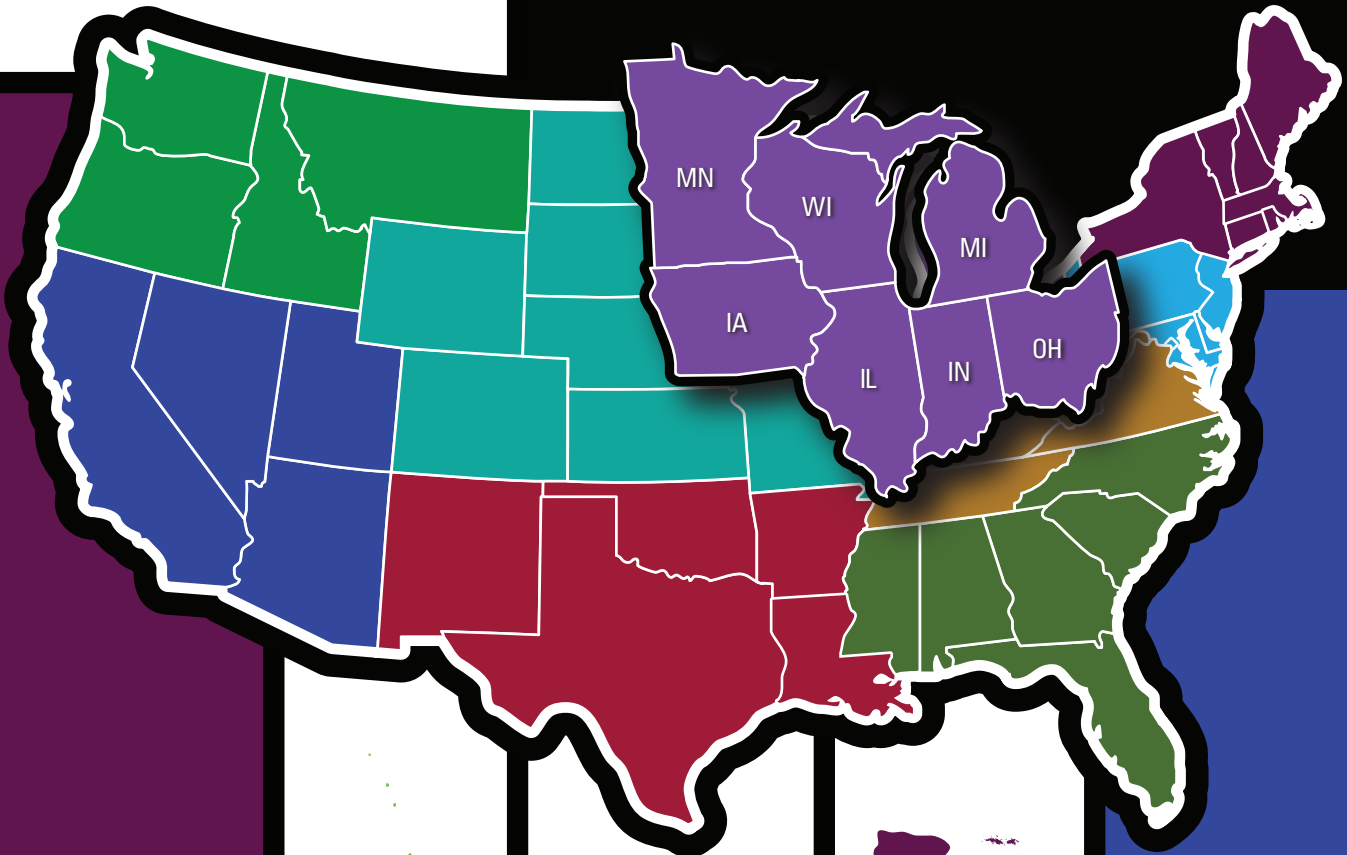
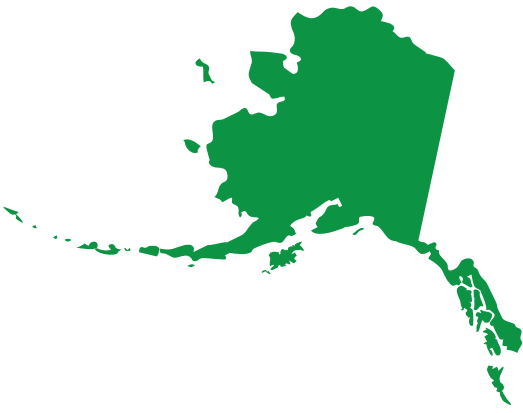


MIDWEST REGION: A REPORT IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS



July 2011

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



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PREFACE

This report presents the deliberations of the Midwest Regional Advisory Committee (MW 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 seven states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Committee deliberations took place May 23, 2011, through June 21, 2011.

Ten RAC members represented local and state education agencies; institutions of higher education; parents; practicing educators, including classroom teachers, principals, administrators, school board members, and other local school officials; education nonprofit organizations; and researchers. Members included:

Regional Chair

- Patrick Mapes, Assistant Superintendent, Indiana Department of Education, Indianapolis, IN

Regional Co-Chair

- Lisa Walker, Senior Researcher, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Designated Federal Official

- Lisa Ramirez, Director, Office of Migrant Education, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, DC

RAC Members

- Marten Frazier, Teacher, Citizens Academy, Cleveland, OH
- Jessica Gillard, Director of Early Learning and Innovation, Early Childhood Investment Corporation, East Lansing, MI
- Diana Mendley Rauner, President, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Chicago, IL
- Donna Powless, Vice President of Academic Affairs, College of Menominee Nation, Keshena, WI
- Diane Rutledge, Executive Director, Large Unit District Association (LUDA), Springfield, IL
- Julie Sweitzer, Director of Leadership Initiatives, College Readiness Consortium, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- Michele Timmons, Director, Care Team Collaborative, Reynoldsburg, OH
- Bruce Umpstead, State Director, Educational Technology and Innovation, Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, MI

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The MW RAC would like to thank Lisa Ramirez, Designated Federal Official (DFO) from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and Carol Chelemer, RAC Facilitator from Synergy Enterprises, Inc., for their assistance and support. The MW RAC would like to thank Stephanie Dominguez of ED who prepared the PowerPoint slides for the RAC's two online meetings. The MW RAC also would like to thank Kipchumba Kitur, Clare Corroone, and Akshay Jakatdar from Synergy Enterprises, Inc., who assisted the MW 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

This report represents the work of the Midwest Regional Advisory Committee, charged by the Secretary of Education with gathering information from stakeholders on educational needs in their region and determining how those needs can be met. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Midwest RAC members included representatives of the stakeholder groups specified by statute.

A few pertinent facts about the states in the Midwest Region include:

- In the 2008-2009 school year, approximately 18 percent of the total U.S. public school student population attended schools in the Midwest.
- The student population is at least 75 percent white, non-Hispanic in all states except Illinois and Michigan.
- There are significant percentages of black, non-Hispanic, and Hispanic students in each state but also distinct local differences in minority groups. In Minnesota, Hmong and East African immigrants are the largest groups in many districts.
- Results on the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth-grade reading assessment indicate that none of the states have even half of the white students performing at the proficient level or above.
- The results on fourth-grade reading and mathematics NAEP for black and Hispanic students show a significant achievement gap when compared to white student performance.
- The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2005-2009) reports that upwards of 19 percent of children ages 5 to 17 in the Midwest region do not speak English at home; the rate exceeds 23 percent in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

RAC Activities

The Midwest RAC worked to identify the region's educational needs and propose strategies to meet those needs from May 23, 2011 to June 21, 2011. The Midwest RAC members met with each other in three public meetings and reached out to their constituencies for input. RAC members used two main strategies to obtain input. Each RAC member sent e-mail messages to organizations and individuals within his/her home state informing them of the RAC activity and inviting the submission of public comments to the Midwest RAC website. In addition, some

RAC members arranged to hold conversations or meetings with professional colleagues to solicit input.

Regional Needs Identified by RAC

All students, regardless of socioeconomic status, racial/ethnic group, or living in urban, suburban, rural and/or tribal communities need the opportunity to receive an education spanning pre-K through high school that will prepare them for success in college, postsecondary training, and beyond. Education reform and improvement has tended to target single solutions as a way to address pressing educational challenges. In the pursuit of a multipronged, systemic approach to achieve reliable results at scale, the RAC members identified four regional needs, one of a more global nature and three others highlighting areas of particular focus.

The first priority need is Systemic Support for Effective Schooling; it includes the following five components:

- Leadership development, quality, and effectiveness.
- Teacher development, quality, and effectiveness, at both the individual and collective levels (e.g., teacher professional communities).
- Instructional supports and resources for student engagement, learning, and achievement.
- Health and social services to support full participation in school.
- Family and community engagement.

These components are interrelated and must be developed simultaneously in efforts to strengthen education. These elements also need to be aligned across all levels of the education system to support diverse student pathways leading to college or postsecondary training.

The next two priority needs call attention to two populations that have been underserved in the Midwest region:

- School readiness for young learners.
- English language learners and ethnically diverse populations.

The fourth and final priority need is Research and Data Use in Support of Systemic Change. This recognizes that the educational system is currently not receiving the research and data feedback it needs to improve policy and practice.

Although not established as a stand-alone priority need, the Midwest RAC also recognized the need to integrate the use of technology within all of the areas of need, and recommended that technology applications be considered as elements in implementing any of the RAC's recommendations.

RAC Recommendations to Meet Regional Needs

Each area of need is accompanied by a set of specific related recommendations. Some are addressed to the federal government, state government, schools, institutions of higher education, and communities. The recommendations include suggestions for education policy and regulation, education programs and support, and educational research and development. Consistent with the priority needs, the recommendations reflect the committee's interest in systemic and aligned

approaches to educational improvement, as well for increased attention to the needs of subgroups of children who are not receiving the education they need to prepare them for the future.

Conclusion

The report captures several important big ideas that reflect key opportunities for action to improve educational opportunities and provides a wide range and mostly cohesive set of recommendations for acting on the ideas. It is understood that these recommendations may require further refinement in light of the kind of assistance the federal government can provide. It will be important for the federal government to provide the support, resources, and flexibility for states to respond in different ways to these needs so each state can build on its strengths and address its particular gaps. If these needs are addressed in a systemic way, the results will benefit many students in the Midwest region, now and well into the future.

INTRODUCTION

This report represents the regional needs assessment of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) for the Midwest region, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The Midwest 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 Midwest 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

The Midwest Region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In the 2008-2009 school years, 8.8 million students attended public schools in the region; this represents approximately 18 percent of total U.S. public school enrollment. Table 1 provides summary data regarding the number of public school students per state as well as the numbers of public, private and charter schools per state.

General Demographics

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
Illinois	2,119,707	4,402	1,924	102
Indiana	1,046,147	1,973	807	70
Iowa	487,559	1,490	242	10
Michigan	1,659,921	4,078	908	300
Minnesota	836,048	2,263	585	163
Ohio	1,817,163	3,852	1,189	373
Wisconsin	873,750	2,268	990	237

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.

While the Midwest region's student population is predominantly white, non-Hispanic (see Table 2), there is also significant enrollment of students of other racial/ethnic groups. Minnesota has the largest proportion of American Indian and Asian/Pacific Islander students; together these groups account for 8.4 percent of total public school enrollment. Illinois has the largest proportion of Hispanic students among the Midwest states (21.3 percent) by more than a factor of two.

Diversity is also reflected in various socioeconomic factors. The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey reported for 2009 a range across the Midwest Region states of from 6.4 to 10.3 percent of families living below the poverty level and the percentages for families with children were even greater, ranging from 10.2 to 16.4 percent. Family income is related to eligibility to receive free and reduced-price school lunches. The National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data (School Year 2008-2009) reported that the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price school lunches across the Midwest Region ranged from 32.7 to 41.8 percent of students.

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
Illinois	0.2	4.2	20.0	21.3	54.3	Not Applicable
Indiana	0.3	1.5	12.8	7.1	78.3	Not Applicable
Iowa	0.6	2.2	5.8	7.0	84.5	Not Applicable
Michigan	0.9	2.7	20.2	4.8	71.4	Not Applicable
Minnesota	2.2	6.2	9.6	6.4	75.6	Not Applicable
Ohio	0.1	1.7	16.9	2.8	78.4	Not Applicable
Wisconsin	1.5	3.7	10.5	8.0	76.3	Not Applicable

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009.

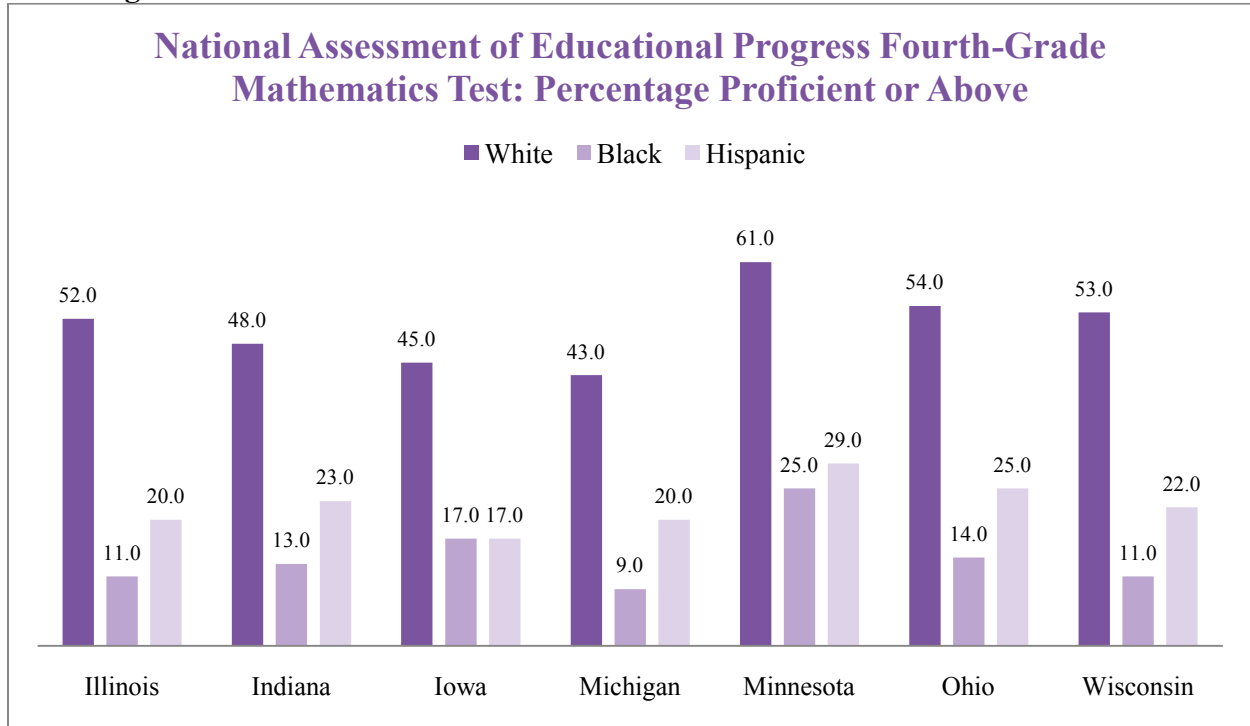
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE GAPS

Like other regions, performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (the “Nation’s Report Card”) indicates striking room for improvement (see Figures 2 and 3). According to the most recent assessment results (2009), only the states of Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin show at least one-half of white students scoring proficient or above on the fourth-grade mathematics test. No state attained this level of performance on the fourth-grade reading test. Parents, educators, business executives, and community and political leaders are concerned about persistently low-performing schools and threats to future economic prosperity. NAEP results are also reported for two other subgroups of students - black and Hispanic. Those students perform significantly below the white students; for example, in Michigan 36 percent of white students scored proficient in reading compared to 9 percent of black and 17 percent of Hispanic students. This achievement gap has persisted over time and has not been significantly reduced. For many students in these subgroups, poverty and lack of equitable opportunities are factors related to the level of performance.

The ultimate measure of educational achievement for a student is his/her success in school and/or career beyond the completion of high school. An important indicator in predicting such success is high school graduation; the converse is dropping out prior to graduation. Table 8 (in Appendix A) includes data on dropout rates for each state in the Midwest Region. Although the overall rates are relatively low, ranging from 1.7 percent to 6.2 percent, the rates for American Indian/Alaska Native, black, and Hispanic students are considerably higher than the rates for white or Asian/Pacific Island students. In Ohio, for example, the dropout rates for black and Hispanic students were reported at 10.1 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively.

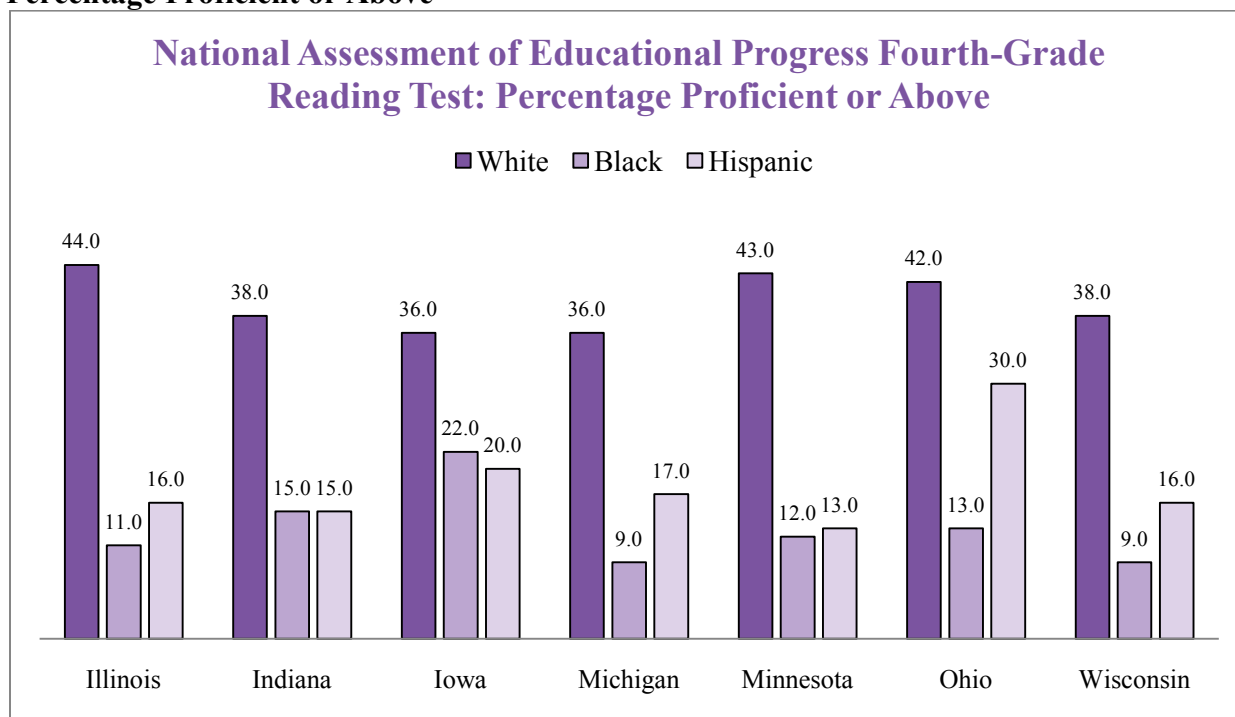
Often discussed in examinations of student achievement and performance gaps are issues including teacher and leader quality, content of curriculum and instructional practices, preparation of children to be successful in school from a young age, how language and cultural diversity affects teaching and learning, and support services that can be offered to best meet the needs of students.

