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ABSTRACT

This overview of information dissemination describes activities in the 33 states serviced by The Appalachia Educational Laboratory, CEMREL, Inc., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Research for Better Schools, Inc., and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. The programs discussed include state dissemination plans and structures, state dissemination resource bases, state linkage systems, and state dissemination needs. A list of major federally supported programs, a summary of dissemination activities, a guideline for collecting dissemination information, and a glossary of terms are appended. (JVP)

AN OVERVIEW OF

STATE DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

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PREFACE

As increasing energy and resources have been devoted to the area of dissemination in education over the last several years, the concept and definition of the term "dissemination" has evolved and expanded. At the First National Dissemination Forum (June, 1977) in Arlington, Virginia, a statement of agreement was adopted by dissemination professionals to identify the purposes and requirements of the dissemination effort nationwide. First, it was agreed that the term "nationwide dissemination configuration" should be adopted to embrace the many efforts intended primarily to improve education practice. As broadly defined, dissemination should include these concepts.

- "The purposes and outcomes of dissemination activities are many-- ranging from acquiring knowledge for its own sake to specific improvements in educational practice."
- Definition of the word dissemination included four possibilities, as enumerated by the Dissemination Analysis Group (DAG), a task force established by the Assistant Secretary for Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to help determine department-wide policy for nationwide educational dissemination.

  (1) Spread: The one-way casting out of knowledge in all its forms: information, products, ideas, and materials, "as though sowing seeds."

  (2) Exchange: The two-way or multi-way flow of information, products, ideas, and materials as to needs, problems, and potential solutions.

  (3) Choice: The facilitation of rational consideration and selection among those ideas, materials, outcomes of research and development, effective practices, and other knowledge that can be used for the improvement of education.

(4) Implementation: The facilitation of adoption, adaptation, and utilization of improvements.

- The nationwide configuration "should be influenced by all levels of government and by other groups and individuals and not dominated by any one."
- A "resource base of knowledge" is required, "available through an ERIC-compatible index and a universally available set of access systems."
- The knowledge base for dissemination should be in a language and a form that is easily understandable; a list of people available for assistance and services should be maintained; technical and monetary assistance should be made available.

In addition, the need to constantly refine and improve the definition and practice of dissemination and provide leadership at both the national and state levels was accepted.

As part of this effort to stimulate the improvement of dissemination practices and to create a more efficient and timely exchange of information between R&D performers and educational practitioners, the five regional exchanges of RDx (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, CEMREL, Inc., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Research for Better Schools, Inc., and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) have prepared reports describing dissemination activities of their 33 participating states.* These reports describe in detail the major dissemination goals and priorities for education in each participating state, its organization for dissemination, specific state resources available for dissemination, and special needs identified and assistance required by the states to improve their dissemination efforts. These reports were prepared to assist RDx staff in planning dissemination, technical assistance, knowledge syntheses, and resource referral services in order to be responsive to the needs of participating states. The digest of information contained in reports by Regional Exchanges has been prepared by the System Support Service, RDx,

located at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. As RDx expands its services, this early compilation is likely to be updated and more states can be included.

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* States currently served by the RDx are: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Additional states are being served as of June 1, 1978.

INTRODUCTION

This preliminary report on the status of educational dissemination in the various states of the nation has been compiled by the Research and Development Exchange (RDx), which is supported by funding from the National Institute of Education.

Although educational dissemination activities have emerged only recently, they have attracted the attention of nearly everyone in the educational community. Teachers and administrators look to various dissemination networks for information about alternatives to current teaching and management practices. Policymakers seek data that will assist them in arriving at critical choices among various options. Parents want information on student achievement. Trainers of teachers search for the most recent research findings. And community groups request reports that will help them understand the operations of their local schools.

These pressures for educational communication and change have generated at the federal and state levels a need to create and support a variety of educational dissemination "systems" across the nation, most of them housed in or intimately linked to state educational agencies. Even professionals now working in the dissemination field do not yet have in their hands a convenient, reasonably current summary of dissemination activities now under way in the various states. To meet this need, this report was prepared late in 1977.

In the pages that follow may be found concise overviews of dissemination undertakings in 33 state departments of education. These overviews are intended to:

- Provide state perspectives on dissemination in relation to an emergent nationwide configuration. The

Education Division of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is actively engaged in a variety of projects - many of them being carried out by nonprofit contractors such as regional educational laboratories. These, taken together, should lead in a few years to a loosely organized but highly visible configuration of programs and projects functioning within and across state lines to provide information, resources, training, and technical assistance for the nation's educational community.

- Stimulate an exchange of information and experiences among the various states so that each can be aware of, benefit from, and/or link up with the dissemination activities and projects of the others.
- Inform research and development (R&D) policymakers and practitioners about the dissemination capabilities and interests of the various states, while at the same time pointing up areas of weakness where further R&D work in dissemination may be needed in the coming years.

Limitations on Data Presented

At no moment in time can a report of this nature be considered comprehensive or fully up to date. Each Regional Exchange (Rx) collected dat[illegible]m state agencies in its own ways and then reported its data in a somewhat [illegible]lel format. Yet it is important to emphasize the fragile nature of this first reporting effort and to acknowledge that, in so fluid and inchoate a field, changes are almost certain to spurt ahead of documentation efforts of this

type. Descriptions of state efforts could not always be verified with appropriate agencies, since such a rigorous process would have delayed publication even further. Hence, the information is offered only as a set of indicators of what appeared to be evolving in the states at a time (1977) when many were just moving into dissemination for the first time.

Moreover, it is extremely difficult to collect accurate, comprehensive, and current information about the dissemination priorities, needs, and activities of large, complex organizations such as the state departments of education. In some states, little valid information could be obtained; in others, pertinent information was sought from many different departments and individuals, each presenting somewhat different views of state operations. Often these views characterized state operations from special perspectives. In large measure, the difficulties the Regional Exchanges faced in attempting to obtain accurate and current information stem from the changing nature of the phenomenon. States are now moving ahead quickly in their emphasis on and programmatic commitment to dissemination. Therefore, attempts to capture and describe this evanescent and complex phenomenon must at best result in approximations and incomplete representations of the "true" state of affairs.

