrating district/school assistance policies for serving students with disabilities</li> <li>☑ Description of services provided by special education and other SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ Data collection/monitoring tools used in working with schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Reports, organizational charts, or program descriptions showing increased coordination of services for students with disabilities</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools corroborating increased quality/efficiency of state services and reduced redundancy in data collection and reporting, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

2	Defined evidence-based programs/interventions for all students & subgroups	
2.3	Helping schools and districts better serve English language learners	<p>In accord with the documented plan, the state SRAS and the Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) operate within the Accountability and Targeted Assistance (ATA) cluster. This year, OLA staff actively participated in SRAS initiatives in all seven identified districts. In addition, ELL education facilitators/specialists participate in all LEA Resource Team District visitations. The third major part of the plan implemented last year was usage of an assessment tool by the SRAS to increase regional and LEA capacity to serve English language learners.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state at <b>Level IV</b>. Implementation of the primary components of the overall plan for this indicator was judged to be reasonably complete and an evaluation system had begun.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for assisting districts/schools failing to meet targets for English language learners</li> <li>☑ Description of services provided by ELL education facilitators or other SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ Communications/records showing meetings, site visitations, and other activities to help districts/schools meet ELL targets</li> <li>☑ Data collection/monitoring tools used in working with schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools regarding the effectiveness of state assistance provided, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>



2	Defined evidence-based programs/interventions for all students & subgroups	
2.4	Coordinating services for English language learners across SEA departments and programs to maximize service and reduce duplication	<p>SEA has worked with the directors of the regional centers to help enact new legislation in the state to better serve English language learners. This activity is increasing the capacity of regional centers to support improvement efforts in small and rural districts. The department partners with the regional centers to provide enhanced regional trainings in identified areas of need. As an example, one pilot partnership focuses on the Native American student population. It ensures targeted interventions for preschool and kindergarten students. The pilot brings together services from English language acquisition, special education, and early childhood units. SEA is developing a plan to formalize these and other services.</p> <p>The reviewers viewed the state as active and achieving some success in coordinating ELL services. However, it assigned a rating of <b>Level I</b> on this indicator due to the absence of a formal plan (which is presently in preparation). Without such a plan, the desired coordinating activities would not be clearly defined, thereby decreasing potential for accountability and sustainability.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for integrating district/school assistance policies to serve English language learners</li> <li>☑ Description of services provided by ELL staff or other SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ Reports, organizational charts, or program descriptions showing increased coordination of services for ELL students</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools corroborating increased quality and efficiency of state services and reduced redundancy in data collection and reporting, with one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

3	Plan for evaluation	
3.1	Documenting district/school activities provided through SRAS	<p>The SEA measures each participating district's and school's progress against 18 identified performance targets. A data "dashboard" is used to periodically check progress on each of the goals and can be seen on the SEA's SRAS website. There are data points that are associated with each of the SRAS goals. An example of an indicator would be "number of schools in the district reducing the achievement gap among subgroups (see Indicator 15.2). Increasing the high school graduation rate of Native Americans is another example of a performance target. The displays on the SEA website show the status of each individual school in detail as well as supportive activities provided by the SRAS. The SEA is also currently initiating an electronic school improvement management system that will document progress on the performance targets at a glance and will show the types of interventions provided for each school. These data will be used to evaluate the patterns of effectiveness of certain types of supportive activities provided for school staff by the SEA's Division of School and Leader Quality as well as the school improvement teams it supports.</p> <p>The reviewers classified the state as operating at <b>Level IV</b> on this indicator. Based on the evidence, the state clearly was judged as having a fully operational system for documenting work with districts and schools.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written plan describing the process for documenting SRAS work with schools and districts</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A report or formal description of the actual SRAS work performed</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data showing school and district outcomes in relation to SRAS services</li> </ul>

3	Plan for evaluation	
3.2	Evaluating the SRAS	<p>The SEA has a documented plan for surveying all districts and schools served by SRAS. To date, it has administered an “Annual Stakeholder Survey” to attendees at all SRAS state and regional meetings. In addition, researchers at a local university recently completed a mixed methods study of perceptions about SRAS interventions by three urban and three rural districts that received services over the last two years.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as achieving <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. No criteria or standards to judge success have been developed to be used to judge any collected data. Although a formal plan has been developed, the evaluation work thus far has been informal (relying on “convenience samples” of those attending meetings) rather than systematically implementing the evaluation plan. The latter activity would elevate the performance to Level III, whereas actual usage of the data to improve services would be needed to achieve Level IV.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for collecting data on districts’ and schools’ perceptions of SRAS services</li> <li>☑ Copies of the survey(s), interviews, or other instruments administered</li> <li>☑ A description of data collection activities and schedules</li> <li>☑ A list of the criteria to be used to judge the success of the SRAS</li> <li>☑ A report on the findings from any studies done to judge what difference the SRAS has made with regard to effecting increases in districts/schools making performance targets</li> <li>☑ Documents, reports, or other evidence that the perception data has been used for improving the SRAS</li> </ul>

3	Plan for evaluation	
3.3	Evaluating the SEA's assessment program	<p>Given the use of revised content standards, an SEA intends to hire external consultants to measure the alignment of the state tests with these new content standards. The consultants will also be asked to evaluate the extended content standards developed for a percentage of the students with disabilities subgroup to see if they align with these standards. They will look at technical measures including reliability. Finally, these consultants will evaluate the effectiveness of the training prior to the test as well as the materials distributed to schools and parents to explain the results and how they can be used for student and school improvement.</p> <p>The reviewers rated this SEA as operating at <b>Level I</b> on this indicator. Although the state is planning to conduct a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation using an external vendor, they are presently still in the "building" phase with regard to both the evaluation plan and its implementation.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written evaluation plan to determine the effectiveness of SEA assessment program</li> <li>☑ Copies of the data collection instruments and analysis plans</li> <li>☑ A description of data collection activities, schedules, and the criteria that will be used to make judgments</li> <li>☑ A report on the findings from the study</li> <li>☑ Documents, reports, or other evidence that the evaluation results have been used for improving SRAS (new programs or policies, a SRAS improvement plan, etc.)</li> </ul>

## Part B: Resources

4	Staff	
4.1	Enhancing the supply of teachers and leadership personnel skilled in school improvement strategies	<p>According to the state's plan, the SEA regularly delivers professional development to turnaround school administrators and superintendents in districts/schools it has identified as high priority. For increasing the supply of skilled teachers and principals, the SEA plan also identifies strategies for helping institutions of higher education (IHEs) to prepare teachers and administrators more effectively. In addition, high-need schools are identified for the Teacher Quality and Equity Action Plan for Title IIA. These schools are offered technical assistance and funding to increase the percentage of highly effective teachers and decrease the percentage of inexperienced teachers. The state disseminates information on incentives offered by districts via its website and other publications. Last year, the state increased its supply of skilled teachers and administrators by 15% and 20%, respectively.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level IV</b> on this indicator. Specifically, the state has a documented plan, appears to be implementing it using multiple strategies (incentives, training, and information), and has implemented an evaluation to document the increase in its supply of highly effective teachers and administrators over the previous year.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for increasing the supply of teachers and administrators skilled in school improvement</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used</li> <li>☑ Description of recruitment or outreach activities provided by SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ District/school data showing increased supplies of skilled teachers or administrators (e.g., % working in low-performing schools compared to prior years)</li> </ul>



4	Staff
4.2	<p>Providing incentives and strategies for addressing a more equitable distribution of well qualified and effective teachers within and across districts</p> <p>The state annually collects and reports the percentage of teachers by years of experience for both high- and low-poverty districts. It also annually reports the percentage of core academic subjects taught by teachers considered not highly effective according to the SEA's teacher evaluation system.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level I</b> because there was no plan to respond to the findings of its annual data collections.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for encouraging highly effective teachers to teach in low-performing schools</li> <li>☑ Criteria for identifying highly effective teachers</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used to encourage a more equitable demonstration</li> <li>☑ Description of recruitment or outreach activities provided by SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ Data indicating that more equitable distributions have been achieved state-wide (e.g., percentage of highly effective faculty in identified schools compared to higher-performing schools; percentage of highly effective faculty working in different regions, etc.)</li> </ul>
4.3	<p>Recruiting and retaining well-qualified and effective teachers</p> <p>This state believes that school improvement cannot occur in many targeted districts and schools without a strong induction and mentoring program coupled with a retention program that includes financial incentives and opportunities for teacher leadership. The state has a written plan that was the foundation for legislation supporting a beginning teacher mentoring program, which will be implemented next year. Regional centers have begun training programs to assist teachers in becoming school leaders without necessarily becoming principals.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> because they had a written plan and were working concurrently at several levels to implement their plan.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for enhancing recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used</li> <li>☑ Description of recruitment or outreach activities provided by SEA personnel in accord with the written plan</li> <li>☑ District/school data showing improved recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers, including one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

