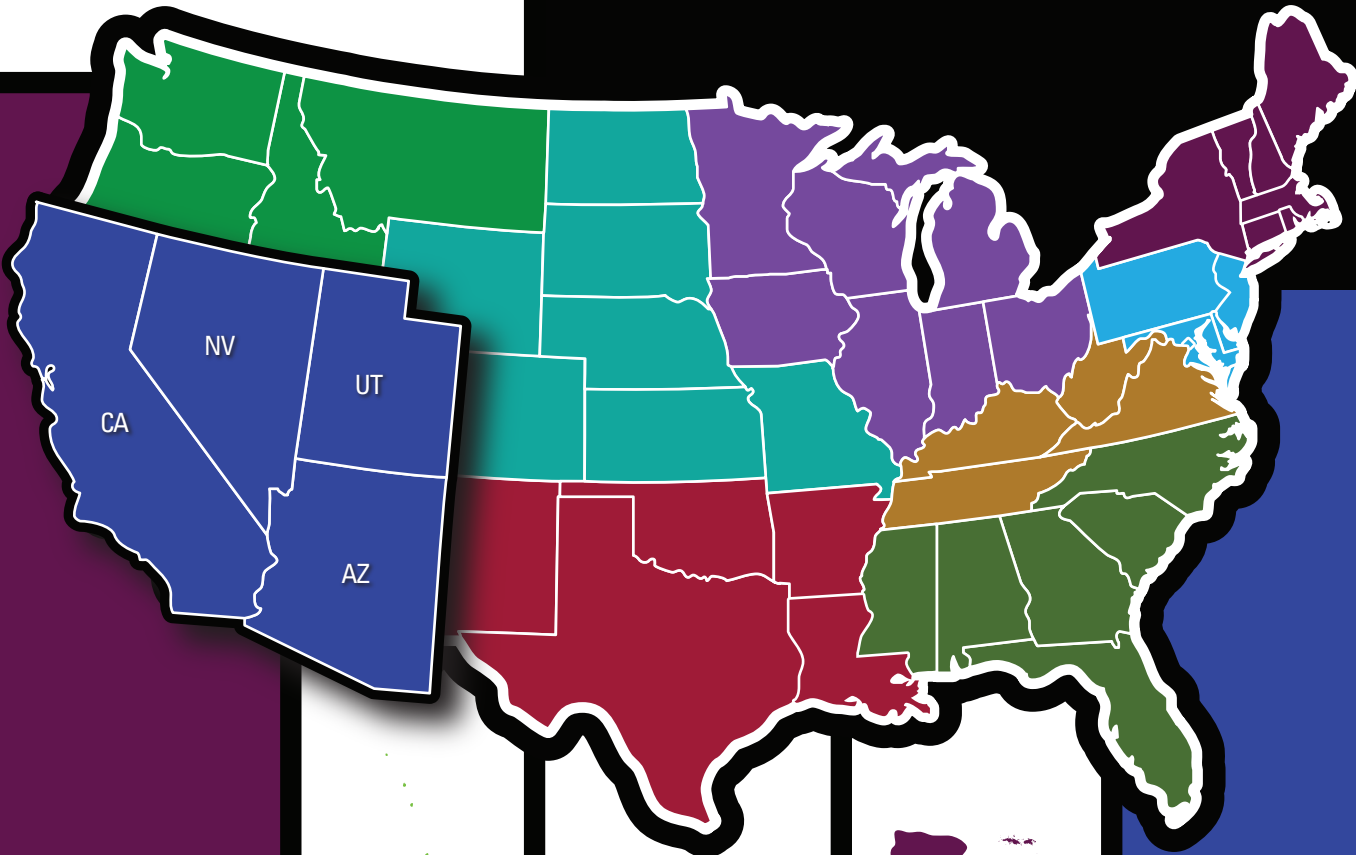
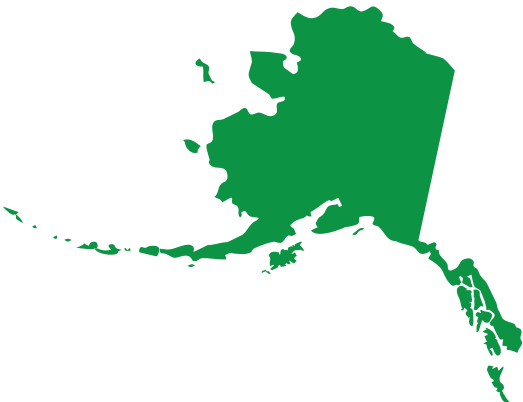


WESTERN REGION: A REPORT IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS



July 2011

U.S. Department of Education
Regional Advisory Committee
(RAC)



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PREFACE

This report presents the deliberations of the Western Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), one of 10 RACs established under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. seq.) to assess the educational needs of the region. The committee's report outlines the educational needs across the Western RAC states of Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. Committee deliberations took place May 23, 2011, through June 21, 2011.

Western RAC members represented state education agencies and practicing educators, including classroom teachers, principals, school board members and administrators. Members included:

Regional Chair

- Larry Shumway, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Designated Federal Official

- Carlos Martínez, Group Leader, Standards & Assessment, Student Achievement and School Accountability, U.S. Department of Education

RAC Members

- Rhian Evans Allvin, CEO, First Things First, Phoenix, AZ
- Gay Beck, Kindergarten Teacher, Highland Elementary School, Highland, UT
- Rorie Fitzpatrick, Director, Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education and School Improvement Programs, Nevada Department of Education, Carson City, NV
- Janet Levenson, Principal, Oxford Elementary School, Berkeley, CA
- Henry Lo, Member, Board of Education, Garvey School District, Monterey Park, CA
- Camille Maben, Director, Child Development Division, California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA
- Brett Peterson, Director, High Tech High, San Diego, CA

Facilitator

- Doreen Bass, Consultant, Synergy Enterprises, Inc., Silver Spring, MD

Note Takers

- Akshay Jakatdar, Research Assistant, Synergy Enterprises, Inc., Silver Spring, MD
- Bridget Doyle, Research Associate, Synergy Enterprises, Inc., Silver Spring, MD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Western RAC would like to thank Carlos Martínez, Designated Federal Official (DFO), from the U.S. Department of Education and Doreen Bass, RAC Facilitator from Synergy Enterprises, Inc., for their assistance and support. The Western RAC would also like to thank Akshay Jakatdar, Bridge Doyle and Clare Corroone from Synergy Enterprises, Inc., who assisted

the Western RAC by preparing the Regional Profile, helping the RAC organize the information gathered by the RAC, and documenting and providing logistical support for the committee's public meetings, including webinars, under U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-ESE-11-C-0017 (Nancy Loy, Project Officer).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During a four-week period (May 23, 2011 – June 21, 2011), the Western Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) held a series of public meetings to solicit input and deliberate on key educational needs facing the four states in the region – Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. A two-day, face-to-face, public meeting was held May 23-24, 2011 in Arlington, Virginia. This was followed by webinars on June 14, 2011 and June 21, 2011.

Through these face-to-face and virtual meetings, the Western RAC identified six priority educational needs facing the region and outlined a series of 37 strategies that could be used to meet those needs. The region's six educational needs, as identified by the Western RAC, are

- Closing the Achievement Gap.
- Promoting Effective Instruction.
- Implementing Common Core State Standards.
- Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas.
- Improving School Safety, Culture, and Climate.
- Preparing for College and Career Readiness.

These needs are not presented in priority order.

To solicit feedback regarding these needs, the Western RAC developed an outreach plan whereby each committee member sent a standard e-mail to key constituents, directing them to the Western RAC website to post comments regarding the region's education needs. Attached to the e-mail was a one-page needs summary. The outreach plan elicited 38 comments on the RAC website. These comments were used by the committee as it worked to refine the needs and identify strategies for meeting them.

INTRODUCTION

This report represents the regional needs assessment of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Western region, which includes Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. The Western RAC members conducted outreach activities to obtain input from various constituencies on regional needs and how to address those needs, used statistical data from the Western Regional Profile (Appendix A), and deliberated during three public meetings from May 23 through June 21, 2011.

Legislative Background

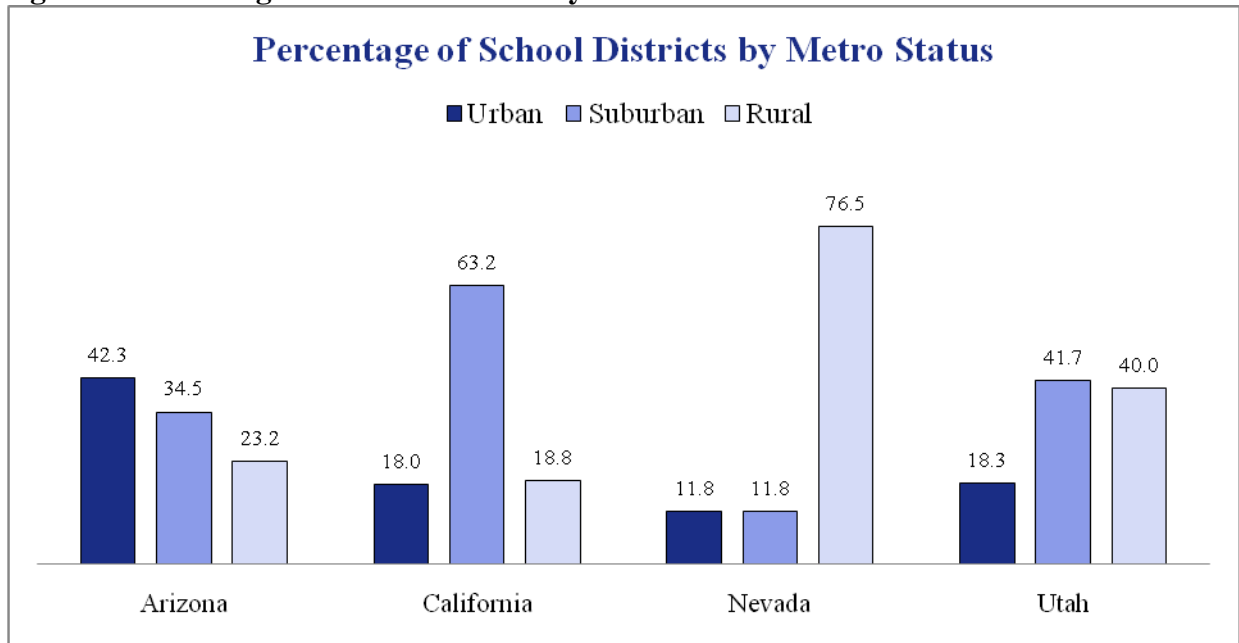
There are ten Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. seq.). The RACs are governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (Public Law 92-463). Each RAC also has a charter that defines the RAC's roles and responsibilities.

Regional Background Information

There is a wealth of educational data on the Western region. A regional profile was created to represent a descriptive statistical snapshot of the educational status in various areas of the four states in the Western region. The Western RAC used member expertise, information from the profile, as well as input from constituencies, to identify the region's most pressing educational needs. The entire profile can be found in Appendix A. However, excerpts are presented below that relate to the six priority needs identified by the Western RAC: closing the achievement gap; promoting effective instruction; implementing Common Core State Standards; building collaborative governance and restructuring financial formulas; improving school safety, culture, and climate; and preparing for college and career readiness.

Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status. Figure 1 contains the percentage of school districts by metro status in the four Western region states. A suburb is defined as a territory that is outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area. A rural area is a territory that is away from an urbanized area or urban cluster. An urban metro area is a territory that is inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. Figure 1 demonstrates the Western region's need associated with its "frontier rural" status and its impact on education, (i.e., sparsely populated areas that are isolated from population centers and services, making for long bus rides to and from school, difficulty in hiring and retaining effective teachers, etc.).

Figure 1: Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status



SOURCE: Common Core of Data 2003-2004.

Selected Student Subgroups. Table 1 displays selected student subgroups, such as percentage of students receiving Free and/or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL), percentage of students identifying as English Language Learners (ELL), and percentage of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Table 1 demonstrates the Western region’s need to close the achievement gap among all subgroups of students – not just those recognized for accountability purposes.

