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Supporting the Use of Data Through Professional Development

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Contents

Introduction

With the implementation of the National Reporting System (NRS) in 2001, states are required to report to the U.S. Department of Education outcome data—including educational gain, entry into employment, transition to postsecondary education, and attainment of a secondary school credential—on students attending local adult literacy programs. In addition to NRS, many states have their own reporting requirements, some of which are more rigorous than those of NRS. Within NRS, data collection occurs at the local level: Data collectors are local program staff, and data users are local and state staff. To achieve NRS's purposes, it is critical that teachers and other local staff involved in collecting, reporting, and using data receive professional development on NRS. The professional development covers general procedures and methods of NRS and the importance of data and how to use it. All too often, states and programs focus efforts on developing forms, procedures, and database systems with little emphasis on resources for providing professional development. Staff must be trained on using data that pertains to their programs, classes, and students and making decisions that will affect their performance. Critical topics include definitions of measures, completing reporting forms, conducting assessments, performing followup methods for collecting data, ensuring data quality, interpreting and analyzing data, and using data for decision making. Local staff that have participated in well-planned, ongoing professional development that is targeted to the needs of programs and staff will be more likely to use data to understand and improve program performance.

This resource guide promotes professional development for local programs to support the use of accurate and reliable data for decision making and program improvement. Although several states have allocated resources for professional development on data collection, reporting, quality, and use, for the most part, professional development related to data has not been systematically rolled out to program staff at the local level. This guide highlights four states—Kansas, New York, Ohio, and Texas—that have systematically integrated professional development on data use into their accountability and professional development systems. These states provide potential models for others that are seeking to provide professional development on data use.

Information for this report was gathered through telephone interviews with state directors of adult education and staff responsible for accountability and NRS-related professional development, and through reviews of extant materials (e.g., annual reports, state Web sites, accountability-related state documents, and state professional development catalogues). Although the document focuses mainly on professional development, it also discusses accountability-related technical assistance provided by the state to local programs. The document is organized into five sections:

- The first section provides an overview of state context that supports data use and data-related professional development.
- The second section discusses state policies and procedures that drive data-related professional development.
- The third section provides an overview of professional development delivery mechanisms and content.
- The fourth section discusses lessons learned and provides recommendations for supporting data-related professional development.
- Appendices A–D highlight data-related activities in each of the four states.

State Context

Several common themes emerged from this review that support a state's ability to provide professional development to local programs on data-related issues.

State Leadership and Vision

State leadership that emphasizes the importance of accountability and provides a clear and consistent message about the need for accurate, reliable, and timely data—along with policies, procedures, and resources to support data use—helps to institutionalize accountability at the state and local levels. For example, all states require that local programs enter data into the state's system on a quarterly basis, at a minimum, (one state requires entry every 30 days). Setting a minimum timeframe helps to prevent programs from scrambling at the last minute and facilitate regular analysis of performance. Interviewees from Kansas and New York indicated that they model the use of data for decision making, thus reinforcing the use of data at the local level. The interviewee from Kansas indicated that the state is a "catalyst for programs to think about data in a different way."

Interviewees from Ohio indicated that from the outset, the state emphasized the importance of accountability to institutionalize it within the state and among administrators of local programs. The state message was consistent: Accurate and reliable data are fundamental to the continued existence of the adult education system. To backup the message, Ohio provided many training opportunities so local program staff could better understand (a) the "whys" of accountability and NRS and (b) the "hows" of entering data. This process helped state and local staff to become familiar with the accountability system.

Texas also emphasized the importance of quality data. Texas examined NRS data from all states to identify which states were performing well. Texas then looked to these high-performing states to learn how they were supporting the use of data.

Dedicated Data Staff

Local programs in Kansas, New York, Ohio, and Texas have dedicated staff who are responsible for data entry, quality, maintenance, and use and data-related professional development. For example, in New York, programs at the local level have a data manager, either a full- or half-time person (depending on funding allocation). Having a dedicated data manager makes a significant difference in the quality of data submitted by the program. At the state level, New York has regional staff that conduct quarterly reviews of program data to identify high- and low-performing programs, look for gaps and irregularities in data that may warrant professional development or technical assistance, and refer programs that appear to be struggling to the state's NRS Liaison for a thorough review of data via desk monitoring. If the program appears to be sliding back, the NRS Liaison provides followup technical assistance. According to the state director of adult education, this system results in a faster response when programs go askew.

In Ohio, although not mandated by the state, programs have either a dedicated data person or a staff member who is responsible for program data. At the state level, staff review data that are submitted quarterly by local programs, conduct the desk reviews, and refer programs that appear to be struggling and in need of technical assistance to the Ohio Literacy Resource Center (OLRC). OLRC provides assistance in operating the accountability system for Ohio's Adult Basic and Literacy Education System (ABLE) and is the primary mechanism that supports professional development on data use.

In Kansas, data entry staff in local programs must enter data every 30 days, at a minimum. State staff review data on an ongoing basis and the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development reviews *Quarterly Program Improvement Plan Progress Reports* from local programs and provides feedback to programs about their progress, as evidenced by data in PABLO. PABLO is Kansas's Web-based adult education data collection and reporting system. To identify potential issues and the need for technical assistance, state staff review data and contact programs if data look questionable.

In Texas, each program has a person who is responsible for data entry. In very small programs, the director assumes the responsibility. To improve data accuracy and integrity for programs that are not meeting negotiated targets, the state requires, under the auspices of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP), more interactions between the program director and data entry staff and that information gets transferred from administrators to data entry staff.

Easy Access to Data

Providing easy access to data facilitates the use of data. Kansas, New York, and Texas use real-time Web-based systems to provide timely access to data. The systems allow programs to make midcourse corrections on the basis of current data instead of making changes on the basis of potentially old data. The systems also allow programs to run their own reports any time and to generate those reports that are most useful to them (e.g., at the class, teacher, or student level or by type of instruction). Programs can review disaggregated reports to inform decision making and identify professional development needs. Security levels are created within the systems so program staff can look at data from only their program. Easy access to data has helped local program staff become more focused on data, resulting in improved data quality and increased attention to performance.

Ohio is planning to move to a Web-based system. According to the state director of adult education, "the easier staff can access information, the more likely they are to use it." Under the current system, the state is very responsive to the data needs of local programs and can generate more than 50 reports, such as annual performance reports and data reports that are specific to a teacher or a class or set of classes. This type of support will continue under the forthcoming Web-based system. However, the Web-based system will allow the state to respond even quicker to requests from local staff.

System to Support Professional Development on Data Use

Kansas, New York, Ohio, and Texas have well-established systems to provide professional development on data entry, quality, and use. In the larger states, training occurs through regional or state centers—such as the Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN) in New York, the OLRC and the Resource Center Network (RCN) in Ohio, and the Project GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas) Centers in Texas. In Kansas, the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development is responsible for professional development in the state.

New York contracts with a full-time data expert, the NRS Liaison, to conduct desk reviews and provide professional development opportunities to local programs. In 2010, the state is contracting with two full-time data experts so that it can provide more indepth professional development and technical assistance to struggling programs and support other programs that require technical assistance. The NRS Liaison is primarily responsible for professional development on accountability and works closely with RAENs.