4	Staff
4.4	<p data-bbox="228 226 505 363">Recruiting and retaining effective district and school leadership personnel</p> <p data-bbox="521 226 1463 541">After developing a plan of action, this state worked with teams from all of the universities that prepare school leaders to begin building a framework based on factors research has indicated are associated with effective school leaders. The SEA told the university teams, “We’re going to work with you to analyze this information, and then help you restructure your leadership training programs. Your task then is to go back and complete the redesign of your courses and your programs so that it meets this framework and gets at the critical success factors.” The program at IHEs has now been implemented for three years.</p> <p data-bbox="521 554 1463 730">The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> since there was an implemented plan to upgrade administrator training, and the state was working with higher education personnel from all pertinent universities. Until an evaluation plan has been proposed, the SEA cannot be rated at a IV level.</p> <p data-bbox="521 743 1081 779"><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul data-bbox="553 791 1463 1108" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ An SEA written plan for enhancing recruitment and retention of highly effective administrators</li> <li>☑ Criteria for identifying “highly effective” administrators</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used (e.g., partnerships with higher education; new professional development programs)</li> <li>☑ Description of recruitment or outreach strategies provided by SEA personnel for local personnel to utilize</li> <li>☑ District/school data showing improved recruitment and retention of highly effective administrators, including one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
4.5	<p data-bbox="228 1119 505 1367">Engaging Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to better prepare new teachers and leadership personnel</p> <p data-bbox="521 1119 1463 1331">The SEA has met continuously with representatives from IHEs over the last two years to develop a joint plan to share information with college professors about curriculum standards, aligned state assessments, effective professional practice, and a host of issues that should better prepare new teachers and leadership personnel. IHE leadership has endorsed the process to share this information</p> <p data-bbox="521 1344 1463 1451">The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> because no mechanism was established to assure that the professors would actually implement the agreement in their classrooms.</p> <p data-bbox="521 1463 1081 1499"><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul data-bbox="553 1512 1463 1713" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Copy of the actual agreement between the SEA and the IHEs</li> <li>☑ Survey information from superintendents and principals noting whether recent graduates were knowledgeable about the state standards, curricula, state assessments and effective professional practice</li> <li>☑ Survey information from college instructors about their inclusion of information on state issues as requested by the SEA</li> </ul>

<b>4</b>	<b>Staff</b>	
4.6	Providing guidelines for the evaluation of teachers and principals	<p>The SEA worked with the legislature and the governor's office to establish the principles for the evaluation of teachers and principals. It then met with representatives from teacher unions and the Principals' Association to solicit their advice. Subsequently, the SEA held training programs to explain the guidelines and to provide suggestions for valid and reliable data collection.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> because the training seemed insufficient for the actual implementation of an evaluation of teachers and principals.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> List of stakeholders involved in the development of the guidelines</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training materials used as well as an evaluation of the training materials by stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Funding</b>	
5.1	Coordinating state and federal funding streams and programs	<p>The SEA has developed a written plan to pool money from several federal and state funding sources to support school improvement. The rationale was to avoid duplicating expenditures for overlapping programs and interventions. Pooling technology funds enabled the SEA to obtain more bandwidth, thereby making the site where schools enter their improvement plans run faster and more reliably.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. Consideration was given to the state's development of a written plan and its initial attempts to integrate funding sources in a particular area. Expansion of the integration to include other programs and funding sources and actually beginning to implement these coordination efforts would elevate the rating to Level III.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written plan to efficiently coordinate school improvement programs with different funding sources</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reports or communications reflecting efforts to integrate programs</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reports or program descriptions showing successful integration efforts</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data reflecting savings in costs and resources (staff and materials) resulting from increased coordination of programs and improved services to schools and districts, including specific examples</li> </ul>

5	Funding	
5.2	Assisting districts in assessing their use of financial resources to fund improvement efforts	<p>The state's written plan consists of two major areas of support. The first is a call-in consulting program by the SEA for helping districts and schools align financial resources with priority improvement needs. The second component consists of regular visits by SEA business staff to schools repeatedly not making achievement and/or graduation performance targets. The business staff works with school personnel to ensure that discretionary expenditures align with needs. Both of these components are regularly implemented as part of the comprehensive SRAS plan, including surveys of local superintendents about the effectiveness of this approach.</p> <p>The reviewers assigned the state the highest rating—<b>Level IV</b>—on this indicator. The critical accomplishment for reaching this level was implementing the district/school visitations by budget staff and an evaluation design which includes surveys of local superintendents.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for helping schools and districts assess their financial resources for school improvement</li> <li>☑ Documents, reports, Internet postings, or other types of written guidance for analyzing budgets</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts describing the supports in place (e.g., call-in service or site visits by SEA budget staff)</li> <li>☑ Records of usage of the support services by schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools corroborating the availability and value of the services, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
6	Data analysis and use	
6.1	Providing a comprehensive SEA data system	<p>The SEA has formed a "Study Committee" consisting of external and internal experts in data systems and user representatives (district and school administrators). The committee has completed a plan to significantly expand the current data system which lacks student identifiers consistent with those used by districts to track student progress and status. The completed system will provide comprehensive, user-friendly data to facilitate assessments of school and district progress on multiple indicators.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as performing at <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. While the existing data system meets minimum requirements, the SEA is searching for funds to implement an expanded system that should more effectively support district/school improvement efforts.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A description of the present integrated data system, verifying its usefulness and efficiency (lack of redundancy)</li> <li>☑ Sample reports (or printouts) from the proposed data system illustrating outputs on a variety of indicators</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools corroborating the usefulness of the proposed expanded state data system</li> </ul>

6	Data analysis and use	
6.2	Using assessment data	<p>An SRAS committee is charged with completing the yearly review of the effectiveness of its training program as well as how local personnel are using SEA assessment data as an element in its improvement planning. The review by regular school personnel as well as teachers of students with disabilities and ELL teachers consists of using both quantitative survey data as well as qualitative results from interviews and observations to identify successes and problems.</p> <p>The reviewers evaluated the state's activities for this indicator as meeting <b>Level III</b> requirements. The state was viewed as implementing its formal process, but not yet fully documenting (as required for Level IV) how it uses the assessment system as a tool in the development of further SRAS resources for helping districts/schools.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for how local educators could use state assessment results to supplement their own assessment findings</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used by the SEA to provide training for local educators with different needs for information, especially trend data for subgroups of students</li> <li>☑ Description of resources (training, consulting) provided to schools and districts on the uses of the SEA assessment system for improvement planning</li> <li>☑ An evaluation plan with criteria for making judgments about the effectiveness of current SEA assessment policies and procedures for helping districts and schools understand and use assessment data in their improvement planning</li> </ul>



7	Support teams and school improvement consultants	
7.1	Matching districts/schools with support teams and school improvement consultants	<p>The SEA has formed five teams of school improvement consultants to work with identified schools that are most in need of improvement. The teams presently operate on an informal system, whereby the SRAS office identifies schools or districts viewed as “high priority” on the basis of test scores, district or principal requests, or other data. Approximately three-fourths of the low-performing districts/schools are being served by school improvement consultants in some capacity.</p> <p>The reviewers evaluated the state as operating at <b>Level I</b> on this indicator. Although consultants and teams have been serving the majority of the low-performing districts/schools, a formal plan for matching them to sites and structuring their work is still lacking. Thus, services are mainly determined and executed informally across the state.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for (a) recruiting/screening improvement consultants and support teams, and (b) a process for systematically matching schools and districts with these consultants and support teams</li> <li>☑ Documents/artifacts reflecting the strategies used by the SRAS as it forms support teams, matches improvement consultants with districts/schools, and prioritizes who receives services first</li> <li>☑ Data reflecting the numbers/percentages of low-performing priority schools and districts are served by improvement consultants/support teams</li> <li>☑ School or district data describing specific improvement strategies being used by these improvement consultants/support teams</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools corroborating the usefulness of the services provided, indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

7	Support teams and school improvement consultants	
7.2	Training, supervising, and evaluating support teams and district/school improvement consultants	<p>As required by the state plan, all school improvement consultants must participate in three levels of training/professional development: (a) a one-week summer session, (b) a two-day refresher in early fall, and (c) ongoing coaching mentoring during the consultant's first year. The "School Improvement Team Academy," which delivers the training, conducts regular formative evaluations of the activities and services, using the data to make refinements as needed.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level IV</b> on this indicator. The training process was formally defined, comprehensive, fully implemented, and subjected to continuing review, evaluation, and subsequent improvement.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan to continuously prepare improvement consultants and support teams to assist districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Evaluation reports (conducted by the SRAS) from affected district personnel describing their needs for assistance from the improvement consultants and support teams.</li> <li>☑ Data reflecting the number of training sessions held for the improvement consultants and number of participants attending each</li> <li>☑ Training agendas and associated materials (guidebooks, PowerPoints, handouts, etc.)</li> <li>☑ Survey data from trainees corroborating the quality of training services, and indicating one or more specific examples of the usefulness of the targeted training</li> </ul>