Table 1: Selected Student Subgroups

State	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch ¹	Percent of Students in ELL/LEP ¹	Percent of Students With an IEP ¹	Number of Migrant Students ²	Number of Homeless Students ²
Arizona	47.5	11.5	11.4	8,722	25,336
California	52.4	24.2	10.6	202,714	288,233
Nevada	39.0	17.5	11.1	241	8,670
Utah	31.2	7.9	11.6	1,788	14,016

SOURCES: ¹Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; ²Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Table 2 contains AYP data for Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah and demonstrates the Western region’s need for effective instruction, as well as closing the achievement gap between high performing and underperforming schools.

Table 2: Adequate Yearly Progress

State	Number and Percent of Schools That Failed To Make AYP in SY2008-2009
Arizona	490 (25.6%)
California	4921 (49.9%)
Nevada	254 (42.8%)
Utah	166 (16.8%)

SOURCE: ED Data Express, State Snapshots, SY2008-2009.

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Table 3 contains dropout rates by race and ethnicity during school year 2007-2008 for the Western region. Graduation and dropout rates do not add up to 100 percent, because they are based on different groups of students. Graduates are counted based on a single freshman class, whereas dropouts are calculated based on all students in any year. Table 3 illustrates the Western region’s need regarding college and career readiness, as well as closing the achievement gap among all subgroups of students.

Table 3: Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

State	Dropout Rate & Number of Dropouts (#)	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Arizona	6.7% (21,034)	11.4% (2,211)	3.8% (325)	7.3% (8,700)	7.1% (1,288)	5.6% (8,510)
California	5.0% (98,230)	6.6% (1,075)	2.3% (5,467)	6.0% (54,911)	9.0% (14,476)	3.1% (19,409)
Nevada	5.1% (6,170)	4.9% (97)	3.4% (343)	6.7% (2,583)	6.3% (889)	3.9% (2,258)
Utah	4.2% (6,920)	7.5% (236)	3.9% (222)	8.0% (1,732)	6.6% (160)	3.4% (4,549)

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2007-2008.

DATA COLLECTION AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The Western RAC held three public meetings. The first was a two-day, face-to-face meeting held on May 23 and 24, 2011 in Arlington, Virginia. During that meeting, Western RAC members identified six regional education needs based on the Western Regional Profile (see Appendix A), committee members’ expertise and experience, as well as input they received from constituent groups and public comments made at the meeting.

The second meeting was conducted via an online webinar on June 14, 2011. The public was invited to listen and submit their comments via the RAC website (www.seiservices.com/rac). At that meeting, committee members reviewed online data received from the RAC website and input from colleagues relevant to the needs identified by the committee and the public. Using these various information resources, the Western RAC members refined the identified needs. In addition, RAC members developed a one-page work product that summarized the identified needs. The RAC members used the work product as a marketing tool to disseminate information about the RAC’s work and seek public comments on the RAC website.

The third meeting was also an online webinar held on June 21, 2011. Again, members of the public listened to the proceedings but submitted their comments via the RAC website. During this final meeting, RAC members reviewed the second set of data from the RAC website. RAC members also reviewed the one-page work product and finalized their dissemination efforts.

RAC members disseminated the work product to numerous constituents via e-mail. Constituents included state and local education administrators, local boards of education, state legislators, teacher organizations, principal organizations, parent organizations, early childhood organizations, other youth organizations, and business leaders. Dissemination occurred after the Western RAC’s second public meeting; feedback was solicited on the six need areas outlined in the one page work product, “Summary of Identified Needs” (see Appendix B). Tables 4 and 5 indicate online response data captured from the RAC website comments.

Table 4: Comments by Affiliation

Role	N	%
Business	1	2
Librarian	14	38
Local Education Agency	5	13
Other	8	21
Parent	4	10
School Administrator	3	8
State Education Agency	0	0
Teacher	3	8
TOTAL	38	100

Table 5: Comments by State

State	N	%
Arizona	11	29
California	18	48
Nevada	2	5
Utah	7	18
TOTAL	38	100

Western RAC members reviewed the online comments and found that most were aligned with and validated the RAC’s assessment of the most pressing needs of the region. The public comments appear in Appendix C.

EDUCATION NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

The committee determined that the Western region differs significantly from the rest of the country. The Western region continues to be *frontier rural* in nature – distinguished by sparsely populated areas that are isolated from population centers and services. For education, the impact of frontier rural includes long bus rides to and from school, which contribute to higher dropout rates; difficulty in hiring and retaining highly effective teachers and leaders; and high rates of student poverty. Other commonalities among the Western region that differentiate it from the rest of the country include a young population, particularly among school-age children; low levels of per-pupil expenditures in education; and a culture of innovation and risk-taking. The committee advised that the unique character of the Western region be taken into consideration when discussing the region.

CROSS-CUTTING EDUCATIONAL THEMES

The Western RAC identified a series of cross-cutting themes that impact each of the six identified needs and must be taken into consideration when discussing the region's identified needs. The cross-cutting themes include the following:

- The use of **technology** in delivering instruction and professional development, as well as ensuring that students can effectively use technology.
- The development of **data systems** that are aligned throughout the P-20 continuum and provide effective data that can be used by all educators and policy makers to make informed decisions.
- The development and delivery of **comprehensive services to children and families** so that students come to school ready to learn and receive support at home.
- The development of **public relations** strategies to allow for constituents to be better informed on, and have a greater understanding of, educational issues.
- The need for **family and community engagement** throughout the K-20 continuum to help promote student achievement.

Leadership at all levels of the educational system, and alignment of system solutions across all needs, are also essential in any discussion of the Western region's needs.

In determining the region's needs, committee members contributed their expertise as well as input from the region's various constituencies. The Western RAC initially identified 21 needs that were ultimately consolidated into the six below, which are not listed in priority order:

- Closing the Achievement Gap.
- Promoting Effective Instruction.
- Implementing Common Core State Standards.
- Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas.
- Improving School Safety, Culture, and Climate.
- Preparing for College and Career Readiness.

For each need presented below, the committee summarized the need and generated recommendations to meet the need.

Need: Closing the Achievement Gap

The Western RAC determined that this need includes not only closing the achievement gap among the subgroups recognized for accountability purposes, but also includes migrant and homeless students. Increasing achievement at underperforming schools is also a key component of this need. Lastly, closing the achievement gap also includes closing the *readiness gap* so that all children enter school ready to learn.

Recommended Strategies to Address Closing the Achievement Gap

The committee identified the following strategies to meet the need:

1. Identify where gaps exist and why, at the state, district, and school levels through a root cause analysis.
2. Identify evidence-based best practices aligned with the results of the root cause analysis at the state, district and school levels.
3. Implement evidence-based best practices for educational leaders and teachers.
4. Correct identification of underperforming schools to include not only those failing to make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP), but also those that are *in danger of not making AYP*.
5. Create communities of practice statewide and regionally among underperforming schools to share information.
6. Identify and disseminate how the needs of underperforming schools differ from the needs of high performing schools.

Need: Promoting Effective Instruction

The Western RAC determined that the need identified as promoting effective instruction includes several components: measuring effective instruction, recognizing effective instruction, and professional development to foster effective instruction. The Western RAC agreed that effective instruction would close achievement gaps among student subgroups, including migrant and homeless children. Lastly, the Western RAC recognized that effective instruction must include developmentally appropriate practices.

Recommended Strategies to Address Promoting Effective Instruction

The committee identified the following strategies to meet the need:

1. Develop tools to measure effective instruction, including tools that will improve the capacity of school-based administrators to perform effective evaluations.
2. Develop tools to assist in identifying leaders that promote effective instruction.
3. Design and deliver professional development for school-based administrators on how to recognize effective instruction.
4. Design and deliver professional development for teachers to promote effective instruction that adheres to nationally recognized standards.
5. Design and deliver professional development for school-based administrators and teachers *on the use* of high level technology.
6. Design and deliver professional development for school-based administrators and teachers *through the use* of high level technology.

7. Develop tools and training for school-based administrators and teachers that encourage innovation and autonomy in the classroom.

Need: Implementing Common Core State Standards

The Western RAC determined that a need exists in the Western region for technical assistance and support to ensure the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including the alignment of assessments, curriculum, and professional development throughout the P-20 continuum.

Recommended Strategies to Address Implementing Common Core State Standards

The committee agreed that CCSS provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so that teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. To that end, the committee discussed potential strategies to address the challenge of implementing CCSS. The following strategies were identified by the committee to assist in meeting the need:

1. Disseminate information to key stakeholders regarding CCSS, including what they are and their purpose.
2. Embed CCSS into teacher preparation programs.
3. Align CCSS from P-20 with developmentally appropriate practices.
4. Design and deliver professional development to teachers to ensure that they have content knowledge that is deep enough to effectively implement CCSS.
5. Design and deliver professional development to teachers that will assist them in teaching CCSS to all learners and to differentiate instruction as appropriate.
6. Identify evidence-based interventions that are aligned with CCSS.
7. Assist districts in developing common assessments and lesson plans that are aligned with CCSS.

Need: Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas

The Western RAC determined that a need exists in the region regarding the governance and financial structures of P-20 education at the state and local levels. The discussion of governance structures focused on the need to improve collaboration and understanding between state education agencies and state legislatures, and between boards of education and district education agencies. The discussion of financial structures focused on the formulas used to fund public education.

Recommended Strategies to Address Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas

The committee discussed potential strategies to address the challenge of building collaborative governance and restructuring financial formulas. The committee recommended the following strategies to assist in building capacity at the state and local levels to meet the need:

1. Provide high quality information to state education agencies and local school districts on sound governance models.
2. Provide research on funding formulas that take into account the geographic distribution of students.
3. Provide research on funding formulas that take into account diverse student populations.
4. Disseminate research-based practices that align education financing to equitable outcomes, effective instruction, and closing achievement gaps.

Need: Improving School Safety, Culture, and Climate

The Western RAC determined that educators have a custodial charge to provide for the safety of their students. This charge is the first and foremost responsibility of educators. The Western RAC recognized that high quality teaching and instruction can only occur in a safe and respectful school environment. Education agencies in support of safe school environments must prioritize respect and appreciation of diverse student groups including, but not limited to, language, race, culture, religious beliefs, sexual identity, living conditions, residency status, and family structure.

Recommended Strategies to Address Improving School Safety, Culture, and Climate

The committee recommended the following strategies to assist in meeting the need:

1. Disseminate high quality information on model policies regarding weapons, anti-harassment, and bullying.
2. Design and conduct professional development about tools to help states, districts, and schools accurately and honestly assess the current climate in their buildings.
3. Design and conduct professional development about tools to help states, districts, and schools improve identified gaps regarding school safety, culture and climate.
4. Research the link between school climate and student achievement.
5. Design and deliver professional development to districts, school-based administrators, and teachers on making schools culturally responsive to families.

Need: Preparing for College and Career Readiness

College and career readiness is essential to the Western region's civic and economic success; preparation for participation in civil society is a vital role for public education. The region strives for its graduates to be fully engaged in civic life and equipped with 21st century skills as they enter college and the workforce. Needs identified by the Western RAC include a clear definition of college and career readiness, and support for curriculum and professional development.

Recommended Strategies to Address Preparing for College and Career Readiness

The committee recommended the following strategies to assist in meeting the need:

1. Develop a clear definition of college and career readiness.

2. Convene P-20 educators to ensure articulation and alignment between levels.
3. Disseminate high quality information on best practices regarding alternative pathways to college and career readiness including internships, project based learning, and service learning.
4. Promote curriculum standards that adequately equip students with 21st century skills that include non-cognitive habits, study skills, problem solving, and higher order thinking.
5. Promote curriculum standards that include citizenship as part of the 21st century skill set.
6. Promote 21st century skills to be taught in early childhood.
7. Promote curriculum standards that adequately engage students to foster intellectual curiosity and promote lifelong learning.
8. Design and deliver professional development to states and districts that will allow for the transformation of schools into 21st century institutions that are fully aligned with the world students will encounter upon graduation.

CONCLUSION

Through a process that involved public meetings and deliberations, the Western RAC identified six needs that committee members determined were the region's highest educational priorities:

- Closing the Achievement Gap.
- Promoting Effective Instruction.
- Implementing Common Core State Standards.
- Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas.
- Improving School Safety, Culture, and Climate.
- Preparing for College and Career Readiness.