Figure 1: National Assessment of Educational Progress Fourth-Grade Mathematics Test: Percentage Proficient or Above



SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009.

Figure 2: National Assessment of Educational Progress Fourth-Grade Reading Test: Percentage Proficient or Above



SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009.

Table 3: Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity

State	Dropout Rate and Number of Dropouts (#)	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Illinois	5.2% (32,638)	3.8% (64)	1.7% (397)	7.3% (7,553)	9.1% (11,360)	2.2% (8,046)
Indiana	1.7% (5,417)	3.6% (30)	0.7% (27)	2.4% (380)	2.8% (1,019)	1.6% (3,851)
Iowa	2.9% (4,437)	9.1% (80)	2.6% (75)	6.1% (479)	6.2% (471)	2.5% (3,332)
Michigan	6.2% (34,702)	8.3% (422)	3.6% (434)	10.3% (2,135)	12.6% (14,355)	4.3% (17,086)
Minnesota	2.8% (7,826)	11.6% (668)	3.1% (497)	7.5% (939)	7.1% (1,778)	1.8% (3,944)
Ohio	4.3% (24,980)	8.2% (66)	1.8% (137)	8.5% (1,051)	10.1% (9,863)	2.9% (13,076)
Wisconsin	2.3% (6,659)	5.8% (248)	2.0% (200)	5.4% (880)	7.8% (2,160)	1.4% (3,171)

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2007-2008.

POPULATIONS FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION

Two groups of children are of particular interest. While all young children are avid learners, many children enter kindergarten or first grade without prior educational experiences of high quality, contributing to a lack of readiness to learn in school. Enrollment in preschool is seen as one part of a child's preparation for the rigorous academic content taught in grades K-12. Table 10 (in Appendix A) provides data on the percentage of children enrolled in preschool prior to entering kindergarten. The data shows that, across the region, with the exception of Illinois, less than half of the children attend preschool.

Table 4: Preschool

State	Preschool Enrollment (Percentage 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)
Illinois	55.4	✓
Indiana	40.5	✓
Iowa	47.2	
Michigan	48.4	✓
Minnesota	46.5	✓
Ohio	45.8	
Wisconsin	45.8	

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011.

The other group of students is comprised of students whose first language is not English. The students may have been born in a foreign country or may live in households where English is not generally (or ever) spoken. While not a large percentage of the student population, these students need specialized language instruction and challenge the regular instructional practices of classroom teachers who have not received appropriate preservice or inservice training. Table 4 provides data for the states in the Midwest region regarding English language learners. States reported that between 2.0 percent and 9.7 percent of their public school students are enrolled in English language learner (ELL)/Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs.

Table 5: Linguistic Indicators

State	Percent of Population: Foreign Born ¹	Percent of People Ages 5 and Over Who Speak Language Other Than English ¹	Percent of Children Whose Parents Are Fluent English-Speakers ²	Percent of Population Aged 5-17: Speak Language Other Than English at Home ¹	Percent of Public School Students in ELL/LEP ³
Illinois	13.4	21.3	82.1	20.2	9.7
Indiana	4.1	7.4	94.0	21.8	4.4
Iowa	3.8	6.4	94.8	23.9	4.2
Michigan	6.0	9.0	93.5	19.9	3.7
Minnesota	6.5	9.6	90.7	23.7	7.4
Ohio	3.6	6.1	96.2	18.7	2.0
Wisconsin	4.4	8.2	92.8	23.5	5.5

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

Finally, there are troubling inequities in school finance, although the extent of these inequities varies by state. This bears mentioning because of the committee's concerns about inequities in educational outcomes. As illustrated in Table 18 (in Appendix A), in 2008 the relationship between district funding and local property wealth (Wealth-Neutrality Score) was lowest in Indiana, Ohio, and Minnesota, indicating proportionally higher funding for poorer districts than in the other states. It was highest in Illinois and Michigan. The actual spending as a percentage of the amount needed to bring all students to the median level (McLoone Index) was highest in Minnesota at 92.4 percent and lowest in Illinois at 88.2 percent. The difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles of spending (i.e., the restricted range) was lowest (\$2,854) in Wisconsin and highest (\$5,239) in Illinois.

Table 6: School Finance

State	Wealth-Neutrality Score (2008) ¹	McLoone Index (2008) ²	Coefficient of Variation (2008) ³	Restricted Range (2008) ⁴
Illinois	0.176	88.2	0.150	\$5,239
Indiana	0.000	89.8	0.142	\$3,614
Iowa	0.051	91.4	0.121	\$2,867
Michigan	0.162	91.5	0.134	\$3,643
Minnesota	0.043	92.4	0.156	\$3,850
Ohio	0.037	90.7	0.170	\$4,592
Wisconsin	0.060	91.6	0.105	\$2,854

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; ¹Relationship between district funding and local property wealth (negative value indicates higher funding for poorer districts); ²Actual spending as a percentage of the 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.

The complete Midwest Region Educational Profile can be found in Appendix A.

DATA COLLECTION AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

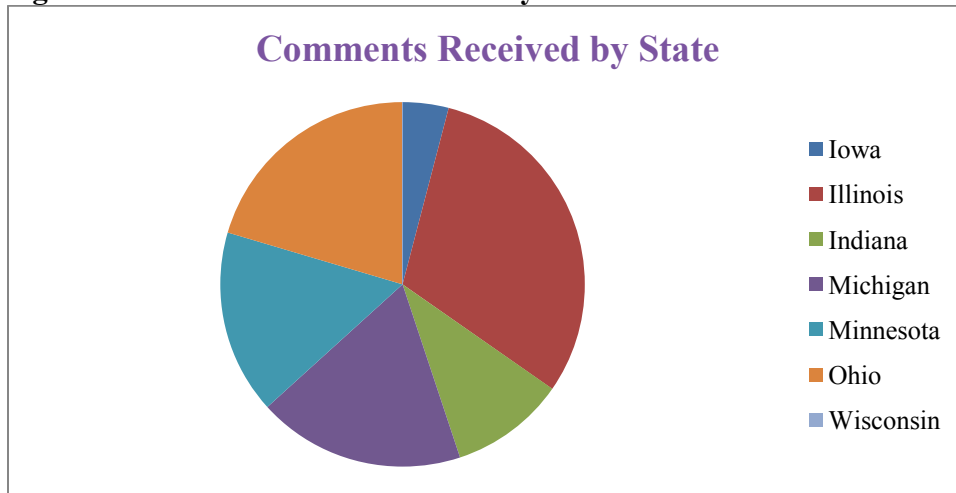
RAC members decided to use two main strategies to obtain input from the public regarding regional needs and recommendations for addressing regional needs. Every RAC member sent e-mail messages to organizations and individuals within his/her home state about the RAC activity and invited public comments on the Midwest RAC website. The RAC Chair provided RAC members with a sample e-mail for this purpose. The second strategy, used by some RAC members, was conducting conversations or meetings with professional colleagues to solicit input. For example, one RAC member met with a group of 15 colleagues to discuss the region's educational needs. Another RAC member in a leadership position with a state educational association arranged for a discussion of educational needs to be placed on the agenda of a statewide meeting. In these cases the input consisted of (1) comments submitted to the website, or (2) written or oral comments provided to the RAC member.

Table 7 and Figure 3 provide a tally of comments received on the website by state.

Table 7: Number of Comments by State

State	Number
Iowa	2
Illinois	15
Indiana	5
Michigan	9
Minnesota	8
Ohio	10
Wisconsin	0
TOTAL	49

Figure 3: Distribution of Comments by State

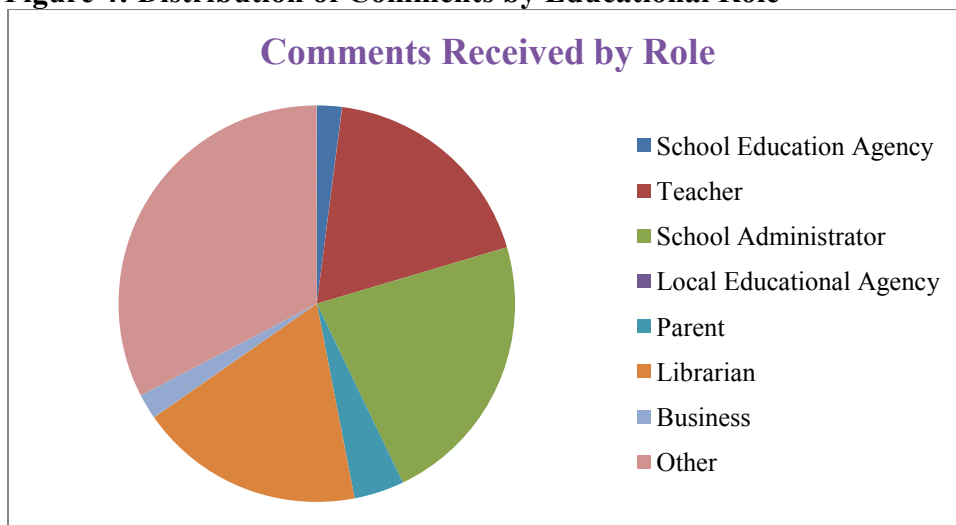


Commenters were asked to self-identify their position. Table 8 and Figure 4 provide a tally of comments received on the website by the commenter’s position.

Table 8: Number of Comments by Educational Role

Role	Number
School Education Agency	1
Teacher	9
School Administrator	11
Local Educational Agency	0
Parent	2
Librarian	9
Business	1
Other	16
TOTAL	49

Figure 4: Distribution of Comments by Educational Role



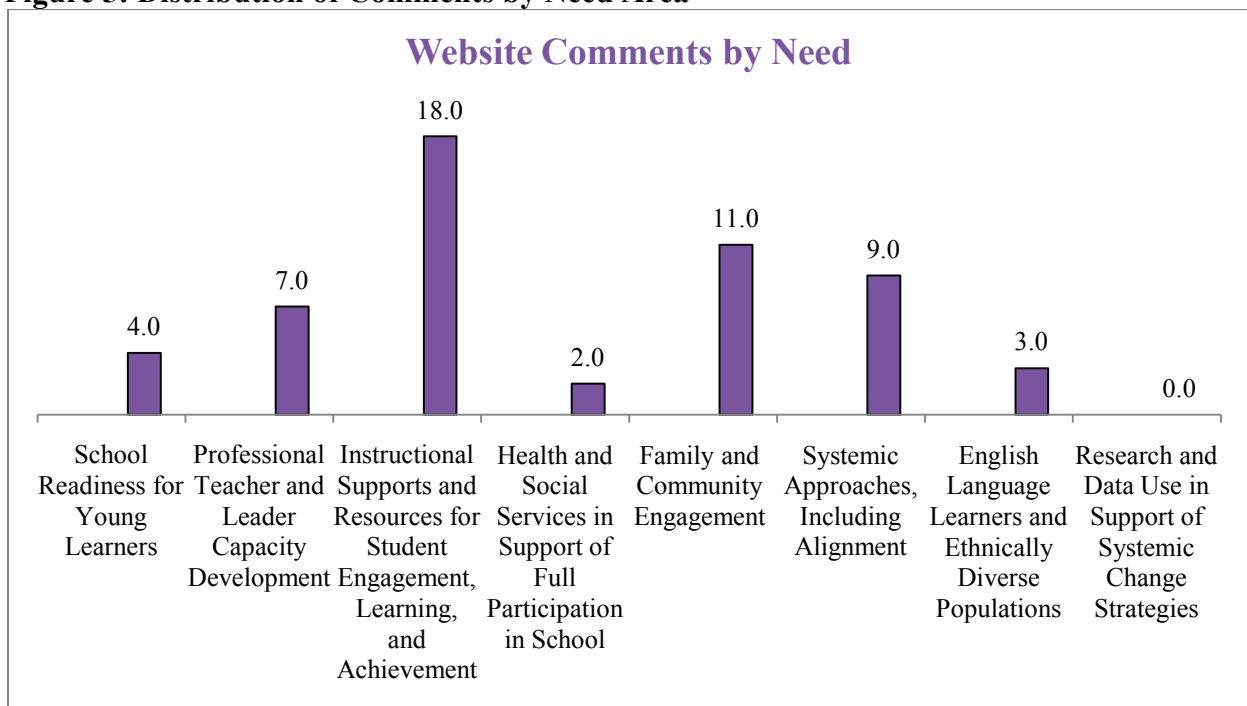
Following the initial RAC meeting on May 23-24, 2011, the RAC website featured regional needs initially identified by RAC members. The titles of several areas were modified as a result of the RAC’s final two meetings, although their content was not. Table 9 and Figure 5 provide a tally of comments received about each need using the modified titles to facilitate linkage with the discussion of regional needs and recommendations for addressing them in the following section. Appendix B contains a list of the organizations (by state) contacted by RAC members to obtain input.

Table 9: Number of Comments by Educational Need

Educational Needs	Tally
School Readiness for Young Learners	4
Professional Teacher and Leader Capacity Development	7
Instructional Supports and Resources for Student Engagement, Learning, and Achievement	18
Health and Social Services in Support of Full Participation in School	2
Family and Community Engagement	11
Systemic Approaches, Including Alignment	9
English Language Learners and Ethnically Diverse Populations	3
Research and Data Use in Support of Systemic Change Strategies	0

Note: “Research and Data Use Need” Area was not included in the list of needs posted on RAC website. Comments were received by one of the committee members during a meeting with colleagues from several other organizations and in writing in response to a draft version of this section of the report.

Figure 5: Distribution of Comments by Need Area



Note: “Research and Data Use Need” Area was not included in the list of needs posted on RAC website. Comments were received by one of the committee members during a meeting with colleagues from several other organizations and in writing in response to a draft version of this section of the report.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

RAC members identified early childhood education and inequities in educational outcomes as two pressing issues in the region. To address these, members identified the need to take a systemic approach to developing effective schooling. Such an approach would involve concentrating talent and resources on developing, sustaining, and aligning supports system wide for five essential elements of schooling¹:

- Leadership development, quality, and effectiveness.
- Teacher development, quality, and effectiveness, at both the individual and collective levels (e.g., teacher professional communities).
- Instructional resources and supports for student engagement, learning, and achievement.
- Health and social services to support full participation in school.
- Family and community engagement.

The committee recommends prioritizing for the near term the element of school leadership because the success of the other elements depends on leadership. A systemic approach should further attend to *alignment* to create support for diverse student pathways from early childhood education to success in postsecondary school or training.

Although for strategic reasons, the report reflects first on taking a systemic approach, the committee does not want to lose sight that early childhood education is an important key to lifelong educational attainment and that it should receive priority in systemic action. The committee identified ELLs and Ethnically Diverse Populations as the third priority. The fourth (and final) priority is the use of data and research to support the systemic strategies.

The Midwest RAC recognizes the need to integrate technology into all areas, and all levels, of educational planning and decision-making and the delivery of curriculum and instruction. Rather than singling out technology as a stand-alone priority, it should be contributing to advancing the work of educational improvement and of supporting students' learning and achievement.

Priority #1: Systemic Support for the Elements of Effective Schooling

Statement of Need

Low-income students in urban, suburban, rural, or tribal environments must have equal access to an education pre-K through high school to prepare them for success in college, postsecondary training, and beyond.

Discussion of Need

Too many low-income students do not receive an education of high quality in their communities. Too many early childhood, elementary and high schools serving low-income students have been unable to raise the quality of their educational services. We see the results in the inequity of

¹ The RAC's list of essential supports is informed by the work of Sebring, et al., 2006.

educational outcomes that are closely and persistently tied to race, ethnicity, income, and access to social resources.

Inter-related and inter-dependent elements: As a field, we tend to target single solutions as a way to address our greatest educational challenges. We may see some isolated improvements, but too many schools and students continue to struggle. It should be the aim of school improvement and reform policies to achieve reliable results across schools and to achieve these results at scale. Scale refers to the problem of implementing improvements at a system wide level, that is, to not only have the capacity to improve individual schools, but to have the capacity to improve sufficient numbers of schools within educational systems to begin to have a significant impact on the inequities in educational outcomes that are of such major concern.

Achieving reliable results will require leadership at all levels of the educational system to develop and support the elements that contribute successful student outcomes. Moreover, it will require embracing the notion that policy and practice must strengthen these elements simultaneously. The elements are inter-connected, and strength in one is dependent on the strength of the others. Moreover, weakness in one element can undermine the strength of the others (Sebring, et al., 2006).

Whether charters, turnarounds, or traditional schools, effective schools attend to these elements:

- Leadership development, quality, and effectiveness.
- Teacher development, quality, and effectiveness, at both the individual and collective levels (e.g., teacher professional communities).
- Instructional resources and supports for student engagement, learning, and achievement.
- Health and social services to support full participation in school.
- Family and community engagement.

The overall challenge is how to attend to each and every one of the elements simultaneously and develop system-wide capacity to develop, support, and continuously improve them. Moreover, we must understand how to bring them together **at the school level** in mutually supportive and robust ways that are sustainable. Some schools require an additional level of problem solving due to the serious challenges posed by educating children living under extraordinary circumstances and connecting with their families. These schools must excel at the essential elements if they are to offer an education of high quality, but they also face the greatest challenges in doing so (Sebring, et al., 2006).

Leveraging best practice: The turnaround process currently targets the schools with the lowest data indicators. Yet many schools are only marginally better. Some turnaround schools have become sites for best practices because they are committed to acting on all the elements above. However, most schools avoid the turnaround process because it is perceived as punishment. Turnaround schools can serve as examples or models for underperforming schools that genuinely want to achieve more than marginal improvement. Policy makers should consider how to encourage and support schools to engage in best practice as a professional responsibility.

School leadership: School leadership greatly affects the conditions for all the other elements to develop and to succeed or fail. Nearly 40 years of evidence shows a well-prepared principal in

the most persistently low-performing school can have a profound effect on student learning within a short time, regardless of the kind of school, (e.g., charter, turnaround, or traditional neighborhood school). Introducing a competent, well-trained, and committed principal makes a dramatic difference because a principal facilitates instructional improvement throughout a school, communicates professional expectations, helps make ELL and Special Education programs reach their potential, and is the gatekeeper for the non-instructional services students may receive.