However, this joint effort did manage to collect information from knowledgeable state personnel who reported candidly on their dissemination needs and activities. Furthermore, the editors have tried to synthesize divergent points of view and to verify the accuracy of factual information. In this regard, the information collected by Regional Exchanges and synthesized in this overview does represent an important move toward meeting the need for a more comprehensive nationwide profile of educational dissemination at the state level.

Information Collection Methods

Information on state dissemination activities was collected from October 1976 to November 1977. In collecting the information, staff of Regional Exchanges relied on several sources. Existing state plans, policy statements, needs assessment study reports, dissemination proposals, and other materials were used as reference sources. Informal interviews were conducted either by phone or in person with several key persons who had overall responsibility for dissemination in each state department of education. In many cases these key state staff have been designated by respective chief state school officers as the "contact persons" to work with the RDx. State and intermediate education agency representatives who served as members of Regional Exchange advisory boards constitute yet another information source. Using a common reporting format (see Appendix C), the staff of Regional Exchanges then synthesized information from these sources and prepared their reports. These reports in turn became the basis for this overview.

Organization of This Report

Following this introductory section, this report will address State Dissemination Plans and Structures, including the location of responsibilities for dissemination within the state organizational structure. Then comes a description of the Dissemination Resources Base in the various states, indicating the varieties of resources and capabilities. Next a discussion of State Linkage Systems is provided, including the role of intermediate service agencies. The final section offers a brief analysis of expressed needs in knowledge synthesis and linkage training.

Four appendices are provided. The first describes some prominent federally funded dissemination efforts. The second contains a table showing

dissemination characteristics of states currently served by RDs. The third indicates the guidelines used by Regional Exchanges in collecting information about state dissemination efforts. And the final one provides a glossary of acronyms and other terms used in this report.

STATE DISSEMINATION PLANS AND STRUCTURES

Fifteen of the 33 states served by the RDx in 1977 had adopted state plans for educational dissemination and another eight were in the process of developing such plans. The National Institute of Education's State Capacity Building program (see Appendix A) provided a major impetus to development of state plans by providing "seed money" to selected states so that they could establish coordinated planning efforts. In many instances, the NIE provided planning (or "special purpose") grants before states received more comprehensive dissemination funding support. Thirteen of the 15 states that adopted plans by 1977 had used capacity building funds to develop and implement their dissemination endeavors.

An effective state plan will include dissemination objectives, strategies for accomplishing those objectives, designation of roles and responsibilities within the agency, resources allocated to achieve the objectives, and an evaluation scheme to assure feedback on accomplishments according to a prepared timetable. Once a state plan is adopted, improved coordination and management of state dissemination activities, along with more precise targeting of resources to priority areas of need, can be anticipated.

State Decisionmaking

The decision to develop or enhance educational dissemination capacity at the state level--whether or not stimulated by external funding opportunities--is most likely to originate in the state education agency itself, rather than in the state legislature. However, in many states the legislature has acted so as to provide an implied mandate for dissemination.

A legislature may require the establishment of agencies which are to assume dissemination responsibilities. For example, in Alaska a Senate bill went into

effect in July, 1976, which established seven Learning Resource Centers as service agencies functioning in cooperation with local school districts and the State Department of Education. This act established a regionally-based statewide network as a mechanism by which two-way dissemination linkages might effectively function between regional centers and the state department. In Texas, a Division of Dissemination has been established in the Texas Education Agency to coordinate dissemination activities in that state. In some other states, such as Colorado, the state legislature has charged the Department of Education with assisting school districts to strengthen their educational programs and to provide information which could help school districts to increase their efficiency in using available financial resources. Similarly, in Florida, the Educational Accountability Act (1976) charges the Department of Education with providing information for educational decision-makers at the state, district and school levels in order to appropriately allocate resources and meet the need for the state in a timely manner.

State Objectives

State objectives vary by the types of need identified and resources available to meet those needs. State objectives are established in some states, such as Pennsylvania and New Mexico, by a steering or dissemination committee composed of members of various divisions of the State Education Agency. In other states, such as Alaska, a Capacity Building grant enabled the state to organize a statement of goals which were then reviewed in terms of current Department of Education and State Board goals. In still other cases (e.g., Colorado and Kentucky), a Dissemination Advisory Council at the State agency supervises development of planning activities, whereas in Oregon state staff formulated the plan with a council of representatives from local education agencies, intermediate agencies, R&D centers, and teacher training institutions.

In those states for which objectives were available from the Regional Exchange reports, one common objective can be identified: The establishment throughout the state of a linkage network resulting in a two-way flow of information between the resource base and educational practitioners. Objectives related to this goal vary in terms of the amount of emphasis placed on various components of a linkage network; i.e., some states, such as Oregon, stress the strengthening of local problem-solving capability whereas other states, such as Florida, stress the development of a comprehensive resource base. The following are representative statements of objectives from various states which illustrate the differences and similiarities among state objectives for dissemination:

- Strengthen local problem-solving capability by building and nurturing a two-way flow of information which effectively puts users with needs in touch with resources necessary to help develop new models and products which satisfy those needs (OREGON).
- Facilitate rational consideration and appropriate use of the results of research and development to improve educational programs and the art, science, and practice of education (IDAHO).
- Centralize information services at the State Department and decentralize information utilization and product use as much as possible (IOWA).
- Build a generalized network of dissemination through linkages between well-established and functioning specialized state networks which involve the State Agency's service areas and several overlays of intermediate level units (MICHIGAN).
- Develop a comprehensive dissemination capacity in the form of an information utility based on personal and telecommunication linkages throughout the state (MINNESOTA).
- Provide convenient access to information and resources in the education system and in other state systems; information resource goal only (FLORIDA).
- Develop a coordinated communications network departmentwide and statewide to bring together all users who support and receive services (SOUTH CAROLINA).