The committee outlined a total of 37 strategies that could be used to meet these needs. The needs analysis included outreach to key constituents in the region and elicited feedback in the form of 38 comments posted on the Western RAC website (www.seiservices.com/rac).

APPENDIX A

Regional Profile

WESTERN REGION EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

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SCHOOL AND STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables 1 through 5 and Figure 1 all contain school and student demographics, such as the number of schools; percentage of school districts by metro status; percentage of public school students by racial characteristics; selected student subgroups, such as the number of students in English Language Learners (ELL) programs and the number of migrant students; linguistic indicators, such as the percentage of children whose parents speak English fluently; and socioeconomic indicators, such as percentage of households below the poverty level and percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). This data for the Western Region states of **Arizona**, **California**, **Nevada** and **Utah** can be found below.

Number of Schools. Table 1 displays the number of public school students and schools, the number of private schools and the number of charter schools collected for the Western Region. During the School Year (SY) 2008-2009, **California** had 10,029 public schools and 6,322,528 public school students. **Arizona** had 2,186 public schools and 1,087,817 public school students, while **Nevada** and **Utah** each had 617 public schools. **California** had the highest number (4,013) of private schools during SY2007-2008, while **Utah** had the lowest (146). In 2011, **California** had 960 and **Nevada** had 26 charter schools collected.

Table 1: Number of Schools

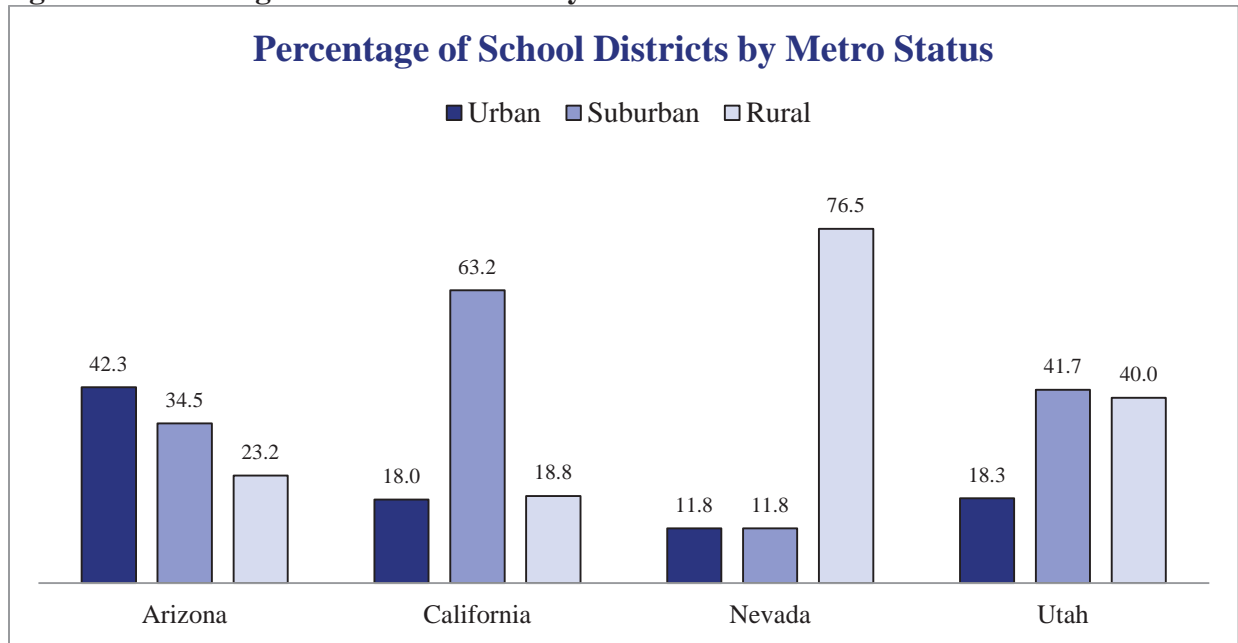
State	Public School Students, SY2008-2009 ¹	Public Schools, SY2008-2009 ¹	Private Schools, SY2007-2008 ²	Charter Schools Collected, 2011 ³
Arizona	1,087,817	2,186	361	602
California	6,322,528	10,029	4,013	960
Nevada	433,371	617	161	26
Utah	559,778	1,029	146	83

SOURCES: ¹Common Core of Data, 2008-2009; ²U.S. Department of Education, Private School Universe Study, 2007-2008; ³Center for Education Reform (www.edreform.com), 2011

Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status. Figure 1 contains the percentage of school districts by metro status in the four Western Region states. During 2003-2004, **Arizona** had the highest (42.4 percent) and **Nevada** had the lowest percentage (11.8 percent) of school districts located in urban areas. **California** had the highest percentage (63.2 percent) of school districts located in suburban areas. A majority of school districts in **Nevada** (76.5 percent) were located in rural areas during the time this data was collected. A suburb is defined as a territory that is outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size. A rural area is a territory that is away from an urbanized area or urban cluster. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size. An urban metro area is a territory that is inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city. The subcategory of locale may vary based on population size.¹

¹ NCES's urban-centric locale categories, released in 2006: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/page2.asp>. Last accessed on May 5, 2011.

Figure 1: Percentage of School Districts by Metro Status



SOURCE: Common Core of Data 2003-2004

Percentage of Public School Students by Racial Characteristics. Table 2 shows the percentage of public school students by racial characteristics. During SY2008-2009, 11.7 percent of **California** public schools identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, the highest among the Western Region states. The percentage of students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native was highest (5.5 percent) in **Arizona**. **Nevada** had the highest percentage of black public school students (11.2 percent) and **Utah** had the lowest (1.4 percent). In **California** public schools, 49 percent of students identified as Hispanic. **Utah** had the highest percentage of white public school students (79.4 percent). Students in **Arizona**, **Nevada** and **Utah** were not given the option of identifying as “two or more races.”

Table 2: Percentage of Public School Students by Racial Characteristics

State	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black, Non Hispanic	Hispanic	White, Non Hispanic	Two or More Races
Arizona	5.5	3.0	5.8	41.4	44.4	Not Applicable
California	0.7	11.7	7.3	49.0	27.9	3.4
Nevada	1.5	8.1	11.2	36.9	42.3	Not Applicable
Utah	1.4	3.3	1.4	14.5	79.4	Not Applicable

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

Selected Student Subgroups. Table 3 displays selected student subgroups, such as percentage of students receiving FRPL, percentage of students identifying as ELL and percentage of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). In **California**, 52.4 percent of students received FRPL, and 24.2 percent of students were enrolled in ELL/Limited English Proficient (LEP) programs. The percentage of students with an IEP was similar for all four states: **Utah** (11.6 percent), **Arizona** (11.4 percent), **Nevada** (11.1 percent) and **California** (10.6 percent).

California had 202,714 migrant students, while **Nevada** had 241. The number of homeless students in **California** was 288,233, and in **Nevada** it was 8,670.

Table 3: Selected Student Subgroups

State	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch ¹	Percent of Students in ELL/LEP ¹	Percent of Students With an IEP ¹	Number of Migrant Students ²	Number of Homeless Students ²
Arizona	47.5	11.5	11.4	8,722	25,336
California	52.4	24.2	10.6	202,714	288,233
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Utah	31.2	7.9	11.6	1,788	14,016

SOURCES: ¹Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; ²Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009

Linguistic Indicators. Table 4 contains linguistic indicators, such as the percentage of population that is foreign born, the percentage of people who speak a language other than English and the percentage of the population aged 5 through 17 that speaks a language other than English at home. According to the American Community Survey, 2005-2009, 26.8 percent of residents in **California** were foreign born, while 14,199,057 people in that state spoke a language other than English. In **Utah**, 89.9 percent of children had parents that spoke English fluently, while the percentage of the population aged 5 through 17 that speaks a language other than English at home was highest in **Arizona** (22.3 percent), and lowest in **California** (21.0 percent). **California** had the highest percentage of public school students enrolled in ELL/LEP programs (24.2 percent).

Table 4: Linguistic Indicators

State	Percent of Population: Foreign Born ¹	Percent of People Aged 5 and Over Who Speak Language Other Than English ¹	Percent of Children Whose Parents Are Fluent English Speakers ²	Percent of Population age 5-17: Speak Language Other Than English at Home ⁴	Percent of Public School Students in ELL/LEP ³
Arizona	14.7	27.9	76.6	22.3	11.5
California	26.8	42.2	62.0	21.0	24.2
Nevada	18.7	27.5	72.4	21.9	17.5
Utah	7.9	13.8	89.9	21.6	7.9

SOURCES: ¹American Community Survey, 2005-2009: U.S. Census Bureau; ²EPE Research Center, 2011; ³Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

Socioeconomic Indicators. Table 5 shows socioeconomic indicators, such as percentage of families below the poverty level, percentage of children who have at least one parent with a postsecondary degree and percentage of students receiving FRPL. **California** had the highest number of families, with 8,333,690. The percentage of families below the poverty level was highest in **Arizona** (10.5 percent) and lowest in **Utah** (7.2 percent). The percentage of families with children below the poverty level was also highest in **Arizona** (16.3 percent) and lowest in **Utah** (9.8 percent). **Nevada** had the lowest percentage of children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree (34.6 percent), while **Utah** had the highest (52.2 percent). The percentage of students receiving FRPL was highest in **California** (52.4 percent).

Table 5: Socioeconomic Indicators

State	Total Number of Families ¹	Percent of Families Below the Poverty Level ¹	Percent of Families With Children Below the Poverty Level ¹	Percent of Children With at Least One Parent With a Postsecondary Degree ²	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch ³
Arizona	1,492,544	10.5	16.3	38.3	47.5
California	8,333,690	9.8	14.5	38.5	52.4
Nevada	618,778	8.0	12.2	34.6	39.0
Utah	625,990	7.2	9.8	52.2	31.2

SOURCES: ¹American Community Survey, 2005-2009; U.S. Census Bureau; ²EPE Research Center, 2011; ³Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

INDICATORS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Tables 6 through 10 and Figures 2 and 3 all contain student achievement data, such as number of schools that failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); percentage of 4th grade students considered proficient on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math and reading tests; measures of education, such as high school graduation rates and Advanced Placement (AP) test scores; dropout rate by race and ethnicity; establishment of common standards in reading, mathematics and science; and percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool.

Adequate Yearly Progress. Table 6 contains AYP data for Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. During SY2008-2009, 4,921 (49.9 percent) schools in **California** failed to make AYP. In **Arizona**, 490 (25.6 percent) schools failed to make AYP, although **Nevada** had a higher percentage of schools that failed to make AYP (42.8 percent). **Utah** had the lowest number of schools (166) and lowest percentage of schools that failed to make AYP (16.8 percent).

