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Identifying and Addressing Priority Education Needs

Northeast and Islands
Regional Advisory Committee

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the activities and results of the Northeast and Islands Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), authorized under the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA) (Pub. L. 107-279; 20 U.S.C. § 9605). The 10 RACs were established to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Education (Secretary) regarding the educational needs of one of the ten regions served by the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) for input regarding technical assistance activities described in Section 203 of the ETAA and how those needs would be most effectively addressed. The Secretary sought recommendations for nominations to serve on the RAC from the Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, and education stakeholders within each region and appointed members to the RAC in August 2023. The activities discussed in this report took place from September to November 2023.

Members reviewed a regional profile comprised of educational statistics and other relevant data to inform their individual assessments of the challenges and educational needs in the region. The RAC additionally sought input from Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, REL Governing Boards, and other education stakeholders through processes including online surveys, focus groups, memos from public forums, surveys on technical assistance recommendations from the RAC, and public comment solicitations. The goal of these processes was to solicit the views and needs of schools (including public charter schools), educators, parents, teachers, administrators, local education agencies (LEAs), librarians, businesses, state education agencies (SEAs), and other customers within the region regarding the need for the activities described in 20 U.S.C. sections 9564 and 9602 and how those needs would be most effectively addressed. In total, the RAC convened three focus groups, conducted two surveys, received 55 survey responses, and received 74 public comments, further described in the Data Collection section of this report.

The Northeast and Islands RAC held three virtual meetings to discuss and conduct its needs assessment. During the first meeting, held September 8, 2023, the RAC reviewed educational data and public comments, deliberated, and made recommendations to address the needs of the region. During the second meeting, held October 12, 2023, the RAC reviewed additional data, deliberated on the educational needs of their region, and voted on the top five recommended priorities to be included in a final needs assessment report. A final meeting was held November 16, 2023, to review the subcommittees' written recommendations and vote on the final needs assessment report for submission to the Secretary.

The five priorities identified by committee members and discussed in further detail in this report are:

- **Priority 1:** Mental health and supports for students and educators
- **Priority 2:** Addressing educator shortages and diversifying the profession at all levels
- **Priority 3:** Improving literacy (generally and across content areas and for specific student groups)
- **Priority 4:** Authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships

➤ **Priority 5: High-quality early childhood education**

These priorities largely agree with prevalent national trends over the last five years. Several members of the Northeast and Islands RAC commented throughout the process on how the interdependencies of the priorities made it difficult to rank them as they all are important. The Northeast and Islands RAC identified mental health supports for students and educators as the first priority given the current mental health crisis and relationships between well-being, quality instruction, and meaningful student learning. Along these lines, the RAC also noted how mental health issues have exacerbated educator shortages. The RAC also noted that addressing educator shortages required diversifying the profession at all levels to better reflect current demographics. Given public comments and advocacy within the Northeast and Islands RAC, improving literacy emerged as the third priority, with a focus on leveraging the science of literacy instruction to develop literacy across all content areas for specific student groups (e.g., students with disabilities). Authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships were identified as the fourth priority. Extant research and research conducted by the Northeast and Islands RAC indicated that parents and families want to be more involved and should be key collaborators in improving the education system. The Northeast and Islands RAC identified high-quality early childhood education as the fifth priority. Early childhood education is foundational and crucial for educational attainment and life outcomes, particularly for historically marginalized groups. Establishing effective, high-quality early childhood education for all provides the academic and well-being foundation on which the other priorities rest.

The list below summarizes some of the technical assistance (TA) recommendations identified by the Northeast and Islands RAC:

- Disseminate information and resources to state education agencies (SEAs), regional education agencies (REAs), local education agencies (LEAs), and schools on implementing comprehensive systems for school counseling that are trauma-informed, such as the American School Counselors Association's SCA model.
- Provide resources, tools, and training on how SEAs, LEAs, and schools can effectively launch and maintain Grow Your Own (GYO) programs to build educator pipelines.
- Provide a clearinghouse of evidence-based literacy instructional models and practices as well as accompanying high-quality tools and materials for use by SEAs, REAs, LEAs and schools, along with a template for strategies to transition to and implement said models.
- Provide a clearinghouse of two-way, culturally relevant communication strategies and tools between schools/educators and parents/families to support authentic engagement and partnerships.
- Provide technical assistance regarding data collection and use to inform the design of early childhood education systems, evaluation systems, educator training programs, and parent/family outreach.

Beyond identifying priority areas and recommendations, the Northeast and Islands RAC also had top-level recommendations for the effective and responsive implementation of technical assistance for SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools. These include the necessity of Comprehensive Center staff having deep

content expertise, the need for Comprehensive Centers to conduct more nuanced and local needs assessments, flexible processes, and structures to be responsive to local needs as they arise and implementing mechanisms to facilitate collaboration across RELs and Comprehensive Centers.

Introduction

The Secretary of Education (Secretary) established ten Regional Advisory Committees (RACs), authorized by the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA) (20 U.S.C. sections 9601 et. seq.) and governed by the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (Public Law 92-463). The purpose of the RACs is to collect information on the education needs of each region and how those needs may be addressed through technical assistance activities provided by the Comprehensive Centers Program described in section 203 of the ETAA and other Department technical assistance activities.

RAC members are appointed by the Secretary based on recommendations from Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, and education stakeholders within each region. Northeast and Islands RAC membership is comprised of both Special Government Employees (SGEs) and representatives of organizations or recognizable groups of persons including state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), including rural and urban LEAs, institutions of higher education, parents, practicing educators, including classroom teachers, principals, other school administrators, researchers, and individuals from the business community. For a complete list of Northeast and Islands RAC members, please see Appendix B.

Each RAC sought input on regional educational needs from Chief Executive Officers of States, Chief State School Officers, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Governing Boards, and other education stakeholders in the region and the public. The Northeast and Islands RAC conducted outreach activities such as public comments, surveys, and focus groups to obtain input from various constituencies on regional needs and how to address those needs, used statistical data from the Northeast and Islands Regional Profile (Appendix C), and deliberated during public meetings on September 8 and October 12, 2023. The RAC established five subcommittees to draft a report summarizing the results of the needs assessment and their recommendations. A final public meeting was held on November 16, 2023, to review the subcommittee's recommendations and vote to submit the final educational needs assessment report to the Secretary.

This report is based on the assessment of educational needs within the Northeast and Islands region, which includes the following states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the Virgin Islands. The analysis and recommendations herein represent the findings of this assessment and the advice of the Northeast and Islands RAC to the Secretary.

Data Collection

The Northeast and Islands Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) began with profiles of the states and territories included in the region prepared by the support organization, Manhattan Strategy Group (MSG). RAC members conducted original data collection via surveys, focus group interviews, submitted additional relevant data sources to the liaison, reviewed public comments, and incorporated Chief State School Officer submissions.

Methods and Outreach

RAC members disseminated information about public comments to their networks, used supplemental data sources, and conducted several data collection activities to inform priority areas and technical assistance. These included:

- Surveys of RAC members on priority needs and TA recommendations,
- Focus group interviews with educators on addressing educator shortages,
- Focus group interviews with parents on priority areas,
- Survey on how to improve family engagement,
- Memo on rural education in New York,
- Comments from Chief State School Officers (CSSOs) that serve Northeast and Islands jurisdictions, and
- Regional Profiles developed by MSG.

Appendix D summarizes each data source or data collection event, who participated, objectives, and outreach.

Regional Education Leadership

Four regional education leaders provided comments through national collection from the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CSSO): one from Massachusetts, one from New York, and two from Puerto Rico. Their comments included the following:

- Have the comprehensive center skilled staff with deep content expertise create concrete tools and resources for SEAs to utilize with students, families, educators, schools, and districts.
- Collaborate with individual SEAs to identify current needs rather than establishing those in advance is essential, as specifics about priorities might change based on legislation, policies, data, or research results. In addition, create a structure, process, or funding set-aside to add or modify the initial scope of work, in response to unanticipated, time-sensitive priorities that arise.
- Facilitate collaboration across RELs and comprehensive centers, and the states and territories they serve, to address common challenges and interests. States often operate in silos to solve similar problems and comprehensive centers could play a groundbreaking role in creating efficiencies and economies of scale for SEAs to avoid duplicating efforts and resources, including money.

Public Comments

From the week of September 4, 2023, through October 9, 2023, the Northeast and Islands RAC received 74 public comments. Seventy-one of the public comments were in English, and three were in Spanish. Beyond engaging all stakeholders in improving public education, Puerto Rico's involvement in this region made it crucial to collect input from Spanish speakers and a Spanish version of the public comment website was added through input by the Northeast and Islands RAC. See Appendix D for more information on the public comments by stakeholder group. The Northeast and Islands RAC identified three prominent themes in the public comments:

- Improving instruction and student learning, particularly regarding COVID learning loss, emerged as a key priority area. Commentors pointed to more evidence-based instruction, especially in literacy, as a strategy to address learning loss.
- Improving instruction for students with disabilities was a second priority area that was prominent. Commentors reported that this priority area could be addressed through hiring more support staff and providing them with training to meet the diverse needs of students.
- Supporting student and educator well-being emerged as another priority area, particularly in response to heightened levels of depression and anxiety for all in the school community. Commentors did not consistently report on TA recommendations for this priority area.

Summary of Findings

Northeast and Islands RAC members synthesized information from various RAC members, their constituencies, and public comments (see Appendix D) to determine the highest-priority educational need areas within the Northeast and Islands region and recommend strategies to address the needs.