Each year, RAENs host a 2-day NRS data counseling session. During the session, participants focus on NRS data, review program evaluation reports, and examine the extent to which programs are meeting state benchmarks. Programs that are struggling are referred to the NRS Liaison, who then conducts a thorough desk monitoring review and, if necessary, a followup site visit, in conjunction with state regional staff, to review program files. Technical assistance and professional development are provided as necessary.

In Ohio, the OLRC has expertise in accountability and manages the ABLELinks database. In addition to professional development, the OLRC operates an ABLELinks help site and provides technical support to programs via phone, e-mail, and instant messenger for general program use, reports, and data matching. It also draws on its bank of local program data consultants to provide onsite technical assistance to local programs that need data-related professional development and training. The OLRC allows the state to address program issues in a timely manner. Ohio's RCN draws on the OLRC's expertise for data issues and provides some training on assessment and accountability.

In Texas, staff from Project GREAT, with the permission from the local program, can gain read-only access to data. One Project GREAT center with read-only access to program data in the region reviews gains in content areas and looks at trends across regions to determine professional development to support program improvement. Texas is looking to revise the system to allow all Project GREAT Centers to have read-only access so they can see all reports in the region and plan for professional development.

In Kansas, the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development has access to all reports and reviews *Quarterly Program Improvement Plan Progress Reports*. Together, data from these sources help the state to individualize professional development for programs and to plan professional development on a statewide basis for themes that appear across programs.

Policies and Procedures That Drive Data-Related Professional Development

Kansas, New York, Ohio, and Texas have several mechanisms to foster data-related professional development at the local level:

- **Performance-based funding.** Through performance-based funding, programs receive funding if they show improved data quality and use of data. Kansas uses performance-based funding, and New York will be implementing performance-based funding in mid-2010. Ohio and Texas are moving toward performance-based funding. Performance-based funding provides an incentive for programs to participate in data-related professional development.
- **Desk monitoring.** Through desk monitoring, states can identify areas in which programs are falling short. Armed with the data from desk monitoring reviews, states can plan for future

efforts to improve data quality and provide professional development and technical assistance more effectively because it can target early specific areas for assistance. For example, based on desk reviews and assessments by the RAENs, New York annually selects 20–30 programs for its Individual Technical Assistance Program (ITAP). As part of the desk review in Ohio, the state rates programs in four categories.[1] Programs rated Exemplary are eligible for incentive funds, and those rated Unacceptable receive technical assistance that is targeted to meet local needs. In Kansas and Texas, results of desk reviews are tied to an individual PIP. These states use the PIP to understand a program's thinking and approach to data use and to focus professional development.

- **Report cards.** New York, Kansas, and Texas report cards correspond to results of monitoring reviews and outline a program's progress. These report cards can be shared with community and other stakeholders involved with programs and foster positive recognition if the program ranks well. In New York, if a program performs in the top quartile of the report cards, it receives five bonus points on its Workforce Investment Act (WIA) proposal. If the program falls in the bottom quartile, it loses five points on its proposal. As such, New York gives its programs an incentive to participate in data-based professional development to improve decision making.
- **Needs assessments.** States conduct informal and formal needs assessments to identify the need for data-related professional development. For example, RAENs in New York conduct regional needs assessments and refer programs that are requesting support on data to the contracted state data expert. In Ohio, program staff submit Individual Professional Development Plans to the state as part of their grant applications. These plans are shared with OLRC for followup on accountability and data-related issues. Kansas conducts statewide focus groups and an online needs assessment to gather data on areas for professional development. In Texas, the Project GREAT centers hold quarterly meetings with programs to identify professional development needs.
- **Data Quality Certification Checklist.** In Ohio, each local program must complete and submit a Data Quality Certification Checklist to demonstrate how it implements NRS data quality standards. Using the checklists, the state can identify areas for professional development.
- **Situational.** New program staff, changes in programs and assessments, and changes in federal and state policies related to data lead to professional development.

Modes of Delivery and Content of Professional Development

Although most states use a combination of alternative and face-to-face modes to deliver professional development, face-to-face is the most common, and often preferred, mode. Kansas has moved to a series of workshops that incorporate a professional learning component in which participants, between sessions, apply information learned, and discuss what works in the next session.

[1] The State ABLE team is reviewing the four-category rating structure in the desk review. The ABLE Accountability Task Force will be asked for input on changing this to a two-category rating system—Acceptable and Non-Acceptable—beginning with the fischal year 2009 desk review.

In Ohio, aside from face-to-face workshops, in 2010, OLRC began to offer online facilitated mini-training sessions of approximately 1.5 to 2 hours on specific topical areas targeted to a cross-section of staff. This approach allows OLRC to "chunk" topics into smaller segments rather than having multiple topics presented in a much longer and intensive, 1-day, face-to-face format.

New York and Texas use Webinars, and Kansas is just being to use them for professional development. In New York, the NRS Liaison hosts Webinars and an "NRS Nuggets Blog." Together, these modes of delivery allow the state to share with all programs lessons learned from those receiving intensive technical and address questions from program staff, and they enable the NRS Liaison to work individually with programs on data-related issues. Other alternative modes of delivery in New York include virtual professional development, via a toll-free call in number, and beginning in 2010, Moodle training and live chat sessions.

States provide professional development sessions on their data systems (e.g., PABLO Basics in Kansas, ABLELink in Ohio). These sessions focus on data entry and the types of reports the system generates and how to interpret the reports and use the data for program improvement. Several states use or build on NRS professional development materials from national and regional workshops, such as data detective, to help state staff interpret data. Other professional development focuses on the desk review system and monitoring tools, understanding and interpreting data in NRS tables, and test administration certification (e.g., CASAS in Kansas, TABE and BEST Plus in Texas). Kansas integrates professional development on data and data use throughout its professional development offerings, regardless of the topic.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lesson: Provide State Leadership

Strong state leadership is critical to supporting quality data and providing professional development related to data issues. State directors, regional state staff, state and regional professional development staff, and independent state contractors all played a role in promoting data quality and data use.

State recommendations:

- Provide strong, unwavering support from the state office on the value and importance of accountability and ensure that the message is consistent.
- Model the use of data at the state level.
- Create mechanisms (e.g., PIPs and performance-based funding) for local programs to use data and hold people accountable throughout the system for improving the system.
- Use a Request for Proposal (RFP) to contract a neutral third party to support state efforts to promote data quality and use and conduct NRS training. This breaks down barriers that may exist between programs and data quality experts. Programs feel that a neutral party is not there to judge them, and program staff are not fearful of asking questions to help improve their programs.
- Build trust between your state and regional professional development providers and local programs to bridge frustration that local programs may feel with the data system requirements mandated by the state.

- Mandate NRS training for all staff involved in data management.
- Have data be a part of every RFP.
- Allocate State Leadership funds to local programs for professional development.
- Implement a process that ensures interactions between local program directors and data entry staff. Interactions will ensure data quality and the flow of data between the two.
- Meet with other WIA partners to discuss their data systems, data reporting requirements, and data needs. These efforts can lead to interagency data-sharing agreements and better service integration.

Lesson: Provide Ongoing Professional Development on Data-Related Issues Based on the Needs of Local Programs

Although states indicated that resources, such as staff and time, are limited, they also recognized that professional development is necessary to ensure that data are accurate and timely and that local program staff understand how to interpret and use data to improve program quality.