8	External partners and providers	
8.1	Managing and coordinating organizational partners	<p>Based on a written plan, collaborations have been formed with IHEs, Area Education Agency staff, other staff within the SEA, and external organizations (e.g., School Administrators Association, and State Association for School Boards). The SEA communicates with these partners intermittently as needed, and more formally in a “Critical Friends” session held at the annual state SRAS conference.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as having attained <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. Some external partnerships have been formed, and communication occurs throughout the year. To reach a higher status, the SEA should engage additional partnerships and formalize shared decision making with a clear focus on how these partnerships will assist districts and schools with improvement. (Level III).</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Reports or documents describing procedures for creating partnerships</li> <li>☑ Written documentation of active partnerships inside and outside the SEA, and their associated activities</li> <li>☑ Data reflecting improvement activities by districts and schools in direct connection to these partnerships</li> <li>☑ Agendas and associated materials (e.g., handouts, planning documents) from partnership meetings</li> <li>☑ Focus group or survey data from schools or districts corroborating the effectiveness of services provided from partnerships, along with one or two specific examples</li> </ul>
8.2	Providing guidance for tutoring and extended-learning time	<p>The SEA has written policies for assisting districts/schools (especially priority ones) with a variety of alternatives to help students learn. Among these procedures are documents to inform them about effective tutoring and extended-learning time opportunities. The SEA has worked with its lengthy list of partners, including IHEs and regional centers, to provide this training as well as supportive materials.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as having attained <b>Level III</b> because the SEA has gone beyond just having written information and has used its partners to train local personnel. The fact that this training has been made available in IHEs is laudable. However, there is no evaluation plan noted to see if these ideas and activities are really useful.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Written plans for using tutoring and extended-learning time</li> <li>☑ Training materials</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools noting which activities worked and why, using one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

## Part C: Implementation

9	Removal of barriers to change and innovation	
9.1	Removing barriers to change	<p>The SEA is working with the governor and state legislature to create more flexibility in selected policies, particularly in alternative programs for teacher licensing and principal certification. Meetings are scheduled for later in the school year to discuss how to remove barriers such as several SEA rules that would provide needed flexibility for local educators.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level I</b> on this indicator. Although SEA is attempting to promote removal of barriers to change, a formal process has not yet been developed or implemented.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented process for identifying and removing barriers to change</li> <li>☑ Reports or documents describing actions taken by SEA (or partners) to assist districts and schools in removing barriers</li> <li>☑ Data reflecting activities by schools and districts to remove barriers</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts and states corroborating the effectiveness of the state support, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
9.2	Creating options for new types of schools, including charter schools	<p>Two years ago, the SEA completed a formal plan for expanding options for charter schools and high school “career academies.” Although the academy proposal is still under consideration, the State Board of Education and the legislature subsequently approved more liberal criteria for student eligibility to enroll in charter schools and increased the maximum number of charter schools in the state from 75 to 150.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. Critical accomplishments included the creation of a written plan, implementation of new legislation, and growth in the number of new types of schools. However, any plan to evaluate the effects of these new options has yet to be written.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented process for creating new types of schools</li> <li>☑ Reports or documents describing actions taken by the SEA to implement policy changes for creating new types of schools</li> <li>☑ Data describing the new types of schools created each year</li> <li>☑ Test scores or other data reflecting the success of the new types of schools compared to traditional schools</li> </ul>

9	Removal of barriers to change and innovation	
9.3	Expanding access to college level courses or their prerequisites, dual enrollment courses, or other accelerated learning opportunities implemented	<p>The SEA has worked with high school principals and IHEs to encourage the use of Advanced Placement programs and dual enrollment programs in each high school. Financial incentives have been proposed for successful scoring on the AP tests. Public colleges now award credit based on AP exam courses, and they work with high schools to encourage dual enrollment programs. In addition, they provide training for high school teachers to ensure that the students receive college level courses while still in high school.</p> <p>The reviewers awarded a <b>Level III</b> rating even though the SEA was making serious efforts at implementing programs throughout the state's high schools. There is not yet a plan to evaluate whether this effort is improving the number of students meeting performance or graduation targets.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Trend lines documenting the last five years of participation by the SEA's high schools in both AP and dual enrollment programs</li> <li>☑ Surveys of educators discussing their successes and problems in working with IHEs to implement AP and dual enrollment programs, with specific examples</li> <li>☑ Surveys of IHE's documenting how the participation in these programs affects student learning and graduation rates in high schools</li> </ul>
10	Incentives for change	
10.1	Setting consequences for low student achievement and low graduation rates	<p>The SEA has completed a plan for increasing the sanctions for schools and districts that perform poorly for multiple years. A major component of this plan requires a comprehensive needs assessment conducted by a third party evaluator, and the associated identification and adoption of evidence-based programs in mathematics and reading. Improvement consultants and support teams have been assigned to assist local educators make the necessary changes.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as performing at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. To achieve Level IV, the state will need to produce evidence showing that the added consequences have been levied and that there is some improvement.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan describing stages of consequences for low performance that continue over time based on whether the districts/schools make gains on their performance targets</li> <li>☑ Websites or written publications communicating publicly the potential consequences for not meeting performance targets over time and the reasons for those actions</li> <li>☑ School or district reports reflecting improvement efforts taken in response to the sanctions and the subsequent results</li> </ul>



10	Incentives for change	
10.2	Providing positive incentives for improvement	<p>In enacting its plan for providing incentives to districts/schools for improved academic achievement, the SEA awarded, during the last school year, 45 “Enrichment Grants” and 13 “Technology Integration Grants.” The districts/schools that surpassed improvement targets were formally recognized at the annual Governor’s Education Conference in July.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator based on the implementation of its incentives plan. To achieve Level IV, evidence showing that the awards have assisted the districts/schools to maintain their high level of performance on multiple indicators must be collected. Also to be collected as part of the evaluation plan, evidence that other districts/schools believe in the importance of the SRAS incentives.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written plan for awarding incentives to districts or schools for high performance</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Websites or written publications communicating publicly the incentives awarded</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School or district reports reflecting improvement efforts taken in response to the incentives</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus group or survey data from districts and schools corroborating the impact of the incentives in stimulating positive change, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
10.3	Publicly disclosing district and school performance	<p>The SEA has created a website that annually reports trends by individual schools and districts in terms of the number of achievement performance targets met, including results by subgroup.</p> <p>The reviewers assigned a rating of <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. The state was viewed as providing only “limited data” to parents and the public. To attain Level III, a more informative, less passive, and less technical version should be available in multiple languages as needed. There would also have to be a more active effort to disseminate the reports to the SRAS partners and improvement consultants.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Websites or written publications for communicating school and district performance publicly</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data reflecting distribution to parents in English or other languages as appropriate.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey data from parents corroborating the usefulness of the data (informative, user-friendly, timely, etc.), and indicating one or more specific examples</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Descriptions of changes made to the dissemination process based on feedback from partners, external partners, and school improvement consultants</li> </ul>

11	Communications	
11.1	Communicating with clear and systematic communication paths within the SRAS	<p>The SEA has assigned staff from its communications office the responsibility of developing an inter-departmental communication process. A recent internal evaluation indicated that SEA employees had been dissatisfied with communications and interactions within and between departments. There was strong consensus that SRAS efforts were hampered as a result.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level I</b> on this indicator. At the present time, there is no documented plan for increasing communications, but it is anticipated that performance will rise to Level II when these staff complete the development of the communications process.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for structuring, improving, and increasing communication within the SRAS</li> <li>☑ Meeting agendas or records of inter-departmental interactions and other SRAS communications</li> <li>☑ Reports or other documents associating communications with the improvement of services</li> <li>☑ Survey or formative evaluation data from SEA staff corroborating improved communications within the SRAS, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
11.2	Implementing clear and systematic communication paths between the SEA/SRAS and districts/schools as well as significant others	<p>The SEA designated a liaison from its staff to write a plan on how to regularly transmit information regarding SRAS services, products, training programs, etc., to districts, regional offices, improvement consultants, and external partners. In return, these districts and partners in school improvement provide information back to the SRAS for sharing. This plan contains multiple modes of communication including a monthly electronic newsletter that has an updated directory of individual contacts, school and district office information, and planned SRAS programs.</p> <p>The reviewers assigned the state a rating of <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. There is regular and systematic communication using the state plan. To achieve Level IV, evidence of improved services as a result of an evaluation will be necessary.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan for structuring, improving, and increasing communication among district staff, important external partners and the SRAS</li> <li>☑ Meeting agendas and records of SRAS communication efforts</li> <li>☑ Reports or other documents associating communications with the improvement of services</li> <li>☑ Descriptions of dissemination modes used by the SRAS</li> <li>☑ Survey or formative evaluation data from district staff and other partners corroborating improved communications by and with the SRAS, using one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

