

Western Educational Equity Assistance Center Proposal

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Introduction

WestEd and its two subcontracting partners, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) and Attendance Works, are pleased to submit a proposal to lead the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center (WEEAC), serving Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, Hawai‘i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Headquartered in San Francisco, WestEd is a national leader in addressing equity in K–12 education and has operated deeply within the region for over 50 years. PREL, headquartered in Hawai‘i, has worked for 30 years to provide education research, development, and training to the Pacific region. Attendance Works has become the nation’s “go to” resource for advancing student success and closing equity gaps by reducing chronic absenteeism. Together, we bring a **powerful combination** of the following components that will bring a more **contemporary, equity-centered, capacity building approach** to addressing the deep-seated inequities within this region and tackling persistent challenges with new thinking and strategies including: **content expertise**; on all topics directly relevant to best practices for addressing desegregation; efficient **project management practices**; **technical expertise** in delivering federally funded technical assistance through **virtual practices**; **deep knowledge of the region**; and **exceptional partnerships**, including easy coordination and collaboration with four Comprehensive Centers, three Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), and two national centers that we operate. With offices and staff **located across the entire region**, WestEd and partners are uniquely positioned to ensure the mission of the EAC is realized by providing technical assistance and training, at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies in the preparation, adoption, and implementation of school desegregation plans for the desegregation of public

schools based on race, national origin, sex, and religion and in the development of effective methods of coping with special educational problems occasioned by desegregation. We present four overarching strengths for why this partnership is unsurpassed in the assets we can bring to the region.



Deep Regional Knowledge Rooted in Assets-Based Equity Work. With a long-

standing knowledge of Region IV needs and context, WestEd brings the ability to tailor regional services and build on experience with virtual convenings, training centered on adult learning, and established communication networks. This regionally focused expertise will enable deeper engagement, reduce the risk of misalignment of technical assistance (TA) with the needs, improve equity of access, and increase impact. *Evidence of Capacity: For decades, WestEd and its partners have worked with schools, districts, state departments, tribal educational agencies, and territories in the region to build their capacity to address educational inequities in pursuit of positive outcomes for all children, youth, and adults. WestEd has successfully led the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West since its inception in 1966 and has led Comprehensive Centers (CCs) in the region for more than 17 years. In its most recent contract, REL West conducted more than 20 coaching and analytic technical assistance projects and 35 training sessions on high-leverage needs in the region.*



Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework Leading to Equitable

Learning Outcomes. WestEd brings decades of experience leading equity-focused

training and TA to create and carry out comprehensive plans for systemwide change. Our proposed Equity Assistance Center will use an evidence-based Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework and TA Delivery Model that is ready to begin on Day 1 and is effective in ensuring impact and long-lasting sustainability. *Evidence of Capacity: WestEd operates the*

Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS) and provides TA to state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) SEAs and LEAs to develop, lead, implement, and sustain social and emotional learning (SEL) and school safety. CISELSS leadership has also been responsive to pandemic-related, rapid-response requests from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), such as creating and hosting a public webinar in March 2021—Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 Through Summer Learning and Enrichment—with over 1,500 in attendance.



Project Leadership and Content Expertise to Drive Systems Change. As

longtime leaders in providing TA, WestEd, PREL, and Attendance Works have access to a robust roster of subject matter experts in many areas of educational inequities. Our deep content knowledge and expertise with specific student populations will ensure that educators and community members learn targeted, evidenced-based best practices for alleviating inequities and that our strategies are well-aligned with the communities and contexts in which they are delivered. *Evidence of Capacity: For example, in 2018 WestEd began to work with [redacted] to address the racial disparities in academic, discipline, and climate outcomes for students. WestEd organized focus groups with students, parents, staff, and teachers to gather diverse perspectives about issues that emerged from closely examining achievement data, discipline referrals, suspension and expulsion rates, and annual climate survey results. WestEd also coached district staff to lead the [redacted] Anti-Racism Committee, build anti-racism policies, and conduct professional learning. As a result, t*



Change Agents for Intersectional Equity Work. This partnership brings a tested theory of change that uses systems design thinking, leverages federal TA centers, and builds on relationships we have nurtured through district, county, tribal, and state government engagements to reflect broader intersectional equity work and improve equitable learning outcomes. *Evidence of Capacity: For example, the National Center on Systemic Improvement (NCSI), led by WestEd, held a Thought Leader Conversation Series in 2020/21—“Pursuing Equity for Black Students in K–12 Education: Exploring the Intersection of Race and Disability”—and is supporting the Washington state special education team through a systemic equity review to create actionable recommendations for students with disabilities who are racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.*

A: Quality of the Project Design

WEEAC Services Appropriate to the Intended Recipients

Unique and Diverse Local and Cultural Needs of Communities Within the Region.

Region IV’s 13 states and 3 territories collectively serve over 12.4 million students in elementary and secondary public schools. The student population is about 2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 8% Asian, 42% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Black/African American, 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 37% White, and 5% two or more races. To address the needs of the students in this region effectively and efficiently, our proposed WEEAC is organized to serve five subregions:

1. **Northwest:** Alaska, Oregon, Washington
2. **Far West:** California, Nevada
3. **Southwest:** Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah
4. **West:** Idaho, Montana, Wyoming

5. **Pacific:** American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, Hawai‘i

Each subregion has unique and diverse local needs and great equity challenges within it; nonetheless, these subregions are similar enough in geography and student demographics and in the challenges they face to allow us to implement our TA model efficiently. In addition, many entities in these subregions already regularly work together (e.g., the “four corners” states and the Pacific islands), and the subregions are organized to overlap with the configurations of the CCs or RELs to yield opportunities for collaboration and for leveraging federal resources to create collective impact. Appendix A articulates fuller details about the needs of each subregion and cross-cutting needs for TA that are described below. (**NOTE:** All Appendix items have been uploaded separately to the “Optional Project Narrative Files” area of Grants.gov.)

Addressing Discrimination Cases and Desegregation Orders. Discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and national origin is prevalent in Region IV, as are court-mandated and voluntary desegregation orders. There have been 259 federal case resolutions regarding discrimination over the last 5 years. Of these, 111 cases were at the elementary and secondary level based on race or national origin, 76 cases at the elementary and secondary level were based on sex, 13 cases were at the postsecondary level and based on race or national origin, and 59 cases at the postsecondary level were based on sex. Across the region, there have been 19 court-mandated and 79 voluntary desegregation orders, with the greatest concentration in California, which has had 12 court-mandated and 35 voluntary desegregation orders.

Improving High School Graduation Rates. Educational attainment has a direct correlation to employment and income potential, particularly for people of color (Snyder et al., 2019). Low graduation rates continue to be a challenge for American Indian/Alaska Native students and students who are English language learners (ELL students) across the region.

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students have the lowest public high school 4-year graduation rates in the Northwest (68%), Southwest (69%), and West (65%) subregions.

American Indian/Alaska Native students have a graduation rate of 61% in Arizona and 62% in Washington.

Strengthening High School Course Enrollment. Although access to Advance Placement (AP) courses for earning college credits and to International Baccalaureate (IB) courses for developing college readiness skills has increased for historically underrepresented students over the years, inequities persist (College Board, 2022; Iboorganization, n.d.). Throughout Region IV, American Indian/Alaska Native students enroll in AP and IB courses at less than half their rate of overall course enrollment. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino male students also have low AP or IB course enrollment across all subregions.

Reducing Chronic Absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism negatively impacts academic achievement and high school graduation rates (Chang et al., 2014) and is a persistent challenge for most states in the region. Chronic absenteeism can translate into students having difficulty learning to read by 3rd grade, attaining proficient student achievement in middle school, and graduating from high school. Children living in poverty are two to three times more likely to be chronically absent and face the most harm because their community lacks the resources to make up for the lost learning time in school. The cumulative affect can mean large disparities in outcomes around educational attainment, job opportunities, income, and even health. In the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years, 6 of the region's states (Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, and Montana) were among the top 10 states in the nation for having the highest rates of chronic absenteeism. Alaska had the nation's highest chronic absenteeism rate (30.1%) in 2018/19. With the closing of schools, an abrupt transition to online learning, and

laxed attendance collection practices across the nation due to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, absenteeism data became difficult to track. Based on a review of the data from 350,000 students in 18 counties in California in 2020/21, with a composition that closely resembles the overall California state enrollment, chronic absenteeism rates for Hispanic/Latino students was 21.7%, for Black/African American students was 31.9%, for Native American/Alaskan Native students was 24%, and for Pacific Islander students was 30%—compared to a rate of 12.7% for White students. During the 2021/22 school year, chronic absenteeism escalated into a full-scale crisis for all students, with historically disadvantaged groups most affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A parent survey conducted in November 2021 by McKinsey and Company found chronic absenteeism had increased 2.7 times, with the highest levels among students from low-income households (Dorn et al., 2021). Local data confirm this harsh reality. As of mid-March, 46% of students in Los Angeles Unified School District had missed 9% or more of school, compared to an average of 19% of students prior to the pandemic. The chronic absenteeism rate is nearly 57% for Black/African American students, is 49% for Hispanic/Latino students, and is 68% for students experiencing homelessness. As a result of the pandemic, the attendance and engagement of ELL students has been especially affected. For example, in Oakland (CA), 47.3% of ELL students were chronically absent at the end of March 2022, compared to 17.3% from 2010 through 2020. This worsening rate of chronic absenteeism reflects the disengagement of students from schools abruptly closing and shifting to distance learning when the pandemic began and then the attendance barriers (transportation, health concerns, trauma, poor school climate, and so on) faced by students when school resumed in person.

Improving Discipline Equity. As cited by ED and the U.S. Office of Justice, exclusionary discipline can contribute to the “school-to-prison pipeline;” a decline in educational engagement

and academic achievement; and an increase in school violence, behavioral problems, and likelihood of dropping out (U.S. Department of Justice & Education, 2014). Throughout the region, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latino students, particularly male students, experience the highest rates of discipline.

Reducing Harassment or Bullying. Bias-harassment, which includes harassment based on race or sexual orientation, tends to lead to youth feeling sad, skipping school, avoiding school activities, and losing friends (Jones et al., 2018). Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latino students are victims of harassment or bullying on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex at alarmingly high rates. Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native students report the highest rates of harassment or bullying on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Overall, school district leaders across the country are noting the sharp increase in threats of violence and student misbehaviors since 2019 (Kurtz, 2022).

Addressing Disproportionality of Students Receiving Services Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). About 12% of students across the region are students with disabilities. In the Northwest, Far West, Southwest, and West, the rates of American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Black/African American male students with disabilities notably exceed their rates of enrollment. The most notable discrepancies are in the Far West, where the rate of Black/African American male students with disabilities is almost twice their rate of enrollment, and the West, where the rate of American Indian/Alaska Native male students with disabilities is almost twice their rate of enrollment. ELL male students are also overrepresented among students with disabilities in all the subregions. Based on our work with NCSI, we know that the biggest issues to address with many of the states in Region IV

include equitable access to services and programs for students with disabilities both at the state level in building equity-driven systems and at the local level through the use of culturally responsive practices and meaningful authentic stakeholder engagement.

Through projects like NCSI; REL West; the Regions 13, 15, 18, and 19 Comprehensive Centers; REL Northwest; and scores of projects with local public school districts throughout Region IV, WestEd and its partners know that the needs of the communities in the region are more than just statistics; this data aligns with what we already know from our project work and furthers our understanding of what must be done in the development of effective methods of coping with the special educational problems occasioned by desegregation.