The priority needs, voted on by committee members during a public meeting on October 12, 2023, presented below in rank order, are:

- **Priority 1:** Mental health and supports for students and educators
- **Priority 2:** Addressing educator shortages and diversifying the profession at all levels
- **Priority 3:** Improving literacy (generally and across content areas and for specific student groups)
- **Priority 4:** Authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships
- **Priority 5:** High-quality early childhood education

This report also includes an Emergent Priorities section that follows Priority 5. This section is based on needs that emerged through needs sensing activities, RAC meetings, and the writing of this report.

Recommendations

Priority 1: Mental Health & Supports for Students and Educators

Outcomes/Findings

An urgency to address mental health has emerged post-pandemic based on the impact of isolation, economic insecurity, family instability, and the exacerbation of prior mental health challenges. Mental health supports for students, families, and educators are significantly lacking in many regions and the field is in desperate need of additional support to confront this crisis.

Our nation, especially students, families, and educators from across the country, is amid a mental health crisis. The seeds of this unprecedented challenge were sown long ago but took root firmly during the pandemic. As we have returned to full-time school and a new normal, educators, mental health workers and public health agencies have been vocal in expressing their unanimous concern about the challenges being created for educators to deliver a meaningful and effective experience for their students and for students to access this experience while confronting the challenges of poor mental health. This issue is a priority for the educators convened to provide recommendations for this report.

In the realm of K-12 education, the interplay between the psychological well-being of educators and students functions as the cornerstone that molds academic accomplishments, fosters constructive classroom dynamics, and ultimately promotes favorable student outcomes. The positive interaction and individual care for the psychological well-being of teachers and students is fundamental in achieving an enriched learning experience. Scholarly work underscores the contagious nature of teacher stress, indicating that the mental and emotional equilibrium of teachers can exert a profound influence on the well-being of their students. The mental health of students is a multifaceted concern that extends beyond academic performance, encompassing emotional resilience, social well-being, and adaptive coping mechanisms. As educational institutions strive to nurture holistic development, an understanding of the nuanced challenges faced by students is of utmost importance. Factors such as academic pressure, social dynamics, and the transition to adulthood can significantly impact the mental health landscape of students, needing a comprehensive and empathic approach.

In accordance with the guidance provided by the Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Emergency Physicians, and emergency nurses, an annual assessment reveals that a substantial number, approximately half a million children grappling with mental health and behavioral conditions, undergo evaluation in emergency departments for psychiatric emergencies. Notably, these figures have increased dramatically over the past decade (Bridge et al., 2018). Moreover, this research reported on a concerning escalation in the annual percentage of emergency department visits related to suicide ideation (SI) and suicide attempts (SAs). This metric nearly doubled from 0.66% in 2008 to 1.82% in 2015, with a consistent average annual increase of 0.16 percentage points (95% CI, 0.15-0.17). Over the study period, a staggering 115,856 encounters for suicide ideation and attempts were identified in emergency departments across 31 children's hospitals, with a notable majority, nearly two-thirds, involving girls. The surge in these encounters spans all age groups but is particularly pronounced among teenagers aged 15-17, closely followed by the age bracket of 12-14. Furthermore, there is evidence that

depression, anxiety, impulsive behavior, and attempted suicides increased during the pandemic (Office of the Surgeon General, 2021).

Simultaneously, the professional landscape of education faced a seismic shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic, placing teachers in the crucible of unprecedented stress. This stress, intricately linked to diminished mental health, coping challenges, and teaching efficacy, became a pervasive concern (Steiner & Woo, 2021). However, amidst the adversity, a noteworthy resilience emerged among teachers, positively correlating with enhanced coping mechanisms and teaching effectiveness.

Northeast and Islands RAC members ranked student and educator mental health supports among the highest priorities for the new comprehensive center competition. This need goes beyond the data cited above; the aftermath of back-to-back Category 5 hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) has left a profound impact on the mental and emotional well-being of its residents, impacting educators and students alike. Furthermore, based on forums in the nine rural regions of New York held in the summer and fall of 2023, addressing mental health challenges emerged as the second most pressing priority, after additional funding, which presented barriers to improving education for students.

Priority Needs

In the pursuit of long-term mental and emotional well-being, there is a shift in focus from mere survival to morale building. It is recognized that sustaining a school community requires more than just coping; it requires a commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. Fostering this sense of belonging applies to students and educators. The aim is to prevent burnout and feelings of isolation, thereby creating an environment where all in the school community can thrive despite the challenges they have faced.

Additionally, to avert the looming specter of teacher burnout and turnover, it is inherently necessary to prioritize and enhance teachers' wellness. Doing so will mitigate the potential detrimental ripple effects on the educational landscape. Recognizing the relationship between teacher well-being, coping capacities, and effective teaching, and the needs of their students regarding mental health, it becomes imperative to address and fortify the support structures for educators and students. The consequences of neglecting this imperative are far-reaching, with potential adverse impacts on teachers, students, and the entire education system.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing the emotional wounds inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent hurricanes in the Caribbean, current practicing school counselors in the USVI and throughout the U.S. are advocating for a comprehensive approach to trauma counseling, grounded in the principles of the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) national model. This model, designed for the development, delivery, and evaluation of school counseling programs, serves as a foundation for guiding counselors in providing effective, trauma-informed support to students and the school community.

At the same time, though, there is a dearth of school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and mental health professionals who can support building collaborative networks that provide holistic support to the community. It is imperative there are tools and systems in place to identify individuals with the right disposition for counseling roles. Establishing these processes can ensure the right individuals are in place to provide support.

Technical Assistance Recommendations

By supporting the ASCA national model, establishing counseling laboratories, and fostering partnerships, Comprehensive Centers can help school systems create a strong support system that not only helps school communities recover from trauma, but also empowers them to rebuild and thrive in the face of adversity.

1. Disseminate information and resources to SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools on implementing comprehensive systems for school counseling, such as the ASCA model.
2. Provide resources and training on how to incorporate social-emotional learning into multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) for students.
 - Schools that have MTSS in place are better equipped to meet the needs of all students, which in turn also supports educators' mental health.
 - For example, see the SEL Capacity Building Series from REL Northwest as a model.
3. Comprehensive Centers can disseminate resources on establishing counseling clinical laboratories that work with SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools to provide mental health support for students and educators.
 - For example, in response to the crucial need for mental health services, there is a call to establish in-house counseling clinical laboratories within the Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) in the USVI.
 - These laboratories can also serve as training grounds for aspiring counselors and mental health professionals, offering hands-on experience in dealing with trauma while also building professional pipelines.
4. Training in strategies and tools to improve mental health for educators and students.
 - These could be quick reference guides or simple practices for individuals. It can delineate different resources or tools that support students and educators.
5. Repositories of information to help students and educators access mental health services in crucial moments (e.g., information on how to access hotlines, information on mental health apps).

Additional References for Further Consideration

The following information was not compiled during the data collection period, nor was it discussed during Meeting 2; however, the Northeast and Islands RAC presents this information to further support its justification as to why this is a priority for the region.

According to Farley & Chamberlain (2021), teacher's stress resulted in prolonged health issues, poor work performance, and a cumulative impact on daily teacher performance.

Students and educators are best served when there are responsive systems in place that can identify mental health needs and provide resources to meet these needs (CASEL, 2021).

Priority 2: Addressing Educator Shortages and Diversifying the Profession at All Levels

Outcomes/Findings

It should come as no surprise that the field of education is facing shortages of qualified and willing staff in all roles. In addition, schools are struggling to diversify the educator workforce, compounding the issue. Increasingly, research is finding that students of all races experience greater levels of academic success and are better prepared to enter an increasingly diverse world when they have diverse educators (New England Secondary School Consortium, 2020).

Addressing the diversity and the shortages in the educator workforce of the Northeast and Islands region is exacerbated by the mental health concerns, pay disparity, geography, and often, ruralness of this region. In addition, data highlights the disparity between the demographics of the student population as compared to the education staff demographics. For instance, in Massachusetts about 45.6% of students are students of color, while 7.8% are educators of color (Volcy, 2023). In a series of forums in rural New York, a common theme that emerged was a lack of affordable housing. Affordable housing is not as available in rural areas, which adds more burden to rural educators. Multi-family units are not as available in rural areas for several reasons, which adds to the financial burdens placed on rural educators.

Diverse representation helps **all** students academically.

Priority Needs

We need teachers of all races, religious groups, cultures, gender identities, physical abilities, and other marginalized groups in our schools, LEADING our schools. Students need to feel they are represented in education and that the career is a vital and valuable one so we can continue to serve all Americans equitably.

To support the recruitment, hiring, and development of a more diverse educator workforce requires the establishment of educator pipelines. These pipelines can include teacher apprenticeship programs, Grow-Your-Own (GYO) programs for teachers, and more delineated leadership tracks for current educators. Effectively building educator pipelines, though, depends on increasing interest in the education profession through better pay and improved working and living conditions.

In addition, it can be challenging to get real-time, comprehensive shortage data. A real need for this region would be support in creating, executing, and analyzing shortage and demographic data of the education workforce. If this data is more readily available, SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools can better direct resources for recruitment, hiring, and retaining educators.