We know how to produce such principals. A recent Rainwater Foundation report documents (www.anewapproach.org/) that organizations like the University of Illinois at Chicago, the NYC Leadership Academy, Gwinnett County Public Schools, and New Leaders for New Schools have demonstrated how to produce effective school leaders. The Wallace Foundation has made a significant contribution to disseminating knowledge about advances in the field.

A focus on principal leadership training would be the single most cost-effective way to begin turning around schools at scale in each state. This would also demonstrate new models of school leadership preparation that are highly selective, intensive in their field experience, and accountable to outcomes in Pre-K-12 student learning.

In terms of school leadership preparation, we are at the same juncture the medical profession faced at the time of the Flexner report in 1910—non-selective programs, untethered to clinics and hospitals, little to no supervised field experience, and low expectations for the results—all of these were true of medical education in 1910 and all have their analogue in principal preparation today. The revolution in medical preparation in the U.S. came largely in a single decade: 1910-1920, and 2011-2021 can be the decade for a similar revolution in school leader preparation. Without it, the other priority action areas will be stunted by the continued failure of school leaders to implement the knowledge base of their profession.

Systemic alignment around the elements: The Midwest region includes states with such large numbers of school districts (e.g., over 800 in Illinois) that advancing a common reform agenda is extremely difficult, ensuring equal opportunity for students is impossible, and achieving efficient operations and governance not feasible. The large number of districts is due to states' philosophy of local control, distance between rural communities, and the structure of dual districts. Additionally, the Midwest region includes a number of major metropolitan areas that have declining enrollment, leaving districts with less-than-capacity-filled school buildings and students without appropriate learning opportunities.

Alignment is the coordination and sharing of funding sources, program missions, data, curricular resources, and other information and resources between common organizations or institutions. This coordination and sharing attempts to address disconnects by establishing an integrated system linking all levels of education from birth through the achievement of a baccalaureate degree. It supports transitions throughout the educational continuum, starting with early childhood services. Such an integrated system can provide all students with an opportunity to succeed in college. For example, the alignment of high school and college programs is challenging because (1) colleges and universities are reluctant to enter into the discussion of standards, (2) high school teachers insist that they know the requirements for college admission

and success, and (3) entry-level college courses function as the de facto admissions process, screening those who can pass them from those who cannot.

Lack of alignment between funded programs threatens the sustainability of services that seek financial support from the same sources, particularly in this era of government austerity. The lack of alignment between funding sources also creates complex requirements for service providers seeking funding. For example, Michigan has 84 separate funding streams targeting early childhood interventions. Schools are left to figure out how to meet a multiplicity of program requirements because each funding source has different requirements.

Recommendations for Addressing the Needs Related to Priority #1

This section includes overall recommendations (Section A) followed by recommendations related to specific elements, including professional capacity, instructional supports and resources, health and social services, and family and community engagement (Sections B-E). The recommendations for each element are introduced with a brief discussion of needs specific to the element.

The section concludes with recommendations related to alignment (Section F). The priority should be supporting the student transitions between and across service systems over time, starting with early childhood and extending into college or postsecondary training.

A. Overall

- Align policies and programs around the following:
 - Leadership development, quality, and effectiveness.
 - Teacher development, quality, and effectiveness, at both the individual and collective levels (e.g., teacher professional communities).
 - Instructional resources and supports for student engagement, learning, and achievement.
 - Health and social services to support full participation in school.
 - Family and community engagement.
- Attend to the following concerns in aligning policies and programs around the elements cited above:
 - Student pathways from pre-K to postsecondary education and training, with an emphasis on recognizing the diversity of student populations.
 - Role and use of technology.
 - Research and data.
- Place priority on developing school leaders without casting this as a single solution. Support a small network or consortium of organizations that supply candidates to fill vacancies in the high-need schools in each region of the state, based on predictions from each state about the average annual number of principal vacancies in low-performing schools. Providers can be institutions of higher education or nongovernmental organizations such as New Leaders for New Schools.
- Create incentives for schools to voluntarily turn themselves around. Engage principals and teacher leaders for ideas about how to do this. Employ data and evidence to focus schools on the elements of success and their inter-dependence.

- Use technology to create and support learning networks of educational practitioners and policy makers within and across state lines to share and problem solve with one another around educational improvement efforts.

B. Professional Capacity

Not all teachers and leaders in Midwest Region schools are effective. This is a concern across subject areas, though particularly in math and science. Candidates for residential or clinical training programs are deficient in pre-requisite courses. It is also difficult to fill high school and middle school math and science vacancies with qualified teachers in turnaround schools.

- Require states to develop rigorous teacher and leader licensure standards for traditional and alternative preparation programs that incorporate competencies in early childhood development from birth, ELLs, cultural diversity, at-risk students, and special education.
- Develop teacher and leadership training programs that merge the teaching of subject matter content with knowledge of language learning needs, awareness of students' home culture, language, and knowledge, and insight into the needs of learners whose intellectual development may lag or who may experience social and emotional challenges due to their experiences at home or in the community.
- Encourage teacher preparation programs (1) to make deeper commitments to pedagogy, pedagogical content knowledge, and dispositions for working with at-risk student, which will require narrowing the scope of skills required for novice teachers, and (2) to provide a rich experience leveraging the Common Core standards and integrating them into practice.
- Encourage districts and teacher preparation programs to collaborate and develop models that clearly define the focus of preparation programs and the responsibility of districts to support teachers once they enter the classroom.
- Require states to develop and implement performance evaluation systems for teachers and leaders.
- Support states in developing their systems for performance evaluation, including collecting data, providing training, and monitoring evaluation in an ongoing manner. For example, Illinois is in the process of developing a model evaluation system and rules to guide development of evaluation systems at the district level.
- Change the distribution of Title II Part A to require that 75% of funding be designated for professional development for teachers and leaders, with use of those funds to be determined according to local and state arrangements. By 2014, the target should be 100% of funds.
- Support ongoing school-wide professional development, such as coaching in subject specific instruction, including effective use of data.
- Support schools in recognizing teachers for their achievements as leaders at the school level and in holding them accountable to a standard of leadership for school improvement. Leadership development must go beyond principal preparation and become an embedded element of school improvement.
- Develop "pre-residency" math and science cohorts so that aspiring teachers can complete the specific coursework they need to be admitted into a preparation program or residency

program. This will also help build the readiness of the applicant for success through more content preparedness.

- Market, more intensely, careers in teaching to those individuals who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in math and science.
- Provide incentives, such as stipends and financial aid, to develop, recruit, and retain skilled math and science teachers who are willing to work in high need urban schools, and in rural districts.
- Require focused, clinical field experiences in math and science in order to build teacher and leader capacity in content area knowledge and instructional expertise.

C. Instructional Supports and Resources for Student Engagement, Learning, and Achievement

Current policies that have a singular emphasis on high-stakes standardized tests are disconnected from a larger vision of developmentally appropriate, engaging, and ambitious instruction and assessment. We need this vision if we are to develop the higher level thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills our nation requires. We also need it to re-engage the many students who have disengaged from schools.

Also, too often schools focus narrowly on academic instruction and do not consider the social supports for learning—including a student-centered learning climate that emphasizes safety and high expectations for achievement—that are essential for school engagement and academic achievement. Related to this, teachers/instructors may not have the training they need to connect students to support services, whether academic or nonacademic, which poses a barrier to effective early alert systems that can identify and address student difficulties. Third, there is a need to be responsive to the diversity of student populations, including those without experience or exposure to workforce expectations due to lack of jobs in their communities and the related lack of participation of their parents or caregivers in the workforce. Also, the multilingual backgrounds of an increasing number of students in both rural and urban schools create instructional and assessment challenges and opportunities.

- Focus school experiences (e.g., knowledge and skills) around preparation for postsecondary education, which increasingly is a prerequisite for obtaining employment in a skilled career (e.g., college and career readiness), including exposing students to the modes of behavior and expectations for skilled employees in the workforce.
- Provide technical assistance to schools and states around how to best use the Common Core State Standards and build them into instructional support. The Common Core Standards define a new model for articulating student expectations connected to college and career readiness. Ensure that the Common Core Standards are aligned with and connected to early childhood learning guidelines/standards used by states.
- Develop self-directed learning projects throughout students' educational trajectories to encourage and enable students to be independent thinkers, discover and explore their interests, and consider potential careers and the postsecondary educational credentials needed for chosen fields of interest. Incorporate principles of positive youth development into challenging learning projects, including for students who have disengaged from school.

- Design and implement diverse assessments to support challenging learning experiences and to provide a continuum of information that will allow educators to continuously assess and build on student progress.
- Support districts and schools to build the Common Core Standards into models for assessing students, including state assessments, interim assessments, and diagnostic, and formative assessments. Facilitate the incorporation of teacher-developed, authentic, and developmentally appropriate classroom based assessment into these models.
- Review assessments for their validity with diverse populations and make appropriate accommodations, including language translation.
- Provide ongoing professional development for teachers, through coaching and/or face-to-face and virtual professional learning communities, to guide and facilitate authentic learning opportunities (e.g., real world demonstration of learning) aligned to academic learning standards and including technology where it adds value.
- Support research to better understand the connection between engagement in authentic learning opportunities (e.g., those that require real-world problem solving) and achievement of higher standards.
- Develop and implement professional development for teachers and leaders to better understand the unique strengths and challenging emotional/behavioral/social needs of the children schools serve and how to engage students, families, and communities in building safe, supportive, and high achieving educational communities, considering, but not limited to, race, gender, cultural, sexual orientation, religious, ethnic, and economic considerations.
- Develop ongoing developmentally appropriate assessments of students' performance in the broad sense, including students' academic and non-academic behaviors, an expectation of the role of the teacher, and something that is evaluated as part of teacher performance.
- Develop linkages between students' home culture, language, and knowledge and school learning experiences through professional development, the curriculum, and outreach to parents in culturally relevant ways.

D. Health and Social Services to Support Full Participation in School

Non-academic factors have strong influences on children's academic progress. Many students who live in poverty are exposed to a variety of experiences that disrupt their educational progress. Schools lack the resources, partners, and professional expertise to effectively address non-academic needs. This does not mean that schools must provide services, but they must be able to accurately assess needs, make and track referrals, and assess effectiveness of services with respect to learning.

- Develop technical assistance capacity at regional (within state) and district levels so regional support centers and districts can support the development of partnerships of schools, community providers, and public agencies to coordinate and identify gaps in services for high needs students and vulnerable families.
- Develop resources, processes, and training to link student-level academic data and non-academic risk/protective data to support appropriate interventions and ensure student academic progress.

- Provide technical support to integrate student support services into the organization of schools and classroom instruction as appropriate.

E. Family and Community Engagement

Many families feel disenfranchised from the educational system and schools lack the resources and skills to effectively re-connect and support the families. Ideas about family engagement tend to be based on middle class expectations, and schools are ill-equipped to respond to low-income populations. Family engagement is an underdeveloped area, both conceptually and programmatically. Community institutions can be invaluable resources for engaging students and families from birth in educational activities and supporting educational aspirations.

- Increase understanding, through research and the experiences of practitioners and communities, about what family engagement might look like across economic, cultural, and religious groups and related obstacles.
- Develop and actively disseminate models for family engagement that value differences in its expression across economic, cultural and religious groups. Address obstacles and barriers to implementing these models.
- Develop and disseminate well-specified models for partnerships between schools and community institutions around programs and services that will contribute to the educational aspirations and achievement of students and their caregivers.
- Provide support for local adaptation and use of knowledge about family engagement and provide support for innovation when this knowledge is not available.
- Develop the capacity of districts or regional (within states) service agencies to support family engagement efforts.

F. Systemic Alignment

Although schools, programs, and educational organizations across the P-20 spectrum have similar goals, the lack of alignment, collaboration, and communication creates gaps and duplication in the services each institution provides and in the efficiency and effectiveness of the services.

With regard to services affected by district size or location (e.g., rural areas):

- Provide support for broadband technology throughout the Midwest.
- Assist in acquiring and using technology and distance learning.
- Provide research that takes into account differences related to school/district size and location.
- Provide technical assistance related to sharing services among districts.
- Encourage collaboration among districts and between districts and universities to share resources and create efficiencies.

With regard to more specifically aligning educational services:

- Provide incentives to support communication between and among various educational institutions to align their standards, assessment, instructional practices, etc. As an

example, the Proficiency-based Admission Standards System (PASS), which was developed by the Oregon University System, works to align university admissions standards with the state’s K-12 school improvement plan, which is based on grades and demonstrated student competencies. In the PASS system, students must demonstrate proficiency in math, English, science, foreign languages, social sciences, and visual and performing arts. Similarly, Michigan recently raised its grades 3-8 proficiency “cut scores” on state assessments to create a trajectory for success on the State’s career-and-college readiness, ACT-based assessment in 11th grade.

- Provide technical assistance for processes to align services.
- Develop, coordinate, and manage data across systems to inform policy and practice and to help students and families manage and understand possible educational trajectories. Develop data indicators to align funding and service supply, use, and quality with student progress and program goals such as:
 - Objectives, eligibility and availability, quality, and funding mechanisms (including family contributions) for early childhood care and programs.
 - Student pathways through the education system, based on broad definitions of readiness that capture student competencies and needs, including social/emotional, job skills, and academic preparedness, with the latter to be understood in terms of established benchmarks in critical skill areas, (e.g., grade 3 for reading; grade 8 for writing and algebra; grade 12 for higher reading, mathematics and citizenship skills, and that link these competencies to the attainment of high quality certificates, associate degrees and bachelor degrees).

Priority #2: School Readiness for Young Learners

Statement of Need

Many children enter kindergarten without the foundational skills and capabilities for success in school and career. Additionally, many preschools and K-2 classrooms are unable to meet the needs of young learners to ensure their educational success in grade 3 and beyond.

Discussion of Need

Learning begins at birth. The experiences children have as babies, toddlers, and preschoolers shape the kind of students they will become as they enter our school pipeline. Research shows that responsive, early care and interaction literally shape the architecture of the infant’s brain, building the foundation for early language, vocabulary, and social-emotional skills essential to school success. To maximize taxpayers’ investments in public education, our educational system can no longer conceptualize that system exclusively as a K-12 system. The period in a child’s life from birth to five years must be viewed as an integral, foundational component of public education—and ensure that all related policy and funding decisions focus on birth-to-grade 20.

While every area of need indicated in this report is relevant to the Midwest region’s youngest students, the historical underinvestment in early childhood as an integral part of the educational continuum requires policy-makers to take careful consideration of early childhood systems for the future. Integrating and aligning these systems with K-12 and beyond is a critical component of school improvement, preparing children to be successful and reducing the need for more costly educational interventions later in the child’s life.

Barriers to providing a quality education include:

- A lack of state-coordinated developmentally appropriate and comprehensive assessment and longitudinal data systems, beginning at birth, in order to target resources and effectively support learning.
- Inadequate access to high quality early learning supports and services for the most vulnerable children, particularly infants and toddlers.
- Inconsistent eligibility, performance, and professional standards and coordinated reporting and outcome measures across state, federal, and local early childhood funding streams results in decreased efficiency and efficacy of programs.
- Inconsistent policies for use of available funding, including Title I and child care subsidy, limits access to high quality early learning programming.
- A lack of compensation structures and career pathways for the early childhood workforce to ensure that every child benefits from an effective teacher.
- A lack at the state level of a coordinated P-8 (prenatal-8) educational framework that allows for seamless transition, shared expectations around social-emotional development, family engagement, support for English language learners and children with special needs, and a continuous focus on comprehensive child development.
- Inadequate resources to engage parents in culturally appropriate ways beginning at birth means that states are missing the opportunity to help parents, especially the most vulnerable, become their child's primary teacher, educational advocate, and family leader. Schools need assistance to be ready for the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students who enter schools in kindergarten, as well as later years.

Recommendations for Addressing the Needs Related to Priority #2

- Implement Federal requirements for state comprehensive early learning systems that support increased access to high quality early learning programming, development of comprehensive program standards, state adoption of P-8 early learning standards, quality improvement and professional development systems, and unified data efforts.
- Provide explicit federal guidance and planning/coordination/reporting requirements that ensure Title I and other early childhood funding assist in the transition from early learning to K-12 including direct support to, coordination with, and creation of early learning programs.
- Establish a requirement for the state adoption of a developmentally appropriate definition of school readiness appropriately incorporating early learning guidelines/standards for infants, toddlers and preschoolers for the purposes of informing instruction, informing parents, and promoting alignment and shared outcome measures—but not for the purposes of denying access to kindergarten. Require input from the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, which includes representatives from all early childhood stakeholder groups, in adopting this definition. Permit states to use federal assessment dollars to implement a developmentally appropriate school readiness assessment.
- Support P-8 teacher preparation that focuses on all domains of early childhood development, consistent knowledge and practice, and alignment between early learning and K-3, with particular attention to English language learners and children with special needs.

- Align existing K-12 parent engagement strategies with promising early childhood family engagement programs and practices that begin at birth.
- Integrate federal technical assistance across both ED and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the early learning recommendations and overall integrative policy and practice framework.

Priority Area # 3: English Language Learners and Ethnically Diverse Populations

Statement of Need

The number of ELLs is increasing across Midwest states and school systems are not equipped to respond to this population. Responsiveness to ELLs raises issues of diversity in addition to language acquisition and development. Therefore, addressing this priority will meet the needs of an even larger population than English language learners.

Discussion of Need

In our current global world, knowing two languages, or retaining one while learning a second, has cognitive, social, economic and even potentially national security benefits. Learning two languages is beneficial for both ELLs and English monolingual students and can be done efficiently through dual language programming where ELLs and monolingual students interact as they strengthen and develop two academic languages. Well designed and implemented dual language, ESL, or bilingual education programs that value the home language and culture of ELLs can aid in reducing the achievement gap between English learners and their monolingual peers.

When ELLs achieve a higher level of proficiency and are transitioned into mainstream classrooms, the students are still developing their academic language proficiency and therefore mainstream teachers need strategies and knowledge to be effective in their instruction. Merging language and content instruction is necessary for efficient and effective learning to take place, in a context where both highly challenging academic content and increased vocabulary and oral proficiency development occur simultaneously. For example, science teachers must understand their role as language teachers within the content of science if they have ELLs or former ELLs in their classes.

Recognizing that professional development should be based on local needs, it is nonetheless a fact that all stakeholders in the educational system must view the English learner population as important because (1) the numbers of ELLs enrolling in schools across the region are increasing and, although mainly Latino, include children speaking a growing number of other languages due to global immigration patterns, (2) these children are entitled to a quality education, and (3) these children bring a culturally diverse resource to schools that can contribute to greater understanding among monolingual populations.