State recommendations:

- Conduct needs assessments to determine how best to support the data needs of local programs
- Use quarterly desk reviews and other monitoring tools to customize technical assistance and professional development for states and to plan statewide professional development on broad themes
- Have each program develop a PIP and report on it quarterly to determine progress. Use these plans to target professional development to programs and plan for statewide professional development
- Make professional development relevant to programs and include a dialogue between programs and the staff providing assistance
- Integrate data use into all professional development events to ensure a seamless process for promoting program improvement

Lesson: Provide Multiple Delivery Modes for Professional Development

Multiple modes of delivery allow staff to access professional development more readily and provides opportunities for all program staff to share in the professional development and lessons learned from programs that were targeted for intensive technical assistance.

State recommendations:

- After face-to-face professional development, conduct Webinars and virtual conference calls to impact the statewide system and reach all programs.
- Create queries for programs so that they look at their own data to determine how it can benefit them. Have programs create their own queries as they look at their own populations and data.
- Consider online professional development, particularly if the state covers a large geographical area. Once content is developed, online professional development can be repeated, without the cost and time of developing new content or incurring travel-related expenses.

- Maintain a databank of data experts from local programs. These experts can support other local programs on an as-needed basis.

Lesson: Build on What Currently Exists

To support data quality and data use, states should take advantage of existing professional development and technical assistance resources.

State recommendations:

- Participate in national NRS training that is provided by the American Institutes for Research.
- Use the resources provided on the NRS Web site to support data entry, quality, monitoring, and use.
- Contact other states that have experience in providing professional development on data use. Learn from successful strategies that other states have use and adapt them to develop policies and procedures that help local program staff in your state use data to improve programs.

Appendix A. Data-Related Activities in Kansas

Overview of State Context

The Adult Education Office is housed within the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), the state agency for postsecondary education that administers funding from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and distributes the funds to eligible local programs. The Adult Education Office oversees the delivery of adult education services and maintains the Kansas State Literacy Resource Center whose mission is to enhance systems that provide basic education skills across the state.

Data System

PABLO is the Web-based Kansas adult education data collection and reporting system that conforms to the requirements of the National Reporting System (NRS). This system allows the state to generate a wide range of individual student-level reports (e.g., tests given, dates, test scores) and eight disaggregated reports (e.g., by age, ethnicity, gender, disability). In addition, validation queries have been designed to provide another level of data quality checking. PABLO has the capability to run a variety of ad hoc reports from data that has been entered into the system. In rare instances, program staff request special reports (e.g., number of refugees being served), which will then be provided. All staff have access to data at the local level. Programs can request up to three staff to have “read and write” access; the remainder has “read only” access. At the state level, the state director of Adult Education, the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development, and the associate director of Adult Education and GED Testing have full access. The host institution, KBOR, provides institutional research staff to assist with maintaining and updating the PABLO data collection and reporting system.

Data Required

Kansas requires that federal core measures and state measures be entered into the system. The federal core measures are outcome, descriptive, and participation measures.

- Outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, received secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training.
- Descriptive measures include student demographics, primary and secondary goals, the program, employment status, etc.
- Participation measures include student contact hours and the program enrollment type (e.g., family literacy or workplace literacy).

State measures are:

- Increase involvement in children’s education (family literacy programs)
- Increase involvement in children’s literacy activities (family literacy programs)
- Demonstrate college readiness (at the credit-bearing level, above developmental education as defined by the Adult Education Office)
- Acquisition of Kansas’s WorkReady! credential

All but the last two measures count as outcomes in the funding formula. However, the last two measures do count toward the Indicators of Program Quality funding portion of the performance-based formula.

Policies and Procedures to Support Data Quality and Program Improvement

Kansas has several policies in place to promote data quality and program improvement, including performance-based funding, program monitoring (desk reviews and onsite monitoring), program improvement plans (PIPs), and program self-evaluations. Local programs receive funding for the initial year of the grant period through a competitive process. However, funding for the second year is contingent on how each provider performs during the first year on the following negotiated targets: number of participants served, percentage of participants who achieve or complete an educational functioning level, percentage of participants who identify the goal of *enter employment* and achieve the outcome, percentage of participants who identify the goal of *retain/improve employment* and achieve the outcome, percentage of participants who indentify the goal of *obtaining the GED* and achieve the outcome, and percentage of participants who identify the goal of *entering postsecondary education* or training and achieve the outcome.

Although KBOR's Adult Education Office expects programs to enter data into PABLO daily, it requires that data be entered every 30 days, at a minimum, to facilitate regular analyses of performance (i.e., progress toward targets) using real-time data. As part of a system of checks and balances to see whether data entry is complete and accurate, the state's contracted third-party program monitor reviews a randomly selected sample of learners' files in each program every year (100% monitoring). In addition, teachers are requested to review the data to ensure that it is complete and accurate. On a quarterly basis, the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development reviews *Quarterly Program Improvement Plan Progress Reports* from local programs and provides feedback, primarily by e-mail, to programs about their progress as evidenced by data in PABLO. The e-mails provide a written review of the progress that can be referenced in subsequent reviews.

The Adult Education Office conducts quarterly desk reviews of local providers' data to determine whether the adult education program is meeting the state's performance measures that were negotiated with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education. If the data look uncertain, then the state director e-mails or calls the program with questions. The state director indicated that Kansas is a "catalyst for programs to think about data in a different way." Based on the program's response, the state director can generally determine whether the program is actually looking at the data. The Quarterly reviews allow programs to compare where they stand in different quarters within the year or with previous years and to see if they are making progress in meeting the negotiated program improvement objectives in the PIP. A program's PIP, which is reported quarterly, includes measures that show the program uses data. It also includes the impact of professional development activities and other state leadership projects on the program's effort to achieve its program improvement objective. Each program also completes an annual self-evaluation based on the monitoring instrument aligned with the state's *Indicators of Program Quality*. Quarterly reviews, along with end-of-year reviews, allow the Adult Education Office to individualize professional development for programs and plan for professional development on a statewide basis for those themes that appear across programs.

The Adult Education Office's onsite monitoring reviews are conducted by an individual who is knowledgeable of the Workforce Investment Act and the state's *Indicators of Program Quality*. Monitoring and program staff examine the program's data in PABLO and program processes. The monitor uses these to determine the program's ratings on each of the *Indicators of Program Quality*. The monitoring results enable the Adult Education Office to determine the technical assistance and professional development needs for programs statewide and locally.

Kansas issues report cards based on monitoring reviews. Although the report cards are more for public relations purposes, they allow programs to see how they compare with each other and with the state's negotiated averages. Thus, the report cards serve as an incentive for programs to improve performance.

Program Use of Data

Programs use data to monitor their own progress to determine whether they are on course to meet the state's negotiated core and secondary performance measures. Programs can compare data from the current year with data from the previous year to identify areas for improvement and complete or update their PIPs. Programs make instructional and programmatic decisions by looking at what is occurring in the classroom and how teachers are performing. They use data, for example, to monitor outreach sites (sites that offer classes not located at the main site) to determine whether the site should be kept. If recruitment is down or if students are not generating enough outcomes to justify expenditures at the site, then the program may choose to close the site and put funds into better performing sites.