Technical Assistance Recommendations

Influenced by the New England Secondary Schools Consortium (2020), extant research, and other data sources analyzed by the Northeast and Islands RAC, the following TA recommendations are proposed to address educator shortages and diversify the educator workforce:

1. Provide resources, tools, and training on how SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools can effectively launch and maintain GYO programs.

- GYO programs can cultivate interest in the education profession and recruit interested high school students, community members, or paraprofessionals. GYOs can also develop current teachers into educational leaders. These programs can provide the resources and mentorship to support alternative certification and career advancement.
- 2. Provide resources, tools, training, and models of effective teacher apprenticeship programs.
- 3. Provide resources, tools, and training on how school systems can implement more equitable recruitment and hiring practices through the use of local data.
 - Comprehensive Centers can consider how to address recruitment and hiring practices and procedures through data analysis. Comprehensive Centers can help school systems consider how they are implementing policies that promote inclusion, retention, and diversification.
 - Seminars and a resource clearinghouse on creating pipelines to support and recruit diverse educators would be helpful technical assistance to advance these efforts.
- 4. Provide resources, tools, and training on how to create welcoming school environments that sustain and support all educators.
 - Educator retention extends far beyond hiring and paying teachers. Education leaders can support educator retention by understanding how to create school cultures that foster belonging and inclusivity.
- 5. Provide resources and effective strategies on how school systems can improve pay and working conditions for educators, including affordable housing in rural and urban areas.

Additional References for Further Consideration

The following information was not compiled during the data collection period, nor was it discussed during Meeting 2; however, the Northeast and Islands RAC presents this information to further support its justification as to why this is a priority for the region.

For instance, Black students with at least one Black teacher in grades K-3 are 13% more likely to graduate and 19% more likely to enroll in college than their same-race same-school peers (Lindsay & Hart, 2017).

“All students benefit from the talents of teachers from a variety of different backgrounds, races, and ethnic groups who have high expectations of them, treat them humanely and equitably, are culturally responsive, and are willing and able to view students and families as assets. Additionally, students of color benefit from having teachers from their own racial and ethnic group who can serve as successful role models, have the potential to possess a greater knowledge of their heritage and culture, and who tend to have higher academic expectations of them.” (Warner & Duncan, 2019).

White teachers can also benefit from working with teachers of color as they can provide perspectives on how to improve culturally responsive and sustaining education (CRSE) practices. CRSE views diversity, culture, and language as assets and sources of knowledge. As such, CRSE aims to build welcoming and affirming environments for all students through high expectations, rigorous instruction, inclusive curricula and assessments, and ongoing professional learning for educators (New York State Department of Education, 2019).

Priority 3: Supporting Evidence-Informed Literacy Instruction

Outcomes/Findings

Fostering students' literacy is one of the most important parts of the mission of public education. Literacy—the broad range of skills and knowledge needed to communicate effectively in today's world across content areas and media types and settings—is foundational for academic learning and is an essential skill in today's world. This includes nurturing students' interests, acquisition of new knowledge, and the expression of ideas to meet the literacy demands of the 21st century. Literacy begins with knowing how to read.

The National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) provides a nationwide measure of student achievement in, among other subjects, reading. State NAEP and Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) results in the region point to a need to strengthen reading and literacy instruction. (Note: The U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico do not have NAEP reading data.)

- Fourth grade reading scores declined between 2019 to 2022 in all states and territories in the region, except for New Hampshire and Rhode Island, which had no significant change.
 - Fourth-grade reading scores declined for most student groups when disaggregated by race and ethnicity, except for students who identify as Asian-American.
 - In Maine, one of the region's largely rural states, 40% of 4th graders and 34% of 8th graders scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading.
 - In Connecticut, which has a mix of urban and suburban areas, 36% of 4th graders and 28% of 8th graders scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading.
- Similarly, 8th grade reading scores declined between 2019 to 2022 in all states and territories in the region, except for New York, which had no significant change.
- Two districts in the region are part of the NAEP TUDA group.
 - In New York City, 46% of 4th graders and 37% of 8th graders scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading. When disaggregated by students' race and ethnicity, 59% of Black 4th graders and 49% of Black 8th graders in New York City scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading.
 - In Boston, 46% of 4th graders and 39% of 8th graders scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading. When disaggregated by students' race and ethnicity, 56% of Black 4th graders and 49% of Black 8th graders in Boston scored below the NAEP Basic level in reading.

In Puerto Rico, results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provide insights into the territory's needs. Examining the reading performance of Puerto Rico's 15-year-old students on the 2012 PISA exam, researchers found that Puerto Rico's average score was below that of most education systems, including the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil (Chan, et al., 2014).

RAC data collection, public comments, and CSSO data confirmed the need for technical assistance in reading and literacy. Reading and literacy featured in the comments of CSSO respondents from New York and Puerto Rico. A public commenter from the *Reading League* organization wrote, "While there are many factors that contribute to students' literacy outcomes (e.g., SES, health, community

resources), ensuring instruction and materials across grade levels and tiers of instruction are research-based is something that schools can and must do to support positive literacy outcomes for students.”

Themes from the public comments reflected the following needs:

- Implementing high-quality, evidence-based curricular materials;
- Coherence, with respect to implementation supports, professional learning, coaching, professional learning communities (PLCs), etc.;
- Frameworks and standards for instruction that are evidence-based;
- Tools to support gradual improvement;
- Supports for students and teachers, in the form of reading/literacy specialists and literacy coaches, respectively, and students need direct intervention from literacy specialists; and
- Enhancement of higher education preparation both for preservice teachers that incorporates content knowledge (e.g., the Science of Reading) and how to apply evidence-based literacy practices in classrooms as well as for school leaders, in the leadership practices that foster literacy attainment.

In sum, the quantitative and qualitative data clearly show the need for technical assistance in the area of reading, writing, and literacy.

Priority Needs

The data presented above are clear: with approximately one-quarter to one-half of students in Grades 4 and 8 in the region not reading at the NAEP Basic level, reading and literacy instruction must be a priority. There are needs for biliteracy support as well, particularly in Puerto Rico and states with large numbers of English learners.

A strong foundation in reading is critical for future achievement in all content areas. Intersections with other regional priorities in our region include parent and family engagement, early childhood education, and educator development. Moreover, there is overwhelming evidence that the more students fall behind, the harder it is to catch up. Educators and policymakers know and have known what to do, but struggle with *how* to do it. The application of research by cognitive scientists about how people learn to read still struggles to gain traction in classrooms, schools, and districts. The Northeast and Islands region needs technical assistance in implementing evidence-based practices in reading and literacy instruction; the reading research needs to be paired with the empirical evidence on culturally responsive and sustaining practices and the literature on scaling.

The priorities identified within “supporting evidence-informed literacy instruction” include:

- Enacting effective change management strategies for various stakeholder groups within SEAs and LEAs (e.g., districts/district staff, boards, unions, families, school leaders, teachers, other educators, community-based organizations, partner organizations) to:
 - Move toward evidence-informed instructional practices, high-quality instructional materials, and aligned assessments;

- Select and implement high-quality instruction materials/curricular materials aligned with the evidence on reading and literacy acquisition;
- Select and implement formative assessments, benchmark/screener assessments, gated assessments, and progress monitoring;
- Use various assessment data to inform policy and instruction; and
- Use core instruction and tiered instruction, including intensive intervention.
- Focusing on teacher development including:
 - Preservice teacher education consistent with the Science of Reading
 - Professional learning around content knowledge; pedagogical practices; leadership practices; etc. via traditional PL sessions/workshops, job-embedded coaching, etc.
- Providing leadership education and professional learning

Technical Assistance Recommendations

To support SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools in adopting and implementing high-quality, evidence-informed literacy instruction for all students, the RAC recommends the comprehensive centers undertake the following technical assistance and capacity-building activities:

1. Provide a clearinghouse of evidence-based literacy instructional models and practices, as well as accompanying high-quality tools and materials for use by SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools and templates for strategies to transition to and implement said models.
2. Ensure that available instruction models and materials allow for implementation across grade levels and tiers of instruction, as well as procedures for data collection to demonstrate student progress.
3. Offer technical assistance to SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools regarding:
 - Implementation supports, the hiring and deployment of literacy coaches, the establishment of professional learning communities, and the coherence of all related activities
 - Provide supports for students and teachers in the form of reading/literacy specialists and coaches
 - Share methods and models by which schools can reorganize themselves to facilitate faithful implementation of evidence-based early literacy strategies
 - Offer support for schools and instructional teams as to how to utilize assessment data
4. Work with institutions of higher education and others involved in the preparation of pre-service educators to ensure the establishment of practices that train and inform future teachers on strategies for delivering evidence-based literacy instruction.
5. Offer SEAs, REAs, and large urban LEAs models for incentivizing the use of evidence-based literacy instructional practices in their schools and throughout their jurisdictions.
6. Coach education leaders in SEAs, REAs, and LEAs on effective strategies for:
 - Change management throughout the life cycle of literacy policy shifts and implementation,
 - Supporting the most vulnerable students' literacy learning, and
 - Engaging authentically with parents around their children's literacy learning.

Additional References for Further Consideration

The following information was not compiled during the data collection period, nor was it discussed during Meeting 2; however, the Northeast and Islands RAC presents this information to further support its justification as to why this is a priority for the region.

Two decades ago, reading scholar Torgeson wrote, “If children fall seriously behind in the growth of critical early reading skills, they have fewer opportunities to practice reading...these lost practice opportunities make it extremely difficult for children who remain poor readers during the first three years of elementary school to ever acquire average levels of reading fluency” (2004).