Our Strength: Deep Regional Knowledge Rooted in Assets-Based Equity Work

Partnership That Addresses Desegregation-Related Needs in the EAC Region. WestEd and partners PREL and Attendance Works have nearly 100 years of collective experience working with LEAs and SEAs to improve educational equity for the students in this region. We share a commitment to equity, strong reputations, excellent relationships with clients from the state to the classroom, and complementary areas of expertise. All three partners center equity in their work; WestEd has developed an Equity Framework (Appendix B) that serves as the foundation of our TA implementation model (see the Project Implementation Plan and Methodological Tools section). Educational equity and success for every learner have been central to WestEd's [mission](#) for more than 50 years. WestEd has extensive experience managing multiyear national centers tasked with building SEA and LEA capacity to improve equitable learning outcomes for students, as well as hundreds of projects within this region serving SEAs and LEAs. This experience also includes operating the REL West for over 30 years and Comprehensive Centers in this region for close to two decades. We are able to [leverage](#)

[partnerships through the REL West](#) , such as *Creating Equitable Educator Practices and Improved Discipline Outcomes for Black Students in San Francisco Unified School District (CA)* and *Reducing Chronic Absence in Washoe County School District (NV) by Strengthening Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*. We have deep expertise improving education systems serving high percentages of students from low-income households and students of color through those projects and the National Center on School Turnaround, the National Charter School Resource Center, the CISELSS and through serving as an evaluator for multiple magnet school assistance program grants and addressing issues of disproportionality in special education through NCSI. WestEd has deep expertise in prevention, restorative justice, and mental health—providing a blend of scholarly work and practical TA. WestEd also conducts research on best practice in juvenile justice through its Center on Justice and Prevention Research.

PREL is an independent, nonprofit organization that collaborates with schools, school systems, families, community organizations, and government agencies throughout the Pacific to transform education. PREL’s approach reflects respect and understanding for local cultures and builds on the social and cultural capital and the assets of local communities. With staff in Hawai‘i, American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia, PREL brings a wealth of expertise to serve the leaders, educators, and students who most need support to improve equitable learning outcomes. PREL currently operates the Comprehensive Centers for Regions 18 and 19.

Attendance Works is passionate about eliminating chronic absenteeism to increase educational equity, as chronic absenteeism and truancy are often symptoms of root causes related to such factors as a school’s poor culture, climate curriculum that is not culturally responsive, or inadequate health services in the community. The organization began in 2006 with the research

study *Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, showing that chronically absent students do worse academically and that children living in poverty were four times more likely to be chronically absent. By 2010, the organization called national attention to this critical issue with the mission of advancing student success and helping close equity gaps by reducing chronic absenteeism. Working in more than 24 school districts and 32 states and in collaboration with 70 national organizations, Attendance Works focuses on (a) building public awareness about chronic absenteeism; (b) improving student attendance; and (c) building the capacity of schools and districts to use data, to partner with students and families, and to improve student attendance and engagement.

Letters in the Other Attachments Form illustrate the support from across the region from SEAs, LEAs, and other entities for WestEd and its partners to operate the WEEAC and address desegregation-related needs in the region.

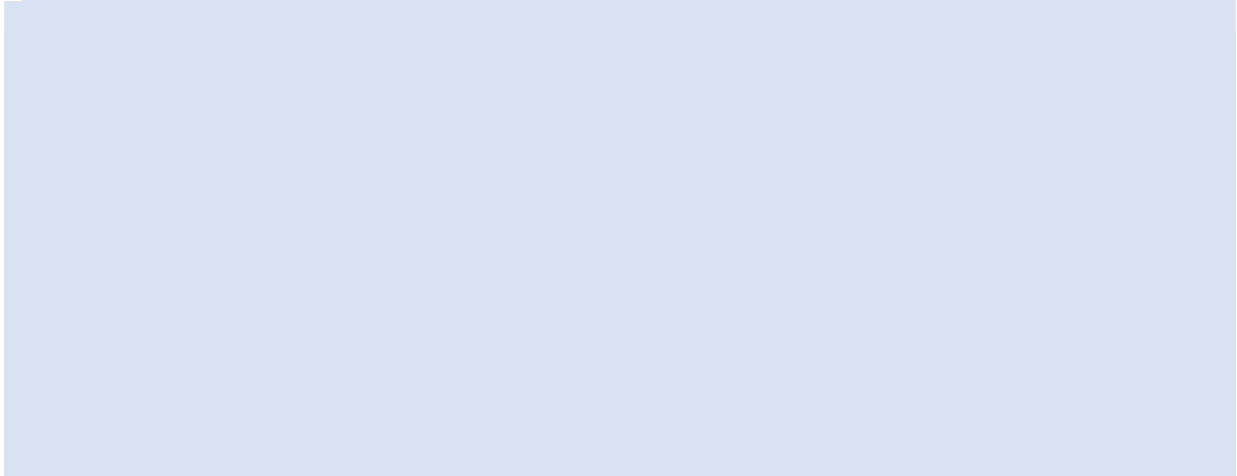


Our Strength: Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework Leading to Equitable Learning Outcomes

WEEAC Services Approach Tailored to Recipient Needs. WestEd and its partners will employ an ***equity-centered capacity building approach to provide better services to students who, because of their race, national origin, sex, or religion, have experienced ongoing inequities in our educational system.*** We will concentrate on building clients’ capacities to address the long-standing and emergent inequities in Region IV that are described in the literature review and the first section of the proposal. Our Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework (Figure 1) focuses on improving the human, organizational, policy, and resource capacity of school systems and schools while keeping the equity implications of systemic change at the forefront (Equity-Centered Capacity Building Network, 2016).



Human capacity (educators' and community members' skills, knowledge, and leadership).

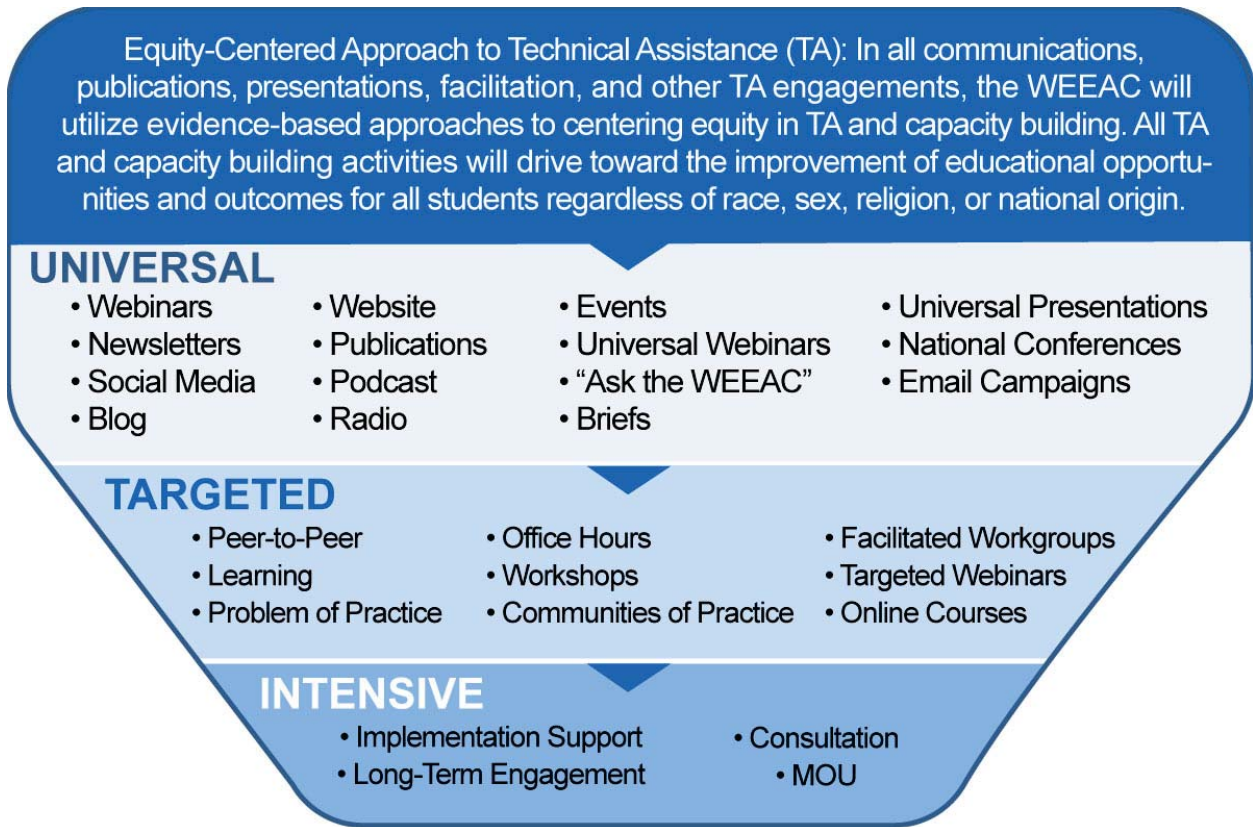


targeted, and intensive TA to address those challenges.

- **Policy capacity** (policies that guide equity). The WEEAC will analyze policies and note the disparities between policy and equitable practice across Region IV. These analyses will inform the WEEAC’s TA for education entities in the region to promote the implementation of evidence-based policies that support equitable outcomes for all.
- **Resource capacity** (technological, material, financial, and human resources). The WEEAC will share tools and evidence-based practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive access to, and allocation of, resources toward eliminating the inequities related to race, religion, national origin, and sex in public schools throughout the region. The dimensions of resource capacity will be explored to illuminate the many “resource levers” school systems can pull to create more equitable learning environments (Travers, 2018).

Level and Modes of Service Delivery. The WEEAC will provide universal, targeted, and intensive TA at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies in the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans for the desegregation of public schools and the development of effective methods of coping with challenges occasioned by desegregation. Figure 2 below shows the types of TA in each level of the WEEAC TA Delivery Model. TA levels are distinguished by the number of public schools that benefit from and receive services at each level and by the intensity of those services in terms of length, duration, and frequency. We will be intentional about assessing readiness to engage in targeted and intensive TA in order to strengthen buy-in and improve fidelity of implementation (Capacity Building Center for States, 2018). We will purposefully partner with LEAs and SEAs to determine *where they currently are* and *where they need to go next* with their improvement work. The implementation plan section of this proposal articulates what this will look like in practice.

Figure 2. WEEAC TA Delivery Model: Levels and Capacity Building Activities



Collaboration to Maximize Effectiveness



Our Strength: Change Agents for Intersectional Equity Work

Collaboration and Coordination With Other Federal Technical Assistance Providers and Relevant Partners to Provide Greater Access. One short-term outcome identified in the program logic model (see Figure 4) is increased collaboration and coordination. Because WestEd is a prime or a subcontractor for several federal TA centers (prime contractor: Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting, CISELSS, NCSI, the Region 2 CC, the Region 13 CC, the Region 15 CC, REL West, REL Northwest; subcontractor: REL Pacific) and PREL is a prime contractor for two TA centers (the Region 18 CC and the Region 19 CC) supporting this region, our proposed WEEAC team is already familiar with the network of federal TA providers and can build on it to more

deeply engage communities served by the WEEAC as well as increase dissemination of resources. Our goal is to create efficiencies and economies of scale.

Collective Impact Approach. Through federal TA, WestEd utilizes a collective impact framework to extend our reach beyond what one entity may achieve on its own. For example, the WEEAC will apply this framework through a **quarterly Regional Coordinating Council** to promote collaboration among federally funded research and TA centers and to coordinate services to maximize collective impact for our member states. WestEd has already demonstrated the power of such a council through the Region 2 CC, whose council includes representatives from REL Northeast and Islands, the Region 1 CC, the Region 3 CC, the Region 1 EAC, National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSE), and NCSI. WestEd plans to leverage this model in the WEEAC; with the Region 15 CC as the convening entity, a Regional Coordinating Council will be established and the WEEAC will be a key partner.

Current and Recent Working Relationships That Reflect the Broader Intersectional Nature of Educational Equity Work in Region IV. WestEd and its partners are deeply embedded in the region; have strong, ongoing relationships with state, regional, and local stakeholders; and have a long history of improving educational equity in the WEEAC region. This work has occurred through respectful working relationships at the local, state, and tribal government levels to benefit students by preparing educators, promoting evidence-based practices, harnessing resources, and convening networks to advance equitable outcomes. The following bullets highlight **culturally relevant collaboration with appropriate partners that resulted in positive outcomes** for students.