Dissemination strategies to accomplish those objectives fall into three

categories: Building an information resource base, establishing a linkage system throughout the state to help users obtain resources, and developing a leadership component to allocate responsibility for coordination. (Components of the resource base are described in the section entitled State Dissemination Resource Base and development of linkages is discussed in the section entitled Linkage Systems.)

Organization for Dissemination

Leadership/Coordination responsibilities have been identified in 13 of the 33 states; i.e., an Office of Dissemination has been created to coordinate activities and/or a specific person has been assigned responsibility for this role. These offices supervise and/or coordinate the implementation of the state plan. The configuration of dissemination roles and actors varies according to the capabilities already existing in the state. For example, in states like Minnesota, Alaska, and Texas, intermediate service units or educational service centers assume substantial importance as key units in the dissemination process. Sixteen of the 33 states described here rely on intermediate units for dissemination purposes. In some states, such as Florida and Minnesota, teacher training institutions are included as part of the dissemination configuration.

Responsibility for Dissemination

In general, there are two types of dissemination activities within a state agency. First, there are programmatic efforts to disseminate information in various areas; e.g., vocational education, special education, etc. (Virtually every state dissemination effort includes efforts by program specialists to disseminate to their special audiences.)

Secondly, there are the more generalized types of dissemination efforts which aim to cut across programmatic lines; e.g., promotion of exemplary

practices, strengthening of resource bases. In cases where a State Capacity Building grant has been awarded, project staff are associated with this effort. Only in Texas is there a Division of Dissemination which assumes responsibility for all dissemination on a statewide basis. In most state agencies, dissemination responsibility is one of several communication functions handled by a particular division or office within the state department. These offices may include Public Information/Relations or Communications Department as in Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Oklahoma; the Planning, Research, and Evaluation offices as in North Carolina, Tennessee, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Arkansas; the Unit of Accreditation and Accountability as in Colorado; or the Instructional Division as in Missouri, Idaho, Oregon, and New Mexico. Often, more than one of these offices tries to coordinate the dissemination activities within the state.

These offices and divisions are located at various levels within the state hierarchy. In four states, directors of these offices report directly to the chief state school officer. In eleven states, these offices report to a deputy or associate commissioner or superintendent, whereas in eight cases dissemination managers are accountable to an assistant superintendent or commissioner. Because the diverse structures and titles of state departments vary widely, it is impossible to identify accurately the level of visibility or responsibility actually attached to any given state program. But the nature of offices, functions, and personnel who handle dissemination at many levels and areas within a state may well be suggestive of the significance given to educational dissemination in that state.

STATE DISSEMINATION RESOURCE BASE

Dissemination resources now available in the states in large measure have resulted from federal subsidization of such generalized nationwide programs as NDN, ESEA Title IV-C, State Capacity Building Grants, RDx, and RDU.* However, in 16 of the 33 states participating in RDx, states have used state monies to strengthen their dissemination capacity. Among the most common dissemination resources available at the state level are: (1) an information search and retrieval capability, (2) an array of exemplary practices, and (3) human resources for technical assistance and consultation in dissemination.

Information Search and Retrieval System

Access to timely and targeted information has been a persistent problem for educators. Twenty-one of 33 states participating in RDx have developed statewide computerized information retrieval systems to help teachers and administrators meet their information needs. Though all of these systems are designed to provide more centralized, quicker, and easier access to information, they differ among states with respect to their capability and the ways in which information requests are processed. In terms of capability, state systems tend to be linked to varying types of data bases. Project CITE in Texas, for example, reports having access to more than 100 data bases. The most commonly used data bases include the following types: Bibliographies, statistics, government publications and proceedings, and specific subject area documents (e.g., special education). These data bases are available on-line from a number of vendors (e.g., Lockheed's DIALOG, System Development Corporation's ORBIT). In addition, some states--e.g., the Wisconsin Information Resources for Education (WIRE) and Project DAIRE in Delaware--are expanding

* See Appendix A.

their databases by the inclusion of directories of human and material resources within the state. States gain access to data bases through contractual agreement with vendors and information services. For example, the state of Michigan and the CITE project in Texas use Lockheed's DIALOG and the System Development Corporation's ORBIT services. The Minnesota Information Network for Educators (MINE), Project A-TIP in Alaska, and Project Exchange in Montana have obtained information services from the San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC) in California. Project DAIRE's Information Search and Retrieval Unit (ISIU) in Delaware uses the services of Lockheed's DIALOG, Research and Information Services for Education (RISE) and Vocational Education Information Network (VEIN) in Pennsylvania, and the Delaware Rapid Interlibrary Loan Service. These are some examples of data bases and information services used by states.

Use of Intermediaries

Though information services are made available to a broad range of users, (i.e., teachers, administrators, school boards, etc.), requests are frequently handled through intermediaries. For example, in Iowa, each of the 15 Area Education Agencies in the states has one staff person who is trained in using Iowa's information system (called INFORMS) and who serves as a liaison to local educational agencies in the area. Similarly, of the 29 intermediate units in Pennsylvania, RISE has trained dissemination liaison persons in 25 intermediate units to act as field agents for services RISE provides. The CITE Project in Texas channels requests through the state's 20 regional educational service centers in addition to providing some services to Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Similarly, local requests in Alaska are handled by the state's Learning Resource Centers which transmit them to the state. In many cases, these intermediaries provide more than information search and retrieval services; in fact, they act as linking agents between the state and the local educational agencies. (See

section on State Linking Systems.)

Exemplary Practices

According to JDRP criteria, locally-developed programs and practices are designated as exemplary if they have demonstrated effects having statistical and educational significance and if these effects can be replicated elsewhere. To date, every state in this report has submitted programs for review by JDRP; furthermore, every state has one or more programs which have been approved by JDRP and designated as exemplary. However, in addition to this national review process, 14 of the 33 states participating in RDx have developed their own Identification, Validation, and Dissemination (IVD) procedures which employ methods and selection criteria similar to those used by JDRP. Nine additional states are proposing to institute IVD procedures.