12	Technical assistance
12.1	<p data-bbox="238 226 521 470">Delivering training to districts and schools in school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring</p> <p data-bbox="532 226 1468 436">SEA has developed a training plan to prepare schools and districts for developing and evaluating school improvement plans (SIPs). Each identified school and district is required to train a leadership team once every two years. The SRAS has provided training materials and school improvement consultants to aid in this process. Accordingly, in the past two years, 100% participation has been achieved.</p> <p data-bbox="532 453 1468 659">The reviewers evaluated the state as operating at <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. Although a training process has been developed and fully implemented, it is limited to only one component—SIPs. By developing a more comprehensive process that also addresses needs assessments and implementation and evaluation of SIPs, the state would advance to Level III.</p> <p data-bbox="532 676 1094 709"><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul data-bbox="561 722 1455 974" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented training plan to prepare districts/schools for improvement planning</li> <li>☑ Training materials/tools used for improvement planning</li> <li>☑ Agendas/handouts/participation lists for training sessions</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools regarding use of plan, outcomes, etc., with one or more specific examples</li> <li>☑ District/school data demonstrating systematic improvement planning</li> </ul>
12.2	<p data-bbox="238 991 513 1129">Providing technical assistance to improve professional practice</p> <p data-bbox="532 991 1468 1197">The SEA has worked with its external partners, including the Principals' Association, the regional centers, and the IHEs to plan the content of training programs regarding professional practice. The plan also includes how district personnel will learn about these SRAS sponsored training opportunities that have been planned to occur throughout the next school year.</p> <p data-bbox="532 1213 1406 1352">The reviewers believe this SEA is only at <b>Level II</b> even though they have shown great leadership in pulling together a team of institutions to provide the resources. The training simply has not yet been implemented.</p> <p data-bbox="532 1369 1094 1402"><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul data-bbox="561 1415 1468 1785" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Results of a statewide needs assessment showing the kinds of technical assistance services relative to the improvement of professional practice needed and where they are needed, that is, what districts should receive them first</li> <li>☑ Documents showing that the SRAS has carefully studied the content and location of training sessions so that there is a careful match with local personnel and their needs</li> <li>☑ A list of the proposed training sessions along with a description of the content of the professional practices training programs</li> <li>☑ An evaluation plan to see if the training programs have positively affected student performance and graduation rates</li> </ul>

12	Technical assistance	
12.3	Building parent involvement into school improvement	<p>The SEA has identified increased parent involvement in the school improvement process as a high-priority goal. Therefore, each school is required to establish benchmarks for parent involvement, but strategies for achieving them have not been defined as part of the SRAS.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state in <b>Level I</b> on this indicator. Advancement to higher levels will initially require a written training plan for involving parents (Level II) followed by implementation of the plan (Level III).</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written training plan to prepare schools and districts for including parents in improvement planning</li> <li>☑ Training materials/tools used for improvement planning</li> <li>☑ Agendas/handouts/participation lists for training sessions</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts/schools regarding use of plan, outcomes, etc., with one or more specific examples</li> <li>☑ District/school data or artifacts showing implementation of parent involvement plans (benchmarks, parent meeting agendas, etc.)</li> </ul>
12.4	Evaluating external providers	<p>The SEA has worked with the Department of Education and several states to develop criteria it can use to evaluate those companies that claim they can be successful external providers for districts/schools. An independent group of state experts have been asked to review all the external providers' proposals on an annual basis using these criteria. A successful provider then has his status approved for a period of three years until he has to submit again. Additional submissions must include a discussion of any work that has been carried out in the state during the three previous years. This process has worked for the last four years.</p> <p>Reviewers gave this state a <b>Level IV</b> rating since they had developed, written, and implemented a process to evaluate external providers. The SEA had even built in an ongoing component in its evaluation plan.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ List of criteria used to evaluate external providers</li> <li>☑ A description of the process used to select the independent reviewers</li> <li>☑ A list of the successful and unsuccessful applicants for each year</li> </ul>

12	Technical assistance	
12.5	Implementing content standards that prepare students to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career	<p>The SEA is a participant in the CCSS but realized that high school staff would need assistance in rethinking, reorganizing, and subsequently developing new ways to evaluate their courses. The SEA began work with a variety of post-secondary institutions to ensure high school graduates would have the knowledge and skills to be successful after graduation. Regional centers provided the technical assistance to high school staff to ease into this new process. The SEA has a third party to evaluate the effectiveness of this training and the materials.</p> <p>The reviewers gave this state a <b>Level IV</b> rating since they had implemented a plan to make the CCSS alive within high schools across the state. Also, the SEA had an evaluation plan to ensure that they were on the right track.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A report detailing the different ways high school courses could be restructured to make sure that students were prepared to take credit-bearing courses at post-secondary institutions and for a career</li> <li>☑ Evaluation reports from the high school personnel who attended the regional center training programs in which they are asked about the adequacy of the training</li> <li>☑ Annual evaluation reports summarizing the judgments from post secondary institutions about whether there is a difference in the quality of the preparation of high school students who are now attending their institutions</li> </ul>
13	Dissemination of knowledge	
13.1	Disseminating knowledge and/or research-based practices	<p>In accord with its plan for disseminating knowledge, the SEA has established a process for making products and resources available to help districts and schools with implementing improvement activities, including manuals and modules on curriculum alignment and how to improve instruction.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator, based on SEA's development and implementation of a dissemination plan (which appears to address varied key topics for school improvement). To achieve Level IV, evidence that schools/districts are using the information to promote positive change and that the changes are improving performance targets is necessary.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented process for systematically disseminating school improvement information to districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Description of SEA activities, staffing, and resources used for disseminating such information</li> <li>☑ Sample websites or materials (manuals, reports) made available to districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Data or reports describing actual usage by districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Survey data from district/school staff corroborating the value of the information provided (informative, user-friendly, timely, etc.), with one or more examples</li> </ul>



13	Dissemination of knowledge	
13.2	Producing products and resources to help districts and schools improve	<p>Two years ago, the SEA received a grant from an in-state foundation to develop products that support school improvement. Consequently, SRAS staff developed a website that lists available products and a “resources center” was set up to provide information and distribute products, such as training materials, to districts, schools, regional centers, improvement consultants and IHEs among others. The resource center routinely follows up with consumers by requesting an online or phone evaluation of the products used. Requests for products has grown significantly (by over 20%) each year.</p> <p>The reviewers evaluated the state as clearly meeting criteria for <b>Level III</b> for this indicator. Its program is documented, fully developed, and being used by recipients. However, there is no written evaluation plan to document the effectiveness of the products in helping districts/schools meet performance targets.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A listing of products made available to districts and schools to facilitate improvement planning (manuals, assessments, rubrics, etc.)</li> <li>☑ Sample websites or other communications (manuals, reports) used to inform LEAs and partner groups of the products</li> <li>☑ Communications (meetings, memos, etc.) with service providers to facilitate matching of products to school and district needs</li> <li>☑ Data or reports describing actual usage by districts/schools</li> <li>☑ Survey or formative evaluation data regarding the effectiveness of the products, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

14	Monitoring and program audits	
14.1	Conducting state monitoring, program audits, and diagnostic site reviews	<p>Recommended interventions for school improvement are based on needs identified during a 3-day SRAS diagnostic visit (which includes classroom walkthroughs, interviews with district/school staff, students, and community members), assessment data, financial data, and Solutions Team Findings. The SRAS team presents a report to the district and affected schools detailing recommendations for changes in order for performance targets to be met.</p> <p>The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. Although a systematic diagnostic review process is being implemented, remaining to be achieved is a systemic evaluation plan which would document that the recommendations are being followed by the districts/schools involved and that they are having a positive effect.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented process for conducting site visits to identified schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Description of SEA activities, staffing, and resources used for visiting schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Tools, materials, and reports used in the audit process</li> <li>☑ Audit reports and recommendations for individual schools or districts</li> <li>☑ Reports describing results of the audits state-wide</li> <li>☑ Survey data from districts'/schools' staff corroborating the value of the audits for improvement processes, and indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>
14.2	Documenting the status of districts/schools	<p>The SEA annually posts on its website a listing of all schools and districts in the state needing substantial improvement, the number of years they have been identified as needing improvement, and the criteria used to identify them as needing improvement.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state at <b>Level II</b> on this indicator. For advancement to higher levels of performance, the posting of district/school status would need to be augmented to include evidence documenting the number of districts and schools that have been removed from this list over time, that is, whether the number of districts and schools meeting performance and graduation targets are increasing or decreasing over time. Such a description would include information about the effectiveness of SRAS interventions and supports.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A documented list of identified schools and districts</li> <li>☑ Description of interventions used in serving the identified schools</li> <li>☑ Data reflecting trends in moving districts/schools off the list over time</li> <li>☑ Reports identifying interventions identified as effective for school improvement</li> </ul>