- With the (b) (6), WestEd codeveloped a funding needs analysis to assess the priorities of tribal members. This project has resulted in a guide for

tribal and state leaders to prioritize investments, including infrastructure **for advancing educational, health, and racial equity**, and has increased staff capacity for securing and managing more than \$1.5 million in new grant funds.

- Since the 2019/20 school year, PREL has worked with the (b) (6)

to establish and pilot a **newcomer student transition program** to support newly arrived students and their families, especially those from Micronesia. Newcomer services at (b) (6) help students build survival English skills through an acculturation curriculum, a teaching team that includes bilingual heritage language teachers, and family engagement. Program evaluation data showed that the pilot reduced disciplinary actions, increased attendance, and built survival English skills.

- WestEd is collaborating with the (b) (6) to produce **18 digital online learning modules for educators** in Oregon for building critical equity skills and competencies in a purposefully sequenced way. The modules will address Racial Equity Foundations, Culturally Responsive Practice, Applying an Equity Mindset to Learner Variability, and Building Equitable Educational Systems.
- WestEd's Region 13 CC and NCSI are partnering with the (b) (6)

on a comprehensive, systemic improvement effort to transform secondary transition services for students with disabilities, fiscal monitoring processes, instructional materials, and accountability structures. (b) (6) education specialists at 60 high schools are participating in a CoP and (b) (6) leaders are also actively engaged in the CoP for (b) (6)

This collaboration has increased access to coaching, current research, evidence-based practices, and the building of new collaborative relationships to advance equity.

- Attendance Works provided TA to the (b) (6)

(2015/16), to address chronic absenteeism for Native American students who had the highest rate of chronic absenteeism in the state. Attendance Works helped the project adapt resources to address the history of trauma experienced by tribal communities in relationship to the public school system. As a result of this project, Native American students were the only student group in the state to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Strategic Communications Plan to Increase Collaboration. The WEEAC will disseminate research- and evidence-based practices that are accessible, relevant, and useful in order to increase awareness, build knowledge, and develop capacities across the region. The strategic plan has the following three cornerstones:

Awareness and Outreach. The WEEAC will build awareness and invite collaboration through a “Meet your EAC” email campaign; presentations, both in person and virtual, at national, regional, and local convenings as well as federal TA partner meetings; and through introductory meetings in each of the subregions with key leaders and influencers.

Knowledge Translation and Utilization. The WEEAC website is the primary channel to share evidence-based practices and research on desegregation strategies; timely information from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and ED; relevant information and resources from other centers in the federal TA network; and universal TA events and resources, including trainings and webinars. The WEEAC will also disseminate a regular email newsletter. Finally, the WEEAC will also disseminate resources via social media as well as by radio since the latter is a key communications tool in the Pacific and in American Indian/Alaska Native communities. Utilizing multiple communication vehicles will ensure the reach of the WEEAC.

Community Input and Engagement. The website will also serve as key channel for community engagement by providing a method for the WEEAC to gather feedback, understand contextual needs, and engage LEAs through website tools, such as Tell Us What You Think, Ask the WEEAC, and Request TA functions. WEEAC staff will also co-present with partners from LEAs and communities at regional and national conferences.

Year 1 Strategic Communications Plan. The strategic communications goal in Year 1 is to advance awareness of Universal (Tier 1) programs, events, and resources while rapidly responding to timely issues that emerge related to Targeted (Tier 2) and Intensive (Tier 3) TA services, as outlined in our TA Delivery Model. Upon award, we will finalize the communications plan (see outline in Appendix C) for working with the appropriate education agencies within the region to promote understanding about EAC services and to foster productive relationships with those agencies and the public at large. All communication channels will be accessible for individuals with varying levels of literacy and learning preferences and will be screened in advance to address potential bias; ensure the confidentiality, safety, and consent of participants; and ensure that respondents learn of the outcomes of their contributions at the conclusion of the information gathering. As issues involving desegregation, segregation or discrimination, bullying, intolerance, and harassment based on race, national origin, sex, or religion can be emotionally triggering for individuals who are directly affected as well as their loved ones, the WEEAC team will approach all communications materials and channels, as well as family, community, and peer engagements with care, respect, and sensitivity to prevent retraumatization.

Rationale for Project Design of the WEEAC

The proposed project logic model, illustrated in Figure 4 aligns with and expands upon the EAC program logic model and operationalizes the WEEAC's theory of change (Figure 3), describing how our team will build capacity to address special educational problems occasioned by desegregation and to ensure equitable educational opportunities for every student regardless of race, sex, religion, or national origin.

(b) (4)

(b) (4)

The logic model depicts the inputs, strategic activities, outputs, and outcomes as a series of relationships, clarifying the assets and approaches used to determine and examine needs, build capacity to address those needs, and accomplish measurable indicators (i.e., changes in knowledge and practice) toward long-term goals (i.e., impact).

(b) (4)

(b) (4)

Applying this theory of change in our work has led to system changes focused on improving equitable learning. In 2021, for example, REL West, led by WestEd, used this theory of change with five small- to large-sized California districts to examine priorities and issues related to racial equity in their districts and to construct data-informed action plans aimed at improving academic and prosocial outcomes of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. The [Equity in Action](#) project introduced equity-centered tools and processes for teams to use in gathering information through interviews, mapping assets, and collecting and summarizing data to inform changes to practices and policies and district team members reported gains in skills to inform policy decisions. By the end of the project’s 8 months, each team had identified a theory of action, developed an implementation plan, and determined implementation and outcome benchmarks to measure progress (Fong, 2021).

The following concepts, theories, and empirical support undergird our logic model and guide our approach to building clients’ capacity to apply research and evidence to address identified needs: (a) best practices for addressing desegregation, (b) implementation science and continuous improvement, and (c) adult learning principles.

Best Practices for Addressing Desegregation. Remedies to counter the negative impacts of segregation include a variety of evidence-based practices (EBPs) that improve instructional quality, expand access to opportunity, and promote integration in educational settings. Culturally responsive and sustaining teaching practices that affirm students’ identities foster positive academic outcomes (New York State Education Department, 2018; Warner et al., 2021). Dual or concurrent enrollment programs improve college transitions, persistence, and completion, especially for students traditionally underrepresented in higher education (Berger et al., 2013). Opening access to more rigorous coursework (e.g., AP, IB) also better prepares students for

postsecondary options (Theokas & Saaris, 2013). High-quality schools of choice, such as magnet schools, have positive effects on student achievement, attendance, and graduation rates (Giancola & Kahlenberg, 2016; Potter et al., 2016; George & Darling-Hammond, 2021). School integration efforts like redrawing attendance zone boundaries and implementing open enrollment policies reduce racial isolation and increase access to resources and opportunities (Potter & Burris, 2020; Kahlenberg et al., 2019; Orfield & Garvie, 2020).

A primary goal of using such EBPs is to implement those strategies with the best evidence to support their effectiveness and increase their likelihood of producing positive outcomes (Wilkinson, 2016). The following contextual considerations also inform selection: (a) the body of evidence for an EBP, (b) the extent to which the EBP meets identified needs, and (c) the local context and capacity to implement the EBP (Hale et al., 2017; Fleischman et al., 2016). Building on this knowledge base, the Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework (Figure 1) and the WEEAC TA Delivery Model (Figure 2) will engage clients in selecting, implementing, and sustaining the use of EBPs with coaching and ongoing support.

Implementation Science and Continuous Improvement. Selecting the appropriate EBPs will result in intended outcomes only if they are implemented effectively. Effective implementation of EBPs requires ample support to learn to use new practices through coaching and problem-solving. It is also important to ensure the alignment of the new practices with new or existing organizational policies. Our team brings a thorough understanding of and ability to effectively navigate four stages of implementation—exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation (Fixsen et al., 2009). Continuous review of the capacity level, stage of implementation, and scope of change is embedded in our Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework. Accordingly, we intentionally design differentiated TA at each

stage to achieve requisite changes in the knowledge and behavior of all involved. Results-focused implementation of EBPs is not linear, however. Our strategic activities focus on building the capacity of individuals and organizations to engage in change within a continuous improvement framework (Bryk, 2015) that allows for adjustment and iteration through improvement cycles. We coach clients to use data to develop clear improvement goals, identify evidence-based strategies, and apply a theory of action that details how changes in knowledge and skills translate into improved outcomes. Then, we work with clients to install systems to monitor and adjust implementation and incorporate lessons learned into subsequent cycles.

Adult Learning Principles. Adult learners are self-directed and internally motivated, possess extensive life experience, and have a broad worldview and a high need for relevance and immediate application of what they are learning (Knowles et al., 2015; O’Toole & Essex, 2012). Based on those principles of adult learning theory, we involve clients and recipients in both the planning and evaluation of their own learning, which needs to be relevant and problem-centered and designed around the experiences that they bring to the work (Knowles et al., 2015). When delivering training and TA remotely, we will foster relationships among participants by providing opportunities to get to know each other; solicit discussion and feedback by using a variety of formats, including breakout rooms, polls, and shared documents; and conclude each session by summarizing accomplishments and outlining next steps.

Literature Review, Project Implementation Plan, and Methodological Tools



Our Strength: Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework Leading to Equitable Learning Outcomes

Literature Review. A review of the literature on educational equity issues underscores the persistence of inequities in K–12 education systems and the impact of these inequities on

students of nonmajority race and/or religion, LGBTQ+ students, ELL students, migrants, and Newcomers. The reality and impact of racism in education systems have been well-documented since the seminal Kerner Commission Report of 1968 (King, 2018; Frankenberg et al., 2019). Racism is manifested in low expectations, limited educational opportunities, poor-quality teaching, and less rigorous course content and academic programs, resulting in achievement gaps, low promotion and graduation rates, disproportionate discipline outcomes, chronic absenteeism, and increased dropout rates (Carter et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2018).

School districts serving the largest populations of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, or American Indian/Alaska Native students receive roughly \$1,800 (or 13%) less per student in state and local funding than those serving the fewest students of color (Hammond, 2021; EdTrust, 2018; EdBuild, 2019). Western states have the fewest Black/African American students (4.8%), and they are far more segregated in schools with more than twice as many Hispanic/Latino students—becoming a minority population within a minority (Darling-Hammond, 2018; Frankenberg et al., 2018; Orfield & Garvie, 2020; McArdle & Acevedo-Garcia, 2017; Monarrez et al., 2019; Reardon, 2014, 2016). Immigrant Students, Newcomers, and ELL students face many inequities, as school services to Newcomers who are often ELL students born outside the United States focus on language classifications and do not provide support based on individual needs, yet the needs of ELL students and Newcomers may differ significantly (Thompson et al., 2020; Unmansky, 2021; MAEC, 2019). States such as Utah lack Hispanic/Latino bilingual teachers and other educators with experience with cultural and linguistic diversity and bilingual education (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Delevan et al., 2017). LGBTQ+ students have higher rates of bullying and harassment and feel less safe in school, affecting their attendance as early as elementary school (Kuff et al., 2019; Gay, Lesbian, &

Straight Education Network & Harris Interactive, 2012; Stone, 2021). The highly negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students of color, ELL students, students with disabilities, and those living in poverty has included reduced learning time and access to nutrition, increased isolation and mental health challenges, and learning loss (OCR, 2021). Rural students also have limited internet access and other resources and face inequities compounded by two years of devastating wildfires in the West (Bruce, 2020; California School Boards Association, 2020; Tomlinson, 2020). The WEEAC’s project implementation plan and methodological tools applied to that plan are based on the literature about persistent educational inequities (See Appendix D for a fuller literature review).

Project Implementation Plan and Methodological Tools. Below we outline what the implementation of the Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework (Figure 1) and methods of the TA Delivery model (Figure 2) will look like overall and for Year 1 of the WEEAC toward accomplishing the outcomes described in the logic model (Figure 4). See Appendix E. for a detailed overview of Year 1 project milestones of universal, targeted, and intensive TA services.