State Validation Procedures

IVD procedures adopted by states all tend to include steps on identification and review of exemplary practices, dissemination of information about approved exemplary practices, and implementation or replication support. The identification and review step is carried out by states with varying degrees of formality and thoroughness. In Texas, the Demonstration School Network has been established to identify, screen, validate, and disseminate information about exemplary school programs. Nominations of school programs are submitted by school superintendents, educational service center staff, deans of teacher education institutions, and Texas Education Agency staff to a review committee consisting of a broad range of representatives from local schools, educational service centers, state education agency, R&D laboratories, and the Governor's Office. Initial screening is done by the review committee, followed by on-site visits before programs are designated as exemplary. The Michigan Adoption Program has established a committee to review local programs and classify them as

operating in the following stages: Planning, developmental, experimental, and demonstration. Once programs have been approved, they are designated as demonstration sites and state funds are made available to other schools to implement the program. In the state of Washington, plans are underway to develop a two-level exemplary practice system. Level one programs are essentially those which have "passed" JDRP-like criteria; level two programs are those which are approved by use of less stringent criteria. Many of the states' teacher-developed materials fall into this latter category.

As programs are designated as exemplary, states tend to maintain descriptive files of these programs. Seventeen of the 33 states participating in RDx maintained exemplary practice files. Some files are limited to only nationally validated programs; others focus on specialized areas (e.g., special education, foreign language). In addition, state newsletters feature exemplary programs; occasionally reports and catalogs of exemplary practices are prepared and distributed; and many states sponsor annual education fairs to disseminate information about exemplary programs. A few states (e.g., Wisconsin) have included their exemplary practice file in their computerized data base so that the information can be readily retrieved.

In Texas, the Texas Diffusion Network provides liaison service between resources in exemplary practices and the education service center staff. The network has files on nationally validated programs (NDN), Title IV-C validated programs, state validated programs, and products of nonprofit R&D laboratories and centers. The educational service center staff identify school needs, offer programmatic alternatives for consideration, and, if necessary, provide technical assistance to help install the programs.

Implementation

Support for the implementation and replication of exemplary practices exists

At both the federal and state levels. In addition to the possibility of receiving direct federal support through the NDN as a Developer/Demonstrator project, programs may receive state support in a number of ways. In Ohio, 181 exemplary programs are given financial support to develop implementation procedure guides. Funds are also provided to local educational agencies for materials and inservice training support. The state of Idaho reimburses interested teachers and administrators for travel costs to observe innovative programs.

Human Resources File

In addition to print resources, states have relied on technical assistance and consultant services to demonstrate promising practices, conduct training sessions in linking agent skills, and install innovative programs. Ten of the 33 states reported having established human resource or talent bank files. Two additional states are planning the development of human resource files. Some of these "files" are characterized as informal systems which rely on personal contacts and recommendations rather than a formal and systematic filing effort.

Talent Bank in Idaho, which began operating in 1976, is a listing of consultants selected by the State Department of Education to provide assistance to local education agencies and teachers. Consultants of the Talent Bank are selected following formal application to the state. Individuals with expertise in conducting workshops or working on a one-to-one basis in such areas as finance, curriculum development, materials development, and evaluation are selected; an annual review is conducted to determine degree of interest in and effective use of consultants. Requests are initiated by a local district superintendent and submitted to the Talent Bank coordinator, who selects a consultant from the immediate area of the requesting district.

One of the key elements of Project A-TIP in Alaska is the identification, description, acquisition, and processing of instructional resources, including

a human talent bank. The process for establishing the human talent bank involves the identification of priority areas, design of criteria for inclusion, and identification and gathering of consultants. The Talent Bank, a directory of human resources established in 1973, includes educators, tradespeople, and professionals.

STATE LINKAGE SYSTEMS

One component of most state dissemination plans is the development of a linkage system within the state to facilitate information retrieval and the flow of information between the resource base and educational practitioners. Twenty of the 33 states served by the RDx have a defined linkage concept undergirding their state dissemination activities. Each state, however, has developed a unique configuration of linkage roles, structures, and activities in response to the unique needs of that state. This section of the report will highlight the variety of these approaches among the states.

Definition and Approach to Linkages

Developing a linkage mechanism requires a state to define who will perform the linking agent role, where linking agents will be located, and what role they will perform. Some states, like Wisconsin, define a linking agent as anyone who works in an assisting relationship with local teachers and administrators in the area of program improvement. A major conceptual focus in this approach is the belief that using existing linkers who are already part of a functioning system is more appropriate than creating a new cadre of linkers who would operate parallel to these existing systems.

Linkage Structure and Activities

The approach taken by a state toward the linking agent role is influenced by the organizational unit in which the dissemination function resides. In states such as Wisconsin, which conceive of linkages at the school building level, the linker concept emerges from an expanded view of the role of instructional and administrative staff. In other states, linking agents are more removed from instruction; they are in most instances housed in intermediate service agencies. ISAs exist in 23 of the 33 states served by RDx. Sixteen of these ISAs play an

active linkage role between local educational agencies and the state agency. These ISAs vary considerably depending on whether they operate as extensions of the state Department of Education and whether they specialize in programmatic areas. States with linking agents at the ISA level include Texas, Illinois, Colorado, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

In Texas, for example, 20 regional service centers, which are supported by a combination of state, local, and federal funds, are independent, locally controlled agencies established to provide services to the local districts. Although some of these services are mandated by the State Department of Education, and although the centers develop a working liaison with the state, they perform no regulatory function and are considered strictly local education agencies. Each center has an appointed "dissemination specialist" who provides liaison with the Division of Dissemination of the State Department. The regional service centers channel local requests for information, act as NDN State Facilitators for their respective regions, help in identifying and validating local exemplary programs, distribute information on state and nationally validated programs, and forward to the State Department information on local needs and concerns.