Recommendations for Addressing the Needs Related to Priority #3

Recommendations to address the needs of ELLs have been incorporated throughout the report, where appropriate, and include:

- Reorient school cultures toward linguistic and cultural diversity as an asset in learning by developing linkages between home culture, language, and knowledge and students' school learning experiences. This can be done through teacher professional development, curricula, and culturally-relevant outreach to parents.
- Merge instruction in content areas with language learning strategies.
- Support policies to promote bilingualism and bilingual education.
- Require professional development for all teachers in working with ELLs and being responsive to diverse populations.
- Support collaboration of institutions and agencies around professional development for ELLs and diversity.
- Examine the validity of assessment for ELL populations and accommodate as necessary.

Priority Area # 4: Research and Data Use in Support of Systemic Change

Statement of Need

The educational system is currently not receiving the research and data feedback needed to improve policy and practice.

Discussion of Need

Research activity and data systems need to inform the process of establishing, sustaining, and improving educational practices and programs recognizing the diversity of schools, districts, communities, and student populations across the region. There is a need to:

- Forge stronger connections between the use of data and the improvement of practice, including but not limited to how to support use of data at all levels—state, district, school, age-level, and classroom. Different kinds of data need to be collected and analyzed in different ways at these different levels.
- Organize research activity to develop and test effective practices and programs;
- Strengthen research, (e.g., through sound logic and theory, mixed method designs to capture both processes and outcomes, improve instruments and measures for outcomes and processes), and identify appropriate indicators of student development and related contextual factors.
- Support productive work between researchers, practitioners, and administrators around policy development and significant problems of practice.
- Support all of this activity so the results cohere and advance the field.

An expanded notion of data (i.e., data not limited to standardized test scores) is essential to the work of the practitioner at all levels of the educational system. Practitioner choices and decisions should be based on different types of evidence and experience, processed together in professional learning communities to identify common problems, share ideas and strategies, and develop and use informative assessment instruments.

The current focus of policy on “what works” and accountability needs to be balanced with greater focus on processes of improvement and on professional judgment and discretion when using data and evidence. The investment in randomized control trials has led to an accumulation of studies showing no effects; evidence-based practices are being treated as stand-alone solutions to the problem of improving practice. Logic models, though they may meet government guidelines, too often lack the underlying logic and sound reasoning to link activities and outcomes in ways that can be evaluated. Data provided as part of program evaluation feedback, whether quantitative or qualitative, tend not to be viewed and used as evidence—with strengths and limitations—to support reasoning about program improvement.

Additionally, there is not a research infrastructure to support performance. More specifically, conditions and context matter for whether and how something works. Even when practices are supported by robust evidence, there remains a vital need for sound information to guide decisions and actions around the implementation of programs and practices so they achieve reliable results across sites. This reliability is essential if programs and practices are to be taken to scale and continuously improved.

Policy and practice need to be more tightly connected through the use of data. The education field is learning to value data; however, there is a need to question the purpose of data (“what are data for”) and their informational value (“what do data tell us”). Data established for one purpose may not be informative for another or they may not be well suited to certain research designs. For example, point in time data do not work in longitudinal analysis. All measures have strengths and limitations. These need to be fully understood and instruments need to be used appropriately. For example, many state agencies currently collect data for compliance and accountability purposes rather than to inform policy in support of practice improvement. At the same time, choices regarding student assessments and teacher evaluation systems at the policy level have real implications for practice that often are not recognized. Two examples follow based on comments to the Midwest RAC:

- DIBELS is a diagnostic tool for identifying students who are not reading at the level they should and it indicates the level of intervention they need. Many teachers are required by their schools or systems to use it for all students. However, DIBELS does not provide information to guide the instruction of students who already read adequately, which means it is of limited value in supporting teachers in their efforts to develop the literacy skills of most students.
- COMPAS, one of the big college placement exams is a test that indicates whether a student is ready for college-level coursework in mathematics and English. Some colleges use the scores to place students into different remedial levels, though it was not designed for this purpose and therefore does not necessarily serve it adequately. We see different colleges set the “ready-for-college” bar at different levels, so some students are placed in remedial courses and others are placed in college-level courses.

To further illustrate the link between data and policy, data have the potential to drive practice improvement in ways not fully appreciated at a policy level. To illustrate, the director of a teacher residency program commented for Midwest RAC that her program decisions cannot be systematically informed by program graduates’ performance as teachers because there is a lack of data, other than anecdotal reports, after they exit from the program. This problem is not just

one of data not being shared, for example student achievement data that may speak to graduates' effectiveness. It is also a problem of not having common teacher performance objectives, expectations for teacher development, and evaluation systems. Thus, the development of data systems have the potential to spur the development of practice as professionals come together to figure out the decisions and the work to inform, the data to be captured, the processes that will generate the data, and how the data are to be used.

Finally, there needs to be an understanding of students' educational trajectories (or pathways), from birth through college. This will require capacity to link data across public systems. If research is limited to questions that can be answered by data collected only by the education system, much will remain unknown about the needs of student populations. Development, family, and contextual factors play a large role and are interconnected throughout, requiring that educators' ideas about the "readiness" of students for next steps in their educational experience and about educational practices to prepare students for next step be informed by developmental and contextual perspectives. This will involve identifying meaningful indicators at the individual level concerning academic and developmental progress and at the contextual level of family, school, and community. It will also require attention to how the diversity of student populations will lead to differences in educational trajectories, posing the challenge of how to adhere to the goal of high achievement and accomplishment without reverting to one-size-fits-all thinking. Interpreting trajectories and when and how to have an impact on them will be a challenge.

Recommendations for Addressing the Needs Related to Priority #4

A primary goal of research activity and use of data should be to improve the education system and educational practice. In support of this goal:

- Develop the capacity of school and district personnel to collect and collaboratively analyze and act on information relevant to the improvement of student learning outcomes.
- Provide support for the development of data systems that can inform key policy and practice questions.
- Identify several significant problems of practice related to each of the five elements described in priority number one (i.e. problems experienced by practitioners on the ground floor of practice), the solutions to which can be advanced through focused research and development activity, and support this activity through research teams that integrate diverse forms of expertise, including practitioner or clinical expertise, including support for the development and/or alignment of work processes at the service level out of which data is to be generated.
- Develop and/or identify meaningful indicators for student trajectories (or pathways), including developmental and context indicators.
- Support the use of data from diverse public systems to answer questions of significance in the educational system.
- Support institutional cultures across the education system that value and can reason from evidence in ways that recognize and are appropriate to the strengths and limitations of various forms of data and feedback.

- Create a clearinghouse of research tools, to be populated by the products of research activity—data, tool and instruments, visualizations, logic models, findings—for use as resources in practice improvement as our efforts cycle forward.
- Examine the value of data captured by technological devices that are used in learning processes for informing decisions at various levels of the system.
- Support the development of networked improvement communities of schools and researchers who work together to develop, implement and modify educational innovations, as proposed by Anthony Bryk, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and colleagues.

CONCLUSIONS

This report was completed in a short period of time by a committed group of people who are in touch with the variety of challenges this region faces as it seeks to develop and sustain educational opportunities of high quality for its young people. It reflects their thinking and discussions and also the many thoughtful comments received from people similarly aware of educational needs in the region. It captures several important big ideas that reflect key opportunities for action to improve educational opportunities and provides a wide range and mostly cohesive set of recommendations for acting on the ideas. Because our goal as a group was to highlight needs and strategies for action without particular regard to authoritative limitations or constraints, these recommendations will no doubt require further refining in light of the kind of assistance the federal government can provide.

The priorities identified are common to most regions across the United States, but the ability to address these issues varies from state to state. It will be important for the federal government to provide the support, resources, and flexibility for states to respond in different ways to these needs so each state can build on its strengths and address its particular gaps. The supports identified in the report are necessary from our viewpoint to create sustainable change. If we are successful in addressing the needs in a systemic way, the results will benefit many students in our region, now and well into the future.

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APPENDIX A

Regional Profile

MIDWEST 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; the 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 the percentage of households below the poverty level and percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). The data for the Midwest Region states of **Illinois**, **Indiana**, **Iowa**, **Michigan**, **Minnesota**, **Ohio** and **Wisconsin** are found below.

Number of Schools. Table 1 contains the number of public schools and students, private schools and charter schools collected in the Midwest Region states. During the School Year (SY) 2008-2009, **Illinois** had the largest number (2,119,707) of public school students and schools (4,402). **Ohio** had 1,817,163 public school students, the second highest number, although **Michigan** had the second highest number (4,078) of schools. **Iowa** had 242 private schools during SY2007-2008, and **Illinois** had 1,924. **Ohio** had the highest number of charter schools collected during 2011 (373), followed by **Michigan** (300), **Wisconsin** (237) and **Minnesota** (163).

Table 1: Number of Schools

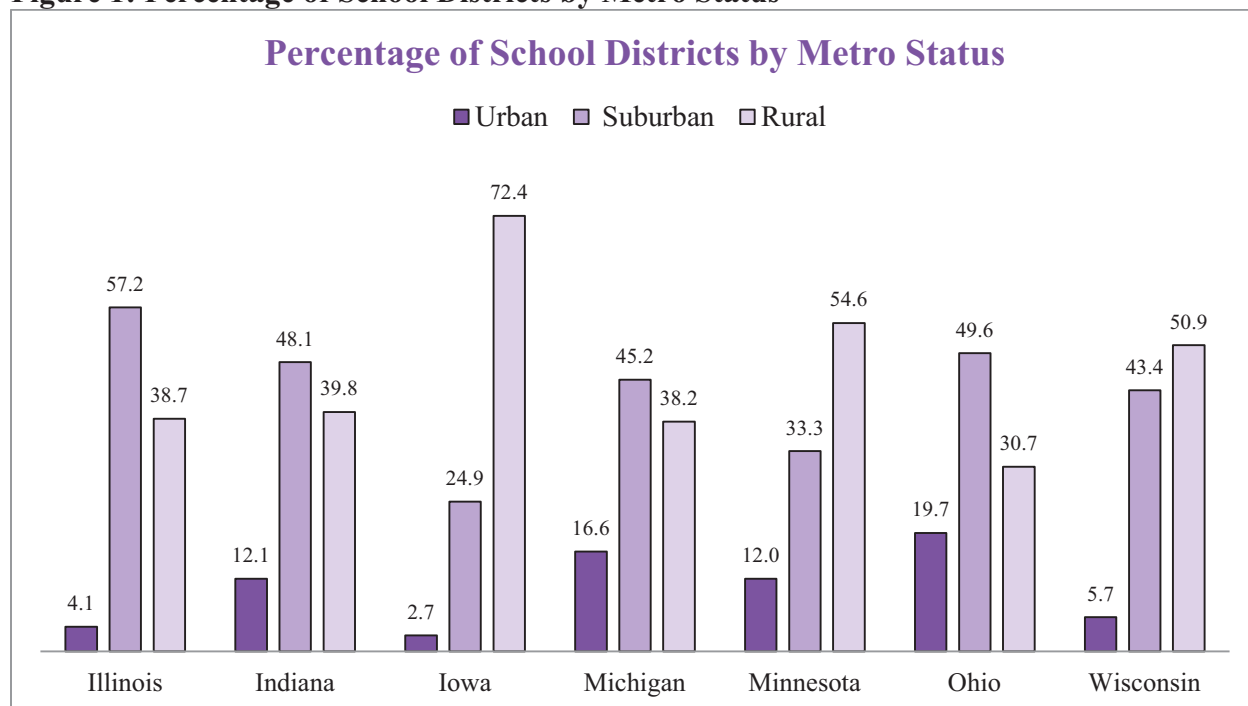
State	Public School Students, SY2008-2009 ¹	Public Schools, SY2008-2009 ¹	Private Schools, SY2007-2008 ²	Charter Schools Collected, 2011 ³
Illinois	2,119,707	4,402	1,924	102
Indiana	1,046,147	1,973	807	70
Iowa	487,559	1,490	242	10
Michigan	1,659,921	4,078	908	300
Minnesota	836,048	2,263	585	163
Ohio	1,817,163	3,852	1,189	373
Wisconsin	873,750	2,268	990	237

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 Midwest Region. 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 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 Exactly 19.7 percent of school districts in **Ohio** were located in urban areas, and 2.7 percent of school districts in **Iowa** were located in urban areas as well. In **Illinois**, 57.2 percent of school districts were located in suburban areas, and in **Iowa**, 24.9 percent were located in these same areas. A majority of school districts in **Iowa** were located in rural areas (72.4 percent), followed by **Wisconsin**, in which 50.9 percent of districts were located in said areas.

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 displays the percentage of public school students by racial characteristics. **Minnesota** had the largest percentage of students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native (2.2 percent) and also the largest percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students (6.2 percent). Black students in **Michigan** comprised 20.2 percent of public school students, while 5.8 percent of students in **Iowa** were black. **Illinois** had the largest percentage (21.3 percent) of Hispanic students, while **Ohio** had 2.8 percent. In **Iowa**, 84.5 percent of students were white, while 54.3 percent in **Illinois** identified as white. Students in the Midwest Region were not given the option of selecting “two or more races” when identifying themselves by race.

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
Illinois	0.2	4.2	20.0	21.3	54.3	Not Applicable
Indiana	0.3	1.5	12.8	7.1	78.3	Not Applicable
Iowa	0.6	2.2	5.8	7.0	84.5	Not Applicable
Michigan	0.9	2.7	20.2	4.8	71.4	Not Applicable
Minnesota	2.2	6.2	9.6	6.4	75.6	Not Applicable
Ohio	0.1	1.7	16.9	2.8	78.4	Not Applicable
Wisconsin	1.5	3.7	10.5	8.0	76.3	Not Applicable

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2008-2009

Selected Student Subgroups. Table 3 displays selected student subgroups, such as the percentage of students who receive FRPL, percentage of students identifying as ELL and the

percentage of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). In both **Indiana** and **Michigan**, 41.8 percent of students received FRPL, and in **Minnesota**, 32.7 percent did the same. The percentage of students identifying as ELL was greatest (9.7 percent) in **Illinois** and lowest (2 percent) in **Ohio**. In **Indiana**, 16.8 percent of students had an IEP. **Michigan** had 8,061 migrant students and 18,706 homeless students.

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
Illinois	39.3	9.7	15.0	1,994	6,654
Indiana	41.8	4.4	16.8	2,242	10,364
Iowa	34.4	4.2	13.8	1,551	6,824
Michigan	41.8	3.7	14.0	8,061	18,706
Minnesota	32.7	7.4	14.4	2,624	7,590
Ohio	36.4	2.0	14.6	2,671	16,059
Wisconsin	33.5	5.5	14.3	998	10,955

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 children whose parents speak English fluently, the percentage of the population aged 5 through 17 that speaks a language other than English at home and the percentage of public school students identified as ELL. In **Illinois**, 13.4 percent of the population was foreign born, and in **Ohio**, 3.6 percent of the population was foreign born. 21.3 percent of people in **Illinois** speak a language other than English, whereas in **Ohio**, 6.1 percent did the same. In **Ohio**, 96.2 percent of children had parents who speak English fluently, and in **Iowa**, 23.9 percent of the population aged 5 through 17 spoke a language other than English at home. In **Illinois**, 9.7 percent of students identified as ELL.

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 Aged 5-17: Speak Language Other Than English at Home ¹	Percent of Public School Students in ELL/LEP ³
Illinois	13.4	21.3	82.1	20.2	9.7
Indiana	4.1	7.4	94.0	21.8	4.4
Iowa	3.8	6.4	94.8	23.9	4.2
Michigan	6.0	9.0	93.5	19.9	3.7
Minnesota	6.5	9.6	90.7	23.7	7.4
Ohio	3.6	6.1	96.2	18.7	2.0
Wisconsin	4.4	8.2	92.8	23.5	5.5

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

Socioeconomic Indicators. Table 5 displays socioeconomic indicators, such as the percentage of families below the poverty level, percentage of families with children below the poverty level

and percentage of children with at least one parent with a secondary degree. **Illinois** had the largest number (3,138,838) of families, while **Michigan** had the largest percentage of families below the poverty level (10.3 percent), and **Minnesota** had the lowest (6.4 percent). In **Ohio**, 16.3 percent of households with children were below the poverty level. **Minnesota** had the largest percentage of children with at least once parent with a secondary degree (56.6 percent), and **Indiana** had the lowest percentage of children (42.9 percent) with the same. The percentage of students receiving FRPL was largest (41.8 percent) in **Indiana** and **Michigan**, and lowest in **Minnesota** (32.7 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
Illinois	3,138,838	9.1	14.1	46.7	39.3
Indiana	1,653,151	9.5	15.4	42.9	41.8
Iowa	793,162	7.3	12.2	52.7	34.4
Michigan	2,570,016	10.3	16.4	45.3	41.8
Minnesota	1,340,397	6.4	10.2	56.6	32.7
Ohio	2,970,400	10.0	16.3	44.6	36.4
Wisconsin	1,460,340	7.2	12.2	51.1	33.5

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 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 displays AYP data for the Midwest Region states. During SY2008-2009, 1,533 schools in **Illinois** failed to make AYP, and in **Wisconsin**, 145 schools failed to make AYP. The percentage of schools that failed was highest (53.7 percent) in **Minnesota**, in which 1,236 schools failed, while the percentage was lowest (6.7 percent) in **Wisconsin**.

Table 6: Adequate Yearly Progress

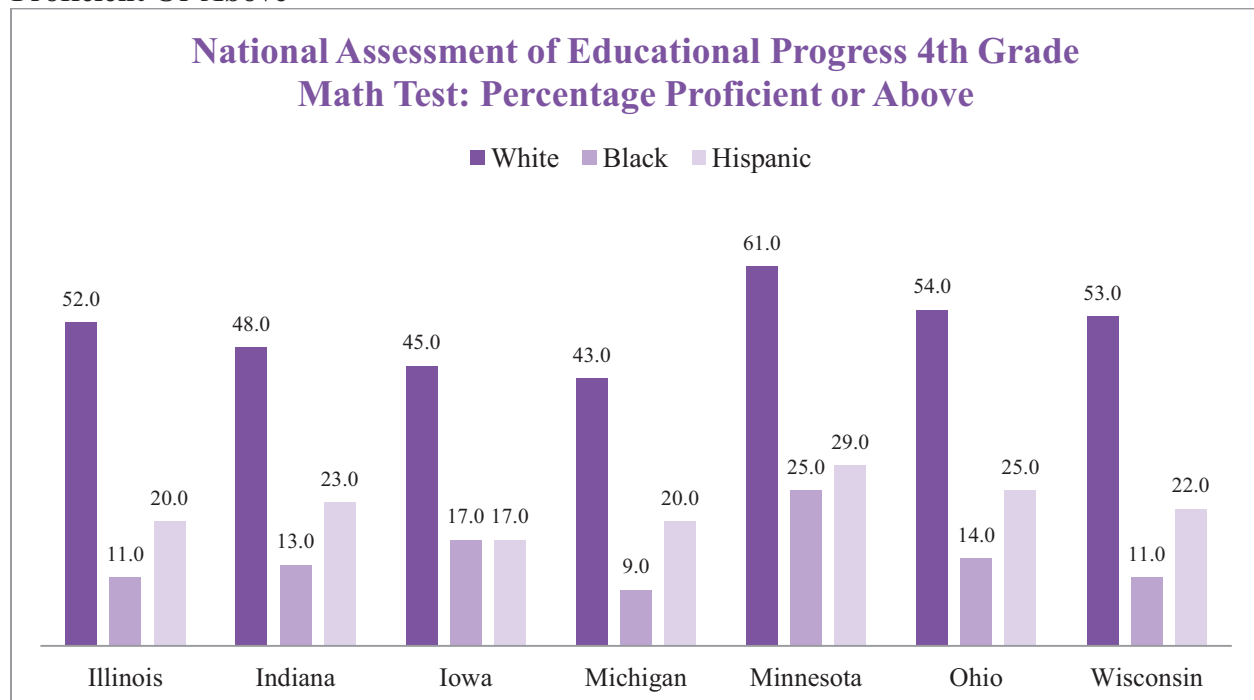
State	Number and Percentage of Schools That Failed To Make AYP in SY2008-2009
Illinois	1,553 (40.8%)
Indiana	920 (49.9%)
Iowa	436 (30.2%)
Michigan	334 (9.2%)
Minnesota	1,236 (53.7%)
Ohio	1,466 (39.5%)
Wisconsin	145 (6.7%)

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

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Math Test. Figure 2 contains results of the most recently administered NAEP 4th grade math test in the Midwest Region.