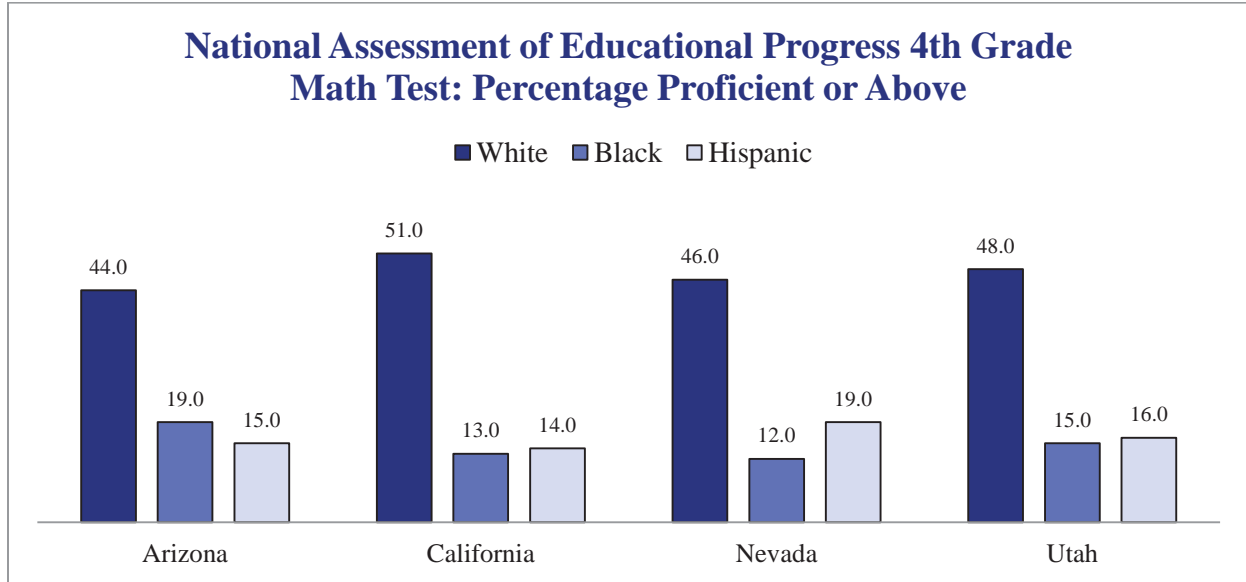
Table 6: Adequate Yearly Progress

State	Number and Percent of Schools That Failed To Make AYP in SY2008-2009
Arizona	490 (25.6%)
California	4921 (49.9%)
Nevada	254 (42.8%)
Utah	166 (16.8%)

SOURCE: ED Data Express, State Snapshots, SY2008-2009

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Math Test. Figure 2 displays results of the most recent NAEP 4th grade math test administered in **Arizona, California, Nevada** and **Utah**. In all four Western Region states, white students outperformed black and Hispanic students, with 51 percent of white students in **California** considered proficient in math. In **Arizona**, 19 percent of black students were considered proficient, while in **Nevada**, 12 percent of black students were proficient. Performance of Hispanic 4th graders was best in **Nevada**, with 19 percent of Hispanic students proficient in math in that state.

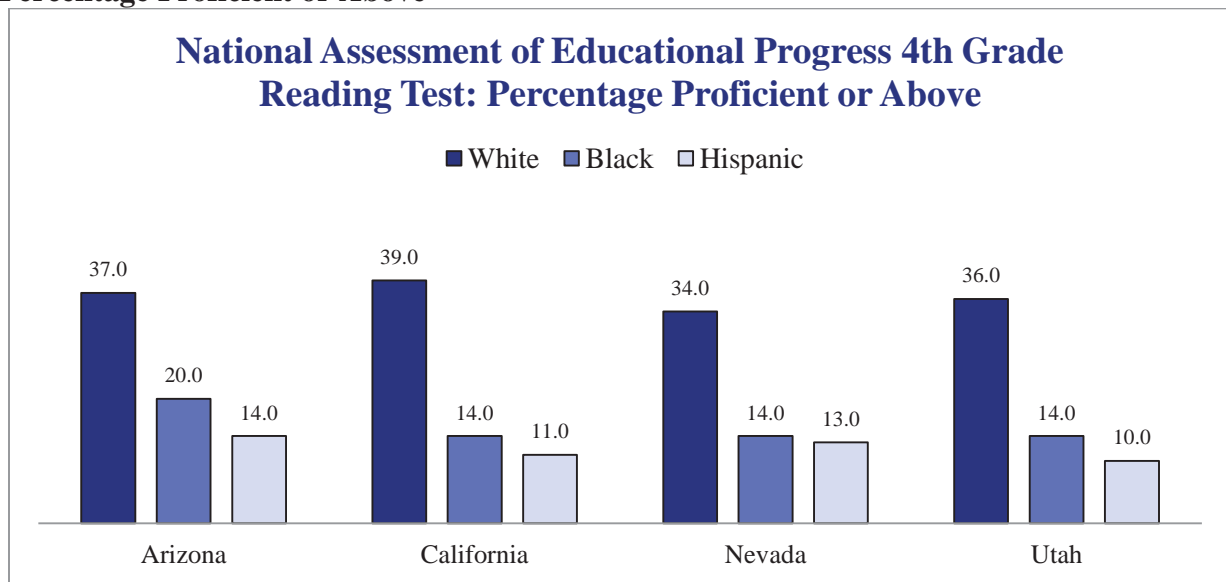
Figure 2: National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Math Test: Percentage Proficient or Above



SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test. Figure 3 displays results of the NAEP 4th grade math test administered in Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. The results for white students were best across all four states, with 39 percent of white students in **California** achieving proficiency in reading at the 4th grade level. For black students, performance was strongest in **Arizona**, with 20 percent of black 4th graders considered proficient. In **Utah**, 10 percent of Hispanic students were proficient in reading at the 4th grade level.

Figure 3: National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test: Percentage Proficient or Above



SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009

Educational Standards. Table 7 shows measures of educational standards, such as high school graduation rate, number of credits required to earn a standard diploma, whether the state has an exit exam and whether states finance remediation for students failing those exams. During SY2007-2008, **Utah** had the highest graduation rate (88 percent) and **Nevada** had the lowest graduation rate (67 percent). In **California**, 25.3 percent of students in grades 11 and 12 who took Advanced Placement (AP) tests scored a 3 or above on these tests. **Nevada** required 22.5 credits to earn a standard diploma, whereas **California** required 13 credits. **Arizona, California** and **Nevada** required exit exams, and **Arizona** and **California** provided state-financed remediation for students failing these exit exams.

Table 7: Educational Standards

State	High School Graduation Rate, SY2007-2008 ¹	Advanced Placement High Test Scores (3 Or Above) Per 100 Students in Grades 11 And 12 for 2009 ²	Total Number of Credits Required To Earn Standard Diploma ²	Alternative Credential for Not Meeting All Standard Requirements ²	Basis for Alternative Credential ²	State Has Exit Exam ²	State Finances Remediation for Students Failing Exit Exams ²
Arizona	74.9	11.7	20.0			✓	✓
California	79.6	25.3	13.0	✓	Pass Proficiency Test	✓	✓
Nevada	67.4	16.2	22.5	✓	Disabilities, Fail Exit Exam	✓	
Utah	87.8	20.7	15.0	✓	District Criteria		

SOURCES: ¹EDFacts/Consolidated State Performance Report, 2008-09; ²EPE Research Center, 2011

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Table 8 contains dropout rates by race and ethnicity during SY2007-2008 for the Western Region. In **Arizona**, the dropout rate was 6.7 percent, with 2,211 (11.4 percent) American Indian/Alaska Native students dropping out during the above-mentioned year. In **California**, the dropout rate was 5 percent overall, highest for black students (9 percent) and lowest for Asian/Pacific Islanders (2.3 percent). In **Nevada**, the dropout rate was highest among Hispanic students, with 2,583 (6.7 percent) of Hispanic students dropping out during SY2007-2008. **Utah** had the lowest overall dropout rate (4.2 percent) although the dropout rate for Hispanics (8 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (3.9 percent) was highest among the four states. Graduation and dropout rates do not add up to 100 percent, because they are based on different groups of students. Graduates are counted based on a single freshman class, whereas dropouts are calculated based on all students in any year.

Table 8: Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

	Dropout Rate & Number of Dropouts (#)	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Arizona	6.7% (21,034)	11.4% (2,211)	3.8% (325)	7.3% (8,700)	7.1% (1,288)	5.6% (8,510)
California	5.0% (98,230)	6.6% (1,075)	2.3% (5,467)	6.0% (54,911)	9.0% (14,476)	3.1% (19,409)
Nevada	5.1% (6,170)	4.9% (97)	3.4% (343)	6.7% (2,583)	6.3% (889)	3.9% (2,258)
Utah	4.2% (6,920)	7.5% (236)	3.9% (222)	8.0% (1,732)	6.6% (160)	3.4% (4,549)

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2007-2008

Meeting Requirements To Establish Standards. Table 9 displays whether **Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah** are meeting their requirements to establish state standards in reading, mathematics and science, and whether these states have agreed to adopt common core standards. As the data show, all four states met requirements to establish state standards, and all four states have agreed to adopt Common Core Standards.

Table 9: Meeting Requirements To Establish Standards

State	Reading ¹	Mathematics ¹	Science ¹	Agreed To Adopt Common Core Standards ²
Arizona	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
California	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

SOURCES: ¹Education Commission of the States NCLB database, downloaded March 2011; ²Common Core State Standards, downloaded March 2011

Preschool. Table 10 contains preschool data, such as percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool and whether states provide or fund programs for children not meeting school-readiness expectations. Preschool enrollment was highest (50 percent) in **California** and lowest in **Nevada** (28.5 percent). Only **Utah** provided readiness interventions during 2010-2011.

Table 10: Preschool

State	Preschool Enrollment (Percent of 3 and 4 year-olds enrolled in preschool)	Readiness Interventions: State Provides or Funds Programs for Children Not Meeting School-Readiness Expectations (2010 2011)
Arizona	33.5	
California	50.0	
Nevada	28.5	
Utah	40.0	✓

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011

TEACHER PREPARATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Tables 11 through 16 display teacher preparation, qualification and certification data such as number of teachers; average teacher salaries; percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers; licensure requirements for prospective teachers; and teacher performance, incentive and professional development criteria for **Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah**. The data are found below.

Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries. Table 11 displays the number of teachers, average teacher salaries and teacher pay-parity in the Western Region. During SY2008-2009, **California** had 303,647 teachers, while **Nevada** had 21,993. The average teacher salary during this year was lowest (\$42,335) in **Utah** and highest in **California** (\$68,093). In 2008, teacher pay-parity (i.e., teacher earnings as a percentage of salaries in comparable occupations) was 78.4 percent in **Arizona** and 100 percent in **California**.

Table 11: Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries

State	Number of Teachers ¹	Average Teacher Salary, Pay Parity (Teacher Earnings as a Percent of Salaries in Comparable Occupations, 2008) ³	
		SY2008	2009 ²
Arizona	54,696	\$46,358	78.4
California	303,647	\$68,093	100.0
Nevada	21,993	\$50,067	81.8
Utah	23,657	\$42,335	90.0

SOURCES: ¹Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009; ²NEA's Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010 Report; ³EPE Research Center, 2010

Teacher Quality Indicators. Table 12 shows teacher quality indicators, such as percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers and the number of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers as a percentage of all teachers. In **Utah**, 204 (0.8 percent) teachers were NBPTS certified, whereas in **Nevada**, 487 (2.2 percent) had this certification. **California** had the highest number of teachers (4,910) holding NBPTS certification. According to the U.S. Department of Education (ED), teachers considered as highly qualified must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure and must prove that they know each subject they teach.²

Table 12: Teacher Quality Indicators

State	Percent of Core Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers ¹	National Board Certified Teachers as a Percent of All Teachers ²
Arizona	93.4	1.4
California	93.9	1.6
Nevada	89.5	2.2
Utah	81.0	0.8

SOURCES: ¹Consolidated State Performance Reports: SY2008-2009; ²National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, April 2011

Teaching Profession. Table 13 displays teaching professions requirements, such as whether new teachers are required to participate in state-funded induction programs, whether prospective teachers must pass subject-specific knowledge written tests and whether the state requires clinical experiences during teacher training. Of the four Western Region states, **California** and **Nevada** required teachers to pass written tests in basic skills, while **California**, **Nevada** and **Utah** required prospective teachers to pass written tests in subject-specific knowledge. During 2009-2010, **California** required 9 weeks of student teaching, and **Nevada** required 3 semester hours of the same.

² U.S. Department of Education: <http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/methods/teachers/hqtflexibility.html>. Last accessed on May 5, 2011.

Table 13: Teaching Profession

Initial Licensure Requirements for All Prospective Teachers (2009-2010)							
State	All New Teachers Are Required To Participate in a State Funded Induction Program	State Requires Substantial Formal Coursework in Subject Area(s) Taught	Prospective Teachers Must Pass Written Tests			State Requires Clinical Experiences During Teacher Training	
			Basic Skills	Subject Specific Knowledge	Subject Specific Pedagogy	Student Teaching (Weeks)	Other Clinical Experiences (Hours)
Arizona				✓			
California	✓		✓	✓		9	
Nevada			✓	✓		8 Semester Hours	
Utah				✓			

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Evaluation of Teacher Performance. Table 14 contains evaluation of teacher performance criteria, such as whether teacher evaluation is tied to student achievement, and whether teacher evaluation occurs on an annual basis. During SY2009-2010, **Arizona, California, Nevada** and **Utah** required teacher performance to be formally evaluated. In **Utah**, teacher evaluation was tied to student achievement during the year. In **Arizona** and **Nevada**, teacher evaluation occurs on an annual basis.