14	Monitoring and program audits	
14.3	Monitoring the progress of individual districts/schools	<p>The SEA has developed the <i>Standards and Rubrics for School Improvement</i>. The electronic needs assessment is completed by districts/schools not meeting academic and graduation standards and therefore are in some level of school improvement. They first complete the needs assessment and then a new school improvement plan that addresses the specific needs of each district/school based on the five critical standards from the <i>Standards and Rubrics for School Improvement</i> document: 1) School and District Leadership; 2) Curriculum/Instruction/Professional Development; 3) Classroom and School Assessments; 4) School Culture/Climate/Communication; and 5) Resource Management. The new plan includes financial and assessment data as well as a progress report on actions taken since the state's last Diagnostic Team visit.</p> <p>The reviewers assigned the state as <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. The state was viewed as having an exemplary system that has stimulated needed reforms by identified districts/schools. However, there is no written evaluation plan with clear criteria to determine the long term effectiveness of this approach.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A written plan for formatively evaluating the progress of identified districts/schools</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Description of SEA activities, staffing, and resources used for formatively evaluating the progress of schools and districts in meeting improvement targets</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tools, materials, and school reports used in the evaluation process</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reports or other documentation of school improvement efforts based on the evaluation results</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey data from district/school staff corroborating the value of the formative evaluation process for improvement processes, indicating one or more specific examples</li> </ul>

### Part D: Outcomes for Schools Served by the SRAS

15	
15.1	<div data-bbox="240 264 521 363">Establishing student achievement performance targets</div> <div data-bbox="532 264 1466 1096"> <p>The SEA has implanted a system of academic and graduation performance targets throughout the state. Analysis of state assessment data from last year produced the following general results:</p> <p>Of the state's 112 districts, 32 (29%) did not meet their performance targets in both reading and math.</p> <p>Eight of the districts with the largest achievement gaps did not show progress.</p> <p>The above results along with specific information by all districts and schools not meeting performance standards are available on the SEA's website.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. The state met the criteria for a written process to implement a state system of performance targets for districts/schools, and it is displaying the results. However, it does not yet have an evaluation plan to investigate more deeply why districts are continuing to not meet these performance targets.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A report documenting who is meeting state achievement performance targets by districts and schools</li> <li>☑ One or more evaluation reports describing a rigorous study of whether the establishment of these high performance targets is reasonable and leading to improvement</li> </ul> </div>

15	
15.2	<p data-bbox="238 228 477 331">Addressing subgroup achievement gaps</p> <p data-bbox="534 228 1442 680">This year, a cross-functional team of SEA staff has forged voluntary partnerships with a number of districts. The focus of the three-year partnerships is to close achievement gaps associated with race and income. The arrangement begins with a comprehensive appraisal of district improvement needs based on the state data system and framework for using the data in school planning. What emerges is a set of recommendations and a plan for improvement using evidence-based strategies. Each district then selects an “achievement gap consultant” who assists with plan implementation and professional development. The state department of education prequalifies these consultants and underwrites the cost of their service. The consultants broker services in a way that delivers customized resources to address the significant achievement challenges of the district.</p> <p data-bbox="534 699 1468 940">The reviewers rated the state as operating at <b>Level III</b>, given its active assistance (via partnerships, communications, and funding achievement gap consultants) to districts and schools in identifying achievement gaps based on data and implementing evidence-based strategies to reduce the gaps. However, there is no written evaluation plan detailing the criteria to be used over the next three years to document whether this process has been effective.</p> <p data-bbox="534 959 1094 989"><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul data-bbox="565 1005 1450 1421" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A written plan describing the process and requirements for schools and districts in using achievement gap data</li> <li>☑ Description of actual services provided to identified sites by SEA staff or external consultants</li> <li>☑ Written material (web-based or paper) identifying evidence-based strategies to reduce achievement gaps</li> <li>☑ Agendas/descriptions of meetings or training sessions with school or district representatives regarding usage of achievement gap data or interventions</li> <li>☑ Communications/records showing school or district implementation of interventions</li> <li>☑ Test score data indicating narrowed achievement gaps</li> </ul>



15	
15.3	<p>Establishing student attendance performance targets</p> <p>The SEA has documented evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure student attendance. It subsequently established attendance targets for all schools and districts. Only 62% of the targeted high schools have met their targets. Further analysis has revealed that these same high schools are generally not meeting their performance and graduation targets.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. The state has not yet shown that it has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policy and procedures for connecting attendance rates to school improvement planning.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A report documenting the meeting of state attendance performance targets by districts and schools</li> <li>☑ One or more evaluation reports describing a study of programs designed to raise attendance (e.g., schedule changes, parent involvement, hiring additional social workers, etc.) and how that connects with school improvement planning</li> </ul>
15.4	<p>Establishing graduation rate performance targets</p> <p>The SEA has documented evidence to show that it can reliably and validly measure graduation rates for all its high schools and that it makes the results public on the annual report cards provided to parents and the public.</p> <p>The reviewers placed the state at <b>Level III</b> on this indicator. The state has not yet shown that it has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policy and procedures for connecting graduation rates to school improvement planning.</p> <p><b>Exemplary Evidence of High Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ A report documenting the number of high schools meeting their graduation performance targets for all students as well as subgroups.</li> <li>☑ One or more evaluation reports describing a study of programs designed to raise graduation rates (e.g., mentoring, after-school tutoring, reduced class size, etc.)</li> </ul>

## Evaluating the Outcomes of the SRAS

Steven Ross, C. Thomas Kerins

### Qualities of an Effective Evaluation of the SRAS

By systematically and rigorously evaluating their SRAS, SEAs realize several important benefits. One is making reliable and valid judgments of the status of the services provided, that is, how fully are the services being implemented and to what degree are the expected outcomes for identified schools and districts being achieved? A second important benefit is using the evaluation results to document accountability by the SEA and external organizations (e.g., providers, universities, consultants, community agencies) offering the services. A third benefit is demonstrating accountability to consumers, namely, the schools and districts served, students, parents, educators, and the general public. A fourth is developing a process for continuous program improvement by sharing evaluation feedback with all stakeholders and establishing defined improvement goals.

To be useful, an evaluation process, first and foremost, must be valid. Validity simply means producing results that are reliable (e.g., accurate, consistent, replicable) and meaningful (i.e., relevant to program goals). In the case of the SRAS, which encompasses a broad range of services, providers, and stakeholders, validity is achieved in ways that strike a balance between what is practical and feasible but also sufficiently rigorous and credible. Thus, a highly controlled experimental study would likely provide a great deal of rigor, but would hardly be practical for addressing the complexities and range of SRAS services. At the other extreme, basing a judgment primarily on anecdotal data (e.g., “We heard at the conference that Oak County Schools are doing great this year.”) or subjective impressions (e.g., “Our data system seems far superior to what other states have.”) may seem practical and feasible to some but certainly would not be rigorous and credible.

As evidenced by the “SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support Evaluation Rubric,” state evaluations of their SRAS focus on three main properties of the services provided:

- ✦ Whether or not a particular tangible *product* has been created (e.g., The state has a documented training plan and policy to prepare distinguished educators to assist districts and schools.)
- ✦ Whether particular *actions* have been taken toward achieving desired goals (e.g., The state assists districts and schools in implementing strategies to reduce achievement gaps.)

- ✦ Whether tangible *outcomes* have been attained (e.g., The recruitment and retention of highly effective administrators improved by 25% over last year).

Directly relevant to all three attainment categories is the dimension of “quality”—to what degree or how effectively does the product, activity, or outcome meet desired standards as defined in the SRAS rubric performance levels? Judging quality significantly elevates the value and impact of the evaluation process. But, there is one “catch.”

To judge a service, standards or criteria are needed. The SRAS rubric performance levels provide a general framework, but it is up to each state to identify the specific standards. What constitutes an “enhanced recruitment” of well qualified administrators or “greater efficiency” in resource allocation? Some rubric indicators are more amenable to specific (e.g., numerical) standards than others, but to have a strong SRAS evaluation, all indicators need further definition of what lower and higher quality products, actions, and outcomes are.

For balancing the practicality and rigor of SRAS evaluations, a key component is having evidence to support judgments of quality of services. Evidence can take many forms, as illustrated in the examples provided in “Illustrating the Scoring System” found in the previous chapter. But, to ensure rigor and credibility, the evidence considered should have the following properties:

It is **tangible**—information or data that can be examined, verified, replicated, and/or judged by an external evaluator.

#### Examples

- ✦ A documented plan
- ✦ A meeting agenda
- ✦ Survey responses
- ✦ Performance targets

It is **objective**—information or data obtained from extant records or sources not having a personal stake in the evaluation results.

#### Strong Examples

- ✦ “80% of the principals surveyed rated the support from the school improvement teams as very helpful, and they were able

to provide a specific example of how these consultants helped their school.”