Universal TA Services. Our approach to universal TA—disseminating information, practices, and resources across the entire region—builds on the WEEAC Equity-Centered Capacity Building Framework, as we prioritize developing human, resource, organizational, and policy capacity. Each TA engagement will be intentional in the effort to expand these capacities within education systems to eliminate the disparities across race, national origin, sex, and religion. We will promote existing resources that elevate voices that have been historically marginalized, illuminate the root causes of the disparities in educational outcomes, and offer practical solutions that can accelerate improved outcomes. We will also provide topical online learning sessions, webinars, and other interactive multimedia virtual events in

collaboration with other TA centers; give conference presentations (national, state, and local); operate a website, including the *Ask the WEEAC* online TA request system; disseminate a quarterly newsletter via email; and use social media and radio platforms for dissemination. Our goal in universal TA is to make research accessible, relevant, and useful for purposes of increasing awareness and building knowledge and capacity across the region. Through universal TA, we will address topics of interest to many clients across the region, as indicated from our needs assessment, incoming requests, and guidance from Advisory Councils. Any subject that is relevant to ensuring civil rights for all students regardless of race, national origin, sex, or religion will be addressed in our universal services (Hood, 2002).

In Year 1, the WEEAC plans to focus at least one universal TA project on chronic absenteeism. As evidenced from the data in the region and the impact on students' long-term success, chronic absenteeism is one of the most urgent challenges we will need to address in Year 1 across the entire region. We know that chronic absenteeism persists among Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and ELL students and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We propose a six-part online learning series to address this critical issue that impacts academic achievement, graduation rates, student engagement, and other critical measures of student success. We will build the human, organizational, policy, and resource capacity of LEAs to use chronic absenteeism data to identify the patterns of inequity, organize their districts and schools to improve attendance and engagement, and adopt effective strategies for specific student groups. The structure of the online sessions will address adult learners' needs for relevance and immediate application of the learning. Using additional adult learning principles, the online learning series will foster relationships among participants by providing opportunities to get to know each other; soliciting discussion and feedback by using a

variety of formats, including breakout rooms, polls, and shared documents; and concluding each session by summarizing accomplishments and outlining next steps. In addition, we propose to host office hours via Zoom for SEAs or LEAs that would like additional assistance and advice. We will also create a brief “Where To Start Guide” offering tips to districts about where they can take action and avoid becoming paralyzed by the extreme levels of chronic absenteeism currently experienced by many in the region. The online learning series, which would incorporate multiple modalities to drive sustained engagement and facilitate collaboration, will follow a sequenced curriculum:

1. **Topic 1: Data to Identify Patterns of Inequity.** Chronic absenteeism is a leading indicator of inequity, a sign of challenges inside and outside schools (e.g., unstable housing, unreliable transportation, historical trauma, disengaging educational experiences, bullying) that not only cause absenteeism but also affect children’s ability to learn if left unaddressed. This session will focus on examples of disaggregated data that help show where systemic issues are having a disproportionate impact on specific student groups.
2. **Topic 2: Data-Driven School Attendance Teams.** Given the sharp increase in chronic absenteeism rates during the pandemic, schools must take a team approach to addressing attendance. This session will focus on the essential functions and tools for teams to identify the patterns of inequity, understand the assets and barriers for each student group, and select culturally appropriate, evidence-based strategies. A key resource in this session will be the [Attendance Playbook and Guide](#).
3. **Topic 3: Organizing a District Team to Address Chronic Absenteeism.** Districts play a significant role in supporting and sustaining effective practice at the school level by [building key systemic ingredients](#). This session will offer examples of districts that are

designing systems that are more just and equitable. Participants will have access to Attendance Works' district self-assessment as a reflection and planning tool.

4. **Topics 4–6: Tailored Attendance Strategies.** Each session will feature 2–3 communities that are successfully improving attendance and engagement for the following student groups: American Indian/Alaska Native and Black/African American students, ELL students, and students with disabilities.

The materials and resources from this online series will be incorporated into targeted and intensive TA services. Because regional data show that Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native students report the highest rates of bullying or harassment based on race, color, or national origin, the WEEAC would also conduct a **second universal TA project as an online learning series focused on harassment and bullying** using a similar structure and format. The series will build from existing resources available through CISELSS, including experts from that center serving as presenters and TA consultants available for assistance and advice.



Targeted TA Services. Targeted TA will be provided in response to requests

from LEAs, county offices of education, tribal schools, the BIE, SEAs, and community organizations and will be customized to meet the specific needs, contexts, and *assets* of the requesters. We will design targeted services to build the human, resource, policy, and organizational capacities of clients. A TA Facilitator will be assigned to each subregion (see the Quality of Project Personnel section for additional details) to assist with requesting TA services, and the WEEAC website will provide a menu to inform clients about our services and the range of topics that the WEEAC can address. Clients requesting services often seek assistance with conducting equity audits; developing strategic equity or desegregation

plans; and responding to OCR’s findings on specific issues of desegregation, equity, or civil rights. Clients also seek assistance with problems of greater complexity and severity and with systems change efforts to improve the core functions of schools (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, social–emotional learning, human resource management). Targeted services require more frequent contact with the clients and include consulting, coaching, and training via virtual synchronous, asynchronous, and in-person events. Targeted TA services will provide peer-to-peer learning exchanges that bring together multiple LEAs, schools, and other entities in sustained CoPs and other collaborative learning opportunities to address common challenges. In delivering targeted TA services, the subregion TA Facilitators and the subject matter experts (SMEs) will develop and employ culturally appropriate awareness and empathetic, inclusive, and collaborative skills to effectively understand and meet the needs of historically underserved and underrepresented populations, sectors, and communities.



Intensive TA Services. Intensive TA is intended to result in substantial changes to policies, programs, practices, and operations that contribute to state capacity and

improved outcomes at one or more system levels. We propose to **provide five intensive projects (one for each subregion) per year**, engaging diverse representatives from multiple districts and agencies in learning networks to focus on common issues within each region. For example, most of the states within Region IV share the dilemma of reducing the dropout rate for American Indian/Alaska Native students. In addition, two states are experiencing intense resegregation of Black/African American students in their large urban districts. The WEEAC will support the learning networks to define root causes, identify effective remedies and resources, and develop tools that will be shared throughout the entire region via multimedia events. Intensive projects will build human, policy, organizational, and resource capacities within each subregion and

ultimately the entire region. In the implementation of intensive TA services, the WEEAC will explicitly attend to equitable representation with clear protocols for establishing equity and voice for all interested parties in leadership, planning, and implementation teams for all TA activities and will draw on the experience, expertise, and ways of knowing from diverse communities to gather information/data, interpret findings, develop remedies, and identify resources. Because of the larger commitment and greater duration of our intensive TA services, recipients will be asked to complete TA agreements outlining the specific issues to be addressed, the responsibilities of both the WEEAC and the client, the deliverables, the timeline, and the expected short- and long-term outcomes. An example of a blank TA agreement is provided in Appendix F. In Year 1 of the WEEAC, we propose to conduct the following intensive TA projects.



Reducing Dropout Rates for American Indian/ Alaska Native Students in the Northwest and Southwest Subregions. Across the whole region, low graduation

rates continue to be a challenge for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) and ELL students. AI/AN students have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic or racial group of students in the United States. In 2019, the high school dropout rate for AI/AN students in



the United States was 9.6%. Multiple studies have documented the crisis associated with the low graduation/high dropout rates of these students. (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010; Brayboy & Maaka, 2015, López et al., 2013). Several states in Region IV were included in the National Indian Education Study (AK, AR, MT, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY), which provides data on some of the factors that make schools hostile environments for AI/AN students. Within the Northwest and Southwest subregions, AI/AN students have the lowest public high school graduation rates at 68% and 69% respectively. With this need so acute, both subregions will focus on addressing

high school graduation rates for AI/AN students, but will do so with different partners. The EAC will host a learning community in each of the two subregions and will produce information about effective ways to reduce the dropout rates for public schools that serve larger populations of AI/AN students in the seven states of these subregions. Tribal colleges and universities will be invited to join the learning community in each region, including Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (NM), Northwest Indian College (WA), and Iḷisagvik College (AK). The



WEEAC will fully engage representatives from various roles in diverse communities (such as administrators, faculty, staff, families/caregivers, students, community members, and business partners) and include them as interested parties and equal partners in

learning community activities. For this project we will also draw upon findings from [a WestEd and PREL study](#) that analyzed National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment data and National Indian Education Study (NIES) survey data for AI/AN 8th grade students. The issues that contribute to school environments being hostile for these populations include lack of tribal, community, familial, and elder engagement and culturally inappropriate or non-responsive instruction, discipline, curricula, assessments, and metrics used to determine achievement.

AI/AN students are also discriminated against when educators use negative quantitative and other data as the sole sources of information to drive decisions that may not result in positive experiences and outcomes for students. The WEEAC will collaborate with the Regional CCs, RELs, and other TA providers and equity-centered capacity-building experts/organizations serving the Northwest and Southwest subregions to leverage resources and maximize the support provided to improve outcomes for AI/AN students throughout these subregions. In particular, the WEEAC will draw on the expertise of REL Northwest through its High School Graduation

project with the REL Northwest will provide subject matter experts to the WEEAC learning community for this intensive TA project.



Ameliorating the Negative Impact of School Segregation and Hyper-Segregation on Black/African American Students in the Far West Subregion.

Across the region, there have been 259 federal case resolutions regarding discrimination over the last 5 years and 19 court-mandated and 79 voluntary desegregation orders, with the greatest concentration in California, which has had 12 court-mandated and 35 voluntary desegregation orders. Based on this concentration in California and data that show California has the most segregated Hispanic/Latino student population nationwide, with 58% of Hispanic/Latino students attending intensely segregated schools (Frankenberg et al., 2019), the focus on segregation, re-segregation, and racial isolation warrants this proposed intensive project. In addition, the largest school district in Nevada, Clark County School District, has historical and current challenges with racial segregation and isolation (Terriquez et al, 2009). The EAC will host a learning community of educators and interested parties in the Far West subregion to examine the data on segregation and produce information about effective ways to ameliorate the negative impacts of resegregation and hyper-segregation on Black/African American students throughout Region IV. Partners such as the



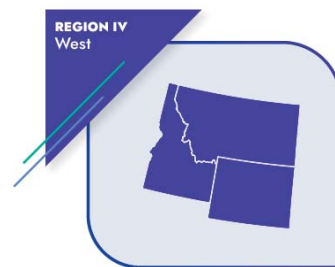
will also be invited to the learning community sessions. The WEEAC will fully engage representatives from various roles in diverse communities (such as administrators, faculty, staff, families/caregivers, students, community members, and business partners) and include them as interested parties and equal partners in learning community activities. The learning community will convene monthly through an online meeting platform

(e.g., Zoom) and will incorporate other tools, such as Padlet, Jamboard, Mentimeter, Kahoot!, and Google Docs, to enhance the online experience and increase engagement and participation. The learning community will create a toolkit on how to review data and address segregation through changes in policy, programs, and school district operations. The toolkit will be distributed throughout all of Region IV as part of providing universal TA. The Region 15 CC and REL West will provide subject matter experts for these learning community sessions and will help develop and disseminate the toolkit.



Advancing Equity in Rural and Small Districts in the West Subregion.