Priority 4: Authentic Parent and Family Engagement and Partnerships

Outcomes/Findings

Authentic parent/caregiver/family engagement and partnership ranks as a top priority in the Northeast and Islands RAC. To engage family, educators, and community partners in exploring this priority, the Northeast and Islands RAC conducted parent/caregiver, educator, and community partner surveys (55 respondents), and a parent focus group interview (8 parent participants). See Appendix D for more information. Results from these surveys and focus group, as well as public comments, reveal that education priorities for children of this region align with the priorities identified by the RAC.

Parents in the focus group discussed the importance of authentic parent and family engagement for student success. For example, a parent leader from New York highlighted the importance of parents being involved in the school system and being equipped to support their children's learning at home. Parents and caregivers also offered their concerns for the mental well-being of students and educators, educator shortages, the need for a more diverse education staff, improvement of literacy and access to high-quality early education. Findings reveal they often prioritize these areas above their desire for authentic engagement of parents/caregivers as partners in their children's education, an indication of the willingness and commitment to focus on what is best and needed for their children to be successful learners.

Mental health supports and addressing educator shortages were the two top priorities the focus group of eight diverse parents identified. Educator shortages impacting learning opportunities for students with disabilities was a theme that cut through the focus group, such as how shortages make it harder for staff to properly address IEPs or work with students who are neurodiverse, including those with ADHD. More diverse representation in teachers and in curricular themes was a second prominent need that parents/caregivers thought the Comprehensive Centers should address. Parents also emphasized the importance of early childhood education in establishing a baseline of equitable educational opportunities. In sum, the focus group on parent and family engagement and partnerships touched upon all the key priorities identified by the Northeast and Islands RAC.

Of the parents who took the survey (N=15/16/17, depending on the item):

- 41% met every few months with their children's teacher(s);
- 50% feel that school prepares students for the next academic year to a moderate or great extent;

- 62.5% feel to a moderate or great extent that their children belong in school;
- 56.25% feel to a moderate or great extent that their child fits in given their cultural background and that teaching styles work well for their child’s learning style;
- 73.33% agreed or strongly agreed that administrators created a school environment that helps children learn;
- 73.33% agreed or strongly agreed that school staff respected children at school;
- 60% agreed or strongly agreed that their child enjoys going to school, and that the school values the diversity of children’s backgrounds;
- 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed that staff diversity reflected the diversity of children at the school;
- 46.67% said the most prevalent barrier to becoming involved in their child’s school was parents/caregivers busy schedule;
- 66.67% reported that not feeling a sense of belonging was not a problem or a small problem to involvement; and
- 60% reported that their student’s school providing information about involvement or engagement is not a problem or a small problem (positive finding).

Priority Needs

Survey findings from RAC data collection reveal the value and need for additional opportunities for parent/caregiver engagement and community partnership and to increase diversity amongst educators and curricula to create an inclusive learning environment and greater sense of belonging for students. For instance, over half of the 17 respondents (53%) meet with their children’s teacher(s) two or fewer times a year. The survey data shared also highlights what schools in this region are doing well and recommendations for what they could do to improve authentic parent/caregiver engagement and family and community partnership. “When parent leaders see opportunity gaps, they know the consequences for their children and take action, forming networks and joining forces with other groups. Using their own stories, backed by data, and told in their authentic voices they offer ideas that lead to more equitable policies and practices” (Annenberg Institute, 2016).

Technical Assistance Recommendations

In an effort to support SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools in adopting and implementing the core practice of authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships, the Northeast and Islands RAC recommends the comprehensive centers undertake the following technical assistance and capacity-building activities:

First and foremost, the Northeast and Islands RAC recommends that comprehensive centers work with LEAs and REAs to support partnerships with families and communities because SEAs are often at a distance from the communities they serve.

In addition, we recommend:

1. A clearinghouse of two-way, culturally relevant communication strategies and tools between schools/educators and parents that school systems can easily put in place that include:

- Information on community partners, resources, and sources of support so that educators/schools can network effectively;
 - Multilingual resources that include tools for family members to support their students at home in various subjects; and
 - Structures for engaging with and developing parent leaders within districts and regions.
2. Recommendations and training for how LEAs can guide schools in effectively supporting parents as students transition between grade levels/schools.
 3. The development and dissemination of training and resources that support the well-being of students, family, and educators.
 4. Resources for educators and families specifically around the learning development of students with disabilities and multilingual learners.
 5. Focused technical assistance for SEAs, REAs, and LEAs to develop community-centered schools that can add additional programming (e.g., after school programs, home visits, and parent and youth leadership) to support students academically and emotionally.
 6. Increase technology availability for students and families by partnering with local internet and computer companies within the LEA's area to provide free equipment and internet access to those most marginalized in the school district.
 7. A series of virtual trainings/convenings on authentic family engagement and partnerships that bring together all stakeholders, such as parents/caregivers, students, educators, and community partners. These can be themed, focusing, for example, on creating welcoming environments for all students and families in PreK-12 settings.

Additional References for Further Consideration

The following information was not compiled during the data collection period, nor was it discussed during Meeting 2; however, the Northeast and Islands RAC presents this information to further support its justification as to why this is a priority for the region.

One definition of family engagement is as a “full, equal, and equitable partnership among families and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career,” with “families” representing any adult caretakers who have responsibility for the well-being of a child or children (Connecticut Department of Education, 2018).

Over 20 years of scholarship has found that students are more successful when students, parents, and educators collaborate to understand and implement what works best for students to achieve in learning (Mapp et al., 2022). Recent research shows that when schools effectively engage parents and form authentic partnerships as a core practice, student learning improves (Mapp & Bergman, 2021). These partnerships also support educators and recognize parents/caregivers as first teachers for their children. A recent study by Piper, et al. (2022) supports the priority of parent and family engagement through trauma-informed practices. This study reported on how microaggressions can have negative impacts on parent and family engagement. Therefore, it is important that these authentic family engagement and partnership practices be culturally responsive and funds of knowledge be asset-based.

Priority 5: High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Outcomes/Findings

Data collected from multiple sources informed the final recommended priority for the Northeast and Islands region—high-quality early childhood education. These data sources include the RAC public comment survey, focus group interviews with parents and early childhood education administrators, and a comprehensive needs assessment.

Data from the Northeast and Islands RAC public comment survey shows early education and care are priority issues for this region. Comments in the survey focused on the need to expand access to Pre-K in various states. For example, respondents noted that while some states in the region have moved to a universal Pre-K model, the demand for seats in universal Pre-K exceeds current capacity.

Parents who were part of the focus group conducted by the Northeast and Islands RAC on parent and family engagement emphasized the importance of early childhood education in establishing a baseline of equitable educational opportunities. They also expressed a need to support parents as students transition between grade levels/schools, such as from Pre-K to kindergarten. Additionally, in a focus group with university educators conducted by the Northeast and Islands RAC, educator preparation stakeholders expressed a need for building a robust educator development pipeline with supports that would also boost the strained workforce of early childhood educators within the region.

A third focus group was held by the Northeast and Islands RAC with senior staff at a State department of early education and care. Two themes emerged. First, participants emphasized the need for building capacity in research and data on early childhood education (ECE) access and quality. Second, participants expressed a need to tailor technical assistance to the stages of the initiatives, embedded in an agency and focused on processes and project management, as well as operationalizing initiatives.

Data was obtained from a comprehensive needs assessment of the current B-5 early childhood ECE mixed delivery system in the USVI with the purpose of informing the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for a mixed-delivery system as a significant step towards strengthening and enhancing ECE in the USVI (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020). The research team from the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) Caribbean Exploratory Research Center utilized a concurrent, mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2009). Primary data collection included the collection of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and town hall meetings) methods. Secondary data included the collection of administrative data, programmatic reports from relevant agencies, and census-related data.

The sample size included greater than 550 persons on the islands of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas. Surveys were tailored and administered respectively (i.e., parent, caregiver/provider, teacher, inclusion, transition, and general stakeholders). Participants included Early Head Start and Head Start parents and teachers; early childhood care and education center caregivers/providers; pre-school teachers from private and parochial schools; and granny preschool and kindergarten teachers from the public elementary schools across the Territory. Additionally, persons providing support services in these settings, first grade teachers, school counselors and administrators, and persons working in other early care settings completed a general stakeholder survey. Persons from Head Start, Early Head Start, and

the VI Department of Education who participate in the transitioning of children from Early Head Start to Head Start; Head Start to kindergarten; and/or from the Part C program to Part B were invited to complete a transition survey. State Advisory Council members completed an inclusion survey.

“Programs and services experience difficulties with collecting and sharing current, comprehensive, and reliable data to better understand the ECE system and to determine if and where additional early childhood program investments are needed. The challenges are due, in part, to the lack of human resources, technical capacity and clear policies/agreements to facilitate cross-agency data sharing” (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xvi).

“Due to data limitations, it is difficult to know whether ECE services are equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of vulnerable families in the Territory because many programs do not maintain a record of unduplicated counts of beneficiaries and persons awaiting services across ECE programs and systems” (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xvii).

The USVI has developed and piloted a Quality Improvement Rating System (QRIS), VI Steps to Quality (VIS2Q). Currently, VIS2Q has not been fully implemented since the pilot study was completed. The VI Department of Human Services (VIDHS) is currently modifying VIS2Q, with plans to implement the QRIS soon (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xviii).