In still other states, the linkage approach is developed within coordinated dissemination networks or projects housed at the state agency level. Some examples of this approach include Project DAIRE in Delaware, Project A-TIP in Alaska, and Project Exchange in Montana. In other states, such as Alabama, all state agency staff are considered to have linking agent functions as part of their own roles in working with local schools.

Another approach to the linkage system is that undertaken in Florida where the 22 Teacher Education Centers have been assigned linking agent tasks. And finally, some states such as Missouri rely on NDN State Facilitators to play a major linkage role in the state's dissemination activities.

Many states consider the functions and activities of the NDN State

Facilitator as one of their primary state resources and a significant part of their state's activities in dissemination. At the time of this report, facilitators had been established in all but two of the 33 states, some only quite recently. As a result, their organizations and activities range from incipient to highly developed and may include:

- distributing brochures and publications
- planning demonstration sites
- assisting schools in selecting appropriate nationally or state validated programs
- providing technical assistance in establishing such programs
- promoting "awareness" of new programs via newsletters, workshops, and consultations
- coordinating all dissemination activities with the state department of education

In addition to these personal linking agent approaches, other states with geographically dispersed populations have begun experimenting with telecommunication linkages between local educational agencies and intermediate agencies and the state agency. Alaska, for example, has developed two-way dissemination linking Regional Learning Resource Centers, local educational agencies, and the state agency.

The functions performed by linking agents are greatly influenced by the nature of the state's dissemination effort. In Delaware's Project DAIRE, "field agent" services to facilitate active dissemination of educational information are provided by linking the educational needs assessment results of the Delaware Educational Accountability Program with the information services of the Information Search and Retrieval Unit.

Illinois has established five "program service teams" which help local districts with needs assessment and program planning, maintain a list of potential consultants, serve as liaison between the Office of Education and local

districts, and provide technical assistance to local educational agencies. Specific activities in dissemination are due to expand--by specifically identifying potential Title I programs for validation and installing a computer terminal with access to ERIC and other educational information.

STATE DISSEMINATION NEEDS

As state departments of education develop dissemination programs and strategies, they encounter a variety of challenges in implementing their plans. Some of the needs they identify are inherent to state educational structures whereas others provide opportunities for the R&D performers, policymakers, and dissemination specialists to enhance dissemination capacity within the states.

Dissemination needs and concerns may be categorized into coordination needs; resource requirements; communication concerns; and training needs. Highlights of areas where external resources will be helpful to state dissemination efforts are included:

Leadership

- Many state representatives expressed concern with the lack of leadership and/or coordination and with duplication of effort in dissemination services at the level of the state agency. A need for regional coordination of dissemination units (i.e., across state boundaries) was also identified, particularly the creation of mechanisms for sharing information.

Resources

- The high cost of comprehensive dissemination services and a concomitant lack of funds and skilled personnel to do the job were identified as a major problem by several states. Specifically, these comments include the need for more money to start new programs and the need for time and resources to follow-up on the services provided to local educational agencies.

Reaching Audiences

- In several states, a critical need for disseminating information so as to assure its use by public school teachers was noted, along with a need to educate local educational agencies on the role of the state agency as a resource for educational services and information. The need for more effective communication links between local educational agencies and the state agency was also mentioned, along with the difficulty in some states of gaining access to local school personnel.

Resource Base

- Some states noted the need for improvement in the quality of both content and format of information disseminated. The development of synthesized materials for educational practitioners is thus an area where assistance to state education agencies could be most helpful. Topics specifically requested by state representatives include:

models/programs in basic skills; research on instructional techniques in reading; use of leisure time; citizenship; career and vocational education; sex education; institutional programs for mainstreaming; alternative schools; school dropout prevention; and lifelong skills (consumer education, personal finance).

Staff Development

- Enhancing capability in dissemination requires the development of trained personnel to work with local schools. Specific skills required by linkers across states include: analyzing and planning; conducting inservice training; using program selection guides and procedures; conducting educational measurement and assessment; identifying, validating, and disseminating program practices; working with teachers' centers; understanding competency-based education; explaining minimal-competence testing; stimulating community involvement; using needs identification and assessment techniques; and choosing among dissemination strategies and tactics.

APPENDIX A

Major Federally Supported Dissemination Programs

Acknowledgements for Appendix A and D

Descriptions of ERIC, NDN, State Capacity and RDU in Appendix A were edited from materials provided by these sources. Portions of the glossary of terms in Appendix D were taken from the NTS Report "1977 State Abstracts — The State Capacity Building Program" by Madey, Mojkowski and Strang.

Major Federally Supported Dissemination Programs

The dissemination practices of the 33 states described here do not occur in a vacuum but are part of a complex "nationwide configuration" of national, regional, and state programs, supported by a variety of funding sources. In addition to RDx, some of the prominent federally supported dissemination programs are ERIC, the National Diffusion Network (NDN), the State Dissemination Grants, and the R&D Utilization Program (RDU). Because these programs often influence the direction that state activities take, each will be described here.

--ERIC--

The Educational Resources Information Center, or ERIC, was established by the U. S. Office of Education (USOE) in the mid-1960s when the literature of education was relatively uncontrolled. At that time, research reports submitted to USOE by contractors and grantees usually were distributed haphazardly and soon disappeared. ERIC was designed to correct this situation by providing a more solid base for prompting acceptance and use of worthwhile educational developments and research-based knowledge.

The ERIC designers developed a network of topical clearinghouses rather than a single monolithic center. These clearinghouses were based in host organizations (mainly universities and professional associations) which were well established and had continuing contacts with practitioners and researchers in ther respective fields.

To develop data base reference resources, and to generate information products, the ERIC Clearinghouses were integrated through a central computerized facility capable of serving as a "switching" center for the entire network. This centralized data base enables those using ERIC to have access to data and products covering the full range of educational interests.