- ✦ “Trend data show a 15% increase in the number of organizational partners that work with the state to provide specific assistance to schools identified as needing help.”

#### Weak Examples

- ✦ “The matching of schools with support teams was reported to be effective.”
- ✦ “The Governor touted the state’s progress in assisting low-performing schools since he took office.”

It is **relevant**—information or data directly connected to evaluation standards or goals (e.g., “SEA System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support Evaluation Rubric”)

#### Strong Example

- ✦ A state rates itself as being at Level IV (full level of implementation) in delivering training to districts and schools in school improvement planning. One piece of evidence is a report by each district documenting the interventions identified as implemented in direct response to the training.

#### Weak Example

- ✦ A state rates itself at Level IV in delivering training to districts and schools in school improvement planning on the same indicator based on a synthesis of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) submitted electronically by schools state-wide. (Note that the SIPs are required of all schools and may not have any connection to the state’s achievements in SRAS training)

It is **evaluative** rather than merely descriptive—information or data that can be judged in terms of quantity or quality (and, ultimately, achieving the indicator standards). Contrast the differences illustrated on the next page.

Table 1: Contrast Between Descriptive and Evaluative Evidence

Indicator	Descriptive Evidence	Evaluative Evidence
Building parent involvement into school improvement	A copy of the manual used for training school leaders but no evidence that it is used by SEA staff or is available for LEA staff	School reports documenting actual parent programs implemented in response to the training
Communicating with clear and systematic communication paths within the SRAS	A bar chart showing the number of hours of meetings held each month with service providers	Survey data from providers showing how the communications were useful in improving services
Providing a comprehensive SEA data system	A technical report describing the properties of the data system	User data showing increases in the frequency with which schools and districts access the system for improvement planning

### Evaluation Recommendations

The examples in Table 1 all represent processes and activities that occur as part of or as a result of SRAS. That is, survey data may indicate positive perceptions by providers (e.g., universities or regional service centers) of the communications they received in connection with SRAS services, or a newly published guidebook may appear well designed and useful to school leaders attempting to increase parent involvement. Positive attainments in the numerous types of services defined by the SRAS Rubric indicators represent important progress toward, but not necessarily accomplishment of, the ultimate goal of the SRAS—improving educational outcomes for students. Accordingly, Part D, Section 15 of the Rubric—referred to as the essential indicators—was created for the purpose of guiding evaluation of the latter outcomes. For clarity and convenience, we repeat the Rubric section dealing with student achievement in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Student Achievement Section from Rubric Part D-Section 15

Essential Indicators	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
15.1 Establishing student achievement performance targets	The SEA has not established performance targets for districts and schools, nor has it established criteria on how to use the state assessment to identify the highest and lowest performing schools as well as the high progress schools and those schools contributing to achievement gaps in the State.	The SEA has established high performance targets for districts/schools and criteria on how to use the state assessment to identify the highest and lowest performing schools as well as the high progress schools and those schools contributing to the achievement gaps in the State.	The SEA has implemented its high performance targets for all districts/schools using clear criteria to annually document their progress and to identify the highest and lowest performing schools as well as the high progress schools and those schools contributing to the achievement gaps in the State.	The SEA has an ongoing process for evaluating and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies and procedures relative to setting high performance targets for all districts and schools as well as the criteria used to identify the highest and lowest performing schools as well as the high progress schools and those schools contributing to the achievement gaps in the State.

What makes this set of indicators *essential*? The SRAS is ultimately about improving the achievement and educational success of students as well as attendance and graduation rates. Because these outcomes

are “distal” or “culminating,” they may not be affected *immediately* by SRAS services. Therefore, judging immediate (proximal) progress solely on the achievement of state performance targets may be misleading. Take, for example, a situation in which an SEA designs and delivers a high-quality training program to prepare principals for turning around low-performing schools. Although we would expect this program to impact student achievement *eventually*, time will be needed for the principals to meet and work with teachers, who, in turn, will need time to replace traditional strategies with more effective ones. So, any given SRAS service, no matter how well designed and delivered, may fail to impact essential indicators demonstrably in the short run. But, to be judged as successful, SRAS services as a whole should be producing measurable gains over time.

Given these considerations, we next offer recommendations for making evaluations of states’ performance on the essential indicators more comprehensive and meaningful.

**Recommendation 1:** Treat the essential indicators section (*Rubric Part D, Section 15*) as a *basic* framework (or starting point) for evaluating state performance. Probing more deeply and analytically into the results elevates the evaluation to the next level—understanding the data and its implications. Specifically, the basic Rubric performance rating (see Table 2) is certainly relevant for accountability purposes and generating an overall picture of the status of the targeted districts/schools (i.e., the percentages achieving state benchmarks). But unfortunately, that information alone conveys little about the true effectiveness of the SRAS. Suppose, for example, that 100% of the identified schools reach performance targets in a given year or, disappointingly, none does. Even in these extreme situations, the quality of the SRAS services provided could have ranged from poor to excellent. Factors such as the difficulty level of last year’s state assessment, changes in performance standards, characteristics of the schools and students, or the effects of academic programs implemented independently of the SRAS could influence educational outcomes substantially. So, although the overall Rubric rating is a logical starting point, the evaluation process should not end there. Recommendations 2 and 3 suggest some useful extensions.

**Recommendation 2:** Supplement the basic Rubric evaluation (Recommendation 1) with follow-up analyses of probable “root causes” of successes and failures. Such analyses do not require expensive or intensive research studies, but rather efforts to identify: (a) potentially successful turnaround strategies that may be transferred to other schools; (b) unsuccessful strategies or conditions that need replacement by alternative interventions; and, most fundamentally, (c) explanations of the outcome data relative to the SRAS services provided. Consider the following examples:

- ✦ School A increases its mathematics scores to surpass state performance targets for the first time in three years. Follow-up study (e.g., a brief site visit by SEA) reveals that the school implemented a new mathematics curriculum using interactive multimedia, cooperative learning, and after-school tutoring.

**Implication:** The new program appears to have had a positive effect and may have potential to raise achievement in other low-performing schools.

- ✦ School B increased its reading scores significantly over the past year. Follow-up study of student enrollment patterns reveals that community rezoning decreased the number of disadvantaged students who attended the school by 50%.

**Implication:** The rise in test scores could be attributable, in part, to some SRAS services, but appears (for this year at least) directly linked to the changes in student enrollment. Continued evaluation is needed.

- ✦ School C failed to achieve state benchmarks in graduation rates and attendance, even though it received intensive SRAS services in teacher and principal professional development, technology integration, and using data for instructional decisions. Follow-up study indicates that over 60% of student enrollees are English language learners, many of whom have high absence rates due to returning to their home communities for extended periods.

**Implication:** The school serves a high at-risk student population that may not show immediate or strong gains from routine SRAS services. Consideration, therefore, might be given to replacing



or supplementing these services next year with more powerful interventions adapted to students' needs.

- ✦ School D had several student subgroups fail to attain performance targets in reading. Follow-up interviews with the principal and literacy coaches reveal that the new reading and language arts curriculum was poorly supported by the provider (late arrival of materials, inadequate professional development, etc.).

**Implication:** Although the services were directed to a relevant improvement need, the particular intervention adopted was ineffective and needs refinement or replacement.

**Recommendation 3:** Supplement the basic Rubric evaluation (Recommendation 1) and follow-up analyses (Recommendation 2) with rigorous evaluations of selected interventions. Note that to achieve Level 4 on the essential indicators (see Table 2), evidence from one or more program evaluations is essential. The overall SRAS evaluation and follow-up studies are limited to providing only suggestive and general results concerning SRAS effects. As will be discussed in detail in the next section, more rigorous research can provide more valid evidence by incorporating comparison (control) groups, measures of implementation fidelity, and, in general, higher degrees of control over study conditions (extraneous or “confounding” factors). Brief illustrations of rigorous studies are:

- ✦ SEA releases an RFP for an evaluation of a block scheduling program implemented in 15 low-performing high schools. The RFP requests assessments of program implementation, teacher and student reactions, and test scores on “Gateway” exams compared to similar schools not using the program. A local university wins the award and conducts the evaluation research.
- ✦ SEA provides data and analysis support to assist a school district’s research department in evaluating the services of improvement consultants assigned to identified schools. The study involves documenting the types of services provided and specific changes in practices (corroborated through observations, interviews, and artifacts) resulting from each category of support.
- ✦ The SEA’s assessment department conducts a study of student achievement patterns in schools that implemented a new reading curriculum as part of the SRAS services. The study compares the reading scores of students in years prior to and following use of the program as it was introduced in different classes and grades.



## Characteristics of Rigorous Studies

### *Accurate and Relevant Data*

Knowing that educational research is “rigorous” naturally raises expectations about its credibility and value. But what does rigor imply as an attribute of a research study? There are several meanings.