Even though 77% of the students in this subregion are White, students who are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and AI/AN face disproportionate challenges. For example, AI/AN male students received in-school suspension at about three times



the rate of their overall school enrollment and received out-of-school suspension at almost four times the rate of their enrollment. Black/African American students reported being harassed or bullied on the basis of race, color, or national origin at 7 times their rate of enrollment. These disproportionalities are also exacerbated by school context, as additional layers of stereotypes and stigmas are often added to students of a minority race in rural settings. Nationally, a typical Black/African American student attends a rural school with 57% non-White enrollment, whereas the typical White student attends school where 80% of the students are White. (Frankenberg et al., 2019). Schools classified as rural in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming are at 40.8%, 74.3%, and 51.4%, respectively (NCES, 2017). Poverty further exacerbates inequities for students of color in rural communities. Nationally, only 13.5% of rural White residents live below the poverty line; the poverty rate for rural Black/African American residents is 32%. For rural Hispanic/Latino

residents, it is 24.5%, and for AI/AN residents it is 31% (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021). To add a final layer of challenges, rural students have faced COVID-19 pandemic challenges with lack of access to technology resources, equipment, and adequate internet. Students who live in rural areas are less likely to have access to the internet and devices such as computers or tablets (Bruce, 2020). To address this multilayered set of challenges in the West subregion and provide technical assistance to the special problems occasioned by desegregation there, the EAC will partner with small and rural district associations in the West subregion to host a learning community to examine equity issues in rural and small schools. The WEEAC will convene the learning community and assist its members in defining their problem of practice and establishing their agenda. All the states in Region IV have large rural areas and many small and rural school districts. Rural and small districts were especially hard hit by COVID-19 and the fire seasons of 2019 and 2020. And while students in rural areas have the same range of diverse characteristics (e.g., race, language, religion, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status) as those in urban and suburban areas, they have fewer resources to meet their needs (Howley & Redding, 2021). WestEd will partner with rural education experts and TA providers who understand the complexities of rural communities and are committed to educational equity for all students regardless of zip code. Invitees to this learning community include the Idaho and Montana Rural Education Association. The WEEAC will fully engage representatives from various roles in diverse communities (such as administrators, faculty, staff, families/caregivers, students, community members, and business partners) and include them as interested parties and equal partners in learning community activities. Examples of EBPs for providing equitable learning and growth opportunities for rural students of all backgrounds and income levels will be elevated through the learning community and TA to assist with moving from theory to practice. REL

Northwest will support this project by drawing up its Rural Alliance for Blended Learning project in this region and providing experts to the learning community.



Collaborative Community Conversations on Racial Equity in the Pacific

Islands Subregion. With the increase in harassment and bullying due to race, religion, gender, or national origin across the region, specific contextual challenges are prevalent in the Pacific Islands subregion. In Hawai‘i, for example, migrants from the Freely Associated States (Palau, Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia) have experienced systemic discrimination to a high degree, as expressed by Sha Merirei Ongelungel, a Palauan artist and activist: “people talking about killing cockroaches, calling for a purge on Micronesians, calling to have us—even those of us who are U.S. citizens who are born in the United States—calling for us to be deported, calling for the parents of minors to be incarcerated, you name it” (Kelleher, 2021). These systemic factors impact students’ educational contexts (Hussar et al., 2020). For school year 2019/20, 22% of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students were absent for 15 or more days, compared to the statewide average of 12% of all students (Hawai‘i State Department of Education, 2021). The WEEAC will use participatory strategies in this subregion to develop and disseminate a toolkit for building pathways for understanding, empathy, support, and engagement with Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander groups who face racial/ethnic discrimination and violence. The toolkit will build on existing resources (e.g., REL Pacific’s *Getting to Know Pacific Island Students from the Freely Associated States Infographic Series*; MAEC’s *Creating New Futures for Newcomers: Lessons from Five Schools That Serve K–12 Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylees*; NCELA and OELA’s ELL student and Newcomer resources) and will be distributed throughout



all of Region IV as part of providing universal TA. The WEEAC will invite the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, as a regional minority-serving institution, to participate in the development of the toolkit. The Region 18 and Region 19 CCs will also help develop and disseminate the toolkit.

Evaluation for Performance Feedback and Assessment of Progress

WestEd and our partners recognize the importance of evaluation with continuous performance feedback to ensure that projects are implemented as intended and accomplish the desired outcomes. Data collected using an equity-focused evaluation approach (e.g., see [WestEd’s Anti-Racist Evaluation Strategies: A Guide for Evaluation Teams](#) [WestEd, 2021]) will be important for assessing the implementation and impact of the WEEAC’s TA and identifying ongoing service improvement needs. WestEd has selected the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) to conduct the evaluation for the WEEAC. The UEPC is an experienced evaluator and has designed a rigorous evaluation of the WEEAC’s TA efforts that considers the diverse perspectives, contexts, and needs of clients and the students and families they serve throughout the region. The following paragraphs describe the proposed evaluation plan in detail.

Evaluation Questions and GPRA Measures. The evaluation questions address each of the six GPRA performance measures and will be used to guide the mixed-methods, equity-focused evaluation approach (Bamberger & Segone, 2011) that will also be aligned with the WEEAC theory of action. The questions and data collection methods will incorporate diverse perspectives for performance feedback and assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Evaluation Q1. What evidence-based practices and resources were identified or developed in response to client needs/requests and attentive to diversity, equity, and inclusion for clients in different contexts? (GPRA Measure 4) Example indicators: number of client requests (total and by state and LEA), number and type of services and resources

developed in response to requests for each of the strategic activities, and number and type of resource (by state and LEA). Data collection methods: client TA request tracker (Salesforce), quarterly reports, and document reviews (with scoring rubric).

Evaluation Q2. To what extent were WEEAC TA services of high quality, useful, and responsive to client priorities, needs, and cultural complexities in each of the strategic activities (Dissemination, Assistance and Advice, Training, Communication and Collaboration)? (GPRA Measures 1, 5) Example indicators: client reports of increased knowledge and awareness of the evidence-based practices; client reports of the value and benefits of the TA provided by WEEAC. Data collection methods: annual client survey; annual client interviews; postsession feedback questionnaires; document reviews (scoring rubric); event/meeting observations (observation protocol).

Evaluation Q3. In what ways did the technical assistance increase the human, organizational, policy, and resource capacity of clients served in the region toward the long-term goals of: increased compliance; decreased segregation; decreased bullying, violence, and disruptive actions; increased student/community engagement; mitigated adverse effects of COVID-19; and increased achievement? (GPRA Measures 2, 3) Example indicators: number and percentage of programs that changed policies/practices to provide students the opportunity to fully participate in all educational programs regardless of their sex, race, religion, and national origin; client reports of improved content knowledge, implementation skills, and leadership (Human Capacity); client reports of improved communication, coordination, and collaboration (Organizational Capacity); client reports of improved policies, practices, and procedures (Policy Capacity); client reports of improved technology use, talent management, and use of resources (Resource Capacity); Data collection methods: annual client

survey; annual client interviews; postsession feedback questionnaires.

Evaluation Q4. To what extent were outputs and client outcomes met as a result of the technical assistance provided (e.g., see logic model inputs, activities, outputs, and intended short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes)? (GPRA Measure 6) Example indicators: needs assessments; policies that promote/ensure equity; desegregation plans; strategic plans for implementing equity practices; [codeveloped] material resources (e.g., briefs); [cosponsored] training events (e.g., learning modules). Data collection methods: client TA request tracker (Salesforce); annual client survey; annual client interviews; postsession feedback questionnaires; document reviews (with scoring rubric).

Data Collection and Analysis Methods. The UEPC employs rigorous, systematic data collection and analysis methods to ensure that evaluation findings are balanced, objective, trustworthy, and reliable. Where possible, attention will be given to representation of clients in data collection, engagement of clients in the analysis (e.g., member checking and involvement in interpreting preliminary results), disaggregation of quantitative data (which may require oversampling), and alternative forms of representation in reporting. Qualitative data will support greater depth and understanding of context to represent diverse voices and perspectives. Attention will also be given to sharing evaluation findings in user-friendly, culturally responsive formats with regular frequency (Hood et al., 2015; Patton, 1997; Stake, 2003).

Survey Instruments. Clients will receive annual surveys and postsession event questionnaires administered through [Qualtrics survey software](#). Open-ended items will be analyzed to identify categories of responses and themes in relation to the evaluation questions. Analysis of closed-ended survey responses will include frequency and descriptive analyses; responses will be combined over multiple survey administrations and integrated with the open-

ended items using structured qualitative analysis procedures to organize data from multiple data sources (Miles et al., 2018).

Interviews. Interviews with a sample of key client contacts representing SEAs, LEAs, schools, and other community partners in the region who work directly with the WEEAC will provide essential information about quality, relevance, and usefulness of TA activities; the ways in which TA services are implemented as intended; the degree to which clients' capacity to foster positive and safe learning environments has improved; and the overall impact of WEEAC TA services on human, organizational, policy, and resource capacity. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed for analysis using qualitative analysis software ([ATLAS.ti](#)).

Review of Documents and Operational Data. The UEPC will gather documents and operational material from WEEAC TA services to track progress toward desired outcomes over time. These will include policy documents and other materials, or guidance developed in response to TA requests. In addition, the UEPC will track progress of implementation by regularly reviewing and analyzing work plans and prospectuses, TA materials (e.g., resources, tools, meeting agendas, notes), the internal document management system, and the calendar of TA events. A document review rubric (aligned with the evaluation questions and GPRA measures) will be used for reviewing and scoring the relevant project documents.

Observations. The UEPC will observe TA sessions to gather information about the implementation of project activities in relation to expected outcomes. Semistructured observation protocols (aligned with the evaluation questions and GPRA measures) will be used during observations. In addition, reflective feedback forms will be used to summarize observations and provide formative feedback to project staff.

TA Service Tracker. The UEPC team will utilize WestEd’s established request/response management system (Salesforce) to monitor and track the specific activities, services, and assistance provided to recipients, including intensive and targeted TA. Quantitative data from the database will be supplemented with qualitative data from interviews, surveys, observations, and review of documents and artifacts. This tracking will portray a clear picture of WEEAC operations, with a focus on how effectively WEEAC staff reach a wide range of recipients and the degree to which services are implemented and making an impact across the region. The combined data from all the above sources will be analyzed using structured qualitative procedures (Miles et al., 2018) to identify issues to be considered for ongoing program planning and improvement.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement Structures. Using a responsive, utilization-focused approach (Patton, 1997; Stake, 2004), the UEPC team will facilitate ongoing continuous feedback and assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. The evaluation reporting structures to support feedback and continuous improvement include (a) immediate results from annual surveys, postsession questionnaires, and summaries of observations of EAC meetings and events; (b) monthly email updates and regular calls with the WEEAC Management Team; (c) formative interim reports of evaluation findings that can be collaboratively reviewed and used for ongoing improvement and planning; (d) annual evaluation reports to summarize the evaluation findings and provide considerations for improvement; and (e) regular coordinating with the WEEAC Management Team to review and update the evaluation plan.

Promoting Equity through Diverse Partnerships and Perspectives

In the operation of the WEEAC, WestEd and our partners will prioritize engaging AI/AN, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

communities and members of LGBTQ+ and religious communities about the needs, assets, and emergent issues and trends of the schools, districts, communities, and state agencies in Region IV (Wells et al., 2016). Because the region is vast and diverse, we intend to build our outreach and partnerships on the following principles, which have been included as key principles in the targeted and intensive TA projects described above:

- Develop and employ culturally appropriate awareness and empathetic, inclusive, and collaborative skills to effectively understand and meet the needs of historically underserved and underrepresented populations, sectors, and communities.
- Fully engage representatives from various roles in diverse communities (such as administrators, faculty, staff, families/caregivers, students, community members, and business partners) and include them as interested parties and equal partners in activities.
- Explicitly attend to equitable representation with clear protocols for establishing equity and voice for all interested parties in leadership, planning, and implementation teams for all TA activities.
- Draw on the experience, expertise, and ways of knowing of diverse communities to gather information/data, interpret findings, develop remedies, and identify resources.
- Using these principles, our outreach will draw on the following strategies: cooperating with the OCR Regional Offices; organizing into subregions, each with a TA facilitator; partnering with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tribal colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions; utilizing Subregion Advisory Councils; and implementing strategic communications.

Cooperation With the Office for Civil Rights Regional Offices. Because the EACs are authorized under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, the EACs cooperate with OCR in assisting

districts and states with implementing remedies to resolve desegregation and issues of disproportionality or harassment in fulfillment of consent decrees and agreements. The WEEAC will build relationships with the Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Regional OCR offices that serve the states and territories in Region IV.

Subregion Structure and TA Facilitators. Our proposed structure of five subregions is designed to help us develop strong relationships with clients in the field. See the sections on Diverse Local and Cultural Needs of Communities Within the Region and Quality of Project Personnel for the rationale for and structure and role of the TA Facilitators.