ERIC makes available more than 100,000 unpublished, hard-to-find documents through hundreds of libraries and information centers. ERIC's specialty is noncopyrighted, unpublished educational materials such as project reports, research findings, locally-produced materials, and conference proceedings. These materials include all levels and subject areas of education; they are available in inexpensive microfiche and print forms. In addition, ERIC publishes indexes which include abstracts of all educational documents.

--NDN--

The National Diffusion Network (NDN), first funded by the U. S. Office of Education (USOE) in 1974, is an expanding nationwide system intended to provide effective educational alternatives to meet the needs of school-age children and/or of those who educate them. NDN's goal is to help educational practitioners solve pressing problems swiftly, efficiently, and economically through program improvement efforts. The NDN links school districts, intermediate service agencies, and state departments of education -- within states and across state boundaries -- so that programs developed in one district, and shown to be effective, can be used to advantage in other districts facing similar challenges. Programs eligible for dissemination through NDN are those which have been approved by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP). Originally, the panel was established in 1972 by USOE to review and designate as exemplary those USOE-supported programs which had demonstrated effectiveness (in terms of statistical and educational significance) and whose effects could be replicated at other sites. The scope of the review panel was expanded in 1975 by the addition of reviewers from NIE programs and by submissions from NIE-supported projects. The joint USOE-NIE panel members are chosen for their experience in education and their ability to analyze evaluation evidence as to the effectiveness of educational products and practices. The full review process begins with an

Education Division project officer who believes that an intervention supported by Education Division funds may be worthy of dissemination as exemplary. Submissions to the panel are made directly by USOE and NIE program officers, who are responsible for carrying out a pre-review screening. By early 1978, nearly 200 programs had been approved by the JDRP. Once programs have earned JDRP approval, they are cataloged and available for dissemination support. Two groups of participants in NDN -- State Facilitators (SFs) and Developer/ Demonstrators (D/Ds) -- have received funding from USOE's Division of Educational Replication to assist schools that are searching for ways to improve their programs and that are interested in adopting one or more of the approved programs. SFs, located in nearly every state, are aware of the needs of school districts in their own states. Each SF serves to link its own state's schools with suitable D/D projects that have succeeded in meeting similar types of challenges. D/Ds then provide training assistance for schools as they work to adopt or adapt one of these new educational programs or processes. Many of the JDRP-approved D/D exemplary programs, spanning all grade levels and many content areas, are now being supported by funds from the Division of Educational Replication.

About a dozen projects identified as exemplary by the JDRP have been packaged, with financial support from USOE, into Project Information Packages (PIPs) that include sufficient management information about an innovation so that a school district may choose to adopt or reject it with little or no external technical assistance. At one point eight regional PIP diffusion contractors were funded to disseminate information about PIPs and to provide limited technical assistance to adopters, but this support effort is now carried out by NDN's State Facilitators.

--State Dissemination Grants--

As part of its mission to foster improvement of education throughout the country, the National Institute of Education (NIE) has assumed responsibility for strengthening the dissemination capabilities of state educational agencies (SEAs).

Through the State Dissemination Grants Program, two types of awards are made to SEAs:

- Capacity Building Grants support SEA efforts to build a comprehensive state dissemination capacity. These awards are of one-year duration and are potentially renewable for several additional years.
- Special Purpose Grants support relatively short-term efforts related to building a comprehensive state dissemination capacity. These grants are used to support such SEA activities as initial planning, training of personnel, or the development of specific dissemination resources.

The goals of the State Dissemination Grants Program have been broadly defined. The Grants Solitations Announcements state that the establishment of a comprehensive dissemination capacity requires three components: an extensive set of resources, a means for linking client groups to the resource base, and the leadership and management arrangements which facilitate the provision of problem-solving services to all clients. The program is designed to be user-driven, that is, to respond to state dissemination needs; thus state grantees have developed their own specific objectives and activities based on those needs.

In 1975, ten states were awarded Capacity Building Grants and four states received Special Purpose Grants. In 1976, fourteen additional Capacity Grants and five Special Purpose Grants were awarded. Depending on availability of funds, NIE anticipates supporting successive groups of states until all those qualified are included.

In conjunction with the State Dissemination Grants Program, NIE also supports a National Dissemination Leadership Project which promotes communication among state education agency personnel who are involved in dissemination. Each SEA has a representative appointed by the Chief State School Officer. This representative participates in national and regional meetings and in other forms of communication intended to improve the dissemination capacities of all SEAs.

--Research and Development Utilization Program--

In 1976, the NIE sponsored the Research and Development Utilization Program (RDU). The purpose of the program is to provide services that help schools use R&D-based innovations to improve educational practices. About 80 percent of the program's effort supports activities that provide direct services to schools, while the remainder is directed toward studying these activities in order to collect data expected to benefit other ongoing federal and state efforts to help schools. The program includes seven field operations or projects and an asspciated evaluation effort.

The seven projects can be described briefly as variations of a set of school services falling within a defined range of services believed by NIE staff to be essential to foster the use of R&D outcomes.

Aside from their similarity in focusing on services intended to bring about greater use of R&D outcomes, the projects are alike in delivering most of their services through "intermediate service agencies," usually working with

or through a state agency. These intermediate agencies range from county offices to state departments of education to teachers' professional organizations to R&D laboratories and universities.

Many other federally supported dissemination programs and networks exist. They are too numerous to describe here; furthermore, these programs and networks tend to be far more content-focused. Examples include: the Vocational and Technical Education network, the Child Service Demonstration Centers, the Right to Read Program, Teacher Corps network, General Assistance Centers, Teachers' Centers, educational cooperatives, and so on.

Table A shows each state that had an ERIC Clearinghouse, RDx Project, State Dissemination Grant, NDN project, or RDU Program, as of March, 1978.

--Research and Development Exchange (RDx)--

The RDx is an emerging Federal initiative funded by NIE to encourage closer interaction between the world of educational research and development on one hand and school practice on the other. The primary goal of the RDx is reflected in its name and can be simply stated as follows: to create an exchange of information. Researchers and developers attempt to communicate the results of their work to educational practitioners; simultaneously, the practitioners use the RDx to relay information about their needs to researchers, developers, and policymakers. Thus the RDx encourages practitioners to seek to influence future R&D programs and policies, while it informs them about available R&D outcomes.