According to COR data and LAP-3 data, Head Start children across the USVI are not making the targeted progress in the language and literacy and cognitive domains (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xviii).

Results of the transition survey show gaps related to transition supports and the need to enhance transition policies (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xix).

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, two Category 5 hurricanes that wreaked havoc on the USVI within 12 days of each other, at least four Head Start centers remain closed, and many childcare facilities permanently closed their doors. Waiting lists documented in the needs assessment reflect the critical need for more facilities or an expansion of the capacity of existing facilities to accommodate children, birth to five years, in need of services (Michael, Ragster, Brown, & Callwood, 2020, xix).

Connections to Other Priority Areas

The findings of data collection activities related to the other identified priority areas present considerable overlaps with early education and care. For example, the need to strengthen literacy outcomes for all students intersects with the need to boost the quality of curriculum and instruction at the early education level given that literacy development begins well before kindergarten. Additionally, priority area findings regarding mental health relate to the social-emotional components of an effective early education program. And as previously mentioned, the need to recruit, train, and support effective educators extends to the early years as well.

Priority Needs

While there is more data than ever before regarding education and student outcomes generally, the need-sensing process surfaced areas where gaps remain. For example, territories such as the USVI experience a lack of quality data to inform policymaking regarding early education and care, making it

difficult to determine if ECE services are equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of vulnerable families (Michael et al., 2020). Similarly, in a focus group with state officials in one region member state, participants noted that a priority area for their work is to build an effective data ecosystem to compare and synthesize data across multiple state agencies in a mixed-delivery system. This need is particularly important given this state's goal to build internal research capacity that can disseminate findings and best practices across the state's provider landscape and beyond.

Early education and care in the region were already tenuous before the COVID-19 pandemic, and those challenges were exacerbated by the pandemic experience. Data from the Kids Count report indicate that a substantial number of parents were affected by shortages of childcare and early learning opportunities, which had a tangible effect on their employment status as they had to adjust their schedules to respond to these shortages. Further, data from states and territories in the region show that capacity in licensed childcare centers decreased significantly and have only now begun to return to pre-pandemic levels (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2023). In states that have moved toward universal Pre-K models, the demand for seats still exceeds available capacity and/or there are challenges matching demand with available seats in mixed-delivery models. Even where state and federal emergency funding was provided with relatively few restrictions, much of that funding has been spent on simply maintaining existing operations rather than expanding access or investing in professional development (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2023). As such, there is a clear and critical need to support states and territories within this region in continuing to stabilize the system and expand access to all children.

Stabilizing and growing the educator workforce for early education and care remains a critical priority across the region. Factors such as low wages have had a tangible impact on the ability to recruit and retain a stable workforce of certified early educators. The secondary impact of this challenge has been that resources devoted to stabilizing the workforce financially means that funds have not been as concentrated on growing the skills of the existing educator workforce through professional development (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2023). As such, there is a need to assist the region in recruiting, training, retaining, and professionally developing the early educator workforce of the Northeast and Islands region. Additionally, needs-sensing activities showed there is a substantial need to support states in providing high-quality programming and curriculum for early education programs in mixed-delivery models.

Technical Assistance Recommendations

Given the outcomes of need-sensing activities and the identified priority needs outlined above, the following are recommended areas for technical assistance regarding early childhood education:

1. Provide technical assistance regarding data collection and use to inform the design of early childhood education systems, evaluation systems, educator training programs, and parent/family outreach.
 - While national evidence supports the need for high-quality early childhood education, data is scarce in some areas, such as the U.S. Virgin Islands.
 - Quantitative and qualitative data on a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), the number of professionally prepared early childhood care and education professionals, as well

- as fidelity of implementation of research-based practices among this population are needed. This demonstrates a need for increasing data collection efforts and technical assistance to accomplish this successfully, particularly in this region.
- Further, there is an expressed need for technical assistance regarding the use of data, particularly regarding data ecosystems that exist across the multiple agencies involved in early education and care and across states/territories as well. Particularly, a request to build research capacity emerged as a need in Massachusetts.
2. Broaden the portfolio of comprehensive centers to include more early childhood care and education projects.
 - Comprehensive center projects in the Northeast and Islands region have generally focused on K-12 issue areas.
 - Given the direct linkage between K-12 needs and early education outlined in this report—as well as the demonstrated need for early education-specific assistance—comprehensive centers should prioritize increasing the availability of technical assistance that directly addresses early education needs. The development of an early learning content center that supports comprehensive centers and state agencies on specific early education issues would be a welcomed opportunity.
 3. Provide technical assistance focused on sustainable funding and delivery models, particularly in mixed-delivery service models.
 - It is clear from need-sensing activities and available data that all states and territories in the region are experiencing challenges regarding family access and sustaining mixed-delivery models. Technical assistance in continuing to stabilize and sustain these systems would be of great value to the entire region.
 - Given the similarities in challenges presented across the region, sharing of best practices within the region and across regions would be helpful.
 - Supporting the region in navigating the multiple agencies involved in early education would also enhance and accelerate local efforts.
 4. Provide technical assistance for increasing program quality through workforce and program development.
 - Technical assistance on proven successes and practices regarding developing effective educator pipelines for ECE would be of immense value to the region.
 - Furthermore, technical assistance regarding the development of high-quality early education curriculum and instruction—particularly in mixed-delivery models—would not only support early education programs but also bolster priority needs in the K-12 span, such as early literacy and social-emotional growth and well-being.

Additional References for Further Consideration

The following information was not compiled during the data collection period, nor was it discussed during Meeting 2; however, the Northeast and Islands RAC presents this information to further support its justification as to why this is a priority for the region.

Early childhood education is now part of a standards-based/accountability movement. This standards-based/accountability movement has resulted in stakeholders specifying what children should know and be able to do at various grade levels (NAEYC, 2002). It is well known how critical the first years of life are for later outcomes (Learning Policy Institute, 2021). High-quality early childhood education can stimulate intellectual, cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development, thus creating school readiness and building a foundation for later academic and social competence (Learning Policy Institute, 2021; NAEYC 2009). Disparities in academic achievement for children living in poverty, as well as Black and Hispanic students, are rooted in significant differences in children's early experiences and access to good programs and schools (Learning Policy Institute, 2021).

Emergent Priorities

Emergent topics arose during data collection, data analysis, and RAC member deliberations at public meetings. These included having comprehensive centers provide technical assistance on:

- How to deal with the impact of climate change on infrastructure and continuity of education in an emergency.
 - Most urgently, extreme weather is disrupting learning time and damaging buildings. This is a particularly acute issue in Puerto Rico and USVI but affects all jurisdictions with respect to air quality, heat, flooding, fire, hurricanes, etc.
 - Other climate-related issues include ensuring career and technical education programs prepare students for transitions underway in energy, transportation, agriculture, materials science, and manufacturing sectors.
- Ways to support asylum seekers and newly arrived migrant students and their families. These families are often living in temporary housing and do not speak English; their children may have had interrupted formal schooling.
- Improving instruction and student learning, particularly with respect to COVID-19 learning loss/unfinished learning.
- Improving instruction for students with disabilities and more support staff and training to meet the diverse needs of students.
- Addressing key challenges specific to rural education, including:
 - Funding;
 - Adjusting to meet requirements for zero emission buses; and
 - Development of regional education offerings to provide more comprehensive supports (e.g., regional high schools that can provide robust academic and career and technical education programs that prepare students for college, careers, and beyond).

Conclusion

Northeast and Islands RAC members familiarized themselves with data from the states and territories in the region; reviewed public comments and Chief State School Officer comments; collected original data from the region's stakeholders; coalesced around five major regional priorities; and consolidated information into this report for the U.S. Secretary of Education to review as part of the upcoming comprehensive center competition.

This report provides findings, priority needs, and technical assistance recommendations for the following five priorities:

- **Priority 1:** Mental health and supports for students and educators
- **Priority 2:** Addressing educator shortages and diversifying the profession at all levels
- **Priority 3:** Improving literacy (generally and across content areas and for specific student groups)
- **Priority 4:** Authentic parent and family engagement and partnerships
- **Priority 5:** High-quality early childhood education

Members agreed, though, that the needs of the region go beyond the five priorities, and there should be a mechanism in place to respond to emergent needs. The Northeast and Islands RAC identified the following emergent priorities: managing the impact of climate change on educational systems, supporting asylum seekers and newly arrived migrant students and their families, addressing COVID-19 learning loss, improving instruction for students with disabilities, and providing more comprehensive support for rural education.

The Northeast and Islands RAC identified many technical assistance recommendations for the core five priority areas, some of which are summarized below:

- Disseminate information and resources to SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools on implementing comprehensive systems for school counseling that are trauma-informed, such as the American School Counselors Association model.
- Provide resources, tools, and training on how SEAs, LEAs, and schools can effectively launch and maintain GYO programs to build educator pipelines.
- Provide a clearinghouse of evidence-based literacy instructional models and practices as well as accompanying high-quality tools and materials for use by SEAs, REAs, LEAs and schools, along with a template for strategies to transition to and implement said models.
- Provide a clearinghouse of two-way, culturally relevant communication strategies and tools between schools/educators and parents/families to support authentic engagement and partnerships.
- Provide technical assistance regarding data collection and use to inform the design of early childhood education systems, evaluation systems, educator training programs, and parent/family outreach.