Programs vary in their use of data. More experienced program directors focus on performance and use data to drive decisions. Some teachers, however, see using data as extra work and do not see the relevance of it to inform their instruction. However, the culture has begun to change as local program directors emphasize the use of data and make it a priority. The state director indicated that adult educators in Kansas have become "data savvy" as a result of the Adult Education Office's continued focus on data. According to state staff, program administrators are moving from a focus on the accuracy of data to becoming more proactive about the quality of their program and its performance in more refined analyses of data. For example, local programs may compare different teachers teaching the same class on different nights who have different student performance levels. Seeing the difference, program directors bring the data to the teacher whose students are performing at a lower level and discuss the factors that may be contributing to that difference. From that discussion, professional development needs might be identified or perhaps a teacher's unacknowledged bias could be revealed.

KBOR's Adult Education Office supports programs' use of data in several ways. It suggests ways in which a program can look at data that may not have been considered by the program (e.g., looking at data from posttests, educational gains, and hours required before a program may administer a posttest). Data from those items could result in a local program changing its session schedules to make sure that students receive enough hours of instruction within a session (e.g., before a break for holidays or other instructional interruption) before posttesting can occur.

The state also models the use of data for decisionmaking (e.g., changing performance indicators based on program data), thus reinforcing the use of data by local programs.

Mechanisms of Professional Development

KBOR's Adult Education Office is responsible for professional development that is coordinated and often delivered by the associate director of Adult Education for Professional Development. The state targets specific professional development activities on a yearly basis and provides a calendar of events so that local programs can plan to participate. Technical assistance activities are planned on an as-needed basis, but the Adult Education Office sees technical assistance and professional development going hand-in-hand.

State Delivery of Professional Development on Data Use

Drivers of Professional Development

Several factors determine the focus of professional development to support data use.

- **Philosophy of KBOR's Adult Education Office.** The state views professional development on data as part of its overall system of data-driven decisionmaking and thus integrates data into all professional development offerings.
- **Ongoing monitoring.** Staff of the Adult Education Office continually monitor data input to help the state detect quickly any data-related issues that require professional development or technical assistance.
- **Quarterly desk reviews.** Findings from the quarterly desk reviews enable the state to customize professional development to foster program improvement.
- **PIPs.** All programs must complete a PIP that shows improvement objectives. The PIP and the quarterly updates help the state to target professional development.
- **Program self-evaluations.** Each program must complete an annual self-evaluation before and in conjunction with the annual monitoring visit. The self-evaluation, based on the monitoring instrument and aligned with the *Indicators of Program Quality*, helps the Adult Education Office identify areas for professional development.
- **End-of-year reports from programs.** Each year, staff from the Adult Education Office review the end-of-year reports that programs submit. These reports help the state to identify areas on which programs need to focus.
- **Needs assessments.** Although not conducted this year, staff from the Adult Education Office had in years past conducted focus groups across the state and online needs assessments to gather data about areas for professional development.

Modes of Delivering Professional Development

KBOR's Adult Education Office provides professional development through face-to-face workshops and Webinars.

- **Workshops.** Professional development in the state is delivered primarily through a series of workshops that incorporate a professional learning component. Between workshops, participants return to their classrooms and/or programs and apply information learned and assess what went well and what they may do differently the next time. For example, in a series of workshops on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), participants had interim assignments where they were asked to review CASAS assessment data from their classes and (a) focus on how they used the information to change, improve, or add to instruction; how the changes went; and what they would do differently the next time and (b) identify other questions they could draw from the data.

- **Webinars.** Kansas is exploring the use of technology for delivering professional development and is planning to offer its first Webinar in mid-2010.

Content of Professional Development

In addition to the customized technical assistance and professional development that comes from the desk reviews and the PIPs, KBOR's Adult Education Office provides a variety of other professional development opportunities that it posts on its statewide calendar. The Adult Education Office integrates training on data and data use throughout its professional development offerings, regardless of the topic. The state uses data detective and other materials from NRS in the professional development offered to program staff. Both teachers and administrators participate in professional development activities, and the audience varies by topic.

- **New Directors Workshop.** This workshop provides new program directors (those with 3-years or less of experience as an AEFLA-funded adult education program) with an overview of the data system and the types of reports the system generates. This workshop is followed up with training on how to use the data.
- **PABLO Basics.** This workshop introduces directors to entering data and finding data in PABLO and lays the groundwork for using the data. Next year this course will evolve into a series of workshops for directors. The series will (a) focus on data quality and how to review data throughout the year, as well as at the end of the year to prepare for the end of the year report and (b) include data detective activities.
- **CASAS Certification.** These are two 1-day workshops that go beyond test administration and focus on how to use the CASAS assessments to improve instruction. Participants receive assignments before the initial workshop to encourage them to think about the data prior to the training. After they have completed the initial workshop, participants must apply what they learned (e.g., how to use data from a CASAS assessment for instructional purposes) to their own classrooms. During the followup workshop, participants focus on their experiences in using the data (e.g., what worked, what could be done better, what other ways could the data be used, what issues were raised as a result of using the data, etc.). Participants should complete the followup workshop within 6–12 months of completing the initial workshop.
- **Making Data Accessible to Stakeholders.** This workshop was offered several years ago to help administrative staff create charts and graphs from data so that stakeholders could easily understand how adult education programs were performing.

Support for Professional Development

KBOR's Adult Education Office sets the professional development schedule for each academic year. Professional development is planned in advance, as the state passes 5% of its State Leadership funds to local programs for professional development. Programs hire substitute teachers so that full-time teachers can attend professional development sessions. Part-time teachers are paid for their time to attend professional development sessions. The program pays for travel expenses.

Challenges to Delivering Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The two primary challenges for the state are limited staff and time.

- The Adult Education Office lacks sufficient time and staff to visit programs and really examine the data to understand the context in which a program operates. Staff believe that gathering information on site may bring to light issues not obtained through telephone calls (e.g., the classroom has no walls and holds three classes in the room simultaneously) and issues for why a program may not be meeting its educational gains. More indepth information would help the state better customize technical assistance for its educational programs. Unfortunately, field visits to programs are time intensive, and with only three staff conducting the visits, all programs are not visited.
- Sustaining technical assistance activities is difficult with limited staff and time.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned from the delivery of professional development and technical assistance on data use include the following:

- Professional development and technical assistance must be relevant and include a dialogue between programs and the staff who are providing the assistance.
- The state must provide feedback to local programs on an ongoing basis. The feedback must occur with the quarterly desk reviews so that programs fully understand the issues and how to address them.
- The quarterly updates of the PIP have helped staff of the Adult Education Office to understand the programs' thinking and their approaches to use data. Staff were able to see things that programs overlooked (e.g., noticing that a low percentage of students took the posttest). Asking questions of the programs have helped the programs look at data differently and identify factors that were overlooked.

Recommendations for States

Kansas offered several recommendations for states that want to promote the use of data:

- Integrate data use into all professional development events to promote a seamless process for program improvement. Do not let limited time, money, and staff be an issue that prohibits professional development on data use.
- See what other states are doing and learn from them.
- Hold people accountable throughout the system for improving the system.
- Create a need for programs to use data. The PIP and performance-based funding means that programs need to use data to track their program's progress in meeting the state-negotiated targets.
- Demonstrate the importance of data to set the tone for the entire state. Show that involvement with data is everyone's job, not just the responsibility of the person who enters the data into PABLO. Explain why we need to know how effective we are as a system and why it is essential to evaluate our effectiveness.