Partnerships With HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions. While Region IV does not have any undergraduate Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the WEEAC team is committed to expanding pathways to college for all students. As part of its targeted TA strategy, the WEEAC team will partner with HBCU alumni associations throughout Region IV to co-host virtual and in-person informational sessions for high school students and their families. These sessions will provide an opportunity for HBCU admissions representatives as well as alumni to showcase programs of study, career opportunities, and financial aid options. A panel discussion featuring HBCU alumni educators that live in Region IV will focus on increasing the pipeline of Black educators. This topic area was selected due to the evidence of significantly improved outcomes for Black students when exposed to Black teachers. According to *The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers* study, "Black students who were exposed to Black teachers by third grade were 13% more likely to enroll in college. If students had two Black teachers by third grade, the likelihood of college enrollment jumped to 32%" (Gershenson et al., 2018). There are 72 HBCUs with Bachelor's degree programs, 45 with Master's degree programs, and 21 with Doctoral degree programs in

education. As an HBCU graduate and active Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) Alumni Association member, WEEAC Deputy Director Kandace Jones will spearhead this HBCU alumni association partnership effort. The pilot initiative will feature the Los Angeles Chapter of the FAMU National Alumni Association, the LA Black Student Alliance (an initiative to increase HBCU enrollment from the Western region), and the Los Angeles Unified School District. This model will be replicated throughout urban districts throughout Region IV. Presentations and other resources shared during the sessions will be summarized and disseminated as part of the WEEAC Universal TA efforts. In addition, Tribal Colleges and Minority-Serving Institutions will be invited to participate in the learning communities that are proposed above as intensive TA services.

Subregion Advisory Councils. The Advisory Council for each subregion will provide important information to the WEEAC about equity and desegregation issues and will help raise awareness about the WEEAC and our services throughout each subregion. The members of the Advisory Councils will represent diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious voices and perspectives in addition to a diversity of roles (e.g., educators, community members, business leaders) and system levels (e.g., LEAs, SEAs, communities). For example, representatives from postsecondary institutions, including Tribally Controlled Universities, and professional networks and associations within each subregion will serve as advisors. WestEd and partners will also collaborate with the small school district associations for each state in Region IV; each of these associations has been invited to serve on the Advisory Councils. Our proposed advisors will have expertise in various areas, including, but not limited to, equity/civil rights for students, urban and rural education, tribal education, LGBTQ+ youth development, gender equity, curriculum, instruction, systems change, professional development for educators, and family and community

engagement. We will meet with the Advisory Councils quarterly and include them in the monthly distribution of our electronic newsletter. See Appendix G for a list of proposed advisors for each Subregion Advisory Council and letters received indicating commitments to serve in the advisory role can be found in the Other Attachment Form.

Strategic Communications Plan. For details on our communications approach, see the Strategic Communications Plan section earlier in this proposal and see Appendix C.

B: Quality of Project Personnel

The success of an EAC depends largely on the quality of core staff and SMEs; their demonstrated proficiency in carrying out work of this scope; and their proven ability to engage and collaborate with many groups, including LEAs, SEAs, tribal educational agencies, local communities, partner organizations, institutions of higher education, other TA centers, ED, and other federal agencies. The EAC's success also depends on the institutional capacity and knowledge capital of its leading organizations to operate and support a multiyear project of this scale with integrity and credibility. Our proposed project personnel and organizational supports demonstrate these characteristics.

Recruitment and Engagement of Traditionally Underrepresented Groups

Since WestEd's inception more than 50 years ago, our agency has been committed to staff diversity. Individuals of different ethnicities, races, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations as well as from different cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds work at all levels of the organization. Based on the results of a 2018 internal survey, very explicit actions and intensified attention have led to increased staff diversity, created a more inclusive culture, and ensured equity in access and opportunity for skill development and leadership positions so that we can lead projects—such as the WEEAC—with equity truly at the center. We

believe equity is most effectively achieved by teams that are diverse and inclusive, that reflect the communities we serve, and that generate bold solutions to our most challenging issues. Since 2018, WestEd has accomplished the following:

- To [intentionally guide the work we do](#), we developed the **WestEd Equity Framework**; see Appendix B with commitments that are framing internal and external attention to equity for further strengthening our focus on equity for all of our projects.
- We launched five **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)** to promote diversity and inclusion, support staff development, capitalize on the extraordinary resources of our employees, and support community building and professional connections. Current staff-led ERGs at WestEd include the Black Diaspora Network; Comunidad Latina; PRIDE Alliance; Asian Pacific Islander Desi American; and Council for Indigenous Relations, Careers, Leadership, and Equity.
- We created a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan** and created a **DEI Council** of 18 diverse staff members who advise the CEO Cabinet.
- We created [Anti-Racist Evaluation Strategies: A Guide for Evaluation Teams](#), which was developed to help evaluation teams increase their awareness of racism in evaluation and to help teams employ strategies to conduct anti-racist evaluations.
- We increased **DEI-focused learning opportunities** through workshops, trainings, forums, and outside speakers. In 2021, 90% of managers and over 250 staff participated in in-depth diversity and equity training. All 800+ staff were able to participate in an Equity 101 series of professional learning.

WestEd's new Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will help operationalize our commitment to diversity and equity through inclusive practices. WestEd actively recruits,

attracts, and retains diverse and varied teams who build from the assets of every community we serve. **We actively encourage applicants for employment from groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.** This includes cultivating relationships and networks with professional associations, colleges and universities, and partners that include those identifying as members of underrepresented groups. WestEd also ensures that our position descriptions follow best practices for supporting inclusion and equity through how we describe job requirements and qualifications. Our interview practices include attention to removing bias and including a range of staff based on experience, level, position, and background in the candidate selection process. Each year since 2010, the representation of staff of color has increased, from approximately 32% to 42%. In 2021, WestEd added 147 new staff, of which 54% were staff of color. Women comprise 74.2% of all WestEd staff and 100% of WestEd’s Executive Team.

WestEd and its partners will continue to actively recruit and engage employees from traditionally underrepresented groups (i.e., based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability) and will sustain affirmative efforts to employ and promote qualified individuals from those groups in project activities. We already have many individuals on staff who meet these criteria. As new positions are available, we will seek and recruit individuals who are knowledgeable about desegregation work using our networks to promote opportunities. We will continue to pursue effective recruitment strategies as we build upon the configuration of staff who serve on the WEEAC.



Our Strength: Project Leadership and Content Expertise to Drive Systems Change

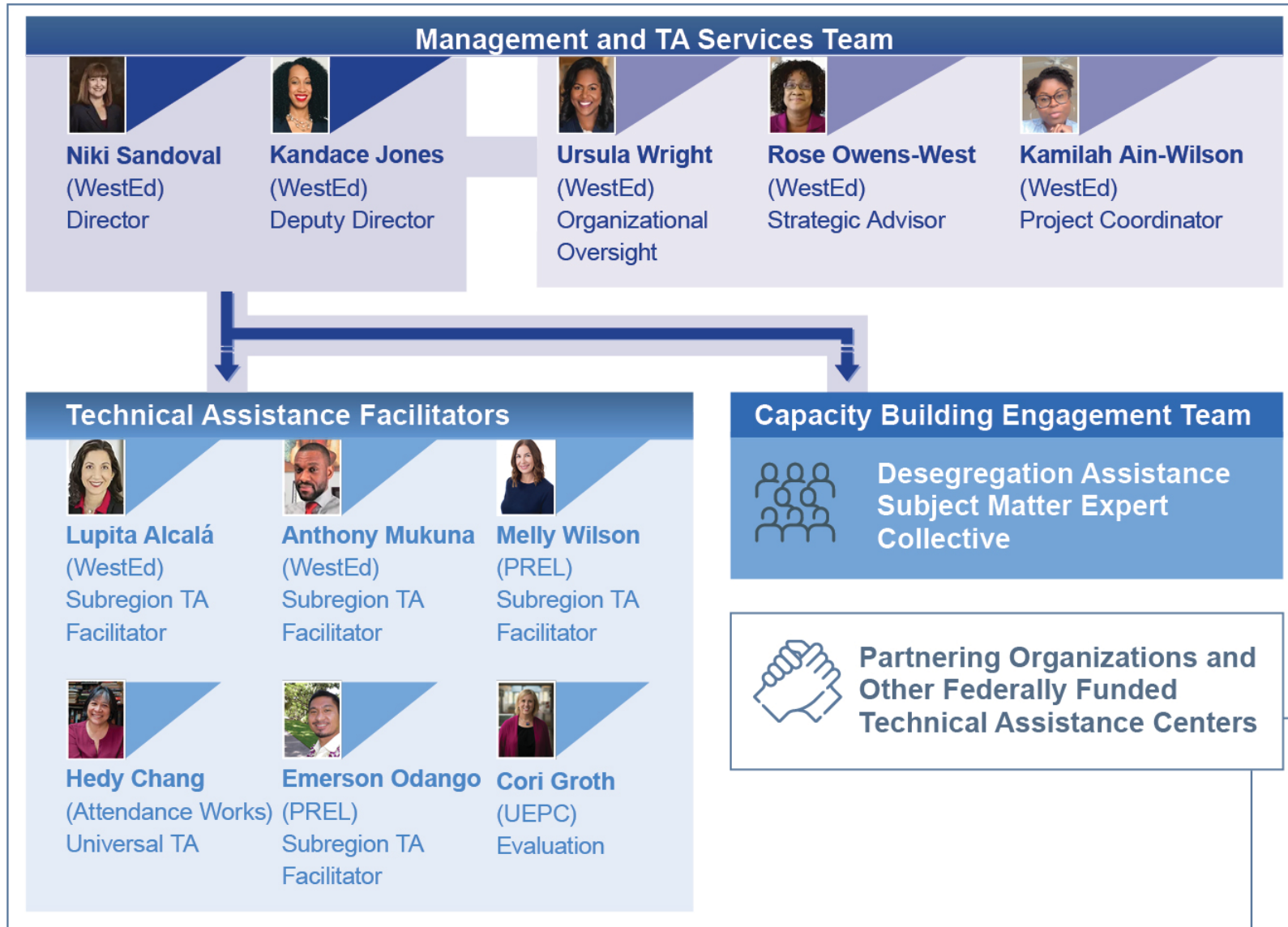
Qualifications and Expertise of Key Personnel

WestEd and our partners have assembled outstanding and nationally recognized leaders to operate the WEEAC who have experience leading large federal TA centers, providing technical assistance to LEAs to implement equity plans, and engaging communities to address equity issues. We have learned through our experience that operating a successful center requires combining capable and stable leadership with a flexible staffing design that can rapidly respond to changes and emerging needs of clients. The WEEAC will be led by Niki Sandoval, as the director (at 1.0 FTE), and Kandace Jones, as the deputy director (at .35 FTE). A majority of the staff for the proposed WEEAC team, both the project management and TA services team and the Desegregation Assistance Subject Matter Expert Collective, reflect the primary demographic groups that the WEEAC will serve—including American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Asian. The structure of the WEEAC project team is illustrated in Figure 5.

In other larger federal TA centers that we manage, our SEA and LEA clients have provided positive feedback on assigning a liaison to an SEA, LEA, or region. They often cite that having a designated person who understands their unique context and to whom they can immediately reach out for help is critical in project design, in implementation, and, ultimately, in achieving outcomes. Following this model used successfully on other federally funded TA centers, the WEEAC will assign a TA Facilitator to each subregion.