Table 14: Evaluation of Teacher Performance

State	State Requires All Teachers' Performance To Be Formally Evaluated	Teacher Evaluation Is Tied to Student Achievement	Teacher Evaluation Occurs on an Annual Basis	State Requires All Evaluators To Receive Formal Training
Arizona	✓		✓	
California	✓			
Nevada	✓		✓	
Utah	✓	✓		

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010 (SY2009-2010)

Teacher Performance Incentives. Table 15 exhibits teacher performance incentives, such as whether states provide financial incentives for teachers to earn NBPTS certification, provide incentives to teachers who work in hard-to-staff assignments and formally recognize differentiated roles for teachers. **Arizona** and **Utah** had pay-for-performance programs, or pilot programs, that rewarded teachers for raising student achievement. **California** and **Nevada** provided financial incentives for teachers to earn NBPTS certification, and **California, Nevada** and **Utah** provided incentives to teachers who work in targeted hard-to-staff assignments. Only **Nevada** provided incentives to principals who work in targeted schools.

Table 15: Teacher Performance Incentives

State	Has Pay for-Performance Program or Pilot Rewarding Teachers for Raising Student Achievement	Formally Recognizes Differentiated Roles for Teachers	Provides Incentives or Rewards To Teachers for Taking on Differentiated Roles	Provides Financial Incentives for Teachers To Earn National Board Certification	Provides Incentives to Teachers Who Work in Targeted Hard-To Staff Assignments		Provides Incentives for National-Board Certified Teachers To Work in Targeted Schools	Provides Incentives to Principals Who Work in Targeted Schools
					Targeted Schools	Hard To-Staff Teaching Assignment Areas		
Arizona	✓							
California		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nevada				✓	✓	✓		✓
Utah	✓				✓	✓		

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Professional Development. Table 16 contains professional development criteria, such as whether the state has formal professional development standards and if the state finances professional development for all districts. **Arizona** and **Utah** had formal professional development standards, and **Nevada** financed professional development for all districts. **Nevada**, along with **Utah** required districts to align professional development with local priorities and goals.

Table 16: Professional Development

State	State Has Formal Professional Development Standards	State Finances Professional Development for All Districts	State Requires Districts To Align Professional Development With Local Priorities and Goals
Arizona	✓		
California			
Nevada		✓	✓
Utah	✓		✓

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

SELECTED FUNDING RESOURCES AND STUDENT EXPENDITURES

Tables 17 through 19 contain selected funding resources and student expenditures such as adjusted spending per student and source of funding; school finance measures such as the wealth-neutrality score and McLoone Index; and U.S. Department of Education funding by grant.

Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding. Table 17 shows adjusted spending per student and source of funding for Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. Per-pupil expenditures (PPE) during 2008 were highest (\$8,852) in **California** and lowest (\$6,525) in **Utah**. During this year, the percentage of students in districts with PPE at or above the U.S. average was highest (33.5 percent) and lowest (1.0 percent) in **California** and **Utah**, respectively. The spending index (i.e., per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures) was 57.4 in **Utah**, 74.0 in **Arizona**, 81.5 in **Nevada** and 92.3 in **California**. In 2008, **Arizona** (3.7 percent) and **Utah** (3.7 percent) spent the highest percent of total taxable resources on education.

Table 17: Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding

State	Per-Pupil Expenditures (PPE), Adjusted for Regional Cost Differences (2008)	Percent of Students in Districts With PPE at or Above U.S. Average (2008)	Spending Index (2008) ¹	Percent of Total Taxable Resources Spent on Education (2008)
Arizona	\$8,435	4.3	74.0	3.7
California	\$8,852	33.5	92.3	3.5
Nevada	\$8,228	10.4	81.5	3.1
Utah	\$6,525	1.0	57.4	3.7

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; ¹Per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures (cost and student need adjusted)

School Finance. Table 18 contains school finance measures, such as wealth-neutrality scores, the McLoone Index, the Coefficient of Variation and the Restricted Range for the four Western Region states. During 2008, the wealth-neutrality score, defined as the relationship between district funding and local property wealth was lowest (-0.020) in **Nevada**, indicating that a higher proportion of funding went to poorer districts in that state. **Arizona** had the highest score (0.064), indicating that poorer districts were likely to receive less funding than wealthier ones. The McLoone Index (i.e., actual spending as a percentage of amount needed to bring all students to the median level) was highest (94.7 percent) in **Utah**. The Coefficient of Variation (i.e., the amount of disparity in spending across districts) was lowest in **Nevada**, indicating greater equity in spending across districts than in the other three states. Finally, the Restricted Range, defined as the difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles of spending, was highest in **California** (\$3,172), and lowest in **Utah** (\$1,632).

Table 18: School Finance

State	Wealth-Neutrality Score (2008) ¹	McLoone Index (2008) ²	Coefficient of Variation (2008) ³	Restricted Range (2008) ⁴
Arizona	0.064	92.0	0.181	\$2,933
California	0.020	91.1	0.163	\$3,172
Nevada	-0.020	N/A	0.141	\$2,781
Utah	-0.010	94.7	0.162	\$1,632

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; ¹Relationship between district funding and local property wealth (negative value indicates higher funding for poorer districts); ²Actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to median level; ³Amount of disparity in spending across districts (lower value indicates greater equity); ⁴Difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles

U.S. Department of Education Funding by Grant. Table 19 displays U.S. Department of Education funding by grant across the Western Region states. **California** received the most funding for most of its grants. **Nevada** and **Utah** did not receive funding for the Race to the Top and Safe and Supportive School grants.

Table 19: U.S. Department of Education Funding by Grant

State	Language Acquisition State Grants ¹	State Agency Grant Migrant ¹	Special Education Grants ¹	ESEA Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies ¹	Improving Teacher Quality Grants ¹	Education Technology Grants ¹	Rural and Low Income Schools Grant ¹	Small Rural School Achievement Grant ¹	Race to the Top Grant ²	Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grants ³	School Improvement Grants ¹	Safe and Supportive School Grants ⁴
Arizona	\$22,008,130	\$6,577,783	\$172,908,742	\$274,776,685	\$48,635,038	\$4,787,318	\$556,447	\$2,025,268	\$0	\$5,954,518	\$9,261,745	\$5,874,815
California	\$164,463,306	\$129,842,389	\$1,165,972,611	\$1,698,808,133	\$332,854,904	\$30,554,155	\$1,172,679	\$6,298,224	\$0	\$9,255,445	\$61,808,215	\$2,220,770
Nevada	\$7,275,754	\$230,345	\$65,025,696	\$80,754,699	\$15,524,495	\$1,525,710	\$0	\$139,901	\$0	\$5,999,975	\$2,884,829	\$0
Utah	\$4,718,942	\$1,783,442	\$102,248,650	\$60,019,100	\$19,074,503	\$1,294,335	\$0	\$184,262	\$0	\$14,179,499	\$2,154,955	\$0

SOURCES: ¹U.S. Department of Education, FY2008 budget; ²Ed.gov Race to the Top Fund; ³U.S. Department of Education, Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, 2006-2009; ⁴Ed.gov Safe and Supportive School Grants

APPENDIX B

Summary of Identified Needs

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED NEEDS

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Note that the below list of needs are not in any particular order.

Need One: Closing the Achievement Gap

The Western Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) determined that this need includes not only closing the achievement gap among the subgroups recognized for accountability purposes, but also includes migrant and homeless students. Increasing achievement at underperforming schools is also a key component of this need. Lastly, closing the achievement gap also includes closing the “Readiness Gap” so that all children enter school ready to learn.

Need Two: Promoting Effective Instruction

The Western RAC determined that the need identified as promoting effective instruction includes several components: Measuring effective instruction, recognizing effective instruction, and professional development to foster effective instruction. The Western RAC agreed that effective instruction would close achievement gaps among student subgroups, including migrant and homeless children. Lastly, the Western RAC recognized that effective instruction must include developmentally appropriate practices.

Need Three: Implementing Common Core State Standards

The Western RAC determined that a need exists in the Western region for technical assistance and support to ensure the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including the alignment of assessments, curriculum, and professional development throughout the P-20 continuum.

Need Four: Building Collaborative Governance and Restructuring Financial Formulas

The Western RAC determined that a need exists in the region regarding the governance and financial structures of P-20 education at the state and local levels. The discussion of governance structures focused on the need to improve collaboration and understanding between state education agencies and state legislatures, and between boards of education and district education agencies. The discussion of financial structures focused on the formulas used to fund public education.

Need Five: Improving School Safety, Culture & Climate

The Western RAC determined that educators have a custodial charge to provide for the safety of their students. This charge is the first and foremost responsibility of educators. The Western RAC recognized that high quality teaching and instruction can only occur in a safe and respectful school environment. Education agencies in support of safe school environments must prioritize respect and appreciation of diverse student groups including, but not limited to, language, race, culture, religious beliefs, sexual identity, living conditions, residency status, and family structure.

Need Six: Preparing for College & Career Readiness

College and career readiness is essential to the Western region’s civic and economic success; preparation for participation in civil society is a vital role for public education. The region

strives for its graduates to be fully engaged in civic life and equipped with 21st century skills as they enter college and the workforce. Needs identified by the Western RAC include a clear definition of college and career readiness, and support for curriculum and professional development.

Cross-Cutting Themes

In addition to identifying the six needs described above, the Western RAC identified a series of cross-cutting themes that impact each of the needs and must be taken into consideration when discussing any of the identified needs. The cross-cutting themes include technology, data systems, comprehensive services to children and families, public relations, and family and community engagement. Leadership at all levels of the educational system, and alignment of system solutions across all needs, will be essential.

APPENDIX C

RAC Website Comments

APPENDIX C: RAC WEBSITE COMMENTS

Western RAC Website Comments Posted Through June 22, 2011

Role	State	User Comment
Other	AZ	The education system must recognize before, after and summer school programs as part of a comprehensive system for education. The means including accountability, standards and professional development opportunities for these programs. We can no longer afford to miss the incredibly opportunity for learning beyond the traditional school day because programs are not given sufficient resources to ensure quality. A quality improvement system must be put in place for these programs nation-wide as it has in Michigan, Rhode Island and Palm Beach County, Fl.
Parent	AZ	Schools in Arizona are severely underfunded. In addition to a simple lack of financial support from the legislature, AZ schools face several financial stressors specific to our state. We have a high percentage of children of immigrant families attending our schools. This results in our tax base being even smaller, both because undocumented workers don't pay their share of taxes and also because a large number of immigrant families have income low enough to not pay taxes even when they are here legally. This stresses all of our infrastructure, including education and health care. We also have a large percentage of Native American families, many of whom live on reservation land. Residents of reservation lands do not pay property taxes which is the primary education funding source in AZ. There is federal money available in lieu of these lost taxes but it is not enough to make up the shortfall. Compounding these financial stressors is the high number of children, mostly low income, who come to school with poor English language skills, therefore needing remedial help. For many of them English is a second language and is not spoken, or spoken well, in the home. Also, the federal government has never adequately funded their share of the extra costs associated with Special Education. Because Special Education is federally mandated, schools have no choice but to spend huge amounts of money to provide services to children with special needs. Many children benefit from these services. However, many of the children currently receiving services from schools are so disabled that they will never be able to live or function on their own. Whether or not society should support these children is not relevant to this discussion but whether or not their care should be the financial responsibility of school districts is. The extreme costs of Special Education drain money from the general pool of funds, making general education even more financially strapped than it would be otherwise. Ill and disabled children who CAN benefit from education are also