One meaning is that the data give a true picture of the phenomena being described. Simply put, the results will be complete, trustworthy, and directly address the research questions of interest. Suppose for example, that the question of interest is whether, after receiving professional development made available through SRAS, teachers use more student-centered instruction.

#### *Weak Evidence*

- ✦ Teachers liked the professional development activities
- ✦ The providers of the professional development believed the offerings to be successful
- ✦ SEA staff observed the professional development offerings and rated them positively

#### *Suggestive Evidence*

- ✦ Teachers express more favorable attitudes toward student-centered instruction
- ✦ Teachers indicate that they use more student-centered instruction than in the past
- ✦ Principals and grade-level leaders indicate observing more frequent student-centered instruction than in the past

#### *Strong Evidence*

- ✦ Systematic observation by independent observers shows significant increases in student-centered instruction relative to the baseline (prior to the professional development) and over time. In teacher interviews, there is strong consensus that the professional development was effective.

### *Internally and Externally Valid Experiments*

*Experimental* research differs from other types of studies by focusing on causal interpretations of program or “treatment” effects. A key component of experimental design is comparing treatment and control groups, with group assignments, preferably, made randomly.

**Internal validity.** One quality of rigorous experiments is possessing high internal validity. This means that the outcomes measured (e.g., teaching behaviors, test scores, graduation rates, etc.) can be confidently attributed to the intervention and not to extraneous factors.

#### **Higher Internal Validity Example**

SRAS services are helping low-performing schools to implement a new after-school tutoring program called “Afternoon T.” In the interests of supporting a rigorous research study, the participating schools agree to make the program available through random assignment to half of the students who sign up. The other half are assigned to participate in the traditional after-school program. At the end of the year, test score gains are found to be significantly higher for the Afternoon T group than for the traditional group. Because all conditions were exactly the same for the two groups except for the program received, it is concluded that Afternoon T was effective in raising achievement.

#### **Lower Internal Validity Example**

Students who volunteer to participate in a new after-school tutoring program, “Afternoon T” are compared to those who don’t sign up. At the end of the year, test score gains are found to be significantly higher for the Afternoon T group than for the control group. While these results are encouraging, they could be due to motivation and parental interest being higher for the volunteer group. Also, the volunteer group received extra tutoring whereas the control group received none. The effectiveness of Afternoon T as an after-school program, therefore, is only suggested.

**External validity.** A second dimension of experimental rigor is high external validity. This means that the findings are generalizable to the types of situations (e.g., schools, students, teachers) of interest. For example, suppose that a wealthy pharmaceutical firm awards a large grant to each elementary school in a small city to hire three full-time social workers, a school psychologist, and a school nurse. An experimental study shows that, over the next two years, student attendance is significantly higher at these schools than at matched comparison schools. Although it seems likely that the added personnel were effective (i.e., the cause of fewer student absences), the special

circumstances and excessive costs involved in this “intervention” reduces generalizability to other schools. Thus, external validity would be low compared to a more affordable program.

### Evaluating Service Quality Through District/school Case Studies

Regardless of what an overall state-wide evaluation of the SRAS might indicate, additional insights of importance can be obtained at the individual school and district levels. In this section, we suggest strategies for conducting simple “case studies” of the SRAS services provided for districts/schools in relation to changes in educational outcomes.

#### *Creating a Profile of Services*

Which SRAS services were provided to individual schools? What were the intensity, duration, and quality of each service? Did any of the services appear to be effective in producing desired changes? Answering these questions is not only relevant to the evaluation of SRAS in general, but most importantly, reveals what is being done to what effect in particular contexts. For example, it may be found that for some schools, “technical assistance” in recruiting skilled teachers primarily consists of weekly phone calls or emails from an SEA staff member. For other schools, the support may be two-day site visits from marketing consultants and union representatives who map out a systematic recruitment plan and benchmarks. We would expect the latter, much more intensive type of service to be more effective in achieving goals, but is that actually the case? Knowing the answer will inform decisions on whether to continue that service another year or try something different.

The first step in conducting a case-study profile is to document the services provided to the individual site (school or district). We suggest a simple checklist (preferably, an online version), that lists each school and district receiving SRAS services, followed by specification of:

1. **Nature of service** (brief description of what was done by whom, when, and where)
2. **Focus of service** (e.g., curriculum alignment, using assessment data, educating English language learners, etc.)

3. **Intensity of service** (e.g., onsite, workshop, email, etc.; staff and other resources used )
4. **Duration of service** (number of days, one-time vs continuous)
5. **Effectiveness rating:** Was the service associated with positive educational outcomes? (Yes, Probably, No)
6. **Explanation of effects** (If effectiveness rating was “Yes” or “Probably,” describe the evidence.)

Although such checklists will not prove definitely the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of particular services, they should provide valuable and readable information for (a) profiling each district/school with regard to the services provided, and (b) relating each set of services to educational outcomes. To enable a stronger analysis of services’ effects, an extension of this process is suggested below.

#### *Relating Service Inputs to Outcomes*

Simply because a particular service encompasses many communication contacts or hours doesn’t mean that it will be more effective than one with more limited time or activity. Realistically, effectiveness will be influenced by multiple factors interacting in combination with one another. To help identify what input levels are associated with desired results, we suggest supplementing the basic case study framework just described with a rubric evaluation of three dimensions of each service listed: *Intensity*, *Duration*, and *Quality*. If, for example, the ratings showed that a particular service (e.g., technical assistance for data usage) was limited to a one-hour workshop, only modest changes (if any) might be expected. On the other hand, if a different service (assistance in establishing partnerships) was consuming extensive time and resources but producing little change, then its continuation would likely be re-evaluated. Some ideas for such a rubric are offered in Table 3. We suggest that refinements be made by each state based on preferences and experiences from application trials.

Table 3. Sample Rubric for Evaluating Service Intensity, Duration, and Quality in Case-Study Profiles

Service Activity Dimension	Not Rated	Low	Moderate	High
<b>Intensity</b>	-Not applicable due to lack of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Minimal resources provided (materials, personnel)</li> <li>-Few staff or experts (1 or 2) involved directly</li> <li>-Mostly distance communications (emails, phone calls, publications)</li> <li>-Small scope (affecting only a few educators, students, or parents)</li> <li>-Potential indirect links to outcomes (e.g., impacts knowledge of target group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Moderate resources provided (material, personnel)</li> <li>-Several staff or experts involved directly</li> <li>-Some face-to-face interactions (site visits, meetings, consults), possibly combined with off-site communications (calls, emails, publications)</li> <li>-Moderate scope (medium-scale intervention affecting multiple educators, students, or parents)</li> <li>-Potential indirect or direct links to outcomes (e.g., impacts attitudes or behaviors of target group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Extensive resources provided (materials, personnel)</li> <li>-Many staff or experts involved directly</li> <li>-Multiple face-to-face interactions (site visits, meetings, consults, etc.)</li> <li>-Comprehensive scope (large-scale intervention affecting many educators, students, or parents)</li> <li>-Potential direct link to outcomes (e.g., impacts behavior of target group)</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	-Not applicable due to lack of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Limited time (&lt; 3 days total)</li> <li>-Restricted time (extends less than 3 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Moderate time (&gt; 3 days total)</li> <li>-Somewhat distributed time (extends over 3 months)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Extensive time (&gt;10 days total)</li> <li>-Distributed time (extends over half of the year)</li> </ul>
<b>Quality</b>	-Not applicable due to lack of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Weak implementation</li> <li>-Not favorably received by district/school (supported by evidence)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adequate implementation (supported by evidence)</li> <li>-Mostly favorably received by district/school (supported by evidence)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong implementation (supported by evidence)</li> <li>-Very favorably received by district/school (supported by evidence)</li> </ul>

## Working with External Evaluators

Whether a state chooses to work with an external evaluator will depend on several factors. One obviously is budget, as an external evaluator is likely to be more costly than performing the work in-house. However, if work can't be completed effectively by SEA staff due to lack of time, resources, or expertise the ultimate cost could be many times greater than if an external evaluator were used. So, a second factor is preparedness and readiness for internal staff to complete the tasks required. A third factor concerns the nature of the evaluation study being conducted.

In general, completing the basic rubric ("Study I") and collecting follow-up data relating to the essential indicators ("Study II") are activities that states typically should be able to perform internally and benefit from by being engaged in analyzing and evaluating their own SRAS efforts. An independent evaluator might be employed (with only modest cost incurred) to review the evidence and corroborate the state's self-ratings. Conducting rigorous studies of specific interventions ("Study III") clearly is the most appropriate context for engaging external evaluators. One advantage of having external evaluators is that they have needed expertise in working with data, research design, and statistical analysis. A second advantage is that school and district staffs are likely to be more candid with external evaluators than with state department personnel. A third advantage is the independence of external providers who have no personal stake in the effectiveness of the services being evaluated.