Appendix B. Data-Related Activities in New York State

Overview of State Context

The Adult Education and Workforce Development (AEWD) Office, housed in the New York State Education Department, oversees adult basic education, English language acquisition, family literacy, workplace literacy, adult career and technical education, instructional components of apprenticeship programs, and workforce preparation programs. AEWD is responsible for providing professional development and technical assistance to more than 200 adult education agencies through the Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN). The Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) operates Adult Student Information System and Technology Support (ASISTS)—the data management system of the state's adult literacy program.

Data System

ASISTS is a robust Web-based data system that allows the state to generate a wide range of reports (e.g., class, teacher, site, funding source, instructional type) to support program improvement. The system generates actual National Reporting System (NRS) reports in real time and is accessible to staff trained on the use of the system. State staff and the seven RAEN directors have access to many of the reports, with the exception of student data. Programs can request read-only access for staff who can monitor progress in real time, any time. Staff reports can be disaggregated by teacher, to allow programs to focus on professional development of staff to improve learner performance. Security levels built into the system mean that staff can access only their classes.

Data Required

New York requires that core and secondary measures be entered into the system; however, only outcome measures are used in rating program performance. The core measures are outcome, descriptive, and participation:

- Outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, received secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training.
- Descriptive measures include student demographics, goals, and status.
- Participation measures include contact hours and enrollment in instructional programs for special populations, such as family literacy.

The secondary measures, mandated by the state, involve employment, community, and family:

- Reduction in receiving public assistance (applies only to those students who receive public assistance upon entry).
- Community refers to citizenship skill attainment, voting behavior, and general involvement in community activities.
- Family refers to involvement in children's education and literacy-related activities.

An automated individual student record system tracks each student's personnel information and demographics, goals, enrollment information, contact hours, assessments (pre- and postassessment), outcomes, and instructional activity (e.g., schedule information, including all available classes, groups, one-on-one tutorial sessions, instructors, and administrative staff).

Policies and Procedures to Support Data Quality and Program Improvement

To promote data quality and program improvement, New York implements desk monitoring, onsite monitoring, and program report cards. Starting July 2010, the state will also implement performance-based funding. The report cards, implemented 3 years ago, rank programs by quartiles; those placing in the first (bottom) quartile are placed into corrective action. The state built the report card scores into allocation rewards. If a program performs in the top quartile of the report cards, then it receives 5 bonus points on its Workforce Investment Act (WIA) proposal. If the program falls in the bottom quartile, then it loses 5 points on its proposal.

Program monitoring has three tiers:

- Quarterly reviews of program data and evaluation reports by state regional staff
- Desks reviews by the contracted New York State NRS liaison who is responsible for NRS-related professional development and support for the Individual Technical Assistance Program (ITAP)
- Onsite reviews by regional state staff and the NRS liaison

If, during a desk review, a program appears to have gaps in information or is struggling to meet state benchmarks, then the NRS liaison and regional Sate staff will conduct an onsite visit, and the consultant will provide technical assistance. According to state staff, this process results in a faster response when data goes askew.

Each year, based on desk reviews and needs assessments by RAENs, the state selects 20–30 programs (at least 3 per region) that because of size or performance, require intensive technical assistance and become part of the state's ITAP. The NRS liaison customizes the technical assistance to meet the needs of the individual program. One of the elements of the technical assistance is a customized flow chart (or Task Master) on data management and flow. The Task Master has proven to be a useful technical assistance tool for large or struggling programs because it provides specific information about tasks (e.g., intake and assessment, data input) that must be done, staff assigned to each task, timeframe for completion, and next steps. Through the Task Master, the NRS liaison holds programs accountable and spot checks the program according to the Task Master (e.g., have reports been submitted on time). If the program is not following the schedule according to the Task Master, then the program receives a monitoring visit.

The state also sets a date in each quarter when local programs must enter data. Setting a target date prevents programs from scrambling at the last minute and encourages them to stay on top of the data. The state recognizes the impact at the federal level if data, particularly for large programs, are not timely and accurate.

Program Use of Data

State leadership have promoted the use of data by modeling its use at the state level, having regional state staff reinforce the importance of data with program managers, and providing technical assistance and professional development on data use. Through a deeper understanding of how to analyze data, local program staff have become more comfortable with data and more receptive about using it than they had in the past. For example, programs use funding reports to gauge contact hour reimbursement schedules and to determine realistic posttesting schedules based on contact hours, rather than arbitrarily setting the schedules. Programs also use data to inform instruction based on disaggregated student data related to test scores and characteristics. For example, programs are using student demographics and test scores to determine what instructional materials to purchase and what skills new instructional hires need to have.

Mechanisms of Professional Development

New York has several interconnected mechanisms in place to support professional development on data use. New York has contracted with a data quality expert (NRS liaison) to develop and deliver professional development and technical assistance to help staff at local adult literacy programs identify and define the interrelationships between data and program performance, to explore ways to self-monitor programs to strengthen the connection between performance and data, and to identify and implement program improvement efforts. (Also see the discussion about for specific workshop sessions in the section titled “Content of Professional Development.”) The NRS liaison works closely with the state’s seven RAENs, because the RAENs know the programs in their region, conduct regional needs assessment to determine professional development needs, and provide regional professional development. In addition, the vendor for the data system provides training on data entry.

State Delivery of Professional Development on Data Use

Drivers of Professional Development

Several factors determine the focus of professional development to support data use.

- **Regional quarterly reviews.** State regional staff conduct quarterly reviews of state data within the region to identify gaps in information and need for more thorough desk reviews. These data reviews are examined by the contracted NRS liaison to determine if more support is needed.
- **Desk reviews.** As noted previously, the results of desk reviews may lead to intensive technical assistance for selected programs that have gaps in data or are slipping behind in meeting state benchmarks. Technical assistance is customized to the individual program and focuses on the data quality issues that were noted in the desk reviews.
- **Needs assessments.** RAENs identify needs around the use of data through a needs assessment that they conduct on a regional basis.
- **Data checks.** The RAEN directors conduct basic data quality checks of program data to identify gaps in data and identify areas for professional development. The RAEN directors also provide technical assistance based on their findings and seek assistance

from the NRS liaison for specific issues that require indepth knowledge of the data system and data issues.

Modes of Delivering Professional Development

In addition to the intensive technical assistance provided to programs participating in ITAP, New York State provides professional development through multiple delivery modes.