Currently, the RDx is operated by a network of regional educational laboratories and a university-based research and development center.* These

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* To date, participating R&D laboratories and centers include: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, CEMREL, Inc., Center for Vocational Education, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Research for Better Schools, Inc., Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Table A

States with RDx, ERIC, NDN, RDU, and State Capacity Programs

States	RDx	ERIC Clearinghouse	NDN	RDU	Capacity Building Grant	Capacity Building Planning Grant
Alabama	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Alaska	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Arizona					✓	
Arkansas	✓		✓			✓
California		✓		✓	✓	
Colorado	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Connecticut				✓	✓	
Delaware	✓		✓		✓	
District of Columbia		✓		✓		✓
Florida	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Georgia				✓	✓	
Hawaii						✓
Idaho	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Illinois	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Indiana	✓		✓			
Iowa	✓		✓			
Kansas	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Kentucky	✓		✓		✓	
Louisiana	✓		✓			
Maine						
Maryland	✓		✓			
Massachusetts				✓	✓	
Michigan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Minnesota	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Mississippi	✓		✓			
Missouri	✓		✓			
Montana	✓		✓			
Nebraska	✓		✓		✓	
Nevada					✓	
New Hampshire						
New Jersey		✓				
New Mexico	✓	✓	✓			
New York		✓			✓	
North Carolina	✓		✓			
North Dakota						
Ohio	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Oklahoma	✓		✓		✓	
Oregon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pennsylvania	✓		✓	✓		
Rhode Island					✓	
South Carolina	✓		✓		✓	
South Dakota						
Tennessee	✓		✓			
Texas	✓		✓		✓	
Utah			✓			✓
Vermont						✓
Virginia	✓	✓				
Washington	✓		✓	✓		✓
West Virginia	✓		✓			
Wisconsin	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Wyoming				✓		✓
TOTALS	33	11	33	18	26	7

institutions, as a group, provide four central services and five regional exchanges, the latter working with 33 cooperating state departments of education. The regional exchanges are the core of RDx. They serve the educational practitioners primarily through intermediate linkages affiliated with the state departments of education. That is, each cooperating state department has one or more contact persons. Schools, then, can call on these linkers, who in turn, refer questions or requests which they cannot satisfy to the regional exchanges. Supporting the regional exchanges are the four central services: linkage training, resource and referral, R&D interpretations, and system support.

APPENDIX B

Summary of Dissemination Activities in 33 States

Dissemination Characteristics
in States Served by RDx

RX	States Served by RDx	Adopted State Plan	Developing State Plan	Coordinating Office at SEA	Individual Linking Agent Role	Centralized/Decentralized [illegible]	State [illegible] Resources	State Network	State Supported Linkage Staff	Non-State Facilitator	NDN	Human Resources File	Staffs with Dissemination Capability	Exemplary Practice File
AEL	ALABAMA				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
	FLORIDA	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
	KENTUCKY	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	MISSISSIPPI									✓		✓		
	NORTH CAROLINA	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
	SOUTH CAROLINA	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓
	TENNESSEE		✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		✓
	VIRGINIA													
	WEST VIRGINIA				✓					✓			✓	
CEMREL	ILLINOIS	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	INDIANA			✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	
	IOWA	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
	KANSAS	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	MICHIGAN	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	MINNESOTA	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	
	MISSOURI				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
	NEBRASKA	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
	OHIO			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
	WISCONSIN	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NWREL	ALASKA	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	COLORADO		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	IDAHO	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	MONTANA	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓				
	OREGON	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	WASHINGTON	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
RBS	DELAWARE		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
	MARYLAND		✓				✓			✓				
	PENNSYLVANIA					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
SEDL	ARKANSAS		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
	LOUISIANA		✓		✓		✓			✓				✓
	NEW MEXICO		✓	✓			✓			✓				
	OKLAHOMA			✓			✓		✓	✓			✓	
	TEXAS			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX C

Guideline for Collecting Information About
State Dissemination Activities

I. Practitioner Needs (needs assessments)

A. What are the major educational needs and priorities of SEAs, ISAs, and large LEAs served by the RXs?

1. Identify priority areas of states. How did the state identify these priorities? Are they:

- Content needs (e.g., basic skills)?
- Process needs (e.g., dissemination training)?

2. Are there sub-priorities? Identify and rank order in importance.

3. Within priority areas, what are the major needs (e.g., inservice teacher training, desegregation programs)?

4. How can priority needs be met?

- What are the desired outcomes?
- What kinds of products/information will be useful in helping practitioners address priority needs (e.g., syntheses or interpretations of research findings, descriptions of R&D products, compilations or catalogs of products, consumer guides to product selection, or staff training materials)?

5. Of your priority areas, what specific areas particularly require knowledge synthesis at the moment?

6. (IF APPLICABLE) Are the priorities identified by the states the same for ISAs? If not, what are ISA priorities? Are they:

- Content needs (e.g., basic skills)?
- Process needs (e.g., dissemination training)?

7. What additional kinds of skills do linking agents need to help them meet practitioner needs more effectively (e.g., communication skills, intervention skills, problem-solving skills)?

8. (IF APPLICABLE) Are the priorities identified by the states the same for large LEAs? If not, what are LEA priorities? Are they:

- Content needs (e.g., basic skills)?
- Process needs (e.g., problem identification skills)?

II. Organizational Capability

A. What is the organizational structure within organizational units for utilization of innovations?

1. SEA organization

- Is there a state policy and plan for dissemination?
- Is there a legislative mandate for dissemination?
- Are dissemination activities scattered over programs or centralized? What is the nature of interaction across programs?