- Northwest (AK, OR, WA): Niki Sandoval
- Southwest (AZ, CO, NM, UT): Kandace Jones
- West (ID, MT, WY): Anthony Mukuna
- Pacific (HI and Territories): Melly Wilson & Emerson Odango
- Far West (CA, NV): Lupita Alcalá

Figure 5. WEEAC Project Team Structure



Each subregion's TA Facilitator will work with the SEAs and their LEAs, which will allow the WEEAC to better understand the unique context of each state and facilitate customized TA and communication. This approach also gives states a single point of contact for direct questions and TA requests. The TA Facilitator can meet LEAs' needs directly or serve as a broker to quickly bring in someone else within the WEEAC (or another center) with the deep expertise related to the issue where support is needed. TA Facilitators have the following responsibilities:

- building relationships with the SEAs, LEAs, IHEs, and other organizations in their subregion through initial and ongoing outreach meetings and holding regular office hours
- supporting universal TA, including dissemination of materials and resources, such as delivering online learning modules, from the WEEAC to LEAs in the subregion
- facilitating the intake of requests for TA from the subregion
- coordinating the intensive TA with the WEEAC Director
- providing targeted TA as needed and appropriate in the subregion and whole region, including training, coaching, consulting, targeted webinars and/or online workshops
- facilitating online CoPs and peer-to-peer exchanges

TA Facilitator assignments will be evaluated regularly, and adjustments will be made as needed. Each TA Facilitator will be responsible for checking in regularly with key contacts in their subregion and for knowing their states' contexts, key state and district staff, and TA needs and plans and for communicating these to the WEEAC Leadership Team. TA Facilitators will support one another as a learning community and will serve an important feedback function, keeping the project informed of current issues facing LEAs and states and helping the WEEAC take the pulse of what is going on across the region with regard to capacity to improve equity and address desegregation. They will connect during monthly virtual meetings led by the Director to

share emerging issues that have surfaced in their interactions within their subregions. Key Staff expertise is listed in Figure 6 below, with bios following and resumes in the Other Attachments Form.

Niki Sandoval, PhD, (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians), **Director of the WEEAC and Northwest TA Facilitator**, brings 30 years of experience to tribal, federal, state, and local education agencies to advance equity for all students. As Director of WEEAC, Sandoval will be responsible for the overall management of personnel, resources, budget, and the WEEAC's ability to adequately respond to TA requests. In addition, she will manage the relationship with ED, lead regular needs assessment of the region, coordinate TA requests across the region for intensive and targeted TA, and oversee the subregion TA Facilitators.

Sandoval currently manages personnel, resources, and budgets; leads needs assessments and relationships with agency leaders; and fulfills TA requests. As a project director for a federally recognized tribe in Nevada, Sandoval remotely led a community-sourced needs assessment in 2021, identifying funding priorities to advance racial equity for rural youth and families. The result was strengthened staff and organizational capacity to secure and manage federal and state grant funds. Sandoval directs a CoP that remotely convenes Indian Education Directors in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Oklahoma, the BIE, and Office of Indian Education to address emergent issues affecting education, including religion, race, and gender. A lecturer at the University of California, Santa Barbara for 19 years, Sandoval examines the impacts of discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, religion, and disability. Former Assistant Director for Community Services at Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Sandoval has provided TA to Indigenous communities throughout the West.

Figure 6. WEEAC Key Personnel Expertise

MANAGEMENT & TA SERVICES TEAM	Expertise and experience in the contexts and partnerships of Region IV					Equity Centered Capacity Building for Systems Change through Evidence-Based Strategies						Improving Equitable Learning: Meeting Student Academic Needs through Desegregation Strategies, Culturally Responsive Instruction, and Positive/Safe Learning Environments					
	Working with SEAs and LEAs in the region covered by the WEEAC	Leading or working on a federally funded TA Center and managed requirements for ED	Applying legal requirements of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion in education programs	Working with rural communities with differences in student racial or religious makeup, ELL families, and tribal communities	Promoting equity through diverse partnerships, including with HBCUs, Tribal colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions	Supporting the resolution of civil rights and hate crime complaints	Developing desegregation and/or equity plans including the use of OCR data	Addressing chronic absenteeism	Addressing Disproportionality (SPED, Discipline, Academic)	Creating a Diverse Educator Workforce	Ensuring authentic family and community engagement	Developing public magnet schools	Building safe and inclusive learning environments for indigenous, LGBTQ+, non-majority race students of different religious backgrounds	Providing culturally responsive and sustaining education	Addressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Providing trauma informed instruction	Addressing bullying and violence in schools/online
Niki Sandoval	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•		•	
Kandace Jones	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
Rose Owens-West	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•				
Ursula Wright	•		•		•		•		•	•	•	•	•		•		
Anthony Mukuna	•	•	•					•						•			
Lupita Alcalá	•	•	•	•	•				•	•							
Cori Groth, UEPC	•	•	•	•			•		•	•							
Hedy Chang, AW	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		
Melly Wilson, PREL	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Emerson Odango, PREL	•	•		•						•		•	•	•	•	•	

Kandace Jones, BS and MBA, Deputy Director of the WEEAC and Southwest TA Facilitator, will: oversee the evaluator and the WEEAC's assessment of progress; coordinate with other EACs and other federal TA centers for collective impact; and implement the strategic communications plan, including overseeing the universal TA. Jones currently works to promote positive, equitable outcomes for students as the Co-Director of the Region 15 CC. In this role, she deepens content expertise, high-quality capacity-building TA, and other services that effectively support SEAs and their regional and local constituents in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah. Jones specializes in shaping and facilitating strategic, large-scale projects designed to improve educational outcomes through high-quality professional development, capacity-building initiatives, sustainability planning, research and policy development, and other forms of TA. A nationally recognized leader, she has worked across the education, nonprofit, and private sectors. Before joining WestEd, she served as Co-Director of the Region 8 CC. In this role, she centered equity in capacity building and guided the team in the development of a new equity-focused framework for TA to SEAs and LEAs. Jones also served as Advisor for School Turnaround and Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at ED. Her responsibilities included supporting SEAs and LEAs to improve school quality and outcomes for students.

Rose Owens-West, PhD, senior advisor to the WEEAC, will manage the Advisory Councils, provide high-level strategic counsel to the Director, support outreach of the EAC with organizations and partners in the region, provide targeted TA, and provide quality assurance for products and publications as part of universal TA. Owens-West is both a Senior Project Director at WestEd and one of the organizational leaders responsible for advancing staff development in the area of equity. She has expertise in addressing racial and gender disparities in

student outcomes, disproportionality in special education, gifted programs and discipline, and school climate issues for LGBTQ+ students. Owens-West has extensive experience leading technical assistance centers. She directed the Region IX Equity Assistance Center (EAC), which under her leadership received excellent evaluations. Prior to that, she was Associate Director of the Northern California and the California Comprehensive Assistance Centers and Director of the Smaller Learning Communities Technical Assistance Center. She is currently helping the Arizona Department of Education establish the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Division.

Ursula Wright, BA and MBA, responsible for organizational oversight of the WEEAC, is a Division Director and a member of WestEd’s senior leadership team. Wright has held executive leadership positions in the field of public education for 15 years, including an appointment at ED from 2013 through 2016. In these roles, she has enabled conditions that created more equitable student and educator experiences for millions. For example, she has led multiple systems change engagements involving school district leaders in cities such as Baltimore; Memphis; Staten Island; New Orleans; Washington, DC; and Battle Creek, MI, that resulted in funding increases for LEAs; new student-centered practices; and better aligned public policy in adjacent areas such as housing, transportation, and health. She will provide high-level guidance and additional quality assurance to the WEEAC leadership and support teams and will serve as WestEd’s designated, independent project reviewer. All WestEd projects are internally reviewed regularly as part of our internal quality assurance process.

Lupita Alcalá, EdM, Far West TA Facilitator for the WEEAC has over 20 years of experience in early childhood to higher education advocacy, policy, project development, and executive leadership. Her commitment to addressing systemic and structural barriers to equity includes tackling complex policy and system challenges through the development of the

groundbreaking 2021 Master Plan for Early Learning and Care for California’s Governor, which resulted in California’s expansion of preschool to include all 4-year-olds. Prior to joining WestEd, Alcalá served as the first Latina Chief Deputy Superintendent at the California Department of Education and was Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission. In these roles, she helped remove structural barriers to equity and implemented systems that expanded access and opportunity for historically marginalized children, youth, and young adults through programs and funding.

Anthony Mukuna, BBA and MBA, West TA Facilitator for the WEEAC, currently serves as a project director for state-based projects and provides TA to SEA staff through NCSI and the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting. Prior to joining WestEd, Mukuna worked for the state of Idaho Supreme Court Finance Office and the Idaho State Department of Education, where he created a very strong fiscal accountability structure to improve program and student outcomes, especially around significant disproportionality fiscal requirements of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Mukuna currently serves on the board of directors of a nonprofit organization called Nshombo Congo Aid that is focused on raising funds to assist people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have been victims of the negative consequences of decades of civil wars.

Emerson Lopez Odango, PhD, co-TA Facilitator in the Pacific Region for the WEEAC, currently serves as Director of Language and Literacies at PREL and as Director of the Region 18 CC, which provides capacity building services to the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Guam, and CNMI. Odango has served as Principal Investigator on multiple federally funded projects and has deep experience in developing equitable education opportunities for students in areas such as the representation of Indigenous minority language

communities in language policy and the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, language/dialect, and clinical practice in speech-language pathology. Languages spoken include English, wikang Tagalog (Tagalog/Filipino), and Kapasen Mwoshulók (Mortlockese, Indigenous minority language of Micronesia).

Melly Wilson, PhD, co-TA Facilitator in the Pacific Region for the WEEAC, is the Director of Research, Policy, and Government Relations at PREL. Wilson oversees the design of research and statistical analysis plans for a variety of experiments and psychometric studies. She serves as Director for the Region 19 CC (American Samoa, Hawai‘i, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands), delivering capacity-building services in the areas of Newcomer education, multilingual/multicultural education, and educator effectiveness. Her experience as policy analyst at the Hawai‘i State Legislature and faculty at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa give Wilson a unique understanding of the Pacific region’s policy and human context and an ability to efficiently access people and data as necessary to respond to community needs. Languages spoken include English, Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, and French. **Melly Wilson** and **Emerson Odango** will serve as a TA liaisons for the Pacific subregion as well as a SME for universal, targeted, and intensive TA projects across the region.

Hedy Chang, MPP, developer for universal and targeted TA for the WEEAC, is the founder and executive director of the nonprofit initiative Attendance Works, which advances student success and narrows equity gaps by addressing chronic absenteeism. Under her leadership, Attendance Works successfully moved chronic absenteeism from a little-known term to a required reporting and optional school accountability metric in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A skilled presenter, TA provider, and writer, Hedy coauthored a seminal report—*Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic*

Absence in the Early Grades—as well as numerous other articles about student attendance. Deeply committed to two-generation solutions for achieving a more just and equitable society, Chang has spent over 3 decades working in the fields of family support, family economic success, education, and child development. She will oversee the technical assistance focused on chronic absenteeism, particularly the universal TA provided to the whole region as well as the intensive and targeted TA provided to LEAs.

Cori Groth, PhD, evaluator for the WEEAC, has over 25 years of evaluation experience in the design and coordination of a variety of studies of statewide, cross-state, and local educational interventions in public schools and higher education with a focus on identifying opportunity gaps and increasing equity and access. She is an Associate Director at UEPC, where she supports educational organizations in improving programs, policies, and practices that result in excellent and equitable outcomes. She also serves as an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy with a focus on enacting principles of justice, equity, and excellence for all learners.

Kamilah Wilson, BA, WEEAC Project Coordinator, has over 10 years of project coordination experience at the school and agency levels managing business operations and the successful implementation of cross-agency and state-level projects and events that require several layers of planning and coordination. She has provided support for the Center on School Turnaround, the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center, and the Region 14 CC.