Beyond identifying priority needs, it is equally important to consider how technical assistance is provided. In conclusion, the Northeast and Islands RAC urges the U.S. Secretary of Education to consider four general recommendations for organizing comprehensive centers so their work can be both effective and responsive to the needs of the region:

1. Comprehensive center staff should be skilled, with deep content expertise, to create concrete tools and resources for SEAs, REAs, and LEAs to utilize with students, families, educators, schools, and districts.
2. Comprehensive centers should collaborate with individual SEAs to confirm current needs and adjust as necessary, as specifics about priorities might change based on legislation, policies, data, or research results.
3. Comprehensive centers should have a structure, process, and/or funding set-aside to add or modify the initial work scopes in response to unanticipated, time-sensitive priorities that arise.
4. There ought to be a mechanism to facilitate collaboration across RELs and comprehensive centers, and the states and territories they serve, to address common challenges and interests. States often operate in silos to solve similar problems and comprehensive centers could play a groundbreaking role in creating efficiencies and economies of scale for SEAs to avoid duplicating efforts and resources, including money and human capital.

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Appendix A. Chart of Nominated, Recommended, and Serving RAC Members

Number of Individuals Nominated, Recommended, and Serving on the Northeast and Islands RAC

Region	Nominated	Recommended by the U.S. Department of Education	Declined	Resigned	Accepted, Serving
Northeast and Islands	61	15	0	2	13

Appendix B. List of RAC Members

Northeast and Islands RAC members represented local and state education agencies; institutions of higher education; parents; practicing educators, including classroom teachers; and organizations serving youth, educators, or both. Members included:

Regional Chair

- Ms. Lauren Goldenberg, Ph.D., Senior Director, Research & Evaluation, New York City Department of Education

RAC Members

- Dr. Mark D. Benigni, Superintendent of Schools, Meriden Public Schools, Connecticut
- Ms. Anne E. Bordonaro, Division Director, Federal & Education Support Programs, Vermont Agency of Education
- Dr. Karen Brown, Dean and Professor, School of Education, University of the Virgin Islands
- Mr. Daniel Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner of Education, Maine Department of Education
- Ms. Danielle Colterman, Principal, St. Lawrence Central Elementary School
- Ms. Carolyn Kielma, High School Science Teacher, Bristol Eastern High School, Connecticut
- Mr. Ed Lambert, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE)
- Mr. David A. Little, Executive Director, Rural Schools Association of New York State, Inc.
- Dr. Charles Lloyd, President, White Mountains Community College
- Dr. Kevin McGowan, Superintendent of Schools, Brighton Central School District
- Mr. Robert Powers, Ed.D., K-12 Social Studies Coordinator, Plymouth School District
- Dr. Kelvin Roldan, Deputy Commissioner for System Transformation, Rhode Island Department of Education
- Dr. Nelson Soto, President, Albizu University, Puerto Rico
- Ms. Donna Thompson-Bennett, Executive Director, National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI)

Appendix C. Northeast and the Islands Profile (Comprehensive)

The following profile shows recent data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education for the Northeast and the Islands Region, which includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Data for each state is included along with high-level data comparing information across the regions. The following topic areas are included:

- Information about Districts and Schools
- Student Enrollment Information
- Graduation Information
- Student Academic Information
- Student Non-Academic Information
- Teacher Information
- Teacher Qualifications
- Teacher Shortages
- Financial Resources
- Resources

Note that data includes the most recent tables available in July 2023. In some instances, data have not been disaggregated by jurisdiction so national data have been included as a reference point. Where appropriate, Reflection Questions have been provided for consideration.

Overall Reflection Questions

- What is your overall reaction to the data presented?
 - *Is it what you expected?*
 - *If it was not what you expected, what surprised you?*
- What other data do you need to help you better understand the needs in your jurisdiction or region?
- Are the data available at the state level or do you have access to this data through another vehicle?
- How can the needs assessment help you attain this data?
- What do you believe are the top priorities facing your jurisdiction/region?
- Why do you believe these are the top priorities facing your jurisdiction?
- What input would you like to hear from other stakeholders?
- How will you collect that input?

Information about Northeast and the Islands Region Districts and Schools

Totals by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Operating Districts (2020-21) ¹	Total Number of Operating Public Schools (2020-21) ¹	Total Number of Charter Schools (2020-21) ²	Total Number of Private Schools (Fall 2019)
Connecticut	272	1,001	21	310
Maine	277	595	154	150
Massachusetts	426	1,845	13,712	660
New Hampshire	310	496	37	210
New York	1,054	4,807	325	1,660
Rhode Island	64	314	37	110
Vermont	184	305	0	110
Puerto Rico	1	856	10	--
U.S. Virgin Islands	2	21	0	--

Note 1: Profiles were prepared using the most recent publicly available data. The most recent set of private school data provided was fall 2019, whereas the tables used for reporting the districts and public/charter school data were updated for the 2020-21 school year.

Note 2: Operating schools/districts include all those providing services at the start of the reported school year.
 --Not available.

Student Enrollment Information

Jurisdiction	Total Public School Enrollment (Fall 2019)	Public PreK-8 Enrollment (Fall 2021)	Public Grades 9-12 Enrollment (Fall 2021)	Enrollment in Private Schools
Connecticut	509,748	346,593	163,155	58,670
Maine	173,215	117,646	55,569	19,850
Massachusetts	921,180	628,437	292,743	118,860
New Hampshire	170,005	114,699	55,306	2,170
New York	2,548,490	1,747,372	801,118	403,720
Rhode Island	138,566	93,509	45,057	18,440
Vermont	83,975	59,327	24,648	10,040
Puerto Rico	259,535	172,920	86,615	--
U.S. Virgin Islands	10,234	6,917	3,317	--

Note: Public schools include traditional public and charter schools.
 -- Not available.

3–5-year-old Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (% distribution by race/ethnicity) (2021)

Jurisdiction	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or More Races
Connecticut	66.6%	67.8%	74.2%	60.1%	67.2%	++	++	69.8%
Maine	51.7%	52.6%	++	++	++	++	++	++
Massachusetts	59.4%	62.2%	62.4%	54.2%	56.5%	++	++	60.9%
New Hampshire	50.7%	52.3%	++	++	++	++	++	43.3%!
New York	62.8%	66.3%	61.5%	57.2%	56.2%	++	++	67.8%
Rhode Island	49.3%	50.6%	++	39.9%	++	++	++	++
Vermont	69.0%	67.7%	++	++	++	++	++	++
Puerto Rico	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
U.S. Virgin Islands	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++

++Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (% distribution by total) (Fall 2021)

Jurisdiction	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Two or More Races
Connecticut	48.6%	12.6%	29.0%	5.2%	0.1%	0.3%	4.3%
Maine	87.5%	4.2%	2.9%	1.4%	0.1%	0.8%	3.2%
Massachusetts	55.8%	9.3%	23.1%	7.2%	0.1%	0.2%	4.3%
New Hampshire	83.4%	2.1%	6.7%	3.2%	0.1%	0.2%	4.3%
New York	41.0%	16.2%	28.8%	9.9%	0.2%	0.7%	3.2%
Rhode Island	53.3%	8.9%	28.6%	3.2%	0.1%	0.8%	5.0%
Vermont	88.7%	2.5%	3.0%	2.1%	0.1%	0.3%	3.4%
Puerto Rico	0.2%	0.0%	99.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
U.S. Virgin Islands	1.4%	76.9%	20.6%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%

Number of Students by School Locale (Fall 2019)

Jurisdiction	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
Connecticut	145,964	292,620	14,526	57,548
Maine	22,338	29,610	29,039	94,139
Massachusetts	169,015	677,807	13,764	84,295
New Hampshire	25,831	64,552	24,296	61,375
New York	1,252,127	948,478	161,748	296,639
Rhode Island	36,073	91,511	150,353	309,638
Vermont	6,549	8,126	22,426	46,136
Puerto Rico	155,683	*	*	94,036
U.S. Virgin Islands	--	--	--	--

--Not available.

*Puerto Rico only identified schools in city or rural areas.

English Language Learners (Fall 2020)

Jurisdiction	Total	Percentage of Total Enrollment
United States	4,963,388	10.3%
Connecticut	39,333	8.0%
Maine	5,210	4.1%
Massachusetts	92,076	10.2%
New Hampshire	4,759	2.9%
New York	239,954	9.4%
Rhode Island	16,684	12.2%
Vermont	1,734	2.3%
Puerto Rico	--	--
U.S. Virgin Islands	St. Croix=270 and St. Thomas=933	St. Croix=5.3% and St. Thomas =18.3%

--Not available.

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (2019–2020)^a

Jurisdiction	Total	Percentage of Total Enrollment
United States	26,000,645 ^a	52.1% ^a
Connecticut	218,235	42.7%
Maine	77,265	42.0%
Massachusetts	379,828	32.8%
New Hampshire	43,493	24.7%
New York	1,420,866	56.1%
Rhode Island	67,574	47.7%
Vermont	29,220	35.1%
Puerto Rico	^	100%
U.S. Virgin Islands	^	100%

^a For the United States data, total includes imputation for nonreporting states.