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>placing stress on local school districts. Children attend public schools today with medical needs that did not exist in the past, such as diabetic children with surgically implanted insulin pumps. Financially strapped school districts cannot afford to reduce school nurses due to the medical liabilities of educating children with illnesses and disabilities. Whether or not children with medical or disability issues or children needing extra care for any reason are the responsibility of local schools is a societal decision. But it is clear that schools are being required to provide more and more services with less and less money.</p>
Business	AZ	<p>Both of our children went through the K-12 school system in Arizona and then graduated from the [university name deleted]. In the K-12 system, I watched the changes in the teacher's ability to be innovative and creative with the advent of the state standardized tests. Most teachers felt that they spent a lot of the school year teaching to the test because their evaluations as teachers depended on how their students performed on the tests. While I feel that there needs to be a measure of how students are learning, I feel that the AIMS test in Arizona has actually dumbed down the curriculum and made it very narrow so that students could pass the standardized tests. As a result, many courses were not challenging enough or diverse enough to meet the needs of today's students. It is obvious that U.S. education today, especially in the public schools, is not competitive with the rest of the world. Public schools have been bypassed by charter schools as parents look for more challenging schools for their kids. Public schools in the U.S. can be and should be the best schools in the country. We should attract the best and the brightest to be teachers by making the commitment to pay teachers more, giving them the help they need in the classroom and having high expectations for our kids.</p>
Other	AZ	<p>As a staff member for a Head Start/Early Head Start program in Arizona, I can attest & support the identified needs & challenges for the Western Region. Our state, like many others, has unfortunately found education services a prime target for budgetary impacts. Yet budget cuts alone should not be used as an excuse for education services not moving forward & continuing to address these issues. I am a strong believer that difficult times can in fact be the impetus for greater innovation, resource development, & needed redesign. This document I hope will serve as a base for planning & innovative development. I hope that these committees will then use this as a springboard to find those of us out there willing to do the work to make things happen, and bring positive change to children's futures. Thank you.</p>

Role	State	User Comment
LEA	CA	We agree with the priority the RAC has placed on the importance of technical assistance in order to implement the Common Core Standards with fidelity. Districts have an awareness of these standards, yet there is much work to do around aligning the new standards to the curriculum, assessments and professional development. It is our hope that the California Department of Education will have staff available to help lead this effort and bring more clarity and focus to the subject. County Offices of Education are well-poised to help support this effort and welcome the opportunity to help support our Districts including our Court and Community Schools through this transition.
School Administrator	AZ	The document not only outlined and identified essential issues and challenges but included two important groups that seem to get forgotten: the homeless and immigrants. It is very important to remember that all activities/lessons need to be developmentally appropriate. I am a big proponent of Early Childhood Education. I know that the earlier the child attends a good quality program with well educated and prepared teachers the more successful these children will be. More money and resources needs to be allocated to Early Childhood programs, teachers need to be paid more and the profession itself needs to be respected.
Other	AZ	All services to the Arizona State Department of Education should also be provided to the Tribes. Currently, the tribal schools (100-297 and 95-561 schools) administer the Arizona State Assessments (AIMS); however, are not provided the services such as the tutoring, training, etc, which are provided to all the Public schools in the district. The Arizona Department of Education should enter into an agreement with the Department of Interior in order that these services are paid for by the Interior in order that all our schools receive equitable services in regard to the State assessments in order that our students can score well.
LEA	CA	Need One: Agreed. I do believe, as well, that any time we go beyond defining children by ethnicity or SES we are wise, and being much more insightful about the depth of every child. Need Two: Agreed Need Three: Agreed Need Four: Agreed Need Five: Agreed Need Six: Agreed Cross-Cutting Themes: Exactly.
Librarian	AZ	One contribution to low achievement in reading and poor skills in college is the lack of well-qualified school librarians in the state of Arizona. It is probable that a student in K-12 would never have contact with a school librarian who inspires reading, helps the student choose the "just right" book and creates a lifelong reader. The school librarian

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		is a teacher of every subject and a valuable collaborator. The CORE standards borrowed heavily from the Standards for the 21st Century Learner developed by the American Association of School Librarians, but school librarians have been eliminated in most schools. If the standards are solid enough for the US Department of Education to hold them up as a model, those who teach to those standards are equally as important. For example, there would not be math standards created and the math teachers cut out of the budget. The state universities are moaning the fact that students have no idea how to do quality research and college students are moaning because they have low grades and don't know how to succeed.
Other	AZ	Under Need Five, I think it is essential that schools implement programs and practices to reduce bullying and victimization.
Librarian	CA	I "attended" the meeting and have some questions: 1- would the committee be willing to reach out to other associations: e.g. the California School Library Association to participate and partner with you? 2- I know that librarians made up a large number of comments submitted - will these librarian concerns be directly addressed? I currently do not see school librarians and school libraries addressed as a part of this document. [name deleted]
Other	CA	Thank you for taking my comment. I did not hear anything about social and emotional intelligence as outcomes for student success. It is common knowledge that without social and emotional intelligence, that students will not succeed at higher education, in the workforce, or in life. We also know that violence and bullying are ongoing problems for youth. I urge you to include social and emotional intelligence (including helping adolescents learn healthy relationship skills) in your recommendations. Thank you. [name deleted]
Parent	CA	In the press release it states that committee members will solicit information from state and local educators, school officials,parents, the community and others. How does this committee plan to solicit input from parents? We found out about this meeting because we were invited to a meeting with the Domestic Policy Council (DPC), Dept of Ed, and the Office of Child Care in DC two weeks ago. These meetings should be publicized. The materials you are referring to are not available to the public. In the meeting [name of government official deleted] stated that early learning starts at birth. As I am sitting on this call listening to the discussion the committee members are having, they are only referring to P-20 (pre-school to 2 years post high school). I would argue that the educational needs of children begins at birth especially since brain research supports that the majority of brain development occurs between 0-3. Too many children are missing out

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		on early learning opportunities from birth, cannot access part/time part/day preschool because their parents are working full-time, and then they arrive into the K-12 system ill-prepared. This report should list the number of children who are eligible but waiting for access to child care and early learning opportunities in order to address the unmet need of CA's children.
Other	UT	Please send the call information ASAP! [name deleted]
LEA	UT	Congressional lawmakers and regulation writers must allow latitude to local superintendents to develop, implement, evaluate and refine sound education practices. There is a plethora of sound research that indicates that the top-down method of dictating what is to be done creates little if any buy-in from those in the trenches who are ultimately accountable and responsible for educating young people. There is ample evidence that local educators can and do make significant progress when a general framework is given, and they, the local educators, do their best to improve education locally.
School Administrator	UT	Changes in the curriculum to the Common Core are positive. The move to matching assessments is also positive. However, with these changes in curriculum and assessments it is critical that schools have the necessary funding. Unfunded mandates in a state which is already the lowest in per pupil spending hampers the required changes. Funding is needed for training on the new Common Core in all content areas. In addition, funding for curriculum and technology to support the required on-line testing is also needed. What would also be helpful would be time for implementation. It takes two years to implement a new core. It appears that assessment is driving the timeline without fiscal support for schools and districts.
School Administrator	UT	Please be sure that as you identify "best practices" for teaching you include a level of flexibility for instructional approaches. For example, we want to see every student actively engaged in their learning - that could look like an exemplary teacher using guided investigation and discussion with a classroom full of students, it could look like each student in front of a computer focused on a personal investigation, and it could look like a hybrid mix of those two approaches. The commonality would be the best practices across those approaches that go well beyond making something fun or interesting to teenagers, to making something intellectually engaging so that a learner is enticed by trying to figure something out - what was great about The Great War?, or which Olympic events would be best on Mars, and why? Thank you for your work on our behalf to improve public education.

Role	State	User Comment
Local Education Agency	UT	I align strongly with all of these concerns and beliefs. However, looking at how funding collaboration is accomplished does not begin to solve the huge financial deficits we work with in Utah. ... produce ... unfunded mandates. How do we collaborate with political ... who create personal gain from their decisions about educational funding? This should be about giving students the best we can afford.
Librarian	CA	I am very concerned about the continued decrease in school librarians across the country. Hardest hit is my state of California, ranking a distant last in full-time school librarians. These professional have been shown through repeated studies to boost reading test scores. More importantly, school librarians offer information literacy instruction, one of the most essential skill sets for this technology age. School librarians should be part of the "highly qualified" category of school personnel under no child left behind. Every state should be encouraged to adopt teacher librarian requirements that include a teaching credential and a Master's in Library Science. This will ensure that these positions are occupied by a professional with knowledge of the classroom and effective librarianship. Please encourage the legislature to pass the SKILLS Act to strengthen one of the best resources a school can offer its students.
Librarian	UT	Because of the loss of state funding, many jobs have been cut in schools. One of those positions that has been affected is the school librarian position. Our state has lost over 240 certified school librarian positions in the last 3 years. This is devastating to schools and students. A library should be a place where student learn information literacy and research skills (something that will become more important with the adoption of the common core standards). Because of the loss of positions, students are not receiving this instruction and a library has simply become a book warehouse, not someplace where students learn these skills. I also know that California has been deeply affected by the loss of positions too. Please keep this in mind when you are discussing ways to improve learning and literacy. Thank you. [name deleted]
Librarian	CA	Funding school libraries and schools in a way that ensures a staff that includes a teacher librarian and a clerk will provide many services to students, faculty and administration. Research shows that the presence of the library team raises student achievement regardless of the poverty levels of parents and community. If we want our kids to be truly educated and ready for their futures in this 21st Century, then they need to be instructed in the content that a teacher librarian can provide. Our students need to also have the resources that they find in a strong school library. Bring school librarians 'to the table' in reform discussions, stop cutting funding to library programs and let's have the conversation about what makes REAL school reform. [name deleted]