- **Face-to-face professional development.** The state's preferred mode of professional development is interactive face-to-face workshop sessions. These sessions provide opportunities for participants to strategize on how to connect federal and state policies because they are both part of the same data system.
- **NRS Nuggets blog.** The NRS Nuggets blog, hosted by the NRS liaison, is a valuable resource for programs that are not receiving the intensive technical assistance provided to the 30 programs that are selected each year for focused technical assistance. The blog provides an opportunity for the data consultant to share "nuggets" of information gleaned from working with programs that are receiving intensive technical assistance and for programs to ask questions daily and seek assistance regardless if they are having difficulties.
- **Webinars.** The NRS liaison conducts Webinars for programs. These Webinars benefit programs in several ways. They allow programs that are not receiving intensive technical assistance to meet with the data quality consultant. They also provide a way for sharing lessons learned by those programs that are receiving intensive technical assistance. The RAEN directors are on the call to talk about lessons learned and strategies for programs to use to ensure that other programs do not make the same mistakes. Additionally, Webinars provide support to individual programs by allowing the consultant to upload a program's electronic database on the screen and going directly into the program's account to show program managers exactly where they need to make corrections.
- **Data counseling sessions.** RAENs annually host a 2-day NRS data counseling session where programs can bring NRS data to a location selected and paid for by RAEN and receive one-on-one technical assistance from professional development staff.
- **Toll-free telephone number.** The state has a toll-free telephone number that program staff can use to ask questions of the data consultant. The toll-free calls allow great flexibility for teachers because they do need to be a work to participate. In FY 2009, the consultant conducted 114 virtual conference calls.
- **Moodle sessions.** Using the state's Moodle training platform, the NRS liaison will begin to offer distance learning NRS training for program staff in 2010. The initial target audience will be data managers in ITAPs.
- **Live chat sessions.** These biweekly chat sessions via the Web will begin in 2010 and provide an opportunity for programs to chat live with the NRS liaison.

Content of Professional Development

Through desk monitoring, the state identifies the focus of the assistance for the 30 programs that are selected annually to receive technical assistance. The content of the technical assistance are customized to the needs of each program.

- **Professional Development Curriculum.** The state's AEWD Team is in the process of revising its NRS data manual and will have the state data quality consultant prepare a revised data quality professional development curriculum and materials that aligned with the revised NRS Manual. The NRS liaison will provide professional development workshops in each of the seven RAENS twice annually on the curriculum that includes the following topical areas:
  — NRS Fundamentals (6 hours)
  — NRS Goal Setting for Teachers (3 hours)
  — Using NRS Data to Improve Program Performance (6 hours)
  — Understanding and Using the New York State Adult Education Report Card (3 hours)

These workshops are for program administrators, professional development coordinators, data managers, teachers, counselors, and intake staff.

- **Data Quality Review Form.** This full-day workshop focuses on the use of the data quality review form for purposes of program improvement.
- **Test Administrator Training.** The state provides professional development to staff who administer the state assessments. Best-plus assessors receive professional development at least once per fiscal year by state-certified trainers. Assessors of the Test of Adult Basic Education receive professional development every 3 years. All professional development addresses the what, where, and why of NRS.
- **ASISTS.** Programs receive day-to-day technical assistance as needed on the ASISTS information system. The state also assigns two full-time technical support staff to programs. This arrangement allows technical staff to build relations with program staff and know the issues that each program is confronting.

Support for Professional Development

Generally, individual programs pay for teachers' time and travel expenses to participate in professional development.

Challenges in Delivering Professional Development and Technical Assistance

New York identified several challenges in delivering professional development and technical assistance.

- **Providing professional development that meets the needs of its diverse programs.** For example, New York City Department of Education's adult education program serves several thousand students, but Allegheny County (New York) serves six students. Although both need help, the question is how much help can the state provide and how can that help be provided best. The state recognizes it is important to provide attention to the large programs because difficulties in these programs can affect the state report. The state needs additional resources to meet all the needs. To address its concerns for 2010, the state contract for data quality will support two full-time professional staff to effectively reach more programs; the state has begun to use distance professional development more frequently to meet the needs of all programs.

- **Providing followup to all programs that participate in professional development.** The state lacks resources to followup on all professional development sessions; however, it follows closely the 30 programs receiving intensive TA. For other programs, the NRS Liaison looks at the data of programs that came to the professional development to check if they are implementing the tools or guidelines of the professional development.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned from the delivery of professional development and technical assistance on data use include the following.

- Face-to-face professional development provides the best foundational support. If face-to-face professional development is followed up with Webinars and virtual conference calls, then professional development can affect the statewide system and reach all programs.
- Creating queries for programs to look at their own data benefits programs. Programs can help their own cause by creating their own queries as they look at their own populations and data.
- A neutral party (i.e., contracted staff, not a state employee) can break down barriers that may exist between programs and the data quality experts. Programs feel that the neutral party is not there to judge them, and program staff are not fearful of asking questions of a neutral party to help improve their programs.
- Modeling the use of data at the state level encourages data use at the local program level. Modeling demonstrates to programs the importance of data and the impact that data can have on programs.

Recommendations for States

New York offered several recommendations for states that want to promote the use of data:

- Have data be a part of every Request for Proposal (RFP) for state funding.
- Create a need for local programs to use data. New York’s move to performance-based funding means that programs will need to use data to track their program against state benchmarks.
- Organize a program improvement committee to support states in using data.
- Mandate NRS training for all staff involved in data management.
- Use an RFP to contract a neutral third party to conduct NRS training
- Participate in the national training on NRS provided by the American Institutes for Research and use the resources provided to support data entry, quality, monitoring, and use.

Appendix C. Data-Related Activities in Ohio

Overview of State Context

The Ohio Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) system is administered by the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR). The Ohio Performance Accountability System (OPAS) within the ABLE system guides instructional programs as they implement required components of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). OPAS is OBR's ABLE system response to the federally legislated National Reporting System (NRS) for adult education. The Ohio Literacy Resource Center (OLRC), housed at Kent State University, provides assistance in operating the accountability system for Ohio's ABLE system.

Data System

ABLELink is a non-Web-based data system that provides the accountability data that the State of Ohio submits to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). Ohio is planning to move toward a Web-based system. Ohio requires programs to submit data quarterly; however programs have access to their local systems at all times and may enter data into the local database at any time. Although not mandated, programs have either a dedicated data person or a staff member who is responsible for program data. The state requires programs to keep data systems current. Several systems are in place to ensure accurate and reliable data.

ABLELink has an internal system of checks and balances that make it difficult for staff to enter erroneous data. Entry levels, exit levels, and student achievement are generated by the program and are not editable by local programs; this information is determined by assessment results and student attendance. Data points that are considered to be out of range (e.g., dates, student ages, assessment scores) will create blanks in required data fields. Error validation reports (EVRs) provide lists of missing or erroneous data for programs. Until the EVRs are reconciled, annual performance reports will not balance, and the program will not be able to transmit final reports. Ohio also has a final system of checks and balances and reviews data for problems or errors. The state reviews several areas for inconsistent or incorrect information, including submitted data (compared with data match reports), goals versus outcomes, and historical performance. If such data look out of line, incongruous with past performance, or otherwise erroneous, the state requests clarifications, thus ensuring data quality.

The data system allows local programs to generate more than 50 built-in reports including a wide range of indepth reports (e.g., student attendance and performance reports that are specific to teacher, class, or a set of classes) to support program improvement. The system runs through Microsoft Access. All programs are linked to the database through their local computers. The link allows programs to run queries and reports directly on the data with full MS Access functionality. Program administrators can generate reports as frequently as they like, thus providing access to information for decisionmaking. At the state level, indepth reports are generated for onsite monitoring visits and used for discussions with administrators and data entry staff.

Only program staff approved by the state may enter and review data and data reports. These individuals sign a confidentiality agreement and are given a user name and password to enter the system. The director and staff of OLRC and state staff also have access to the data.

Data Required

Ohio requires local programs to enter outcome, descriptive, and participation measures into the ABLELink system.

- Outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, received secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training.
- Descriptive measures include student demographics, primary and secondary goals, primary classes and sites, employment status, etc.
- Participation measures include student contact hours and program enrollment type (e.g., family literacy or workplace literacy).

Additional information on ABLE staff, sites, and classes are also entered. Information that supplements NRS-required information is also collected. Supplemental data elements include data used for marketing (how students heard about the program); community involvement data (whether students have a library card or are registered to vote); supplemental goals (stackable certificates; "soft" outcomes); specialty program measures for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), workplace literacy, and other areas.

Policies and Procedures to Support Data Quality and Program Improvement

Ohio has several resources, policies, and procedures in place to promote data quality and program improvement. These include state resource materials and monitoring reviews. Program staff are required to read two resource manuals—Ohio Performance Accountability System Manual and ABLELink Manual—that are provided by the state. The OPAS Manual guides local programs in their implementation of ABLE programs and provides the parameters of the data system and the program requirements. It includes guidelines and polices related to orientation, registration and enrollment, assessment; goal setting and individual learning plans, curriculum and instruction; monitoring student performance, exiting students, and followup procedures to determine goal attainment. These requirements are reinforced formally and informally in the field through desk reviews and state efforts to promote the accountability system. The ABLELink Manual provides the mechanics of how to enter data and use the program.

To make certain that local programs have policies and procedures in place to ensure quality data, Ohio developed the Ohio Local Program Certification Checklist, which is a modified version of the Data Quality Certification Checklist that states are required to submit to OVAE. Each local program must complete and submit the checklist to the state to demonstrate how the program implements the data quality standards from NRS. The standards are organized into four content areas: data foundation and structure; data collection and verification; data analysis and reporting; and staff development. The staff development standards address whether the program has systems for professional development on OPAS for local staff. This includes ensuring that the program has provided training on data collection, measures, assessment, goal setting, and followup procedures. Standards also focus on whether training is ongoing and continuous (for all new staff), meets the needs of local staff, and is designed to improve data quality. Based on program submissions, the state rates the program as acceptable, superior, or exemplary. If the local program fails to meet exemplary standards in any area, then the program's performance is considered unacceptable, and the program must include a brief data quality improvement plan that describes how it will move toward exemplary status.

The desk review is a formal, high-stakes data report that focuses on two areas: student performance (e.g., how programs measure up according to state targets for enrollment and retention, pre- and posttest rates, core indicators of performance, followup outcomes) and compliance (e.g., state and federal standards and grant requirements). Based on the results of the desk review, programs are rated on a four-category scale: Exemplary, Superior, Acceptable and Nonacceptable. Programs rated Exemplary are eligible for incentive funds. Programs rated Nonacceptable receive targeted technical assistance. Programs are subject to defunding if they are not responsive to the technical assistance and do not make the required changes. Programs take the desk review process seriously and understand the importance of accurate and reliable data and the consequences of a poor rating. Program administrators are knowledgeable about their own data, how they matchup to state targets, and how data drives their decisions at the local level. The desk reviews have driven programs to improve their data quality and reporting: Programs that receive a high rating want to retain that high score, and programs with lower ratings seek to improve their programs, student performance, and scores on the desk review.

The ABLE team is reviewing the current four-category rating structure of the desk review. The ABLE Accountability Task Force will be asked for input on changing this rating from four to two categories—Acceptable and Nonacceptable—beginning with the FY 2009 desk review. Incentives and other elements of the desk review would be maintained.

Onsite monitoring provides the state with another opportunity for state staff to engage with program administrators and data entry staff regarding the quality of data. During these visits, the state runs full reports from the data entered and develops an indepth picture of program performance.

In July 2008, with a recommendation from the Ohio Accountability Task Force, the state commissioned MPR Associates to assist Ohio in thinking through performance-based funding and how it would look in the state. However, as a result of changes in the administration of adult education in Ohio, implementation has not yet moved forward. Ohio's ABLE program is waiting for input and feedback from OBR before moving forward.

Program Use of Data

Since the inception of the accountability system, the state has given programs the opportunity to provide input each year for requests for features and reports to allow programs to delve more deeply into data.

Although not all program staff are comfortable with using data, they appreciate the importance of data and the high stakes placed on accountability at the program, state, and federal levels, and they understand the importance of accurate and reliable data. Programs use data in a variety of ways. For example, student demographic data may be used to market the program to populations that may be underrepresented, and student progress data may be used to evaluate teacher performance. Program directors have used ABLELink data to assist in making determinations about opening and closing sites; report outcomes to local politicians; open dialogues with partner agencies, including higher education and potential workplace literacy sites. Programs that have multiple funding sources can share data reports with other agencies (e.g., Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, United Way) to show how the shared students are performing and the progress they are making. Programs housed in local school districts can use the reports to show the value of adult education to the community and boards of education.

Mechanisms of Professional Development

OLRC is the primary mechanism in place to support professional development on data use. OLRC has expertise in accountability and manages the ABLELink central database. In addition, OLRC provides technical support to programs via phone, e-mail, and instant messenger for general program use, reports, and data matching, and it also provides beginning and advanced training on ABLELink. Additional training may be coordinated through Ohio's four regional resource centers (RRCs). Each center coordinates the professional development in its region, and each has an area of expertise (e.g., special needs, English as a second language). An RRC may work outside its region if the request is in its area of expertise. If a program in any region requires support on data and accountability, an RRC will contact OLRC to provide professional development.

In addition to the OLRC director and staff, data training is provided by consultants. These individuals are ABLELink experts who work in local programs and are retained as consultants by OLRC. Consultants also provide professional development to other local programs on an as-needed basis.

State Delivery of Professional Development on Data Use

Drivers of Professional Development

Several factors determine the focus of professional development to support data use.

- **Individual and programmatic professional development plans.** Individual staff develop and submit Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs) to the program director who, in turn, develops the Program Professional Development Plan (PPDP). These plans are submitted to the state as part of the grant application. The state reviews the plans and shares them with the Resource Center Network (RCN). The RCN is comprised of the four RRCs and OLRC. Plans that include accountability or ABLELink training are shared with OLRC, which is responsible for professional development on accountability and the NRS.
- **Desk reviews.** The results of desk reviews lead to targeted technical assistance for programs who are rated as Nonacceptable. This technical assistance may include professional development related to the two focus areas of desk reviews: student performance and compliance issues. The technical assistance is tailored to the needs of the specific program.
- **Data Quality Certification Checklist.** As local programs complete the checklist, areas for professional development may be identified.

- **Situational.** As programs identify specific data needs, given real time and circumstances, they can contact OLRC. Situations may include hiring new data entry staff or new program administrators who need immediate support.
- **Professional development evaluation forms.** Participants complete an evaluation form after any professional development event. The form provides an opportunity for participants to request other professional development needs around a topic (e.g., accountability).

Modes of Delivering Professional Development

Ohio uses a combination of face-to-face and alternative modes to deliver professional development on data use.