^100% of students receive free lunch and the specific number of students was not reported.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Connecticut

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	15	166	611	1,518	9	2,407	353
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	11	246	696	1,887	4	2,647	271
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	190	1,855	12,340	25,426	63	35,527	2,992

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Maine

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	X	13	39	20	X	763	37
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	24	30	98	51	10	2,191	89
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	405	265	1,165	942	31	28,118	1,063

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Massachusetts

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	68	1,252	1,994	5,844	30	11,811	784
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	24	764	1,145	2,535	9	5,640	456
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	446	5,853	17,439	41,638	118	92,623	6,858

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – New Hampshire

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	0	37	X	83	X	1,449	93
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	X	54	47	180	X	1,787	64
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	75	409	593	2,137	22	23,004	820

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – New York

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	63	1,473	2,832	5,909	265	14,094	352
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	268	2,178	4,804	10,195	49	21,528	1,815
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	3,640	22,786	97,402	160,060	912	190,860	16,446

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Rhode Island

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	X	38	133	628	X	1,160	69
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	22	34	144	533	6	1,228	117
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	260	409	2,086	6,069	33	11,929	1,079

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Vermont

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	0	X	17	X	0	813	50
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	X	27	42	13	X	1,253	23
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	38	149	451	203	16	12,645	291

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Puerto Rico

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	0	0	0	X	0	0	X
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	0	0	4	7,158	0	5	0
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	27	16	X	89,580	X	112	0

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Special Education Enrollment Numbers by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group Served under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – U.S. Virgin Islands

Age Group	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Ages Birth-2 (Served under IDEA, Part C)	0	0	79	13	0	4	9
Ages 3-5 (Early Childhood) (Served under IDEA Part B)	0	0	61	X	0	X	0
Ages 5 (School Age) through 21 (Served under IDEA Part B)	0	X	748	209	X	18	X

X: Data suppressed due to small size.

Student Enrollment Reflection Questions

- Based on the number of students by school locale, where are the majority of your students located?
- Looking at the enrollment distribution by race percentages, how diverse is your student population?
- How does the percentage of students qualifying as ELLs in your jurisdiction compare to the overall percentage of ELLs throughout the United States?
- How does the percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) in your jurisdiction compare to the overall percentage of students qualifying for FRPL throughout the United States?

Graduation Information^{b,c,d,e,f}

Demographic	United States	CT	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	PR	USVI
Total ACGR for all Students	87%	82%	87%	89%	88%	84%	84%	83%	77%*	71%*
Percent Students with Disabilities (2019-2020)	71%	68%	74%	75%	73%	61%	73%	69%	--	63%
Percent English Learner (2019-2020)	71%	67%	81%	68%	67%	39%	69%	49%	--	46%
Percent Economically Disadvantaged (2019-2020)	81%	81%	79%	81%	75%	77%	80%	75%	--	--
Homeless Enrolled (2019-2020)	--	65%	62%	64%	58%	61%	70%	55%	--	--
Foster Care (2019-2020)	--	47%	53%	58%	43%	57%	56%	--	--	--
Private High School Graduates (2018-2019)	340,610	6,920	3,000	11,300	2,170	26,890	1,610	950	--	--

--Not available.

*Puerto Rico data from SY 2018-19 and USVI data from SY 2021-22.

ACGR by Race/Ethnicity % (2019-2020)^g

Jurisdiction	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Two or More Races
Connecticut	93%	80%	80%	95%	88%	90%
Maine	88%	83%	82%	94%	72%	82%
Massachusetts	93%	83%	77%	95%	86%	89%
New Hampshire	89%	77%	74%	92%	85%	84%
New York	90%	75%	75%	90%	75%	83%
Rhode Island	88%	80%	76%	91%	69%	77%
Vermont	85%	70%	82%	74%	>=50%	76%
Puerto Rico*	56%	60%	77%	--	--	--
U.S. Virgin Islands*	--	78%	63%	--	--	--

--Not available.

*Puerto Rico data from SY 2018-19 and USVI data from SY 2021-22.

^b Numbers are the public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by selected student characteristics for 2019-2020.

^c The time when students are identified as having certain characteristics varies by state. Depending on the state, a student may be included in a category if the relevant characteristic is reported in 9th-grade data, if the characteristic is reported in 12th-grade data, or if it is reported at any point during the student's high school years.

^d Students who met the state criteria for classification as economically disadvantaged.

^e Students who meet the definition of English Learners as outlined in the Department of Education *EDFacts* workbook. For more information, see [EDFacts Workbook](#).

^f Students identified as children with disabilities under the IDEA.

^g States either report data for a combined "Asian/Pacific Islander" group or report the "Asian" and "Pacific Islander" groups separately. Total represents either a single value reported by the state for "Asian/Pacific Islander" or an aggregation of separate values reported for "Asian" and "Pacific Islander." "Asian/Pacific Islander" includes the "Filipino" group, which only California and Hawaii report separately. Number represents the Total reported Asian/Pacific Islander.

Graduation Rates Reflection Questions

- Do you collect data on 5-year graduation cohorts? If so, how does it compare to the 4-year cohort ACGR?
- Which, if any, graduation rate would you prioritize to increase over the next 5 years?

Student Academic Information

To compare students nationally, we have provided results from the fourth and eighth grade math and reading National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results. NAEP—a congressionally mandated large-scale assessment administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)—consists of print and digital assessments in various subject areas. Three of these subjects—mathematics, reading, and science—are assessed most frequently and reported at the state and select district level, usually for grades 4 and 8. The Nation’s Report Card provides results on student performance based on gender, race/ethnicity, public or nonpublic school, teacher experience, and hundreds of other factors.

NAEP assessment results are reported as average scores on a 0-500 scale (reading, mathematics at grades 4 and 8, U.S. history, and geography) or on a 0-300 scale (mathematics at grade 12, science, writing, technology and engineering literacy, and civics). These scale scores, derived from student responses to assessment questions, summarize the overall level of performance attained by that student. Scale scores for individual students are not reported, but summary statistics describing scale scores for groups of students (demographic, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) are reported. More information about NAEP can be found at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Academic Achievement: NAEP (2022) National and State Averages

Jurisdiction	4th Grade Math	4th Grade Reading	8th Grade Math	8th Grade Reading
United States	235	216	273	259
Connecticut	236	219	276	264
Maine	233	213	273	257
Massachusetts	242	227	284	269
New Hampshire	239	223	279	263
New York	227	214	274	262
Rhode Island	234	217	270	259
Vermont	234	217	276	264
Puerto Rico	178	Does not participate	216	Does not participate
U.S. Virgin Islands	Does not participate	Does not participate	Does not participate	Does not participate

Student Academic Factors Reflection Questions

- How did students in your jurisdiction compare to the national average of students on the NAEP results?
- Given the national average NAEP score, what goal(s) would you set for your students to achieve on the next NAEP administration? For example, would you like the results to stay stable or would you want to see a 3-point increase on 4th grade math? What do you need to achieve this goal?

Non-Academic Information

Non-academic factors for students include suspension and expulsion rates. Additionally, the most recently reported data regarding students who have carried firearms to schools and have experienced bullying (both on school property and electronically) have been included.

Percentage of Students Suspended or Expelled from Public Elementary and Secondary Schools by Gender and Ethnicity (2017–2018)ⁱ

Percent who Received Out-of-School Suspensions^j

Demographic	United States	CT	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	PR	USVI
Total	5.0%	3.4%	4.1%	3.3%	5.3%	3.1%	4.9%	3.3%	--	--
Male	6.8%	5.0%	5.9%	4.6%	7.6%	4.2%	6.5%	4.8%	--	--
Female	3.0%	2.5%	2.2%	1.9%	2.8%	1.9%	3.1%	1.8%	--	--
White	3.4%	1.7%	4.0%	2.1%	4.8%	2.8%	3.6%	3.3%	--	--
Black	12.3%	9.4%	6.6%	7.0%	12.2%	6.0%	8.6%	6.4%	--	--
Hispanic	4.0%	5.7%	4.5%	5.7%	9.7%	2.3%	6.3%	2.4%	--	--
Asian	1.0%	0.7%	1.7%	0.8%	1.8%	0.5%	1.8%	0.9%	--	--
Pacific Islander	4.9%	2.0%	2.0%	2.5%	4.4%	1.1%	5.6%	0.6%	--	--
American Indian/ Alaska Native	6.9%	4.4%	5.1%	4.0%	5.2%	3.1%	12.0%	4.1%	--	--
Two or More Races	5.5%	3.5%	3.8%	4.0%	5.9%	4.3%	6.1%	2.8%	--	--

--Not available.

Percent Expelled^k

Demographic	United States	CT	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	PR	USVI
Total	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	--	--
Male	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	--	--
Female	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	--	--
White	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	--	--
Black	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	--	--
Hispanic	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	--	--
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	--	--
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	--	--
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	--	--
Two or More Races	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	--	--

--Not available.

ⁱData by race/ethnicity excludes students with disabilities served only under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (i.e., those not receiving services under IDEA).

^jAn out-of-school suspension is an instance in which a student is temporarily removed from his or her regular school (either in person or virtual) for disciplinary purposes for at least half a day (but less than the remainder of the school year) to another setting (e.g., home or behavior center). Out-of-school suspensions include removals with or without the continuation of educational services.

^kExpulsions are actions taken by a local education agency to remove a student from his or her regular school (either in person or virtual) for disciplinary purposes, with or without the continuation of education services, for the remainder of the school year or longer, in accordance with local education agency policy. Expulsions also include removals resulting from violations of the Gun Free Schools Act that are modified to less than 365 days.