- What are some key dissemination units in the SEA?
- What kinds of resources are disseminated within state (e.g., exemplary practices, R&D products, etc.)?
- What are the channels for dissemination (e.g., newsletters, developer demonstrations, etc.)?
- Note organizational characteristics (e.g., demography, budget, degree of specialization, complexity, centralization, extent of federal support, informal networks, community involvement, years in operation of dissemination structure).
- How does information (needs, problems, priorities, plans, reactions, etc.) from educators in the state reach the SEA?

2. ISA Organization (DELETE IF NOT APPROPRIATE)

- What is the pattern of ISAs in the state?
- What type of linking do they do (e.g., resource center)?
- Note organizational characteristics as described above.
- How does information from educators (needs, problems, priorities, plans, reactions, etc.) in the region served reach the ISA? How does the SEA reach the ISA?

III. State Resources

A. What is available in locally developed exemplary practices that might be potentially responsive and useful to practitioner needs? That is,

1. What are each state's IVD procedures?

2. Does the state have a catalog of exemplary practices?

3. What are State Facilitators and/or Developers/Demonstrators doing in each state?

B. What human resource files are available in the state?

APPENDIX D

Glossary of Terms

GLOSSARY

ACCESS	(not an acronym) The name of Colorado's State Capacity Building Project. The project's basic strategy is to facilitate "ACCESS" to resources.
AIDS	Project AIDS, the Alabama Information and Development System, Alabama's Capacity Building Project.
A-TIP	Project A-TIP, Alaskan Talent, Information, and Promising Practices, Alaska's Capacity Building Project.
CESA	Cooperative Educational Service Agency - Wisconsin's 19 intermediate service units.
CITE	Project CITE, Coordinating Information for Texas Educators, the Texas Capacity Building Project.
D/D	Developer/Demonstrator in the National Diffusion Network.
DAG	Dissemination Analysis Group, a joint government task force which prepared policy recommendations for the Assistant Secretary for Education. DAG delineated four possible usages for the term, dissemination: (1) spread, (2) exchange, (3) choice, and (4) implementation.
DAIRE	Project DAIRE, Delaware Application of Information and Research to Education, the Delaware Capacity Building Project.
DEAS	Delaware Educational Accountability System, which includes a needs assessment and a program improvement phase.
DEEP	Diffusion of Exemplary Educational Practices Project, New Mexico's State Facilitator Project.
DIALOG	(not an acronym) On-line search program developed by Lockheed Information Systems. Presently it provides access to more than 50 different bibliographic and numeric databases.
ECSU	Educational Cooperative Service Unit, an intermediate unit formed of local education agencies between the level of the local education agencies and the Minnesota legislature.
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Center, a national information dissemination service operation created by OE in 1965 and funded since 1973 by NIE. ERIC provides ready access to reports of federally sponsored R&D and general educational R&D literature.
ESEA TITLE IV-C	The elementary and Secondary Education Act section that provides USOE funds for innovative programs in every state.
ETA	ETA Project, Educational Telecommunications for Alaska.

FREE	Project FREE, Florida Resources in Education Exchange, Florida's Capacity Building Project.
INFORMS	(not an acronym) The name of Iowa's information dissemination system.
IRDN	Illinois Resource and Dissemination Network, the State's Capacity Building Project.
ISA	Intermediate Service Agency.
ISRU	Project DAIRE's Information Search and Retrieval Unit, which is housed in the Delaware State Library.
IVD	Identification, Validation and Dissemination procedures for review of exemplary practices at the state level.
JDRP	Joint Dissemination Review Panel, review panel established jointly by NIE and USOE to review exemplary practices.
KEDDS	Kansas Education Dissemination/Diffusion System, the Kansas dissemination project.
LEA	Local Education Agency.
MINE	Minnesota Information Network for Educators, the State's Capacity Building Project.
NDLP	National Dissemination Leadership Project. The National Institute of Education supports the NDLP in conjunction with the State Dissemination Grants Program to promote communication on dissemination among all state education agency personnel.
NDN	National Diffusion Network. This federal/state/local network of agencies was established in 1974 by the U.S. Office of Education to improve the means and efforts of communication among the developers and practitioners (i.e., adopters-implementers) of worthwhile innovative practices, ideas, materials and programs in the field of education.
ORBIT	(not an acronym) A bibliographic search service developed by the System Development Corporation of Santa Monica, California, and McLean, Virginia. In addition to the ERIC base, this service also has databases in the natural and social sciences.
PIP	Project Information Package. For some products that have been identified as exemplary by the JDRP, these packages include management and implementation information about the innovation to aid school districts in adoption decisions.
PRISE	Pennsylvania Resource and Information for Special Education located in Intermediate Unit #23.

QUANDARY	(not an acronym) Project AIDS' computerized information retrieval system in Alabama.
RDx	Research and Development Exchange. This is a government-sponsored effort to bring educational research and development results to practitioners and to return their concerns to the researchers and developers. Several regional educational laboratories and a university-based research and development center have come together to form a network; its activities in 1977 were under the sponsorship of the School Practice and Service Division of the Naitonal Institute of Education.
RDU	Research and Development Utilization Program, an NIE sponsored program to provide services that help schools use R&D-based innovations to improve educational practices.
RESA	Regional Educational Service Agencies in Michigan; in 1977 four RESAs existed but there were plans for eight.
RISE	Research Information Service for Education, an information-retrieval organization in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, which maintains the ERIC database, and appropriate retrieval software, on its own in-house computers. It serves clients both in Pennsylvania and throughout the nation.
SEA	State Education Agency.
SF	State Facilitator, National Diffusion Network.
SMERC	San Mateo Educational Resource Center, an information-retrieval organization in Redwood City, California, which maintains the ERIC database, and appropriate retrieval software, on its own in-house computers. SMERC serves a nationwide clientele.
VEIN	Vocational Education Information Network in Pennsylvania, located at Millersville State College.
VISIT	Visit to Innovative Schools for Interested Teachers, organized in Idaho to encourage observation of innovative practices.
WIRE	Wisconsin Information Resources for Education, central database at Wisconsin State Department.