Role	State	User Comment
Librarian	AZ	<p>The role of a public library has changed greatly in the past decade. It is now seen as a family destination. We pride ourselves on providing activities and programs to enhance this experience. Our [name deleted] Early Literacy Center (0-5 years) was grant funded. It is in constant use. Every item located in this center revolves around literacy. These interactives lay the foundational experience children need before learning to read. We are told on a weekly basis how families enjoy this area. Off this Center, we have an outdoor Family Courtyard that entices families to linger as they enhance their Library experience. Our babytimes, toddlertimes and storytimes are staples of our early childhood program. For many preschoolers, this is their first exposure to books in a formal setting. Grants have been secured in the past to allow us to give each child in attendance a book to take home. For some, these are the only books in the home. This pride in ownership is often displayed when a child hugs the book to their chest. Our programs have become more innovative as funding and staffing diminish and the need for the library as a destination increases. Splash Water Play, Fridays for 4's and 5's and Fun Time With Brain Boxes are new preschool programs we've created. All have been received with great enthusiasm. Splash Water Play is held in our Family Courtyard twice a year. Preschoolers are encouraged to do exactly as the program name implies. These programs are heavily attended. Fridays for 4's and 5's was designed to encourage preschoolers to develop their skills as kindergarten approaches. Packets were given out each week for children to continue working on their skills. Each child received the book <i>The Night Before Kindergarten</i> at the conclusion of the four week program. Parents commented how much they enjoyed the program. They requested we lengthen the number of weeks the program was held from four to six or more. Fun Time With Brain Boxes was created to increase parents knowledge of early brain development. Toys were provided each week for the preschoolers. Parents were given ideas on how to guide the child's play and enhance brain development. Evaluations were positive as to the purpose of the program. The Summer Reading Program for children through eighteen years old is held for eight to nine weeks each summer. Children are given a reading log to track their reading and prizes are given at various intervals. Our Friends of the Library provides each finisher with a new book and a drawing slip for family zoo or museum passes. Through the summer, activities are held to supplement families' needs for free programming. Our Library has held a long time collaboration with our local Head Start. We support each others programs. We provide them with Start Smart bags holding twenty five books each to be rotated every other month. Children know these books are from the library and are encouraged to visit with their parents. As staffing allows, we participate in community outreach, including but not</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>limited to: Child Find, Child ID, Open House and providing Library promotions. Promotional materials and resources are found provided in the [name deleted] Early Literacy Center and on a resource table in the Children's Department. These are well received and must be restocked on a regular basis. The high school teen parent program receives regular library updates that are pertinent to their needs. Early Childhood education interns provided many programs as dictated by their various classes. These programs were a wonderful supplement to our Library programs. As a rather rural library, we pride ourselves in providing many early literacy opportunities for our preschoolers and their parents. Almost daily we receive positive comments on the library in general, our innovative activities and friendliness of staff. Our goal is to meet the communities' needs. Goal met.</p>
Librarian	AZ	<p>Please see attached comments. [no comments attached] [name deleted] Library not only offers a children's 3-5 yr old Storytime program, we also do outreach to the pre-schools in our community. When school is in session, we do outreach to all grades as well. All socioeconomic statuses and several cultural backgrounds utilize our library. Our library is fortunate to have access to multiple cultural backgrounds in such small community, including English, Hispanic, Dutch, Filipino, Chinese and French Americans. As Children's librarians, we are not only motivators to help children develop a love of lifelong learning; we strive also to help them imagine. Reading is an essential life skill, but one can only learn if one is motivated to want to learn. That is where we as librarians come to the forefront. From my personal experience as Library Programming Technician, our programs offer children curiosity and involvement in workshops from different presenters throughout Arizona, puppet shows with children/parent involvement, and children engaging in reading books, with prizes given at the end of the Summer Reading program. I have been able to offer the Children and Teens a chance to discover there are many things and opportunities outside of the comfort box of a small town. I have been able to teach them that to learn means big and bright things can be achieved -- from coloring in the lines, or using scissors for the first time, arts and crafts, fun time with getting involved in the storytelling, to learning what the properties of dry ice are, we can help them strive to be more than they are now. As the community's public library, and with the grant awarded this year by the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records' Library Services and Technology Act, in the amount of [award amount deleted], our goal is to promote the importance of early literacy to parents, present the six skills that help children get ready to read, and making it an enjoyable experience for children and parents. These funds will be used to train parents on how to effectively choose reading materials/technologies for their children, augment the library's</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>children’s collections, and conduct special programs for parents to learn a variety of methods to interact with their children for school readiness. In our community, we are blessed to have partners with similar materials that help bolster what we are trying to teach. Not only does the [name deleted] Library have two qualified staff, namely [name deleted] and [name deleted], Child-Parent Centers, Inc. is also an excellent resource. We also have a great working partnership with both the English and Spanish pre-schools. Our library is the center of opportunity for promoting reading and literacy skills for all ages of children, especially so for pre-school aged children and their parents.</p>
Other (Retired Teacher)	NV	<p>As a former teacher in [district name deleted], I continue to advocate for my students to continue through the educational pipeline. [School district name deleted] is lucky right now to have new leadership from Superintendent [name deleted] and Governor Brian Sandoval who are supporting major education policy changes. However, Nevada and [district name deleted] have the highest high school dropout rates in this nation according the latest "Building a Grad Nation" and Education Week reports. Yet, no one talks about this region-- no one is advocating for our region. I just finished a Masters in Education Policy and Management from [university name deleted] Graduate School of Education and [district name deleted] -- the fifth largest school district in America-- was never mentioned in conversations, readings, or case studies. Our region needs help for our students. With the highest foreclosure and unemployment rates and ranking 49th in the number of students who complete a Bachelor's degree, my former students have multiple barriers in front of them to be successful. We need support. I do not have answers, but I can at least remind leaders that we are the most neediest and most neglected region in this nation. Please consider focusing on our students. Thank you, [name deleted]</p>
Librarian	AZ	<p>I am a Youth Services Library Assistant Senior in a rural library in Arizona. Our library plays an important role in the community since we are so far from other towns/cities. We maintain parent collection shelves in our section and they are visited all the time by parents and homeschoolers. Most are looking to help their children develop reading or math skills. We are frequently asked for phonics books, English comprehension books, math books and child development books. Most of these inquiries are for Kindergarten through second grade. There are not a lot of programs in the area for help in these subjects and we remain the best place to get this kind of information. We also run storytimes for birth to age 5. In our storytime, we emphasize reading, music, movement, concepts of right/left/up/down as well as alphabet awareness. Over the last two years, we have seen a dramatic increase in our attendance. We used to hold two programs a week with about 20 children in each. Currently we are up to four programs a week with an</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>average attendance at each program of 25-27 children. It is important for development of the child that we see these children at an early age. We have found that children who start out in these programs become life long readers and library users. They are at a more advanced level when it comes to reading and some are reading by Kindergarten. We also have a lot of parents who have children reluctant to read and if we can get them interested in just one book, they become ardent readers. We run a lot of programs for children and always try to have an educational content to them as well. We also see a lot of visits from schools and daycares. For some children, this is their first experience in the library and with what the library has to offer. Libraries are truly a place for parents, grandparents, children and teens to come to for expert help in education.</p>
Librarian	AZ	<p>[name deleted] Library in Scottsdale, Arizona is proud of it's early childhood services. Through our tremendous partnerships with [district name deleted], the city's office of Youth and Family Services, [name deleted] Neighborhood Center, [district name deleted], and numerous local preschools and child care centers, we are able to reach large numbers of families and provide fun and informative programming. Please enjoy reading about our many programs and services. We feel strongly that public libraries are an essential component in reaching families and assisting in their desire to see their children succeed. [see additional attached comments below]</p>
Librarian	CA	<p>Public libraries serve a crucial role in education and early literacy education in particular. Story times based upon developing early literacy skills are a key component of many systems. Our library in particular offers: 1. Over 50 story times per week highlighting print motivation, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print awareness and narrative skills. We offer these programs in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish in response to our large ELL community. 2. Workshops for parents and caregivers on using music, rhyme, stories, puppetry, and more to support early literacy in the home and preschool setting. 3. Interactive "Play to Learn" spaces in all of our branches to support early literacy play and interaction with adult caregivers. 4. Bibliographies, rhyme booklets and other print items for parents and caregivers to assist and support early literacy development. 5. Large collections of materials for children birth through preschool for adults to use with the pre-reader to establish early literacy skills that will make it easier for them to learn to read upon entering school. For older children, we provide: 1. Homework assistance, both online and in-house. 2. Reading Buddies programs where we connect a younger reader with an older student to practice their reading skills. 3. Large collections of materials that enrich and</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>expand homework and self-directed learning. 4. Summer Reading programs that keep children reading over the summer to avoid Summer Learning Loss. 5. Expert guidance in the use of online research and resources. 6. Programs on the public school system, including how to select and get admitted to a school that meets the child's and family's needs. Our library along with almost all others, also offers a vast array of arts, musical, cultural and educational programs that enhance what is offered in the more formal and confined school facilities and which often serve as an introduction to arts-based exploration and learning. Basically, the library serves as a rich educational and cultural resource that enhances the school experience and for the preschool age child, the largest-reaching educational institution available. In addition, it is FREE to all who want to use it.</p>
Librarian	CA	<p>Literacy is the key to success in school. Exposure to books and stories in the home is essential. The public library is a natural partner in any effort to support early learning. The public library is the only FREE access that many families have to a rich variety books and early learning resources. Public libraries are in every community and serve every demographic, ethnic and socioeconomic group. Reading readiness and a love for learning are the core of the public libraries' early childhood programs. Professional library staff are trained and dedicated to providing books, early childhood and parenting resources as well as programs and services designed to promote reading readiness. The California State Library has supported the development of Family Place Centers across California to position the public library as a formal gathering place and parent education center for young children and their families. A core tenet of that program is to introduce parents and caregivers to community resources to provide assistance and support. Public Libraries provide NO-COST parent education, learning environments and early literacy opportunities children and families. Public library staff are committed to introducing children, parents and caregivers to reading and books and learning through the joy of literature and language. Public library initiatives such as Every Child Ready to Read have ensured that children's librarians are trained to provide story times which emphasize the development of early learning skills through language and literature. The Early Learning Challenge Initiative programs will be effective if public libraries are included as community partners and eligible entities in the implementation of the Initiative.</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Parent	UT	<p>I have two special needs kids. ... (IDEA and 504) despite having a Superintendent that is a former [position deleted] and [position deleted]. The Utah State Office of Education knows about the problems but claims they cannot get involved unless I exercise my dispute resolution rights. Here are some examples what I deal with: -District refusal to allow state facilitators at our IEP meetings -District requirement that District Admin attend all of our meetings to provide "technical support" Reality is they are there to ensure District interests -District manipulation of SLP test scores which are contrary to publisher guidelines in order to justify discrepancy in scores (private v. school done within 2 month time period) -Removal of IEP eligibility 2 days after granting our request for an Independent Evaluation at District expense. They claimed IDEA 3 yr review deadlines required them to act despite pending IEE and that IEE results could be reviewed later to determine if they had obligation under Child Find -District refusal to document FAPE offer in IEP. Full time paraeducator support for mainstream LRE was deemed as "methodology" and a "district decision." They finally documented that this was occurring in the IEP 2 days before state was set to respond on State Complaint for this issue. However, this practice continues - they agreed to more OT services due to lack of progress but refused to document how this would occur claiming "methodology issue." Child is transitioning from 1/2 day Kindergarten to Full day 1st grade this fall. Placement changed from Special Ed to Regular Ed with itinerant but they refused to update IEP to show level of paraeducator supports or anything else to be provided in new placement with full day. They claimed new school not IEP team would determine what was needed. However, a week later they announced major special ed budget cuts and there was mass firing of Paraeducators throughout the District. -District refusal to provide Prior Written Notice for decisions made. Decisions are made in IEP meetings based upon District Admin preference and the subsequent PWN's provided do not reflect the dialogue or events that transpired leading to those decisions. Everything is slant to make the District appear compliant - reality they do what they want and lie later to cover it up. -District removed IEP for our oldest inappropriately (see above) and then failed to discuss 504 options for nearly 8 months. They then denied a 504 claiming the disabilities have to "impact learning" or "access to learning" in order to be eligible. We repeatedly cited the law and pushed hard for answers. It took them an additional 4 months to "reconsider the issue" and finally grant a 504. -District refused to address behaviors for over a year. We had to push hard to even get a Functional Behavioral Assessment despite teacher reports of bad behaviors. FBA done showing 13-15 acts of aggression/non-compliance in a 2 hours time period but results withheld by District</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>Admin for 5 months until child settled into new school year at new location. District Admin downplayed withholding results and FBA results deemed outdated despite District documentation that behaviors were continuing even escalating. District began removing child to the hall and restraining. District refused to tell us what interventions were being used claiming too many to cite. District eventually admitted in IEP meeting that universal classroom interventions and removal to the hall for regrouping were the only things being used. Child was in 1/2 day Kindergarten program so we placed her in private behavior treatment center school for other 1/2 of day and will seek reimbursement under IDEA. Behaviors in general have started to improve since additional behavior supports provided at private school. -Programs are not individualized. ESY is 12 day/3 hour a day program over 3 weeks. Kindergarten is 1/2 day only except for Title 1 that gets full day. Early intervention preschool is 2x a week for ages 3-4, 4x a week for those who will enter Kindergarten and sessions are only 2 hours a day. -District has \$800,000 shortfall so special education services are being cut district wide and changes that are being deemed as FAPE. Very sad that those who are disadvantaged the most due to no fault of their own have to go without so other programs can remain operational. The District has several accelerated programs, different diploma options, dual immersion programs etc none of which are being impacted by the budget shortfall. It's all very sad - our options are to stay in the home/neighborhood we love and fight for basic rights or move. We've chosen to stay for now. Feel free to contact me [name deleted].</p>
Librarian	CA	<p>California is experiencing three major education issues: Budget cuts which mean staffing and program cuts; an increased need to provide digital resources and instruction in ethical and safe use of these resources; and increasing numbers of students from low-income homes. One of the resources that schools have to help meet these challenges are teacher/librarians, who provide extra support for youngsters who may regard education and reading as uncool. Expertise in digital information use, knowledge of the curriculum, contemporary literature, and selection of appropriate digital resources is invaluable. Something simple like periodicals-- students in poverty do not have access to those at home, where there is also a lack of books. The correlation between poverty, poor test scores, and lack of books in the home has been noted in numerous studies. As part of budget cuts, teacher librarians are losing their jobs, and school libraries are being reduced to book rooms. The longterm damage this will do to the overall educational program won't be realized for some time to come. Preventive measures must include appropriate library staffing and support for access to digital resources.</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Librarian	CA	Let's teach to the standards: The school library learning standards move learners beyond the one-word answer and teaching to the test by requiring learners to actively engage in critical thinking to gain and share knowledge. The delivery for this sharing is via traditional as well as social learning tools that encourage electronic communication and interaction.
Librarian	CA	Many school librarians are losing their jobs at a time when their skill in teaching digital literacy is needed more than ever. The California State Board of Education has passed Model School Library Standards that outline the skills that need to be taught in every grade. School libraries need a credentialed librarian and an assistant to deliver a full program of research skills and promotion of reading. Our students must be adequately prepared for the demands of college and to be critical users of information.
Teacher	NV	Nevada is in a world of hurt as far as education goes. Our State budget has been cut and our county [district name deleted] alone is expected to reduce our district budget by \$53 million dollars over the next two years. Admin wants teachers to cut their pay by 7% for all future years! Nevada is the last in statistics for most, if not all, areas in education nation wide. Instead of helping to build our system, the government and administration are asking us to demolish our education system, classrooms, and staff which in the long run will eliminate the education for our students in [county deleted] as a district and Nevada as a whole. Please help us to raise our education system to a high and proud level, not lower us to the bottom of the statistics barrel. Our [district deleted] Career and Technical Education Office was taken down to the sole position of the [district deleted] CTE Coordinator and his Administrative Assistant, beginning in the fall of 2011. We are the [district name deleted] in Nevada with 100+ CTE teachers and this office is suppose to operate with one individual to accomodate all CTE programs, teachers, and students?? This coordinator is also in charge of writing and over seeing the [grant name deleted] grant for hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is absolutely ludicrous!! Please HELP the [school name deleted] office, programs, teachers, and students.
Other	CA	As [name of private non-profit organization deleted] we host school students in both nature education and California and American history. In [location deleted], [name deleted] is involved both with our school system and our high-tech community. The lack of emphasis on science in No Child Left Behind has had a devastating impact on science education in our area much to those of us in the museum and public education sector and executives in the tech community. For many of our school students that we host on our grades 1-5 nature hikes, we offer programs aligned