Firearms (2019-2020)

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Students Who Brought Firearms to or Possessed Firearms at School	Number of Students Who did this per 100,000 Students, Enrolled
United States	2,431	4.8
Connecticut	16	3.1
Maine	2	1.1
Massachusetts	8	0.8
New Hampshire	8	4.5
New York	119	4.4
Rhode Island	1	0.7
Vermont	3	3.5
Puerto Rico	7	2.4
USVI	0	0.0

Bullying (2017)

Jurisdiction	Percentage of Public School Students Bullied on School Property ^l	Percentage of Public School Students Electronically Bullied ^m
United States	19.0%	14.9%
Connecticut	18.9%	15.8%
Maine	21.8%	17.8%
Massachusetts	14.6%	13.6%
New Hampshire	21.4%	19.0%
New York	21.7%	17.6%
Rhode Island	17.3%	14.2%
Vermont	--	15.9%
Puerto Rico	17.1%	13.2%
U.S. Virgin Islands	--	--

--Not available.

Bullying was defined for respondents as “when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again.” “On school property” was not defined for survey respondents.

^mIncludes “being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting” for 2011 through 2015, and “being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media” for 2017.

Student Non-Academic Factors Reflection Questions

- What policies are in place to address recent issues of school violence?
- How does your state compare to the national average? Is this a number you would like to change? What other information do you need to make an informed decision about this issue?

Teacher Information

Jurisdiction	Total Number of Public School Teachers (Fall 2019)	Pupil/Teacher Ratio (Fall 2020)	Teachers in Private Schools
Connecticut	42,386	12.4	5,100
Maine	14,826	12.2	2,080
Massachusetts	75,152	12.8	15,220
New Hampshire	14,695	12.1	2,570
New York	217,398	12.4	40,010
Rhode Island	10,704	13.4	1,830
Vermont	8,042	10.8	1,200
Puerto Rico	24,840	11.8	--
U.S. Virgin Islands	976	11.2	--

--Not available.

Teacher Qualifications

The following table includes the highest degree earned and years of full-time teaching experience by state and United States. Data from 2011-2012 was the latest data reported at the national level.

Jurisdiction	Degree Levels, Percentage - Less than Bachelor's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Bachelor's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Master's (2011-2012)	Degree Levels, Percentage - Education Specialist or Doctor's (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - Less than 3 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - 3 to 9 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - 10 to 20 (2011-2012)	Years Fulltime Experience - Over 20 (2011-2012)
United States	3.8%	39.9%	47.7%	8.7%	9.0%	33.3%	36.4%	21.3%
Connecticut	++	15.3%	64.4%	17.7%	10.0%	29.1%	37.1%	23.8%
Maine	4.9%!	46.3%	42.8%	6.0%	5.8%	24.1%	39.4%	30.6%
Massachusetts	3.9%	21.8%	67.5%	6.8%	12.4%	33.4%	36.8%	17.4%
New Hampshire	3.0%!	40.2%	48.7%	8.1%	8.1%	32.8%	31.5%	27.5%
New York	2.8%!	4.4%	84.2%	8.6%	5.3%	30.0%	45.5%	19.1%
Rhode Island	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
Vermont	6.6%	35.4%	52.0%	6.0%	12.9%	22.1%	37.0%	28.0%
Puerto Rico	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
U.S. Virgin Islands	0.0%	60.0%	37.0%	2.0%	--	--	--	--

++Reporting standards not met. Data may be suppressed because the response rate is under 50 percent, there are too few cases for a reliable estimate, or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

--Not available.

Number and Percentage Distribution of Teachers Enrolled in Traditional and Alternative Programs

Jurisdiction	Number Enrolled in a Teacher Preparation Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Traditional Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Alternative Program- (Institute of Higher Education [IHE]) (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Enrollment by Enrolled in an Alternative Program- (Not IHE based) (2019-2020)
United States	590,046	69.9%	8.3%	21.9%
Connecticut	3,993	88.1%	0.7%	11.2%
Massachusetts	2,203	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maine	12,571	95.0%	0.0%	5.0%
New Hampshire	2,767	72.6%	0.0%	27.4%
New York	51,165	88.1%	11.9%	0.0%
Rhode Island	1,605	99.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Vermont	1,444	72.7%	8.0%	19.3%
Puerto Rico	10,002	66.6%	33.4%	0.0%
U.S. Virgin Islands	125	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Number and Percentage Distribution of Teachers Who Completed Traditional and Alternative Programs

Jurisdiction	Number of Completers in a Teacher Preparation Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in by Traditional Program (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in Alternative Program- (Institute of Higher Education [IHE]) (2019-2020)	Percentage Distribution of Completers in an Alternative Program- (Not IHE based) (2019-2020)
United States	151,138	76.8%	11.4%	11.8%
Connecticut	1,441	84.1%	0.7%	15.2%
Massachusetts	444	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Maine	4,291	93.5%	0.0%	6.5%
New Hampshire	698	83.1%	0.0%	16.9%
New York	14,313	85.4%	14.6%	0.0%
Rhode Island	481	96.7%	0.0%	3.3%
Vermont	381	68.5%	13.6%	17.8%
Puerto Rico	1,508	80.2%	19.8%	0.0%
U.S. Virgin Islands	23	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Teacher Information Reflection Questions

- Given national issues of teacher shortages, where are the priority areas in your state?
- What teacher preparation institutions or alternative programs does your state offer? Are these programs going to fulfill your educator needs in the next 5 years?

Financial Resources by State

Description	CT	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	PR	USVI
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education – Federal (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$671,481	\$497,014	\$1,290,317	\$252,513	\$3,567,146	\$293,372	\$206,938	\$751,875	\$218,994
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education – State (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$4,484,299	\$1,411,382	\$8,328,725	\$1,093,913	\$29,093,368	\$1,243,479	\$1,739,914	\$1,631,653	+
Revenue sources for public elementary and secondary education – Local (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$7,277,497	\$1,681,664	\$11,413,086	\$2,197,532	\$44,724,292	\$1,374,679	\$40,054	\$461	\$164,182
Amounts and percentage changes of inflation-adjusted state, local, and federal revenues per pupil (FY2021)	\$24,424	\$20,817	\$22,819	\$21,545	\$30,396	\$20,919	\$24,113	\$8,625	\$34,856
Percentage change from FY20-21	5.2%	15.3%	8.2%	7.8%	1.0%	6.9%	7.8%	11.5%	66.7%*
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction - Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$11,309,002	\$3,170,667	\$19,843,547	\$3,190,438	\$66,439,455	\$2,617,982	\$1,981,766	\$2,103,412	\$180,024
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction - Instruction (In thousands) (FY2021)	\$6,995,841	\$1,828,220	\$12,741,574	\$2,022,989	\$45,148,569	\$1,586,685	\$1,233,142	\$902,596	\$115,607

Description	CT	ME	MA	NH	NY	RI	VT	PR	USVI
Current expenditures for public elementary and secondary education by function, and subfunction -Support Services (In thousands) (FY2021)	\$4,039,551	\$1,255,322	\$6,668,765	\$1,108,721	\$20,105,188	\$979,155	\$691,800	\$1,014,409	\$54,746
Current expenditures per pupil - Total (In thousands) (FY2021)	\$22,216	\$18,385	\$21,529	\$19,396	\$26,097	\$18,810	\$24,050	\$7,610	\$1,028
Title I expenditures per pupil - (In thousands) (FY2021)	\$248	\$283	\$246	\$244	\$874	\$419	\$299	\$16,376	\$0
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction - Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$11,309,002	\$3,170,667	\$19,843,547	\$3,190,438	\$66,439,455	\$2,617,982	\$1,981,766	\$2,103,412	\$180,024
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction -Instruction and Instruction-related total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$7,402,463	\$2,013,225	\$13,685,711	\$2,121,035	\$47,933,603	\$1,690,496	\$1,317,068	\$966,429	\$122,713
Salaries and wages, and employee benefits for public elementary and secondary education, by function and state or jurisdiction -Support Services Total (In thousands) (FY 2021)	\$3,632,929	\$1,070,318	\$5,724,628	\$1,010,676	\$17,320,155	\$875,344	\$607,874	\$950,576	\$47,640

+ Not applicable.

* USVI received \$193 million in COVID-19 Federal assistance funds.

Financial Resources Reflection Questions

- Looking at the subfunction allocations, are expenditures allocated proportionately in the correct places?
- How do educator salaries in your state compare to other professional careers?

Appendix D. Summary of Stakeholder Input

Data Source	# of Responses	Time Period	Topics by Category
Public Comments	74	September 4, 2023 – October 9, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater support in rural areas • Greater support for special needs populations • Teacher and support staff shortages • Student mental health and well-being • Student engagement • Universal pre-K • Aligning to the “science of reading” • Internet broadband/technology access • Lack of funding • Absenteeism • Career & Technical Education programs • Culturally responsive sustaining education • High academic expectations • Learning loss due to COVID-19 • School safety • School facilities • Family engagement • Evidence-based best practices
CSSO	4	September 15, 2023 – October 10, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/academic achievement • Workforce development • Recruiting, hiring, and sustaining qualified teachers and support staff • School improvement

Additional data collection efforts included surveys to RAC members to help determine priority areas and technical assistance recommendations, focus group with university educators on educator shortages in the U.S. Virgin Islands (6 participants), focus group with employees from the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education on educator shortages (8 participants), focus group with parents on priority areas and technical assistance (8 participants), and a survey on family and community engagement to a “Parents Who Lead” mailing list provided by a RAC member (55 respondents).