Performance for white students was strongest in **Minnesota**, with 61 percent of white students proficient in math, while in **Michigan**, 43 percent were proficient. Black students in **Minnesota** also had the best performance, with 25 percent achieving proficiency in that state. In **Michigan**, 9 percent were proficient, and in **Illinois** and **Wisconsin**, 11 percent were proficient. Among Hispanic students, 29 percent were proficient in **Minnesota** and 23 percent were proficient in **Indiana** in math at the 4th grade level.

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

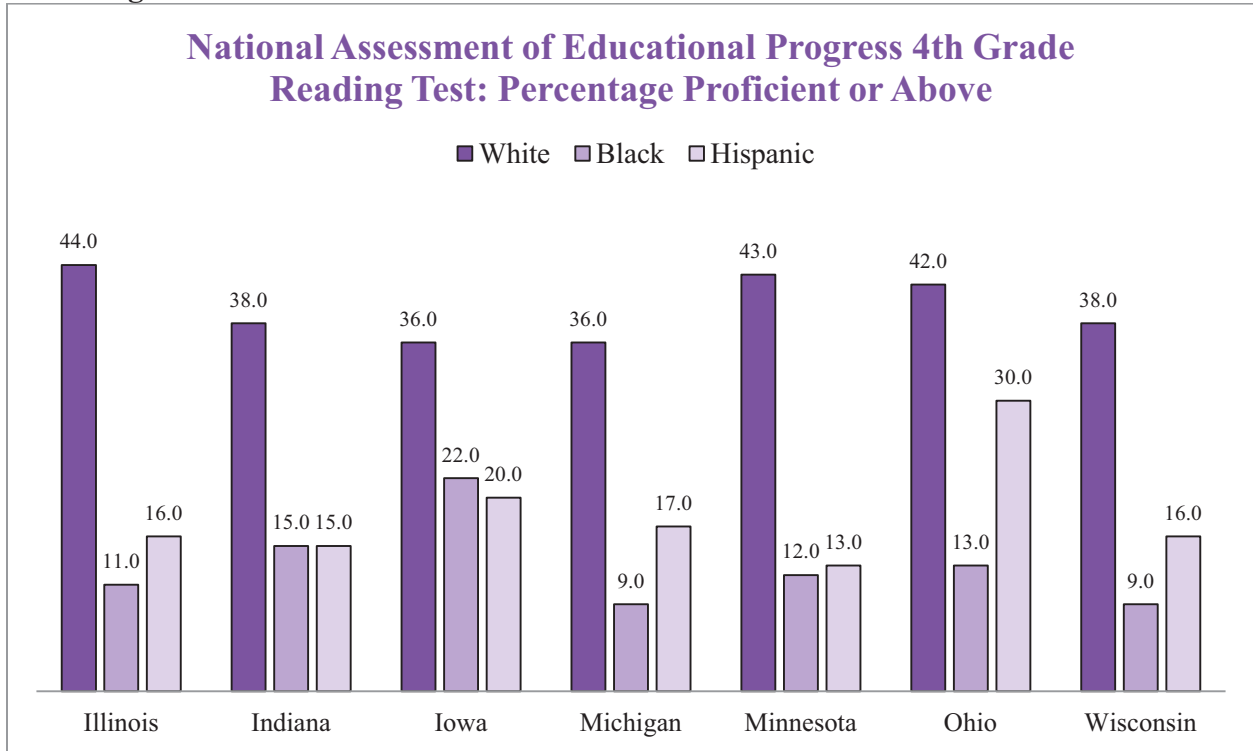


SOURCE: NAEP State Profiles, 2009

National Assessment of Educational Progress 4th Grade Reading Test. Figure 3 displays results of the most recent NAEP 4th grade reading test administered in the Midwest Region.

Approximately 44 percent of white students in **Illinois** and 36 percent of white students in **Iowa** and **Michigan** were proficient in reading. Among black students, 22 percent in **Iowa** and 9 percent in **Michigan** and **Wisconsin** were proficient. For Hispanic students, performance was strongest in **Ohio**, with 30 percent of Hispanic 4th graders in that state achieving proficiency in reading.

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 achievement, such as high school graduation rates, Advanced Placement (AP) scores, whether the state has an exit exam and whether the state finances remediation for students failing that exam. During SY2007-2008, the high school graduation rate was highest (91.7 percent) in **Minnesota** and lowest (77.5 percent) in **Michigan**. Among 11th and 12th graders who took AP tests, 22.9 percent in **Illinois** scored a 3 or above on these tests. **Michigan** and **Wisconsin** offered alternative credentials for not meeting all requirements to earn a standard diploma. **Indiana**, **Minnesota** and **Ohio** required exit exams, and **Indiana** and **Minnesota** financed remediation for students failing these 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
Illinois	86.5	22.9	16.0				
Indiana	77.8	11.5	20.0			✓	✓
Iowa	88.7	10.2					
Michigan	75.5	15.0		✓	Local Option		
Minnesota	91.7	19.5	21.5			✓	✓
Ohio	84.6	13.8	20.0			✓	
Wisconsin	89.0	18.9	13.0	✓	Alternative Education Program		

SOURCES: ¹EDFacts/Consolidated State Performance Report, 2008-2009; ²EPE Research Center, 2011

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Table 8 contains dropout rates by race and ethnicity for SY2007-2008. The overall dropout rate was highest (6.2 percent) in **Michigan** and lowest (1.7 percent) in **Indiana**. The dropout rate for American Indian/Alaska Native students was highest (11.6 percent) in **Minnesota**, and for Asian/Pacific Islanders was 3.6 percent in **Michigan** and 0.7 percent in **Indiana**. Hispanic students had a dropout rate of 10.3 percent in **Michigan** and 8.5 percent in **Ohio**, the lowest being 2.4 percent in **Indiana**. Among black students, the dropout rate was 12.6 percent in **Michigan** and 2.8 percent in **Indiana**. White students had a dropout rate of 1.4 percent in **Wisconsin** and 4.3 percent in **Michigan**. 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 and Number of Dropouts (#)	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White
Illinois	5.2% (32,638)	3.8% (64)	1.7% (397)	7.3% (7,553)	9.1% (11,360)	2.2% (8,046)
Indiana	1.7% (5,417)	3.6% (30)	0.7% (27)	2.4% (380)	2.8% (1,019)	1.6% (3,851)
Iowa	2.9% (4,437)	9.1% (80)	2.6% (75)	6.1% (479)	6.2% (471)	2.5% (3,332)
Michigan	6.2% (34,702)	8.3% (422)	3.6% (434)	10.3% (2,135)	12.6% (14,355)	4.3% (17,086)
Minnesota	2.8% (7,826)	11.6% (668)	3.1% (497)	7.5% (939)	7.1% (1,778)	1.8% (3,944)
Ohio	4.3% (24,980)	8.2% (66)	1.8% (137)	8.5% (1,051)	10.1% (9,863)	2.9% (13,076)
Wisconsin	2.3% (6,659)	5.8% (248)	2.0% (200)	5.4% (880)	7.8% (2,160)	1.4% (3,171)

SOURCE: Common Core of Data, SY2007-2008

Meeting Requirements to Establish Standards. Table 9 displays whether states are meeting requirements to establish state standards in reading, mathematics and science, and if they have agreed to adopt common core standards. **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Ohio** are meeting requirements to establish state standards and have agreed to adopt common core standards. **Michigan** and **Wisconsin** have partially met requirements to establish state standards in reading and mathematics, and **Minnesota** has not 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
Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iowa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michigan	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ohio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Partial	Partial	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 enrollment and readiness intervention data. Preschool enrollment, defined as the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool, was highest (55.4 percent) in **Illinois** and lowest (40.5 percent) in **Indiana**. During SY2010-2011, **Illinois, Indiana, Michigan** and **Minnesota** each provided readiness interventions, defined as state-provided or funded programs for children not meeting school-readiness expectations.

Table 10: Preschool

State	Preschool Enrollment (Percentage 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)
Illinois	55.4	✓
Indiana	40.5	✓
Iowa	47.2	
Michigan	48.4	✓
Minnesota	46.5	✓
Ohio	45.8	
Wisconsin	45.8	

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 **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin**.

Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries. Table 11 displays the number of teachers and average teacher salaries for the Midwest Region states. **Illinois** had the highest number (135,704) of teachers, and **Iowa** had the lowest (35,961). During SY2008-2009, the average teacher salary was highest (\$61,344) in **Illinois** and lowest (\$48,638) in **Iowa**. Teacher pay-parity (i.e., teacher earnings as a percentage of salaries in comparable professions) was 109.4 percent in **Michigan** and 100 percent in **Ohio**.

Table 11: Number of Teachers and Teacher Salaries

State	Number of Teachers ¹	Average Teacher Salary, SY2008 2009 ²	Pay Parity (Teacher Earnings as a Percentage of Salaries in Comparable Occupations, 2008) ³
Illinois	135,704	\$61,344	83.9
Indiana	62,668	\$49,569	96.0
Iowa	35,961	\$48,638	91.1
Michigan	94,754	\$57,327	109.4
Minnesota	53,083	\$51,938	87.3
Ohio	112,845	\$54,656	100.0
Wisconsin	59,401	\$51,121	94.0

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 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers as a percentage of all teachers. 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 In **Iowa**, 99.9 percent of classes were taught by highly qualified teachers, and in **Minnesota**, 97.5 percent were taught by the same. In **Illinois**, 3.5 percent of teachers held NBPTS certification, and in **Michigan**, 0.4% of teachers held the same.

Table 12: Teacher Quality Indicators

State	Percentage of Core Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers ¹	National Board-Certified Teachers as a Percentage of All Teachers ²
Illinois	98.8	3.5
Indiana	97.7	2.4
Iowa	99.9	1.8
Michigan	99.2	0.4
Minnesota	97.5	0.7
Ohio	98.2	2.9
Wisconsin	98.3	1.3

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

Teaching Profession. Table 13 displays teaching profession criteria, such as whether states require substantial formal coursework in subject areas taught, and initial licensure requirements for all prospective teachers. **Iowa**, **Michigan**, **Ohio** and **Wisconsin** required new teachers to participate in state-funded induction programs. These four states and **Illinois** required substantial formal coursework in subject areas taught. In all the Midwest Region states, except for **Ohio**, prospective teachers had to pass basic skills written tests, and in all states but for **Iowa**, teachers had to pass subject-specific knowledge written tests. **Wisconsin** required 18 weeks of student teaching during teacher training, and **Ohio** required 100 hours of other clinical experiences during 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)
Illinois		✓	✓	✓			
Indiana			✓	✓			
Iowa	✓	✓	✓			14	80
Michigan	✓	✓	✓	✓		12	
Minnesota			✓	✓		10	
Ohio	✓	✓		✓		12	100
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓		18	

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Evaluation of Teacher Performance. Table 14 contains evaluation of teacher performance measures, such as whether teacher evaluation is tied to student achievement and if states require evaluators to receive formal training. **Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** required all teacher performance to be formally evaluated, and in **Iowa** and **Ohio**, teacher evaluation was tied to student achievement. **Illinois, Iowa** and **Wisconsin** required all evaluators to receive formal training, and neither of the Midwest Region states required teacher evaluation 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
Illinois	✓			✓
Indiana				
Iowa	✓	✓		✓
Michigan	✓			
Minnesota	✓			
Ohio	✓	✓		
Wisconsin	✓			✓

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

Teacher Performance Incentives. Table 15 contains teacher performance incentive criteria, such as if the state provides financial incentives for teachers to earn NBPTS certification, provides incentives to teachers who work in targeted hard-to-staff assignments and provides incentives to principals who work in targeted schools. **Minnesota** had a pay-for-performance program or pilot program rewarding teachers for raising student achievement, and **Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** formally recognized differentiated roles for teachers. **Iowa, Minnesota** and **Wisconsin** provided incentives or rewards to teachers for taking on differentiated roles, while **Iowa, Michigan** and **Wisconsin** provided financial incentives for

teachers to earn NBPTS certification. **Illinois, Iowa, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** provided incentives to teachers who work in hard-to-staff assignments in targeted schools.

Table 15: Teacher Performance Incentives

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

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

Professional Development. Table 16 contains professional development criteria, such as whether the state finances professional development for all districts and whether the state requires districts to align professional development with local priorities and goals. **Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota** and **Ohio** have formal professional development standards, and **Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** finance professional development for all districts. **Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota** and **Wisconsin** required districts to align professional development with local goals and priorities.

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
Illinois			
Indiana	✓		✓
Iowa	✓	✓	✓
Michigan	✓		✓
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓
Ohio	✓	✓	
Wisconsin		✓	✓

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2010

SELECTED FUNDING RESOURCES AND STUDENT EXPENDITURES

Tables 17 through 19 all contain selected funding resources and student expenditure data 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 grant funding by state for the Midwest Region.

Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding. Table 17 displays adjusted spending per student and source of funding for the Midwest Region states. In 2008, per-pupil expenditures (PPE) were highest (\$11,370) in **Wisconsin** and lowest (\$9,983) in **Indiana**. The percentage of students in districts with PPE at or above U.S. average was 8.5 percent in **Iowa** and 64.1 percent in **Wisconsin**. 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 97.4 in **Wisconsin** and 84.1 in **Indiana**. **Michigan** spent 4.7 percent of its taxable resources on education in 2008, and **Iowa** spent 3.6 percent.

Table 17: Adjusted Spending Per Student and Source of Funding

State	Per Pupil Expenditures, Adjusted for Regional Cost Differences (2008)	Percentage of Students in Districts With Per-Pupil Expenditures at or Above U.S. Average (2008)	Spending Index (2008) ¹	Percentage of Total Taxable Resources Spent on Education (2008)
Illinois	\$10,030	27.4	90.7	3.7
Indiana	\$9,983	13.4	84.1	4.5
Iowa	\$11,367	8.5	84.8	3.6
Michigan	\$10,318	24.6	90.5	4.7
Minnesota	\$10,396	30.5	90.5	3.7
Ohio	\$10,795	31.4	90.7	4.5
Wisconsin	\$11,370	64.1	97.4	4.1

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 shows school finance measures, such as the Wealth-Neutrality Score, McLoone Index, Coefficient of Variation and Restricted Range. In 2008, the wealth-neutrality score (i.e., the relationship between district funding and local property wealth) was lowest in **Indiana**, indicating proportionally higher funding for poorer districts than in the other states. The McLoone Index (i.e., actual spending as a percentage of the amount needed to bring all students to the median level) was 92.4 percent in **Minnesota** and 88.2 percent in **Illinois**. The Coefficient of Variation (i.e., the amount of disparity in spending across districts) was lowest in **Wisconsin**, indicating proportionally greater equity in spending across districts. Finally, the restricted range (i.e., the difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95th and 5th percentiles of spending) was lowest (\$2,854) in **Wisconsin** and highest (\$5,239) in **Illinois**.

Table 18: School Finance

State	Wealth-Neutrality Score (2008) ¹	McLoone Index (2008) ²	Coefficient of Variation (2008) ³	Restricted Range (2008) ⁴
Illinois	0.176	88.2	0.150	\$5,239
Indiana	0.000	89.8	0.142	\$3,614
Iowa	0.051	91.4	0.121	\$2,867
Michigan	0.162	91.5	0.134	\$3,643
Minnesota	0.043	92.4	0.156	\$3,850
Ohio	0.037	90.7	0.170	\$4,592
Wisconsin	0.060	91.6	0.105	\$2,854

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2011; ¹Relationship between district funding and local property wealth (negative value indicates higher funding for poorer districts); ²Actual spending as a percentage of the 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 contains U.S. Department of Education funding by grant such as Language Acquisition State grants, Title I grants, Improving Teacher Quality grants, Education Technology grants, Race to the Top grants and Safe and Supportive School grants. The information for **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** is found below.