Desegregation Assistance Subject Matter Expert Collective. As a national leader in TA for K–12 education systems, WestEd employs more than 800 staff and works directly with all 60 U.S. states and territories. Drawing from this large pool of staff, WestEd has created a Desegregation Assistance Subject Matter Expert Collective (SME Collective) of over 50 staff

who have specialized experience and expertise in the WEEAC region’s context to meet student academic needs through desegregation strategies, culturally responsive instruction, and positive and safe learning environments. To provide TA, both remotely and in person, that serves the unique and diverse local and cultural needs of communities within the region, the WEEAC management team will draw from the SME Collective for the delivery and dissemination of universal TA and the requested targeted and intensive TA. Most of these staff live and work within the WEEAC region and also work on other large federally funded TA centers (e.g., REL West, the Region 15 CC, the Region 13 CC, NCSI, CISELSS) creating many opportunities to further the desegregation work through professional partnerships. Our SMEs include staff who have served as Tribal Education Directors, who are research experts on juvenile and adult justice systems, authors of guidance on civil rights data collection, virtual technical assistance providers on focal areas like racism and health equity or religious diversity, policy analysts for the ACLU, curriculum developers for CRSE, and statewide accountability system designers. With expertise in topics such as analyzing special education disproportionality, building inclusive learning environments for ELL students, and supporting rural and remote communities, the SME Collective brings decades of experience that reflects the broader intersectional nature of educational equity work. Figure 7 illustrates the expertise WestEd brings to the WEEAC in terms of the understanding the region’s context and demonstrated ability to improve equitable learning outcomes through desegregation strategies, culturally responsive instruction, and positive and safe learning environments. The 27 staff listed in the SME Collective below represent a sampling of the full SME Collective of 50+ staff that the WEEAC has access to. Short bios for each of the SME staff in Figure 7 are located in Appendix H.

Figure 7. WEEAC Subject Matter Experts Expertise

SME EXPERTISE	Expertise and experience in the contexts and partnerships of Region IV					Equity Centered Capacity Building for Systems Change through Evidence-Based Strategies						Improving Equitable Learning: Meeting Student Academic Needs through Desegregation Strategies, Culturally Responsive Instruction, and Positive/Safe Learning Environments				
	Working with SEAs and LEAs in the region covered by the WEEAC	Applying legal requirements of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion in education programs	Working with rural communities with differences in student racial or religious makeup, with newcomer families, with high incidences of languages other than English spoken in the home, and tribal communities	Promoting equity through diverse partnerships, including with HBCUs, Tribal colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions	Supporting the resolution of civil rights and hate crime complaints	Developing desegregation and/or equity plans, including the use of OCR data	Addressing chronic absenteeism	Addressing disproportionality (SPED, Discipline, Academic)	Creating a diverse educator workforce	Ensuring authentic family and community engagement	Developing public magnet schools	Building safe and inclusive learning environments for indigenous, LGVBQT+, non-majority race students of different religious backgrounds	Providing culturally responsive and sustaining education	Addressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Providing trauma informed instruction	Addressing bullying and violence in schools/online
Angelia Turner	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Anthony Petrosino	•														•	
Crystal Robinson	•															
Elsa Billings	•															
Eric Crane	•	•		•		•		•	•		•		•			
Jenny Betz	•	•				•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	
John Paul Lapid	•						•		•			•				
Jordan Gibson	•		•				•		•		•	•				
Maria Paredes	•															
Mario Molina	•															
Molly Faulkner-Bond	•	•				•	•					•				
Rebeca Cerna	•		•				•	•	•				•		•	
Rob Salley	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•		•			
Sara Allender										•						

Figure 7 (Cont.). WEEAC Subject Matter Experts Expertise

SME EXPERTISE	Expertise and experience in the contexts and partnerships of Region IV					Equity Centered Capacity Building for Systems Change through Evidence-Based Strategies					Improving Equitable Learning: Meeting Student Academic Needs through Desegregation Strategies, Culturally Responsive Instruction, and Positive/Safe Learning Environments					
	Working with SEAs and LEAs in the region covered by the WEEAC	Applying legal requirements of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion in education programs	Working with rural communities with differences in student racial or religious makeup, with newcomer families, with high incidences of languages other than English spoken in the home, and tribal communities	Promoting equity through diverse partnerships, including with HBCUs, Tribal colleges and universities, and minority-serving institutions	Supporting the resolution of civil rights and hate crime complaints	Developing desegregation and/or equity plans, including the use of OCR data	Addressing chronic absenteeism	Addressing disproportionality (SPED, Discipline, Academic)	Creating a diverse educator workforce	Ensuring authentic family and community engagement	Developing public magnet schools	Building safe and inclusive learning environments for indigenous, LGVBTQ+, non-majority race students of different religious backgrounds	Providing culturally responsive and sustaining education	Addressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Providing trauma informed instruction	Addressing bullying and violence in schools/online
Sharon Nelson-Barber	•		•	•												
Sylvia Kwon	•					•		•	•		•	•				•
Cecelia Leong, AW	•		•			•	•	•	•							•
Sue Fothergill, AW	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•						
Maria Casey, AW			•				•	•	•							
Shyla Dogan, ASU				•				•	•		•	•		•		
Lauren Katzman, ASU	•	•			•	•		•	•		•	•				
Carrie Sampson, ASU	•	•		•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•			•
Corrin Barros, PREL	•	•	•	•			•		•		•	•	•			•
Eloise Sanchez, PREL	•							•	•		•	•		•		
Paulina Yourupi-Sandy, PREL	•		•						•		•	•				
Spencer Scanlan, PREL	•		•	•			•	•								
Lynette Villagomez, PREL	•	•	•					•			•					

C: Adequacy of Resources



Our Strength: Change Agents for Intersectional Equity Work



Our Strength: Project Leadership and Content Expertise to Drive Systems Change

Adequacy of Resources to Carry Out Proposed Activities

WestEd will lead the WEEAC and will benefit from the support of two subcontracting partners: PREL and Attendance Works. WestEd and our partners have extensive organizational resources to carry out the proposed activities, including substantive content expertise, strong project management experience, ability to operate and leverage federally funded TA centers, and strong methods for delivering TA virtually.

Use of Efficient Strategies, Technology, and Non-Project Resources

High-Quality Project Management: Achieving Milestones and Objectives.

Daily business operations—including contract administration and compliance, data processing, accounting, and legal functions—are handled through WestEd’s Contracts and Finance departments. Practices are governed by standard accounting principles, Rules for the Conduct of Business, rules for government contracts, and specific contractual agreements. Accounting, billing, and reporting procedures consistently meet government reporting requirements (e.g., FAR, EDAR, EDGAR). Our breadth of funding sources and depth of corporate experience provide a stable funding base and organizational structure for supporting the WEEAC. Further, WestEd has a full communication infrastructure with graphic design and editorial staff who produce engaging, well-written, thoughtfully organized, and visually appealing resources that are designed with end users in mind. Likewise, specialists in online

learning and engagement ensure that technology services are effective and comply with universal design principles.

Project Management. WestEd’s approach to project management fully embeds project management staff and philosophies in the daily operations of large-scale projects. Initial plans and timelines are designed using project management software that allows for real-time tracking of progress toward milestones and against projections. By establishing specific interim milestone deadlines and identifying the steps required to meet these milestones, it is possible to detect problems and find solutions quickly, avoid drift, and efficiently guide projects to on-time completion. Linking project goals with staff assignments ensures efficient procedures and motivates staff by highlighting their contributions to the outcomes. Our approach includes dedicated staff to oversee project management tasks and the full incorporation of project management staff in project implementation tasks.

Fiscal Management. WestEd’s accounting system provides the necessary functionality for this cooperative agreement award. Procedures are in place for mid-month and month-end reporting, enabling project managers to review and monitor costs against budgets in a timely manner. Costpoint produces and electronically distributes various project financial reports to project directors. WestEd uses the G5 system to submit grant expenses and draw down funds and has an electronic timesheet system that can be accessed via a secure intranet that produces a weekly labor report for project directors.

Use of Technology for Needs Sensing, TA Requests, and Usefulness of Services. The WEEAC will use several tools for needs-sensing, responding to TA requests, and driving continuous improvement for the center. As part of its Communications Plan, the WEEAC will create a website, which will be the primary portal for dissemination of universal TA resources

(e.g., materials and events), access to relevant events and information from other federal TA centers, and information about TA services. It will also include functionalities for the intake of TA requests. The WEEAC will use data collection tools, such as Google Forms or Survey Monkey to collect just-in-time data about the usefulness of our TA services to support continuous improvement, Salesforce for tracking TA requests, and multiple tools for delivering virtual TA.

Tracking Technical Assistance Requests. All TA requests and activities are entered into WestEd’s established request/response management system (Salesforce). When a request is received by the WEEAC (in person, by phone, or online), a staff member will review the details provided. Then, using relevant data, client information, and other documentation, results of the request will be captured in an online database available for all staff and leadership to review. Depending on the depth and length of time and effort needed to address the TA request, a targeted or intensive TA plan will be developed in collaboration with the LEA to outline project goals, approach, and deliverables, including expectations for the WEEAC and the requester. WestEd will use a well-established, web-based plan management tool to document and monitor the progress of each request. Staff will update the progress of each activity and request or plan, ensuring the system is kept up to date. We designed a flexible staffing model that can expand as TA requests increase, as they have been steadily doing since 2017.

Innovative Web-Based Strategies to Deliver Virtual Technical Assistance. Since March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the country, teams across WestEd’s various content areas have shifted delivery of TA to respond to our clients’ needs and circumstances. The use of online platforms has long been part of WestEd’s TA toolbox but has now taken center stage. WestEd has a Digital Learning Playbook that guides all online learning with a framework,

learning tools, and collection of successful design and learning strategies. In addition to continuing to use Zoom as our main online webinar and meeting tool, we use tools such as Google, Padlet, Jamboard, Mentimeter, and Kahoot! to offer polls, collect feedback in real time, and create opportunities for participants to engage with each other in meaningful ways. The opportunities for impromptu feedback allow facilitators to be agile, adjusting their sessions to respond quickly to the needs of the participants. As an example of virtual TA delivery, WestEd's [*Safe & Supportive Learning Environments Essentials*](#) are designed to be small, essential pieces of the larger body of work around trauma-informed practices, restorative practices, culturally responsive practices, and SEL, centered in equity. We offer four options for modes of delivery, including virtual professional learning communities, often as Communities of Practice (CoPs), to schools and districts, with ongoing virtual support to district instructional coaches or other lead staff/administrators; and WestEd provides virtual professional learning to schools/districts and administrators via digital course enrollment.

Reasonableness of Proposed Costs

WestEd's proposed cost is reasonable in relationship to the scope and size of service to the region and the quantity and quality of TA services. The Budget Narrative demonstrates that costs are reasonable in relation to anticipated results and benefits. Due to WestEd's, PREL's, and Attendance Works' locations in the region, we can convene people in person to maximize low-cost meeting options. Travel is also budgeted as required for meetings with LEAs based on the intensity of the TA required; most of the TA will be delivered virtually as described in the Use of Technology for Needs Sensing, TA Requests, and Usefulness of Services section, as we have developed engaging methodologies for online convenings, professional learning, and consultative meetings. As the work plan changes based on needs, evaluation results, and shifts in

priorities, WestEd will reassess its budget allocations to ensure efficiency and alignment within the scope of work.

Scope and Size. Given the size of the region, the numbers of students to be served, and the number of challenges to be addressed as detailed in earlier sections of the proposal, the WEEAC has adequately scoped the project work to the budgeted allocation and will leverage additional federal resources to ensure the maximum TA to public schools in the region.

Quantity and Quality. The WEEAC proposes to address five short-term outcomes, four mid-term outcomes, and two long-term outcomes and is prepared to respond to scores of TA requests each year. With a 1.0 FTE Director; a deputy director at .35 FTE; TA Facilitators at .25 FTE each; a dedicated project coordinator at .50 FTE and a dedicated financial analyst at .03 FTE, both supporting the Director in the effective and efficient planning, implementing, tracking, and evaluation of our work; and over 50 SMEs who are on call to serve up to .20 FTE of time in providing expertise and technical assistance, the WEEAC has prepared a staffing model that ensures the flexibility to meet the rising demand, as services continue to increase since 2017, when the EACs were reorganized. We expect continued growth in requests for TA services. In Year 1, the WEEAC proposes to immediately begin one universal project and five intensive projects, each with scale-up potential, based on current regional needs sensing. With TA liaisons able to draw from an SME Collective of over 50 staff who are ready to engage with LEAs for intensive or targeted TA and with our wide network of Advisory Council members who can provide additional support and connections to local, community-based supports, we believe we are well positioned to address the equity needs of the WEEAC region.