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>with state standards in science and history. Many of our public school teachers tell us that their visit to [location deleted] for a nature hike is the ONLY SCIENCE EDUCATION their students will have for the entire year because it is not a priority in their testing. In an area highly dependent on a highly educated technical work force entrepreneurs and members of the high tech community serving on our board increasingly voice their alarm at what they see is a major void in their future work forces and their frustration with the current immigration restrictions that bring students from all over the world to study at Stanford and other major universities and then deny them visas to let them stay in the US for employment. The brain drain that we are training and sending back to China and southeast Asia is of particular concern. As one leading entrepreneur said to me at a board meeting, "Every diploma that we give to a foreign student should have a green card stapled to it. We are doing nothing but educate our competition and don't bother to educate our own children." In countries that emphasize science and math education, we continue to provide their brightest higher education and then send them back to their home countries. We need to either educate our work force with the skills in science and math they need to keep us competitive or allow those we do educate to stay in the United States.</p>
Teacher	CA	<p>PROBLEM: The intense focus on standardized testing, and in particular literacy and math scores, puts many of our students in the dangerous position that they spend a great deal of classroom time learning: 1) Content exclusively geared for these two areas of education. 2) How to score well on standardized tests. As a result, students are spending less time on cultivating the skills that will make them successful 21st Century learners, and they have fewer opportunities to develop as well-rounded learners. The focus on testing often means cutting time devoted to areas such as art, music, civics, and technology, as well as fewer opportunities to engage in informal learning at museums. SOLUTION: Expanding standards to include informal learning, including required visits to museums, historical societies, art centers, etc. With access to the internet, students from even the most remote portions of the country have access to these sorts of institutions, their collections, and often programming that is broadcast or recorded and shared over the internet. An eighth grade student studying U.S. History in Alaska could examine portraits of the Founding Fathers at the National Portrait Gallery (http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/origins/index.html), examine the clothing of the period using Colonial Williamsburg's site (http://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_intro.cfm) , listen to podcasts of renowned historians talking about the founding area at Gilder-Lehrman (http://www.gilderlehrman.org/institute/era_founding.php) , or examine the art of the period and attempt to create their own using the</p>

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		resources at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=epage;id=500765;type=803) . Including informal learning into national standards also means that educators and students will tap into the vast cultural resources available at the institutions across the country.
Teacher	CA	Problem: Lack of authentic professional development opportunities for a large portion of educators across the country. Solution: Make professional development a set portion of any Race to the Top Funding. Schools can then look at the data to identify areas of biggest need (literacy, professional learning communities, etc...) and actively seek local experts (either within the district or from external groups such as the National Writing Project) to administer the professional development on site. This way the schools won't spend thousands of dollars on professional development they don't need, and providers of professional development can compete to show why they would produce the biggest bang for the buck. Best, [name deleted] [school name deleted] [district name deleted]
Local Education Agency	CA	Please do not dismantle the organizations we count on to partner with our schools on vital areas of program improvement. The USDOE, through its lack of support for the National Writing Project, made it vulnerable to cuts in our current Congress. As a state that has adopted the Common Core, we have a serious need to strengthen skills in writing that have been weakened by our assessment-driven focus on reading. We have lost ground in writing, and the National Writing Project was the only program out of DOE that assisted us in this vital area. All LEAs want flexible financial support, but we cannot spend PD dollars if there are no quality providers to assist our schools. We have come to count on the quality provision from NWP.
Other	CA	Problem 1: A focus on multiple choice assessment and standardized testing has created a generation of students who lack the skills needed to thrive in a world wide 21st Century economy. Solution 1: Ensure that 21st Century skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and citizenship are core components of any standards adopted, and that the means of assessing these skills across disciplines aligns with what research suggests about effective assessment practices. For example, multiple choice tests do little to effectively measure multiple intelligences. Problem 2: Social studies education in general, and civics education specifically are generally ignored by testing, and therefore we have students who know little about the history and function of our government, and what they can do to be informed and proactive citizens. Solution 2: Increase civic learning beyond the single semester Government course in senior year. Include mandatory service learning as part of graduation requirements

Role	State	User Comment
Comment continued from previous page		<p>(for both middle and high school). Problem 3: Lack of authentic professional development opportunities for a large portion of educators across the country. Solution 3: Make professional development a set portion of any Race to the Top Funding. Schools can then look at the data to identify areas of biggest need (literacy, professional learning communities, etc...) and actively seek local experts (either within the district or from external groups such as the National Writing Project) to administer the professional development on site. This way the schools won't spend thousands of dollars on professional development they don't need, and providers of professional development can compete to show why they would produce the biggest bang for the buck. If you have any questions or would like to follow up at all, I've included my contact information below. My interest in education comes from my experience in Teach for America (as a [year deleted] corps member), and as someone who has taught and been an administrator in public, private, and charter schools. Currently I manage education programs at a Southern California museum [name deleted].</p>
Parent	CA	<p>The State of California has received \$69 million dollars of federal funds to improve low performing schools. Regarding the inner cities of California which happens to host a disproportionate number of academic low achieving schools there's a critical factor that's missing and it's direct participation from very low to low-income parents who reside in public housing and conventional homes that are located in red lined districts. For years, HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) has funded entitlement cities who then subcontract with neighborhood groups who propose to mobilize citizens for over all improvement activities. But; there's no evidence of this occurring! There should be documentation on file that exhibit HUD and Education efforts in the neighborhoods and larger communities in the spirit of collaborating on community development projects, and this mobilization should include (residents, schools, churches, private business initiatives etc.). Unfortunately, something is broken and until it's fixed no money should be thrown at education reform!</p>

(Continuation of AZ librarian comment on pg. 10)

Scottsdale Public Library's Role in Early Childhood Education Activities

Scottsdale Public Library has a long history of providing classes and programs that educate families on the importance of early literacy and early childhood development. The City of Scottsdale was one of the first in the region to adopt the *Ready to Learn* initiative and the library began basing all of its storytimes on the principals of *Ready to Learn* which included informing parents and caregivers about the importance of early brain development. When the American Library Association and the Public Library Association teamed together to produce *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*, a research-based early literacy parent education program, Scottsdale Public Library ensured that all youth staff received training in implementing the program throughout the library system. In 2007, the library further committed itself to community early literacy education by creating an Early Literacy Librarian position and further emphasized the importance of early literacy by placing it prominently in the library's Strategic Plan. In Fiscal Year 09/10, the library presented 1,312 storytime programs for children ages 0 – 5 and their caregivers with a total attendance of 31,518 individuals. According to the library's Spring 2010 Storytime Surveys (N=126), 83% of all families agree or strongly agree that they feel confident and competent applying the six early literacy skills and 97% of all families stated that they read more to their children as a result of attending storytime programs. In addition, through the library's partnership with Paiute Neighborhood Center, a community center located in the heart of the city's largest Spanish-speaking population and with the city's lowest socio-economic status, we have been able to provide twice weekly bilingual English-Spanish storytime programs to over 60 families per week. We also provide classes on early literacy and early brain development to Paiute families in their native language.

Professionally designed and installed, Scottsdale Public Library's *Early Literacy Centers* help to develop literacy skills in children through interactive play in the company of their caregivers. We estimate that half of all visitors to our early literacy centers attend our storytime programs, bringing us to 72,000 estimated visitors per year.

As a partnership between the library and Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn and Shea, our *BookBites* program ensures that every child born at either hospital goes home with their first board book and library card. When the parents bring the card to the library to be activated, they receive a bib and an information sheet on activities to do with their baby at home. We deliver 5,000 BookBites to the hospitals each year.

Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library are workshops and classes which introduce the six essential early literacy skills that children need to become successful readers: Print Awareness, Print Motivation, Phonological Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Narrative Skills, and Vocabulary. These are presented as Professional Development Workshops for Teachers, Informational Workshops for Parents, and as a 6-week series of classes called *Ready to Read Family Storytimes* for parents and children together. Since 2009, the library has presented Every Child Ready to Read Workshops to 147 teachers and 300 parents. Since April 2010, 90 parents and children attended Ready to Read Family Storytime Programs.

It's never too early to introduce books to a child. Our library understands this and the importance of nurturing the emergent literacy of babies and toddlers. Started in Summer 2008, our early childhood summer reading program, the "*Summer 'Read To Me' Book Club*" is designed to encourage positive early literacy interactions between parents and their young children (ages 0 – 3), and to make reading a natural part of everyday life. After completing 12 of 16 fun, literacy-based activities, all participating families receive an "Ency Weency Rhyme Book" which contains fun rhymes and fingerplays to enjoy with their young child. Since beginning the program, 2000 families have participated.

The library's *Books and Babies Celebrations* are fun and informative "baby showers" to welcome our newest community members ages 1 and under and their adult caregivers! Families receive information about library and community services for them and their children and all families who attend receive a board book and other fun prizes. To date, the library has held 4 events with a total of 263 participants.

Utilizing the Brain Boxes designed by New Directions Institute for Infant Brain Development, *Brain Time Programs for Babies and Toddlers* focus on the ABC's of early learning – Attention, Bonding, and Communication. Approximately 130 families attend these programs each year.

Library *Story Stops* are informal, drop-in programs where volunteers read stories to children. This library program was designed to promote the joy of hearing children's picture books read aloud. Overall, 3,600 participants per year attend these programs and over 15 volunteers happily give their time to share their love of books and reading.

The library partners with local preschools and child care centers through our *Literacy Links* program. We bring a deposit book collection of approximately 50 books and a literacy box containing age-appropriate activities to the preschool or center each month. The librarian or volunteer presents a model storytime utilizing the books and activities. There are seven monthly visits per site, the last involving handing out library cards and encouraging families to join the summer reading program. We currently serve 6 preschools and 8 classrooms, impacting 200 children and 16 teachers each year.

Scottsdale Public Library's newest program, *Family Read Aloud Nights*, provides a fun, informative, and interactive evening introducing families to library programs and services. Currently held in partnership with Scottsdale Unified School District's Title I Preschool programs and Maricopa County Head Start, the first Read Aloud Night had 120 persons in attendance and 60 children and their family members signed up for library cards. All programs are held bilingually in both English and Spanish. School reading specialists, teachers and parents have all stated that they truly enjoyed the programs. One of many thank you letters received stated, "I just wanted to extend a sincere thank you for all of your efforts with the 'Family Read Aloud Night' at Yavapai Elementary School last week. As a speech-language pathologist in the Program for Assessed Needs – Developmental Areas (PANDA) classroom, we are always recommending the Scottsdale Public Library as an excellent resource for parents and students. The 'Family Read Aloud Night' was such a great opportunity for families to see what is available that will encourage a love of reading and socialization at the same time. I really appreciate all that you have done to coordinate this event."