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 Grant ³	School Improvement Grant ¹	Safe and Supportive School Grants ⁴
Illinois	\$27,696,340	\$1,960,048	\$481,310,879	\$593,980,302	\$117,680,290	\$10,170,546	\$733,638	\$5,693,719	\$0	\$20,869,775	\$19,201,628	\$0
Indiana	\$6,846,078	\$5,309,178	\$243,042,361	\$247,109,265	\$50,368,699	\$4,481,769	\$677,579	\$317,879	\$0	\$5,188,260	\$8,629,835	\$0
Iowa	\$3,039,052	\$1,708,463	\$116,027,770	\$72,717,331	\$22,318,054	\$1,329,425	\$57,373	\$4,284,508	\$0	\$8,777,459	\$2,568,155	\$3,477,752
Michigan	\$9,808,235	\$8,760,814	\$380,700,133	\$527,254,785	\$112,109,766	\$9,781,009	\$1,436,291	\$2,752,083	\$0	\$19,142,192	\$18,699,655	\$5,997,018
Minnesota	\$8,212,782	\$1,734,113	\$180,405,407	\$126,936,366	\$38,482,785	\$2,339,005	\$80,497	\$3,345,416	\$0	\$15,684,225	\$4,457,449	\$0
Ohio	\$7,815,268	\$2,534,982	\$415,983,310	\$511,796,517	\$107,784,210	\$9,463,599	\$1,962,521	\$2,538,674	\$400,000,000	\$13,750,983	\$17,946,161	\$0
Wisconsin	\$6,396,351	\$630,036	\$197,853,865	\$199,030,296	\$46,372,266	\$3,441,718	\$112,174	\$3,274,754	\$0	\$22,442,310	\$6,526,979	\$3,500,000

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

Organizations and Education Officials Contacted to Obtain Input on Regional Needs

APPENDIX B

Organizations and Education Officials Contacted to Obtain Input on Regional Needs

Illinois

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Office of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel
- Illinois Association of School Administrators
- Illinois Principals Association
- Illinois Association of School Boards
- Illinois Association of School Business Officials
- Latin Policy Forum
- Advance Illinois
- Voices for Illinois Children
- Illinois Action for Children
- Civic Committee of the Chicago Club
- P-20 Council
- Early Learning Council
- Ounce of Prevention
- Large Unit District Association
- Illinois Education Association
- Illinois Federation of Teachers
- State Action for Education Programs
- ED R E D (Education Research)
- Du Page Education Network
- Illinois Parent Teacher Association
- Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
- Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago
- Urban Education Institute at the University of Chicago
- Urban Teacher Education Program at the University of Chicago
- School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago
- Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education, University of Chicago
- American Institutes of Research -- Midwest REL
- School of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago
- School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University
- Chicago Public Schools
- Academy for Urban School Leadership
- Federation for Community Schools
- Illinois Network of Charter Schools

Indiana

- District Superintendents
- Building Principals
- Indiana Parent Teacher Association

- Professional School Staff (Teachers, Librarians)
- Urban Schools Association
- Chamber of Commerce
- Charter Schools Association
- Schools of Education at 47 Indiana Institutions of Higher Education

Michigan

- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Intermediate School Districts
- Great State Collaborative
- Early Learning Advisory Council
- Higher Education Alliance
- Technology Experts
- Parent Teacher Associations

Minnesota

- Citizens League <http://www.citizensleague.org/>
- Education Minnesota www.educationminnesota.org/
- Minitex <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/>
- Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) <http://www.mnase.org/>
- Minnesota Association for Supervision and Curriculum <http://www.mnasc.org/>
- Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children <http://www.mnaeyc.org/>
- Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACA) <http://www.mncharterschools.org/>
- Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education <http://www.mnteacher.org/>
- Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) <http://www.massp.org/>
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) <http://www.mnasa.org/>
- Minnesota Business Partnership (MBP) <http://www.mnbp.com/>
- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce <http://www.mnchamber.com/>
- Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented (MCGT) <http://www.mcgt.net/>
- Minnesota Council for the Social Studies <http://www.wcss-wi.org/>
- Minnesota Council of Teachers of English <http://www.mcte.org/>
- Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics <http://www.mctm.org/>
- Minnesota Council on Foundations <http://www.mcf.org/>
- Minnesota Department of Education (Commissioner of Education)
http://www.education.state.mn.us/html/mde_home.htm
- Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) <http://www.memoweb.org/>
- Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA)
http://www.mespa.net/About_MESPA.html
- Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF) <http://www.misf.org/>
- Minnesota Minority Education Partnership <http://www.mmep.net/Minnesota> Officer of Higher Education <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/>
- Minnesota Parent and Teacher Association (MNPTA) <http://www.mnpta.org/>
- Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA) <http://www.mnrea.org/>
- Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) <http://www.mnmsba.org/public/main.cfm>

- Minnesota School Counselors Association http://www.mnstate.edu/msca/Gov_Board.cfm
- Minnesota Science Teachers Association <http://www.mnsta.org/>
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities <http://www.mnscu.edu/index.php>
- Minnesota Private College Council
- Parents United for Public Schools <http://www.parentsunited.org/>
- Ready4K www.ready4k.org
- Saint Paul Public Schools Office for Innovation and Development
- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus: Dean of the College of Education and Human Development
- University of Minnesota Duluth: Dean of the College of Education and Human Service Professions

Ohio

- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio School Board Association
- Ohio Association of Charter Schools
- Ohio STEM Learning Program
- Battelle for Kids
- Ohio Mental Health Network for School Success
- Knowledge Works
- Parents
- Teachers
- School Staff Members
- Administrative Leaders
- Students

Wisconsin

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Tribal Education Officers
- Tribal College President
- Tribal Schools Administrators
- District Minority Affairs Directors in Milwaukee, Madison, and Wausau

Iowa

Note: The Midwest RAC had no member from the State of Iowa. The Chair provided a copy of the sample email soliciting input to the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Association of State Superintendents for their use.

APPENDIX C

Comments Submitted to
Midwest RAC Website

APPENDIX C

Comments Submitted to Midwest RAC Website

Role	State	User Comments
School Administrator	IL	In our area the largest concerns are as follows- 1. Funding- not being supplied the funds necessary to operate nor th funds that have been promised us 2. Students coming to school with "baggage" caused by broken families, poor nutrition, lack of guidance, etc. 3. The state and feds seemingly having the wrong priorities. We are not paid the money we are owed, yet we continually must deal with new and costly mandates. In addition, new programs are developed when the basics are not funded.
School Administrator	OH	Ohio's students need for all stakeholders to put students first. All parents, school employees, city officials, members of every community, legislators and policy makers need to believe that all children can succeed and they must invest highly in ensuring that this happens. Ohio has been slowed down in its education reform because of special interests that put adults first, and because of a deep suspicion of the charter school movement. Ohio needs to stop identifying schools as charter or non-charter and instead set some strong policies in place that support the creation and maintenance of effective schools, by any name. That would include giving all high-performing schools access to the public funds that are available for public education. That also means creating a thoughtful method for awarding the purchase of empty school buildings to new schools. That also includes doing deliberate research into new methods for evaluating and rewarding teachers, and new methods for supporting their work and developing their skills. Every day, communiites must ask- what is best for the student? From there, policy and programming and distribution of personnel and avenues for volunteer/community invovlement will become clear.
Teacher	IN	I believe more money needs to be put into special needs classrooms. More classrooms are needed for our students. I find that students are not labeled special needs because they don't have the classroom space to put them. I am constantly told that a student is borderline. I have learned that there is not enough money so we can only move students who are severe.
Teacher	OH	What we need in Ohio and throughout the US is support for gifted students. Ohio's new budget will eliminate many gifted intervention specialists and programs. A move from the federal government to mandate services for gifted students is needed. Without such a mandate many of our brightest students will underachiever because there are not teachers and classes dedicated to their unique needs.

Role	State	User Comments
School Administrator	OH	<p>This is just another layer of government that is not necessary and a waste of taxpayer money. Education is not a function of the federal government, it is a function of the individual states and the local entities. If the federal government would get out of the way and let administrators do their job, everything would run better and cost less. The amount of time, effort and cost associated with accepting and administering federal grants/entitlements is ridiculous, now you are adding more? Why? The Race to the Top grants are a joke, they should be labeled Race to more ineffective government spending. If you really wanted to help education, dismantle the U.S. DOE. [name deleted]</p>
Other	OH	<p>[organization name deleted] The Midwest region needs to position itself as a geographical center that adheres to the highest standard of quality education in the country. An environment that supports the opening, revival and replication of high-quality schools, especially in a city's underserved communities, can impact tremendously a region that is also in need of economic development and stability. In [district name deleted], the flight of families to better school districts, and even other states, has been catalytic in spurring the economic downturn of our city and state. Right now, only 9 of every 100 African-American high school students in [district name deleted] graduate from college. Our city is one in crisis. Where do the other 91 students go? Without a college education, our children are subject to the pull of violence, crime, substance abuse and/or menial jobs that keep them and their families in the cycle of poverty. Education has largely been recognized as the critical component that not only breaks the cycle of poverty, but also contributes in a large part in enhancing a city's workforce and developing a community of thoughtful and productive citizens. Yet, [district name deleted] is home to a broken educational delivery system. Only 34 of the 155 public schools in [district name deleted] are rated excellent or effective. Every effort must be made to ensure that every child in every neighborhood has access to a high-performing school in their community. There are several neighborhoods in [district name deleted] that is not home to even one school that is not on Academic Watch or Emergency. We understand that [district name deleted] is not the only city experiencing the educational struggles highlighted by these statistics. At [school name deleted] we have found that the charter model has been enormously effective in providing high-quality educational options to communities in a timely and innovative way. Effective educational practices have already been proven by various charter school models across the country. [school name deleted] have emulated these practices to achieve noteworthy standards of</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>excellence and a reversal of the achievement gap that was believed to be intractable. Stagnant educational practices and policies have impeded progress by traditional public schools. Our children cannot wait for entrenched systems and stakeholders to move slowly towards long-term change. Many of our students will have already been lost to the broken system and reenter a sad cycle of poverty. [school name deleted] has already made great strides through its partnership with the [district name deleted]. We believe strongly that this collaborative relationship can benefit the [district name deleted] community, and most importantly our children and their families, even more than it already does. Currently, [district name deleted] sponsors the member schools of [school name deleted]. Yet, even with this relationship, our member schools are not entitled to comprehensive transportation funding. We have slightly favored facility access, but no facility funding. We do not have automatic access to various private/public partnerships which are often the source of critical in-kind donations.[school name deleted] also does not yet have the recognition desired within the community that would steer parents and families to this free, viable educational option. And more importantly, while traditional public schools in the district receive a per pupil portion of local property tax revenue, [school name deleted] continues to have to operate at a much lower cost and supplement its public education services with the support of the philanthropic community. Therefore, we would humbly put forth that the greatest need, as we have found in the [district name deleted], is that high-performing charter schools, providing communities with access to a high-quality education must be considered a part of a district’s comprehensive educational portfolio. Our greatest need is to eliminate the label of charter or traditional in front of “public school” and simply regard every free, nonselective school as just a public school, with all the rights and privileges to which they are entitled. Summary of tactical needs: - Comprehensive transportation funding “ Yellow Bus Service Favored facility access and facilities funding comparable to traditional public schools - Inclusion in the district portfolio of public educational options (to leverage publicity and recruitment) - Access to private/public partnerships, including in-kind donation opportunities - Entitlement to per pupil funding share of the property tax revenue, in addition to already allocated state and federal per pupil funds.</p>
Other	IL	<p>The following comments are submitted on behalf of the [organization name deleted], a [district name deleted]-based public policy and advocacy organization with the mission of building the power, influence, and leadership of the Latino community through collective action to transform public policies that ensure the well-being of our</p>

Role	State	User Comments
	<p>Comment continued from previous page</p>	<p>community and society as a whole. The first set of recommendations are based on a collaborative agenda-building process which involved over 600 Latinos from throughout the [district name deleted] region from across various sectors. The second set of recommendations are specific to early childhood education and are based on the collective recommendations of a group of Latino-serving early childhood providers from the [district name deleted] region, the [organization name deleted]. Recommendations for Improving Latino Educational Experiences and Outcomes Improving Early Childhood Education Outcomes - Capital Funding: for early childhood facilities in high-need Latino neighborhoods - Program Funding: increases to make more slots available, particularly extended and full-day slots - Parental engagement: through outreach and leadership opportunities in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways - Professional Development: geared towards increasing pool of linguistically and culturally competent early childhood teachers - Public Awareness Campaigns: informing the public about the critical importance of early childhood education Improving Elementary Education Outcomes - Parental engagement: through outreach and leadership opportunities - Bilingual Programs: Improvements of bilingual education programs and expansion of dual language programs - Public-Private Partnerships: to expand after-school enrichment programs - Partnerships with Latino CBO's: to develop Latino-focused initiatives - Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Curricula: development and implementation - Professional Development: geared towards increasing teacher and administrator cultural competence Improving Secondary Education Outcomes - Teacher Preparation: Form partnerships between schools, community organizations, researchers, and teacher training universities to develop culturally relevant teacher preparation programs - Parental Involvement: Increase communication among educators, parents and communities to foster parental involvement - Motivating Students: Partner to expand programs, from middle school to high school, that support and motivate Latino students to finish high school, while preparing them to enroll in college by providing assistance in the financial aid and application processes. - Deliberate Plan of Action: Develop an articulated plan of action to mentor and support Latino students to graduate from high school and pursue higher education - Enrichment Opportunities: Develop partnerships to provide high school students with meaningful research opportunities to foster analytical and critical thinking skills Bridging Latinos to Higher Education - Targeted Recruitment: Increase the recruitment, enrollment and retention of Latino students in colleges and other post-secondary programs. - Resources for Undocumented Students: Increase efforts to leverage resources for undocumented students in</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>the form of internships and scholarships to pursue higher education - Partnering to Inform Families: Coordinate efforts between high school counselors and university and college representatives to disseminate information to Latino parents and students regarding financial aid and the application process Ongoing Support in Higher Education - Ongoing Mentoring to Improve Retention - Link students to mentors which can provide guidance and serve as role models - Curricula and Research on Latino Issues - Provide courses, specializations, degrees, and research opportunities in Latino issues - Tenure-Track Faculty Addressing Latino Issues - Increase the number of tenure-track faculty throughout departments, which address Latino issues - Funding for Latino Centers and Extracurricular Programs - Fund and support programs and activities focused on Latino student support, retention, and enrichment Improving Workforce & Professional Development Outcomes - Community Education Programs: including GED, ESL classes, and vocational training programs, should be offered, particularly in high need communities - Culturally Relevant Training Programs: should be developed, particularly in the fields of education and medicine - Streamlining Foreign Accreditation: to increase access to higher education - Cohorts for Bilingual/Bicultural Professionals: through partnerships with CBOs to offer ongoing professional development opportunities to professionals in the field - Holistic Job Training Programs: should be developed in partnership with public and private entities Early Childhood Education - elaboration of recommendations Workforce: Goal: Increase the pool of highly qualified bilingual and culturally competent personnel working with children in birth-to-five services. Objectives: - Increase the number of bilingual/ESL certified pre-k teachers entering the field. - Increase professional development resources and opportunities for professionals in the field of early childhood education targeted towards bilingual/ESL certification. - Increase the number of bilingual, Spanish-speaking licensed professionals involved in birth-to-five education including but not limited to occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers, and case workers. Capital: Goal: Build the infrastructure needed to meet the demand of birth-to-five services for Latino children in high-need, underserved communities. Objectives: - Promote public investments focused on building, renovating, and expanding early childhood education facilities. - Ensure that high-need; underserved Latino communities receive equitable funding within the early childhood capital program. Parent Involvement: Goal: Provide parents with leadership development opportunities and information to increase their awareness of issues related to early childhood and transitioning into k-12 education. Objectives: - Provide advocacy trainings to parents focused on the state budget and</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>relevant legislation. - Provide trainings to parents that further enable them to advocate for their children within a school or district setting - Connect parents to opportunities to enter the birth-to-five workforce. Birth-to-three Services: Goal: Increase access to quality of birth-to-three services for Latino children and families. Objectives: - Increase access to home-visiting and other birth-to-three programs in Latino communities. - Increase the cultural and linguistic competency of the state's birth-to-three services workforce, particularly those engaged in Early Intervention. Local Advocacy: Goal: Coordinate local advocacy efforts in order to promote common priorities and strengthen services to Latino children and families. Objectives: - Support [organization name deleted] members as they work to develop consensus on local issues and coordinate strategic advocacy efforts with local agencies, i.e. city agencies and school districts. - Build infrastructure within [organization name deleted] member organizations to increase advocacy skills and expand the base of advocates. Early Childhood Transitions: Goal: Ensure that Latino children, especially those with developmental disabilities, receive appropriate services as required by law at each transition point from birth to kindergarten. Objectives: - Promote successful transitions within birth-to-three services - Promote successful transitions from birth-to-three programming to preschool - Promote successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten for Latino children and families. - Ensure that Latino children with developmental disabilities are referred to and receive appropriate services within birth-to-five services and entry into kindergarten.</p>
Other	IL	Please see attached comments. Thank you for consideration and request for input. [name deleted] [comments at end of appendix]
Other	OH	<p>As the founder and former leader of [school name deleted], a high performing charter school serving families in core city [district name deleted], I want to make a suggestion. Leadership in Washington is needed to build infrastructure to support informed parent choice in this nation's cities. School choice is gaining popularity with America's urban families. Fortunately, many cities have increasing K - 12 choices. This is due to growth in charter schools, as well as a growing number of voucher programs supporting opportunities in independent and parochial schools. Also, some urban districts provide families with choices of some or even all district schools. Programs supporting informed parent choice need to be sophisticated enough to be truly effective. In other words, parents need guidance to identify their children's individual needs and to assess school quality and fit within the range of their choices. For tens of thousands of families just having DOE data on a website and/or brochures or pamphlets is not going to work. We need to be creative, realistic and resourceful. Such</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>an infrastructure can contribute to urban (and rural) school quality in other ways, such as the politics involved with closing chronically low performing schools, parent advocacy calling for more high quality schools, and parents' disposition to and capacity for partnering with their children's teachers to help ensure that they - parents and teachers - are doing everything in their power to get the children for whom they share responsibility on track to graduate from college. There is enormous untapped potential here crying out for national leadership. [name deleted]</p>
School Administrator	OH	<p>While I appreciate the role that assessments have played in holding all schools and all students accountable for learning, we are becoming too test driven. These are such high stakes assessments that too much time is spent teaching students how to become effective test-takers. Not enough time is spent on teaching students to love learning, on how to be creative and critical thinkers, on how to be work in groups etc. School and student performance all comes down to one moment in time. Teachers need to be paid more. We need to change the culture in this country about how teachers are viewed. One of our staff members recently reported on a conversation she had with her father in response to her 2% raise. He told her he was amazed that she got this given that she works in an industry that doesn't make a profit and doesn't produce anything. Schools are at the heart of producing EVERYTHING. If it weren't for what people learned in school where would or leaders, doctors, lawyers, etc. come from? Yes, homes have a lot to do with what people learn, but schools and teachers influence a great deal as well.</p>
School Administrator	IA	<p>I am interested in continued conversations on these topics: 1. Additional outdoor time/break time for students, possibly by extending the school day by 20 minutes, hence not rushing through lunch and other parts of the school day, especially at the Middle School and High School levels. 2. Year-Round School, taking the bulk of time off during summer, but maybe not a full 10-12 weeks, where student retention drops. 3. Teachers staying with the same group of students a minimum of 2 years, which would help teachers more effectively get to know students and their talents, interests, and abilities.</p>
Librarian	MN	<p>I could not get into the session yesterday. Will there be another one? Thank you, [name deleted]</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Other	MI	<p>I am a [position deleted] for Head Start and a parent of two boys, age 15 and 9. Priority 1 - School Readiness, all children deserve the opportunity to attend a comprehensive (includes family support and parent involvement, such as Head Start) preschool. These preschools should be aligned with public, charter and private school curriculums for seamless transition. Priority 2 - My children have, for the most part, had excellent teachers. Both had a few who have no business working with young children. Teacher effectiveness is definitely an issue due to tenure. Too many teachers are teaching to the MEAP and not identifying that children have different learning styles. Too often there seems to be a lack of enthusiasm and creative on the part of the instructor. Priority 5 & 6 - My youngest son, was almost allowed to "slip through the cracks". He has an August birthday and each year he seemed to fall further and further behind. When I would talk with teachers about holding him back, each time I was told he didn't need it and they promoted him. I was told that due to our family income he would be ineligible to participate in summer school. His 2nd grade teacher actually told me that some children hit this "gap" and don't get the services they need to be successful. By 3rd grade he was behind a year in reading and failing in math. I had to advocate for him, demanding the evaluation of the school "support team". He was allowed to attend the schools after school program to get more help. Luckily he had a teacher who was invested and found volunteers to help her work one on one with students. He had this same teacher two years in a row and has made a great turn around. He is now reading above grade level but still struggles with math. We need to teach to the child rather than an assessment test. Too often I think, especially with boys, the traditional, sit in your seat and take a test method of learning is failing our children. There are many modalities of learning and many ways to evaluate what children have learned. It is time that we investigate other options so that students can succeed. Also, in regard to student engagement we must acknowledge that many children live in poverty and their home life makes it nearly impossible for them to focus on learning while at school. We have children in Head Start who are unable to function in a classroom. The focus absolutely needs to be prenatal - 8. The importance of a child's social emotional foundation can't be ignored.</p>