Working with external evaluators should neither be very costly nor difficult if a number of simple steps are taken:

- ✦ Use a systematic process to select the evaluator. Whether or not a formal "Request for Proposals" (RFP) process is employed, it is important to review the candidate's prior work and references from former clients.
- ✦ Establish a clear plan of work and budget. Important to the plan is specifying the research questions that need to be answered. Such questions take the form of: "What are the effects of the literacy program in raising student achievement?" "Do new teachers who received in-service mentoring stay

in the field longer than those who did not receive mentoring?" Ensure that the study addresses these very questions (see next step).

- ✦ Monitor the study by meeting with the evaluators regularly, reviewing progress reports, etc. Obviously, once a study is completed, it is too late to refine it.
- ✦ Work with the evaluator to disseminate the results to different audiences. The value of good research is that it informs both policy-makers and practitioners about which services and programs work and which do not.

## Concluding Comments

As occurs with virtually all endeavors in education, the benefits of evaluation directly relate to the effort and resources put into it. Making snap, subjective judgments to get the evaluation requirement "over and done with" or to make something mediocre look good (to avoid ruffling feathers) ultimately benefits no one—least of all, low-performing schools—and actually can be harmful. If a service isn't functioning up to expectations, a positive evaluation erroneously communicates that all is going well and should be left alone. A truthful negative evaluation, on the other hand, provides the direct stimulus for making that service better over time. And, when a service is working well, credible evaluation results serve to recognize and sustain it. SRAS evaluations represent a type of service. The key to their working well, as we have emphasized, is using relevant evidence to make informed judgments relative to goals or standards.

## About the Authors

SUSAN HANES has extensive experience in public education, including information management services, assessment development, research, program evaluation, and high school mathematics teaching. Her experience includes 12 years in the Georgia Department of Education in assessment development, director of statistical services and electronic data collection for statewide systems, and program evaluation. Dr. Hanes has worked in local school systems as the director of assessment, research and evaluation. She was the Director of Standards and Research for the Georgia Office of Education



Accountability. She has conducted consulting services for the IES Longitudinal Data System Grants, technical assistance for the Performance Based Data Management Initiative (PBDMI), and consulting services and site visits with the Center for Education Leadership and Technology and CCSSO for the Decision Support Architecture Consortium. She is a consultant for the Center on Innovation & Improvement and coordinates the National Network of State School Improvement Leaders. She has served as a peer reviewer for the US Department of Education for Accountability Reviews and State Assessment System reviews since 1999 and has been a member of Title I State Monitoring teams. She has worked on committees for the CCSSO and National Center for Education Statistics including Chair, Implementation Task Force – National Forum for Education Statistics, 1990-1991; Task Force on Confidentiality, National Center for Education Statistics – Member, 1994-95; and Chair, Education Information Advisory Committee for the Council of Chief State School Officers, 1994-1995.

C. THOMAS KERINS serves as the Associate Director for Program Development for the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII), where he has specialized in statewide systems of support, coauthoring case studies on five states. He holds a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Illinois and a master's degree in education research from Loyola University. He has held positions including the State Director of Testing for Illinois; Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement and Assessment for the Illinois State Board of Education; and Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement, Standards, and Assessment for the Springfield School District. For USDOE he has been a Peer Evaluator of State Testing Programs, State Assessment Enhancement Programs, and SEA High School Graduation Data Systems. Recently he served as a reviewer for ESEA state waiver requests. For Illinois he was also instrumental in the development of the Annual State Report on Special Education Performance and the LRE Special Education Profile. He has been an adjunct professor for the University of Illinois at Springfield Graduate School Program for a decade, and a much-sought-after consultant with over 30 years in the field of education. Besides serving in a variety of roles

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CAROLE L. PERLMAN, before joining the Center on Innovation & Improvement, served as School Improvement Coordinator for the Chicago Public Schools from 2003 to 2006. For 20 years she was director of student assessment for the Chicago Public Schools and later served as School Improvement Coordinator. She holds a B.S. in Mathematics with honors from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), an M.S. in Statistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a doctorate in Public Policy Analysis from UIC. A past president of the National Association of Test Directors (NATD) and past board member of the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), she also served on the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) National Advisory Board and represented NCME for two terms on the Joint Committee on Testing Practices. She has served on numerous state and federal advisory panels, including the 1992 NAEP Reading Framework Steering Committee, the first NAEP Mathematics Standard-Setting Panel, the Education Information Advisory Committee's Assessment Task Force, and the Voluntary National Test Technical Advisory Committee. She is a frequent presenter at professional conferences and is the recipient of the AERA Division D Research Report Award, AERA Division H Outstanding Publication Award, National Association of Test Directors Career Award for Outstanding Contributions to Educational Assessment, and the UIC College of Education's Distinguished Alumna Award.

SAM REDDING is Director of the Center on Innovation & Improvement (CII). A former high school teacher and college dean, since 1984 he has served as the Executive Director of the Academic Development Institute (ADI). He received

the “Those Who Excel” Award from the Illinois State Board of Education in 1990 and the Ben Hubbard Leadership Award from Illinois State University in 1994. He has been executive editor of the *School Community Journal* since 1991 and was a senior research associate of the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) at Temple University from 1995 to 2005. He has edited three books on family–school relationships, written a book on school improvement, edited a book on state-wide systems of support, and written articles and chapters in the areas of school management, school improvement, and factors affecting school learning. Dr. Redding served on the IES expert panel on school turnarounds and co-authored its 2008 report: *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools*.

Dr. Redding has served on a variety of state committees, including the standards-writing committee for the Illinois State Board of Education; the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Leadership Team and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Parent Leadership Team; and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. He has served on various civic boards, as well as the boards of the Effective Schools Institute and Superintendency Institute. In 2000, Dr. Redding conducted a study for LSS of 102 schools in 11 states that were implementing comprehensive school reform. He has worked directly with more than 40 districts in comprehensive school reform, consulting with their administration, training teachers, and establishing systems for tracking student learning data. He holds a doctorate in Educational Administration from Illinois State University, master’s degrees in both Psychology and English, and is a graduate of Harvard’s Institute for Educational Management.

STEVEN M. ROSS received his doctorate in educational psychology from Pennsylvania State University. He is currently a senior research scientist and professor at the Center for Research and Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Ross is the author of six textbooks and over 120 journal articles in the areas of educational technology and instructional design, at-risk learners, educational reform, computer-based instruction, and research and evaluation. He is a noted lecturer on school programs and educational

evaluation, Editor Emeritus of the research section of the *Educational Technology Research and Development* journal, and a member of the editorial board for two other professional journals. In 1993, he was the first faculty recipient of The University of Memphis Eminent Faculty Award for teaching, research and service, and recently held the Lillian and Morrie Moss Chair of Excellence in Urban Education and a Faudree Professorship at The University of Memphis. He has testified on school restructuring research before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth, and Families, and is a technical advisor and researcher on current federal and state initiatives regarding the evaluation of technology usage, supplemental educational services, State Systems of Support (SRAS), and ESEA. Steven serves on the Center on Innovation & Improvement’s Scientific Council.





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# Statewide System of Support Evaluation Rubric

For each of the essential indicators your state has chosen, please select the description that best describes your state system of support (SSOS). Note that in order to attain a score of "III," the state SSOS must have met the conditions for getting a score of "II." Similarly, in order to attain a score of "IV," the SSOS has also met the conditions for attaining scores of "III."

## Part A: SSOS Plan and Design

### 1. Specified comprehensive plan for SSOS

Essential Indicators	I Little or No Development or Implementation	II Limited Development or Implementation	III Mostly Functional Level of Development and Implementation	IV Full Level of Implementation and Evidence of Impact
1.1 Design and organization of a statewide system of support (SSOS)	There is no identifiable, clearly defined system of support for schools and districts with academic problems.	There is a written, available statement, including goals, objectives and timelines describing the SSOS.	The state has an operations manual, including an organization chart, depicting the offices, both within and external to the SEA, that have responsibilities in implementing the SSOS.	The state has role descriptions for each person and office within the SSOS to formalize its integrated planning.
1.2 Oversight and coordination of the statewide system of support	There is no oversight of resources and services to schools and districts.	There are written plans for oversight or coordination of resources and services to schools and districts.	The state has begun integrated planning among programs in order to maximize resources and coordinate services to districts and schools, but the integration is not yet fully operational.	A systematic process for coordinating planning and resource allocation across programs has been implemented. The state has evidence of greater efficiency in resource allocation and delivery of services.
1.3 Differentiating support to districts and schools	The state has no clearly defined procedures to determine which schools/districts receive SSOS services and resources and the amounts and types of services provided.	The state has developed clearly defined, written criteria (including a needs assessment) and procedures to determine which schools/districts receive services from the SSOS and the amounts and types of services provided.	The state has implemented clearly defined, written criteria (including a needs assessment) and procedures to determine which schools/districts receive services from the SSOS and the amount and types of services provided.	The state has evidence that it provides levels and amounts of intensive support on student performance and documentation of improvement.

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