Role	State	User Comments
School Administrator	IL	Of great concern in the area of assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs) is the use of inappropriate assessments with ELLs to measure academic achievement in the content areas. Assessments designed and normed for native speakers of English should not be used with ELLs. Instead, assessments should be given to ELLs in their native language to measure academic achievement in the content areas, especially in cases in which ELLs are instructed in the native language as required by state statutes (e.g. Illinois). [no attached report]. [name deleted]
Business	MN	I am a 30-year educator of and researcher on gifted students. I currently run a private learning center in [district name deleted]. I believe that customization of the curriculum for gifted students, to fit their advanced academic and creative levels, can speed their school progress -- and our country's! This customization depends greatly on help from the regional centers because of the lack of mandated training from states on these centers. As part of my tutorial and research work with the gifted, I have worked with hundreds of GLBT youth. While they have great potential and they are excellent consumers of existing school services, they could produce so much more if they were protected from the constant verbal and physical harassment that many of them now face in school. They also would do much better, in both school and in later life, if they could learn about themselves in school, through GLBT-supportive instruction, discussions, and counseling, which is now so rarely provided. Since GLBT youth is such a controversial topic for many localities, your centers can make an important difference in educating teachers who might not get sometimes-life-preserving help from their localities! Thanks so much for the chance to offer input on your important tasks! Please let me know if I can expand on these comments or otherwise assist you! [name deleted]
Other	MN	Please see uploaded comments. [comments at end of appendix]
Other	IL	Please accept the uploaded document as comments from the [organization name deleted] [comments at end of appendix]
Parent	IN	Too much emphasis is being put on the teacher to improve student learning. The real need is to improve early education in the home by the PARENTS. Study after study show that if children are exposed to vocabulary, reading, etc. at an early age their education success is much higher than those that are not exposed to these factors. More needs to done to educate the parents of students who fall in the lower social economic class on how to properly prepare their child for school success. I know that NO elected official would have the guts to

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>come out and support this. Also, teachers fight an uphill battle with the home if education is not valued at home. Too many students come from second and even third generation welfare homes that do not value education. No matter how great the teacher is, over coming this issue is not going to happen. Many city schools fight attendance battles, some even as high as a 25%+ absentee rate, how can teachers be expected to improve a child's education if the parents don't even get them to come to school on a regular basis. It is easier for State Government Officials (and the US DOE) to blame teachers for the lack educational success. However, in talking to teachers from my community I find it amazing how many state and federal mandates are required to be followed. It seems as if we have bent over backwards for the Special Education student with all the mandates and requirements that need to be met, and have almost completely forgotten about the general education student. Wouldn't it be great to have an aide assisting every 10 to 20 (heck even every 50 would be great) general education students with their schoolwork like many Special Ed students have on a daily personal basis. I guess in summary my comments can be summarized as Everyone has been in school at some time, so this makes them an expert even if they have no knowledge of the classroom or not.</p>
Other	IL	<p>The only thing I see missing in the Midwest Region Needs/Challenges and Strategies is a recruitment strategy. Getting parents of students involved is one thing, but I feel recruitment of 3 and 4 year olds into a voluntary preschool system is hard. Parents are not aware of a lot of the opportunities out there currently, so we must make them aware if new funding is available.</p>
Teacher	IL	<p>The following comments are from [name deleted]. The comments have also been attached. 1. What do you think about the above list of priority concerns? Please offer an overall assessment and/or your ideas for refining the list. - All of the items on the list of priority concerns are important. What I believe is missing from this list is a sense of the relationship among these items that would inform strategies for making a difference in a status quo that has proved itself effectively resistant to asystemic interventions derived from lists of priorities. For example, one of the most proven and cost-effective ways we know of to improve family engagement and student engagement is to put strong school principals in place who know how to foster both in schools. Yet leader effectiveness is coupled with teacher effectiveness as just another item on the list, and an add-on at that. The list-makers did not intend this to be so. But the result is a list of priorities that can easily lead to asystemic, non-strategic interventions because the relationships among the items on the list are not sufficiently understood or taken into account while creating</p>

Role	State	User Comments
	<p>Comment continued from previous page</p>	<p>funding policies. - There was a time, for example, when the Essential Supports generated by the Consortium for Chicago School Research and Designs for Change listed school leadership as one of five co-equal components of schools that succeed in high-need environments. After many years, leadership was explicitly foregrounded as a component that conditions all the other components. This is an example of understanding how organizational systems work - how system components work in relation to one another. 2. What else would you add to this list of priority concerns? Why? I would therefore add to this of priority concerns the following: systemic strategies for correcting educational inequities at the school, district, and state levels. The reason that this immediately strikes the reader as a category mistake is that all the other items are more or less components of systems, while this item focuses on the systems themselves. In the absence of making systemic strategic planning a priority, however, none of the other items will come close to having the desired effect. One could argue that doing ALL of them better, or half of them better, will have a systemic impact, but there is no historical reason to expect that will be true, with the exception of one item on the list. - That item is school leadership. We have nearly 40 years of evidence, starting with Edmond's Effective School Research, continuing into the Consortium's essential supports research, and including work on school leadership by Leithwood, the Ed Trust, UIC, NYC Leadership Academy and others, showing that putting a well prepared principal into the most persistently low-performing school can have a profound effect on student learning within a short time. At UIC, for example, 9 out of 10 first-year principals in high poverty African American enrolled elementary schools substantially outperformed district norms for such schools, even against experienced principals. - The reason the introduction of a competent and committed principal can make such a dramatic difference has to do again with systems and organizations. Such principals help improve instruction throughout the school, help improve parent engagement, help make ELL and Special Ed programs reach their potential, and so on. School leadership preparation and development is not just another item on the list. It is an item that if done poorly will sap the potential of every other item on the list, and if done well will compensate for poor policies and investments in these other items. For example: most teacher learning takes place after certification. Even if teacher ed programs were not to improve, outstanding principals have shown unequivocally that they can improve teacher instructional quality throughout a school by putting the right professional learning communities in place and supporting teacher learning as a top priority. - In addition to bullet number one, therefore, I would single out school leader preparation and</p>

Role	State	User Comments
	<p>Comment continued from previous page</p>	<p>development as a stand-alone item that must be a top priority for every state. It is the single most cost effective strategy for improving student learning at scale now available to us. Chicago, for example, will in the next few years be able to fill every principal vacancy with a graduate of a selective, rigorous, year-long residency-based principal preparation program. This was not done with state support, but because of the entrepreneurial energy of UIC, New Leaders for New Schools, Teach for America, Harvard, Loyola of Chicago, and a long list of philanthropic organizations who made the necessary up-front investments. The data are increasingly mounting to show the superior performance of schools led by these programs. Public policy needs to follow. 3. What do you consider the most important educational concerns in Illinois or the Midwest? Why? The RAC will rank the priorities. - The single greatest concern is inequity of educational outcomes not inequality of outcomes, because outcomes will never be equal but the unfairness of educational outcomes that are so closely and persistently tied to race, ethnicity, income, and access to social resources. - The second concern is that we as a field and as a nation are not acting on what we know to be true: that (a) even the highest-need schools can be dramatically improved in student learning outcomes if we put the right leadership in place in those schools, regardless of whether they are non-selective neighborhood schools or charter schools; and (b) we know how to produce such principals as a rule, rather than as a rare exception to the rule. It is only recently that organizations like UIC, the NYC Leadership Academy, Gwinnett County Public Schools, and New Leaders for New Schools have demonstrated how such effective leaders can be produced, as a recent Rainwater Foundation report demonstrates (www.anewapproach.org/). 4. Based on your perspective, what are the policy and practice needs in any of the above or other priority areas of concern? Please be specific to make the report as informative as possible. - Despite the vigorous resistance from many higher education institutions resistant to risking their tuition revenue streams, other higher education institutions in Illinois and elsewhere recognize that the single most important step that can be taken to improve student learning outcomes at scale is to produce much better school leaders and to do so routinely. We in school leadership preparation are at the same juncture the medical profession faced at the time of the Flexner report in 1910 non-selective programs, untethered to clinics and hospitals, little to no supervised field experience, and low expectations for the results all of these were true of medical education in 1910 and all have their analogue in principal preparation today. The revolution in medical preparation in the U.S. came largely in a single decade: 1910-1920. This can be the decade for a similar revolution in school leader preparation. Without it, the other priority</p>

Role	State	User Comments
	<p>Comment continued from previous page</p>	<p>action areas will be stunted by the continued failure of school leaders to implement the knowledge base of their profession. And it bears noticing that there are 3 times as many physicians as principals in Illinois today: we can be three times as selective about who gets into a graduate principal preparation program as we are - Illinois just passed a law sunsetting all principal preparation programs in the state in 2012, with programs thereafter only allowed to accept new admits if they adhere to new and rigorous guidelines. A handful of for-profit and on-line institutions succeeded in weakening the law before it was passed, but it nonetheless has the potential to support IHEs that are committed to opening highly selective and rigorous programs that can produce the kinds of results that UIC and others have now begun to produce. 5. What are your ideas for how to meet the identified needs? Feel free to answer this question from a policy or a practice perspective. - All of the RAC-assembled ideas below are fine and all will help. To get strategic, however, in a way that can establish clear, systemic goals and hold agencies accountable for achieving them: Each state should predict the average annual number of principal vacancies in low-performing schools, and then support a small network or consortium of providers regionally located who can fill vacancies in the high-need schools in each region of the state. The can be institutions of higher education or NGOs such as New Leaders for New Schools. This would be the single most cost-effective way to begin turning around schools at scale in each state, while at the same time demonstrating new models of school leadership preparation that are highly selective, intensive in their field experience, and accountable to outcomes in Pre-K-12 student learning. RAC priorities for TEACHER-LEADER EFFECTIVENESS All schools in the Midwest do not have effective teachers and leaders - Require states to properly license teachers and leaders - Require states to develop teacher and leader preparation standards and rigorous admission requirements for traditional and alternative preparation programs - Require states to have school improvement focused clinical field experience for teachers and leaders (minimum of one semester for teachers) - Require states to have mentor program for teachers and leaders - Federal government shall change the distribution of Title II Part A to require 75% of funding be designated for professional development for teachers and leaders in areas identified by state. By 2014: 100% - Require preparation programs to provide employment trends to candidates as part of admission process - Require states to develop and implement a performance evaluation system for teachers and leaders - Create a network of Midwest representatives to learn from and share with one another education reform efforts Provide ongoing professional development for current teachers and leaders targeted to school improvement data</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Other	MI	<p>I am an early child mental health consultant in [location deleted], MI. I have reviewed the areas of need and concern. I can tell you from my own experience something that will address several of the 'need' areas: Make regularly occurring, mental health, "Reflective Consultation" available to early childhood educators. There is a good model for this being implemented right now in many areas for local Head Start teachers. What this provides is training for teachers to assist young children with social/emotional development, therefore school readiness. Teachers become more effective, students become more engaged through supportive relationships, and family engagement may be enhanced. I may be available to discuss in more detail if needed: [name deleted]</p>
School Administrator	IL	<p>- Based on your perspective, what are the policy and practice needs in any of the above or other priority areas of concern? Please be specific to make the report as informative as possible. DISTRICT PLAN FOR Prek -3 SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on years 3 through 8 as an aligned system leading to grade level achievement by 3rd grade. 2. Recognize some families are unable to provide the quality of education necessary for children to be ready for school. Districts should encourage these children to attend preschool aligned with their kindergarten beginning at age 3 or earlier. . 3. School districts should use Title 1 money to provide preschool for children likely to be at risk in their system: low income children, children in failing schools, children with special needs and English Language Learners are the most likely candidates 4. School districts should provide free preschool education aligned with their kindergarten to eligible children in center-based and home-based child care arrangements. 5. Teachers should be trained and certified in prek-3 education by a state approved teacher education program. 6. Classrooms should be evaluated for best practice, using valid instruments and supervisor observations, and teachers provided with coaching when needed. 7. School districts should provide evidence of the educational effectiveness of programs using multiple strategies, including child assessments by teachers and sample standardized assessments. 8. At each grade level, children not making expected progress should be evaluated and a plan made to address barriers and challenges. 9. Districts should provide opportunities for parents to be involved and participate in educational programs. 10. Districts should organize parent advisory council to ensure programs are parent friendly.

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	MI	<p>I am a public youth services librarian, serving a community of around 16,000 people, we offer 4, 5-week infant classes per year, 132 Parent/child "Lap Sit Programs per year (18 months - 3 yrs), 40 pre school story hours (3-5 yrs old). We offer an Early Childhood summer program and programs to day care centers, preschools, Head Start and other programs, both in my building and "on location." I also work with the local [organization name deleted], a local tribal government and work to get more at-risk children into our library simply because we already have some of the books and other literacy materials that they desperately need. We use much of the "Every Child Ready To Read" model developed by the Association for Library Services to Children and the Public Library Association divisions of the American Library Association. We do all of this in ADDITION to programs and materials for elementary and teen age children. My staff, which consists of 1 full-time and 3 1/8-1/2 time positions, and I often wonder how much more we could do, given the unique position that we have in the community, to reach children and their parents well before they enter school....IF we weren't stretched so thin and could afford the staff and the early literacy materials that we need to do this most effectively. Public Libraries need to be included in the planning and funding of early literacy programs (not to mention what we can do to help prevent or eliminate "summer slide" as well as our more traditional services); when we imagine the possibilities of what we could do, were this the case, we see endless possibilities. I recently had a young mother bring her 18 month old daughter to one of my Lap Sits because she remembered the stories, songs and experiences that she had when she attended preschool story hour when she was little and wished to share those with her daughter; what if that were the norm and not the exception?[name deleted]</p>
Librarian	MN	<p>Public libraries are a premier early childhood learning resources for children, parents, adult caregivers, early childhood teachers, preschools, childcare centers and all organizations whose mission is supporting the educational development of young children. Public libraries provide programs and services to diverse and changing populations, appropriate collections, services and technologies that serve young children and their adults in library or through partnerships and community-based collaborations. Current service: - A wealth of print, non-print and electronic collections in-library and online - Early literacy storytimes based on current research - Birth to Six web page on our public website provides 24/7 service and 21st century tools to parents and caregivers - Early literacy learning environments in library buildings promote play and learning - Local partnerships with community programs such as Early</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		Childhood Family Education (ECFE) enhance early literacy services to our customers at some libraries - Partnerships serving low-income and at-risk parents are coordinated centrally and implemented by a staff
Librarian	IN	I believe it is imparitive that every child has access to early learning environments. Libraries can and do play a significant role in reaching children who may not otherwise have access to free learning environments.
State Education Agency	MI	<p>Priority 1: School Readiness - States implementing or in full implementation of QRIS, coordinated systems of care, transition policies and procedures between agencies and parent involvement programs should be targeted and highlighted as models for other states and regions. Michigan is in the process of implementing a QRIS system and has new data on longitudinal outcomes for it's state-funded pre-kindergarten program demonstrating effectiveness and positive effect through high school exit. - While school readiness guidelines are informative, there should be an emphasis on developmental screening P-5. This emphasis will particularly assist those programs in identifying those infants and toddlers at risk. - There is much mention in Priority 1 of title 1 and child care, but it is essential to include children with identified special education needs in the spectrum of early childhood. Inclusive practice across all programs will promote school success.</p> <p>Priority 2: Teacher-Leader Effectiveness While all stated goals are ideal in preparing high quality teachers, the reality that teachers are sorely underpaid and already pay more out-of-pocket expenses to maintain credentials than many other established professionals exists. With increased mandate to maintain teachers as highly qualified should come fiscal support to aid in that goal.</p> <p>Priority 3- Alignment It is essential to recognize that while the state education agency sees high need for alignment, the prospect has local programs worried about increased cuts and unemployment. Alignment is essential and long overdue, particularly in the Michigan examples, but cannot be done without intentional planning and involvement from all stakeholders.</p> <p>Priority 6: Authentic Student Engagement Increased and accessible teacher development opportunities will assist this goal.</p> <p>Continued fidelity to research-based curriculum and assessments should be ensured through frequent retraining and mentoring models. District staff often have the experience of a one-time-only training on a particular curriculum or assessment tool without checks for fidelity to the curriculum or tool.</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Librarian	IA	Equal access to information is the issue that is vital to educating all of our children for the world they'll participate in as adults. As the world's information is digitized, it is critical that all of our citizens have access to the high speed transfer of information and the devices that are used to access and create information. Thank you.
Librarian	MI	Public libraries exist in almost every community and are primed to connect with parents before their children start school, serving as the parent's first teacher. In fact, children's librarians reach and work with families and children in over 17,000 public libraries and 99,000 school libraries across the nation. Children's librarians are positioned to work with families across all socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. With the help of well-funded public libraries and pre-kindergarten programs, children's librarians are positioned to reach children before they start school and help develop their early literacy skills. Reading is an essential life skill and learning to read begins at birth, before school. Children's librarians are motivators and help children develop their love of lifelong learning. The public library effectively engages in providing early literacy parent education and works with community partners to do so. Public libraries have early education resources and materials that will assist parents in becoming effective teachers for their children right from birth.
Librarian	MN	Public libraries are welcoming gathering places in every community and connect with parents before their children start school. Public libraries are a primary public resource, providing free access to information and books supporting early literacy. Books available in many languages support the language and literacy development of babies, toddlers and preschoolers, when the books are shared with the child by an adult caregiver. [district name deleted] early literacy librarians effectively engage in providing early literacy parent education as part of our storytime model, in addition to working with community partners to do so. We currently have a partnership with the [organization name deleted] called Share Books, Share Love that will serve about 500 at-risk families this year. The goal of the project is to work with a partner to share early literacy information and to connect at-risk families to the resources of the Library. The pilot project will target teen and adult immigrant mothers who receive regular pre and post natal visits from the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Agency (MVNA). The Library provides early literacy training for the nurses and develops gift baskets for the families, that include books for their babies, songs, and appropriate incentives and toys, funded by a grant from a private funder. The public library plays an important role in

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		early literacy. We work directly with parents in the community and with community partners, providing information, and connecting them to a lifelong resource that support's their child's learning from birth on.
Librarian	MI	Libraries play an essential role in early childhood education and serve as a valuable resource for families years before their first contact with their local schools. Most libraries offer early literacy programs for children as young as six months of age, as well as offering programs and materials for the entire family, so that children can be brought up in a nuturing environment that will give their education a jump start when they reach the school setting. Children whose parents bring them to library programs read years beyond their peers in school and continue to read through breaks and vacations, making less reteaching necessary when school resumes. We strive to offer things to interest even the most reluctant reader, and create positive experiences for students to carry forward.
Teacher	MI	I have marked my role as teacher although I am officially a Media Specialist. I have a teaching degree along with a library science degree. I would say that the greatest need that I see in my community is having a certified media specialist available in all of the schools. I am fortunate that the district I am employed in sees the importance of this and has that for all elementary through high school. Many district have removed media specialists from their staff and have either closed their libraries or rely on teachers to show students how and where to find reliable, relevant and readable information. It is imperative that our students know how to discern what information they find is reliable and what is not and the role of the media specialist is to do just that. [name deleted]
School Administrator	OH	As the leader of a shared services organization supporting three distinct charter school models, I beieve strongly that the notion of a portfolio school district has the best chance of positively impacting quality educational options for urban children. The [district name deleted] Transformation Plan proposes such an approach in [district name deleted], and is based on the evaluation of each and every District school with plans to close or repurpose those that have been doing the poorest job of educating [district name deleted] children, while replicating or expanding school models that are working. Unlike historic examples of failed urban school reform efforts based on a top down District-wide approach, the Transformation Plan is based on a bottoms up approach where indivdual principals are given more authority, but then held accountable for results, and where high performing public charter schools are given the opportunity to participate as partners by opening quality schools in neighborhoods

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		<p>that have none. When high quality public charter schools and/or successful District Innovation schools open in neighborhoods with failing schools, they will demonstrate that urban children can thrive academically given the right environment and raise the expectations of parents in the community, thereby increasing the community pressure to reform and improve performance in surrounding schools. The Plan proposes to break up comprehensive District high schools and create more 9th grade academies to provide more attention to children at that critical transition year. High performing public charter schools have an important role to play in the transformation of urban education. Their high expectations, no excuses approach is successful and can be replicated. The greatest challenge that the Charter schools face in Ohio is inadequate funding relative to nearby District schools. Fixing the funding gap to enable these schools to properly reward their dedicated and successful teachers should become a legislative priority in Ohio. In [district name deleted], the portfolio school district idea is beginning to take shape with the District's sponsorship of high performing charter schools. The District's support is demonstrated by it's willingness to sell vacant District school buildings to charter schools and by it's recent willingness for the first time to share space with a charter school within an existing District school. The District is rewarded for that collaboration by the ability to count the sponsored charter school test results on the District's state academic report card. The District should be further rewarded by being able to count the sponsored charters' enrollment as part of the District enrollment totals. In general, obstacles to the replication and growth of successful charter schools in Ohio should be addressed, as should obstacles to more District/charter collaboration.</p>
School Administrator	IN	<p>Professional leave days must become a standard part of all school calendars to allow teachers and staff to collaborate and grow. As I understand it we are required to give the dibels assessment to all students in kdg-2nd grades since we are a corporation in improvement. For compliance reasons we often assess students who have met the end of the year benchmark at the beginning of the year, MOY and EOY. Wouldn't we be better served assessing the students who are below benchmark and spend the time saved assessing on assessments that drive instruction or classroom instruction. I am pleased that we are moving toward national core standards. If we truly want to compare our work to others, it is important the standards and assessments are similiar. If we truly want to provide students with a level playing field all students deserve the right to participat in preschool and kindergarten.</p>

Role	State	User Comments
Other	MN	I am an ex-librarian from an alternative high school. I created a library and stayed there 30 years running it and doing some clerical helping for other staff. I got laid off in June of 2009 for economic necessity. The library sits there now, only used as a nice room for meetings and for a college prep class to meet in the middle of the room. We need more money, not less, in school libraries and media centers. They have raised the level of state required graduation tests for students in MN to get their diplomas and we have less resources to help them get there. I am now doing clerical work part-time in a community education office and trying to make ends meet. [name deleted]
Librarian	OH	Librarians are important educators at all levels. Information literacy is a vital skill to acquire during this, the age of information (overload). Students at all levels must learn not only how to find, but also how to evaluate and use information.
School Administrator	IL	School librarians are uniquely situated to provide strong benefits to the development of literacy, technology expertise, and critical thinking skills of students. There is a wide body of research that indicate that a quality library program impacts student achievement as measured by standardized testing. See http://www.lrs.org/impact.php . By encouraging extracurricular reading based on students' interests, by honing important research skills to prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and by supporting students to develop critical technology competencies, librarians remain the best bargain for the educational dollars spent. Library resources are shared, available in digital and print formats, and aligned to the standards. Robust library programs provide resources to differentiate instruction and librarians are often the only teachers in a building who work with all students. Undeniably, a well-funded and professionally staffed library program contributes significantly to the success of a school and the academic success of its students.
Other	MN	I am a school counselor and I know first hand what an effective counselor can do in a school to help to close the achievement gap and to ensure that all students are prepared for education beyond high school. I have worked in rural, urban and suburban schools, and the needs of kids in all of these locales are similar, with all of these communities contending with poverty, job losses, social pressures, family challenges and others. Schools must be staffed with enough highly qualified school counselors, to ensure that all students are being given services in the areas of personal/social, academic and career planning. When I have worked in schools where the counselor:student ratios were high, my colleagues and I were not able to be effective in any of these areas for most of our students. I currently work in a school district that values school counselors, has

Role	State	User Comments
Comment continued from previous page		enough of us to be effective, and we are closing our achievement gap, and sending almost all of our students on to higher education/post-secondary training. Qualified school counselors are an essential part of an educational team working towards these goals; these goals are not met without us.
Other	MN	The caseloads for school counselors needs to be addressed. There are many students within the school that would benefit from developing social skills, decision making, self-esteem etc. However, due to the demands placed on our positions: scheduling, testing and other administrative duties, we are not always able to provide that contact. Many of my colleagues and I have caseload ratios of 550:1. It is not feasible to even think that adequate services to each and every one of these students can be provided. Additionally, in recent years, we have seen an increase of issues with depression, anxiety and self-mutilation. It is imperative that we have adequate personnel to assist students with these issues that cause interference with their educational objectives. Thank you. [name deleted]
Teacher	IN	The schools in my area, in [district name deleted], are lacking in technology and also lacking in diversity. I have substitute taught in most of the middle and high schools here and have been surprised to find that there are few modern computers in the classrooms, and few computer labs. There seems to be a lack of commitment to technology. Regarding diversity, I have been in several school buildings with no faculty of color. This is despite the fact we are in a rich market for teaching talent, within an hour of Chicago and within 30 minutes of ethnically diverse Gary, Michigan City, and LaPorte. This is also despite the fact that 3-10% of the student body in our schools is non-white.
Teacher	MI	Textbooks need gay and lesbiban history!!!!

Comment attached on page 6 from IL:

- ***What do you think about the above list of priority concerns?*** The provided list of priorities is a good representation of educational priorities for the Midwest though the 5 Essential Supports presented by Bryk et al is a comprehensive and thorough way of outlining educational priorities in an integrated manner that provide some additional insight into priorities; the 5 Essential Supports are school leadership, parent-community ties, professional capacity, student centered learning center, instructional guidance.
- ***What else would you add to this list of priority concerns? Why?*** We would argue that a key priority missing from the list is an engaged community because when a school has the support from the community at large schools are apt to be more rich in resources, both financial and social capital. Moreover, an engaged community creates an “expectation” of academic success for its children, which can lead to increased student engagement at school.
- ***What do you consider the most important educational concerns in Illinois or the Midwest? Why? The RAC will rank the priorities.***
 1. In Illinois, a key educational concern is the lack of adequate educational funding due to the inordinate reliance on property tax revenues as the primary income source for schools.
 2. Educational resources, innovations, and supportive services must be delivered in a more coordinated, comprehensive strategy that is aligned with student academic and life success. Currently, there are far too many special initiatives with a variety of targeted outcomes, which lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness for students, schools, teachers, parents and communities.
 3. Not enough learning time to both master the learning goals and address student barriers to learning.
 4. The [position deleted] recently said “healthy kids produce healthy learners”. In Illinois, health and wellness for our students is essential.
 5. The DOE’s Turnaround strategies for low-performing schools must be amended to include an option that allows districts to use a strategy that does not require the firing of staff, but adds another option of expanded learning time coupled with the comprehensive provision of supportive student services to address student needs is critical.
- ***Based on your perspective, what are the policy and practice needs in any of the above or other priority areas of concern? Please be specific to make the report as informative as possible.*** Encouraging districts to identify their student’s needs and then strategically addressing those needs is a key practice; effectively engaging parents not only to be more active partners in their child’s learning but also as learners themselves; and, bringing community stakeholders to schools so that they can be a part of solution to meet student needs is essential.
- ***What are your ideas for how to meet the identified needs? Feel free to answer this question from a policy or a practice perspective.*** Supporting the creation of full service community schools is a key educational strategy that the DOE is not embracing through Reauthorize ESEA to include community schools as a way to address a number of the issues listed above.

[name deleted]

Comment attached on page 9 from MN:

These comments relate to changes that need to be made at the national level regarding gifted and GLBT students' requirements.

School environments—both in terms of curriculum and culture—can be toxic and dangerous for students who are *either* gifted *or* GLBT, and they are doubly so for students who are *both*. When a student feels subjected to danger through attending class, whether from fellow students or from faculty and staff who also often participate in bullying, abusive behavior, the likelihood that that student will succeed academically is greatly reduced.

The US DoE should be focusing on ensuring that every student is safe, every student receives instruction suited to her/his abilities, and every school setting in the US creates a welcoming space for students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds. Ignoring the specific needs of gifted and GLBT students in efforts to close gaps that may exist for other groups of students diminishes the quality of education for everyone.

Many opportunities exist to educate all of our youth—as well as the adults who work in schools—on the vitality that can be sustained in an environment where people's differences are celebrated, where the notion of sameness or conformity is rejected in favor of embracing the "otherness" in all of us. Gifted kids and GLBT kids should not be forced to pretend they are just like everyone else in order to avoid abuse at school. Nor should any student who is not part of the dominant culture have to attempt to blend in. Learning to recognize and not denigrate the uniqueness that each person brings to the educational setting enriches the experiences for everyone.

Time is short for getting these comments in, I realize, so I will close by recommending a few scholarly articles that I have found to be revealing and thought-provoking:

Levy, J.J. and Plucker, J.A. "Assessing the psychological presentation of gifted and talented clients: A multicultural perspective." *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 16 (2003): 229-47.

Loutzenheiser, Lisa W. and MacIntosh, Lori B. "Citizenships, Sexualities, and Education." *Theory into Practice*, 43.2 (spring 2004): 151.-58.

Peterson, Jean S. and Heather Rischar. "Gifted and Gay: A Study of the Adolescent Experience." *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 44.4 (2000): 231-46.

Kumashiro, Kevin K. "Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education." *Review of Educational Research*, 70.1 (2000): 25-53.

Merry, Michael S. "Educational justice and the gifted." *Theory and Research in Education*. 6.47 (2008): 47-70.

Talbert, Susan. "Constructions of LGBT Youth: Opening Up Subject Positions." *Theory Into Practice*, 43.2 (spring 2004): 116-21.

Piechowski, Michael M. "Experiencing in a Higher Key: Dabrowski's Theory of and for the Gifted." *Expert Approaches to Support Gifted Learners*. Ed. Margaret Wayne Gosfield. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2008. 19-32.

Comment attached on page 9 from IL:



CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Midwest Regional Advisory Committee
(submitted electronically)

June 10, 2011

On behalf of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) and the thousands of homeless families represented by our Law Project, thank you for the opportunity to comment on educational needs, challenges and strategies in Illinois. CCH understands the critical role of quality education in helping those children and youth experiencing homelessness to escape poverty.

For more than two decades we have worked to improve the educational rights of homeless students, enforce those rights, secure quality services and bring attention to their unique needs. The primary vehicle for serving homeless students is the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11432 *et seq.* and the appropriation of McKinney funds to Illinois. The purpose of the program is to identify and enroll homeless students, transport them to enable school stability, remove barriers to their access, attendance and success in school and connect them to services in the community.

We offer these comments, in part, to share the rich experience we have had with our students and families throughout Illinois and to ensure that your ultimate report does, indeed, address their needs. Because we had short notice to comment, these remarks are brief. For further information and to apprise us of future activities of RAC, please contact me [email deleted].

- I. Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth in Illinois
 - A. The numbers: Illinois schools counted more than 31,000 homeless students during the 2009-2010 school year. Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the largest school district in the State served 15,027 of the students.
 - B. Numbers of homeless students in Illinois Public Schools have increased steadily over the past decade. In the past 7 years, CPS alone has seen a 91% increase in homeless students identified. CPS is on track to report an increase of 500 homeless students for the current school year.
 - C. In 2005, the Illinois State Board of Education estimated 60,000 children and youth statewide experiencing homeless. A study independently conducted by the Illinois Department of Human Services in that same year counted almost 25,000 homeless youth state-wide. Since that time Illinois has been greatly impacted by the economic recession and is one of the top states in the nation for the number of mortgage foreclosures.

- D. Illinois has more than 800 school districts. For many years now, Illinois has received \$3,2 million dollars in federal McKinney-Vento funding. In any given year, few school districts receive any McKinney sub-grants. Additional temporary ARRA stimulus funds, while helpful, did not reach most school districts in the state.

Based on this data, it is easy to see that Illinois has great –and growing-- need but too few federal dollars targeted to direct services to homeless students at the school district level. Federal funding has simply not kept up with needs. Congress appropriated \$65 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program in FY2009, FY2010, and FY2011. In the 2008-2009 school year, this funding level left more than 300,000 identified homeless children and youth without any direct services, a figure certain to have increased due to the economic recession. Flat funding for the EHCY program ignores the surge in student homelessness, and, in effect, removes funding from school districts that received stimulus funds to begin to support their homeless students.

An appropriation at the full authorized funding level of \$75 million for EHCY - a modest increase of \$10 million - is needed to ensure that school districts all over the nation and, of course, here in Illinois can continue to identify and assist children and youth experiencing homelessness.

II. Challenges in Serving Homeless Students in Illinois

- A. Insufficient training of school-based staff. Though excellent training is available to ensure that all staff within a school identify and properly serve homeless children, most school-based staff with whom we come into contact are unfamiliar with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and fail to fully identify or serve all homeless children.
- B. The lack of full-time dedicated, qualified liaisons in most school districts hampers implementation of the EHCY program in Illinois. Imposing an additional layer of duties on staff who are working to capacity, is not a successful strategy.
- C. There is insufficient collaboration between school districts throughout the state and the state and local housing authorities to ensure an adequate plan for permanently housing homeless families or unaccompanied youth, or even providing temporary shelter close to the school of origin. Simply meeting with continuum of care programs does not satisfy the imperative to link families with services or to plan for meeting the needs of the families.
- D. Virtually all school districts and most individual schools generate copious enrollment materials and handbooks and maintain websites which thoroughly detail residency requirements and enrollment procedures for Illinois families but overwhelmingly, these informational materials fail to address the rights of homeless students in any way. Moreover, by ignoring the rights of homeless students, the information deters homeless students from attending (lack of information re: transportation, for example). The informational materials are very often both legally inaccurate and intimidating. For example, district forms or websites announce that “only permanent residents of the _____ district are entitled to enroll and attend, “then indicate that “all violators will be prosecuted. “ Many documents will threaten immediate disenrollment and liability for tuition. The Office of State Coordinator here does not and will not mandate that districts alter these practices. Nor will they

require that all applicable laws and policies be posted or linked on these district websites.

- E. Not enough resources are provided to perform outreach in communities to reach those students not enrolled in school, including preschoolers and drop-outs.
- F. School districts engage in highly intrusive residency investigations which ensnare homeless students and discourage and humiliate families. The investigators are often uninformed about the rights of the homeless.
- G. The Illinois State Board of Education (“ISBE”), the agency responsible for implementing McKinney-Vento in Illinois, is often timid regarding requiring that districts address systemic violations of McKinney leaving enforcement and efforts at systemic reform to advocates and local initiative. Policies and practices that create barriers for homeless students, though known to the ISBE, will remain unaddressed.
- H. Preschool programs are not fully coordinated or accessible to homeless students. Districts overall are not working to locate homeless preschoolers or link them with non-district programs when the district programs are full. Documentation and assessment requirements act as barriers. Training on the rights of homeless students is not widespread in these programs.
- I. There is a lack of alignment in programs for homeless families. Often, the services for homeless students are limited to the basics: enrollment and transportation. While providing the basics is good, it is insufficient. Every department, service and resource within the school must be integrated into the McKinney-Vento mission. Too often, “homeless services” is a silo unto itself. In our experience, even small McKinney-Vento sub-grants to a district can spur much greater attention to homeless students throughout the system.
- J. Homeless parents are not effectively engaged by many schools. It is more difficult for parents in crisis to give full attention to educational needs. Schools often respond, however, by simply leaving them out of the picture: failing to offer support to attend school events, offer opinions or input or simply visit and experience normal school-parent activities.
- K. State-wide homeless student data is not regularly made available to the public nor employed effectively to measure performance or project planning needs.

III. Strategies to Address the Needs and Challenges

A. CCH is in agreement with the concerns, needs and priorities expressed in the RAC materials but feels strongly that the needs of homeless families and students must be strongly reflected in the final Report.

B. An increase in appropriations to at least \$75 million for the EHCY program nationally is essential. Moreover, Illinois must allocate *state* resources each year to support our schools in meeting these needs. A modest federal matching requirement could be very helpful.

C. Federal guidance must make clear the duty of the Office of State Coordinator for the EHCY program is to respond and enforce the rights of homeless students and families.

D. Federal guidance should require that all school districts provide full and accurate public information regarding the rights and services for homeless students and should further require that practices and policies which create barriers must be changed promptly. Community outreach should be stressed.

E. States which agree to provide greater staffing and support for McKinney-Vento implementation should be given greater fiscal support.

F. It should be made clear that federal Title I monies can be utilized by districts to support any McKinney-Vento services which promote enrollment, attendance and success of homeless students, including transportation.

G. Statewide school-based training on the needs and rights of homeless students should be required as a priority for Illinois.

H. The right of preschool age homeless students to access all government-funded preschool, programs receive transportation and related supports should be clarified.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide input. We would be happy to engage in further dialogue on these important matters.