- **Face-to-face professional development.** OLRC conducts face-to-face professional development with large and small groups.
- **Online facilitated mini-training sessions.** In 2010, OLRC began to deliver professional development via online, facilitated mini-training sessions on specific topics related to ABLELink and data use. These 1.5- to 2-hour sessions target a cross-section of staff and allow OLRC to provide professional development in "chunks" rather than having multiple topics presented in a much longer, intensive, 1-day, face-to-face format. The real-time training is provided through Elluminate. Participants receive e-mail handouts before the session and connect via the Web and conference calls. The presenter is broadcast via Webcam. Sessions allow for presentations, displays of information, and discussions. In the future, these sessions will be recorded so those that have missed them will have access to the information and materials presented. These sessions can occur with large and small groups.
- **Onsite consultants.** OLRC has a resource bank of data consultants (local program staff with data expertise) who can be sent to programs on an as-needed basis. Thus, when turnover in program administrators or data entry staff occurs, a trainer can be quickly sent to provide support on a variety of data and accountability issues.

Content of Professional Development

Ohio offers a variety of professional development content.

- **Onsite ABLELink.** OLRC consultants provide program staff with onsite ABLELink professional development at the beginning and advanced levels. Beginning sessions include information about how to enter and manage program data, ABLELink basics, basics of accountability, the NRS, introductions to data entry and reporting forms, and data use. Advanced sessions focus on how to incorporate other accountability methods and/or procedures into the program and classrooms and include such topics as customized reporting functions and features, data matching, and using data for program improvement. The state encourages program administrators and data entry staff to attend professional development sessions to ensure that everyone understands the system and the kinds of reports that it can generate.

- **ABLELink Annual and Interim Reporting.** This 5-hour workshop is designed for program managers and advanced data entry staff. It focuses on ensuring quality data and improving data quality and includes strategies for continuous improvement and using data for program management.
- **Understanding Your Desk Review.** This state or regional professional development session walks participants through the desk review system. Because program staff have become more familiar with desk reviews, the professional development focus of this workshop has moved to administrative, data entry, instructional, and program improvement strategies.
- **Test Administrator Training.** The state provides 5-hour professional development sessions for test administrators on each of the state's approved assessments: BEST Plus, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) ESL, and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Sessions on CASAS and TABE focus on how to analyze test data and use test results to inform instruction. The Northeast Resource Center provides professional development on BEST Plus, the Northwest Resource Center provides professional development on TABE, and the state's ABLE Office conducts sessions on CASAS.
- **Race and Ethnicity Reporting.** With the changes in race and ethnicity reporting beginning in 2011, the state will begin to provide professional development to ensure that local program staff are aware of the changes and its implications.
- **Annual Performance Report—Employment Reports Mini-Training.** For this mini-online professional development session, OLRC developed reports for programs that highlight how students are tallied for NRS Tables 5 and 13 (Obtain/Retain Employment). Programs repeatedly have difficulty with these types of data. Potential topics for future mini-online sessions to promote the use of data for program improvement may include:
  - Using Data for Instruction/Accountability for Teachers
  - Data Intervention (detecting problems before they become problems)
  - Using Microsoft Access/Excel to Create Customized Reports

Support for Professional Development

The state provides resources to support professional development on data use. It allocates funds for staff time, participant travel, and consultant funds and travel. Staff may be eligible for a stipend for participation in professional development if they are not being compensated by the local program for their time.

Challenges in Delivering Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The state identified several challenges in delivering professional development and technical assistance:

- Getting teachers to see the value of accountability and reporting for program improvement and getting them to participate in the professional development. The state believes that it is a paradigm shift for teachers to include accountability as an integral part of instruction. Administrators and data entry staff have become "true believers," but teachers have historically shied away from accountability.

- Providing meaningful professional development that is not fragmented or so intensive that participants have too much information to process. The implementation of the mini-online courses is addressing this concern.
- Providing followup to professional development is difficult because of the number of programs and related costs. However, implementation of the mini-online courses is designed to address this issue and build on prior knowledge.
- Moving to a Web-based data system in the future and addressing the changes that will entail at the state and local levels.
- Shrinking program and state budgets that limit what programs and the state can do. With accountability as a driver of the system, many teachers have to devote time to noninstructional paperwork without compensation.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned from the delivery of professional development and technical assistance on data use include the following:

- Having state staff make a concerted effort from the outset on the importance of accountability has helped to institutionalize accountability within the state and among local program administrators. The state message has been consistent—that is, accurate and reliable data are fundamental to the continued existence of the adult education system. The message for local program administrators and staff continues to reinforce that the NRS measures are the best way to accurately and uniformly show how programs are doing.
- Providing a lot of training in the first year that focused on the "why's" of accountability and the NRS, and then following up with the "how's" of entering data have helped state and local staff get familiar with the system.
- Setting up a technical assistance network for technology morphed into an accountability and technical training system that supports data entry, maintenance, quality, and use.
- Using local program data entry experts as consultants to other programs allows OLRC to more quickly meet local program requests for assistance.
- Building trust between OLRC staff and local programs has helped to bridge some of the frustrations that local programs feel with the requirements mandated by the state for implementation of the data system.
- Making access to information easy for program staff has encouraged staff to use the information. Quickly providing reports requested by program staff (e.g., breakdown of students not yet posttested by teachers) has facilitated the use of the information.

Recommendations for States

Ohio offered several recommendations for states that want to promote the use of data:

- Conduct a needs assessment through a survey of programs directed at administrators, teachers, and support staff to determine how best to support local program data needs.

- Provide strong, unwavering support from the state office on the value and importance of accountability. Ensure that the message is consistent.
- Consider online professional development or an alternative delivery system, particularly if the state covers a large geographical area. Once content is developed, online professional development can be repeated, without the cost and time of developing new content or incurring travel-related expenses.
- Take advantage of the professional development and technical assistance resources on the NRS Web site.
- Keep professional development current, consistent, and ongoing.
- Contact other states that have experience with providing quality professional development on data use to learn strategies and develop policies and procedures to support local program staff in using data to improve program quality.
- Meet with other WIA partners to discuss their data systems, data reporting requirements, and data needs. Interagency data-sharing agreements and better service integration can come from these efforts.

Appendix D. Data-Related Activities in Texas

Overview of State Context

Texas LEARNS, under an agreement with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), provides grant management, program assistance, support services, and other statewide initiatives to support professional and program development to Texas adult education and family literacy providers. TEA funds several state leadership projects, one of which is Project GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas). Project GREAT's eight regional centers are responsible for regional professional development and teacher training projects and support Texas LEARNS services.

Data System

The Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) is the real-time Web-based data collection system for the National Reporting System (NRS). It generates a wide range of reports, or as the state director indicated, "you name it, we got it." TEAMS generates twice as many state reports as federal reports. Per input from users, the state has combined some of the federal reports, such as Tables 4 and 4B, and modified some federal tables to display performance measures that Texas negotiated with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). Reports provide detailed information down to individual classroom, teacher, and student levels. For example, a program director can see how many more students need to be tested in a class to meet or pass an educational functioning level and meet the targeted performance measure.

The state has 12 levels of access to the data. For example, local program directors have direct access; state staff have access to all data across programs; and teachers have read-only access to data about their specific class or program. With permission from the local program, professional development staff from Project GREAT can also gain read-only access. The state is looking to revise the system to allow staff from Project GREAT to always have read-only access so that they can see all the reports in the region and plan for professional development.

Texas requires programs to submit data at least quarterly. The Adult Education Guidance Information System (AEGIS) is an electronic desk review tool that provides quarterly reports to the state office and local programs. *Report Issues* are sent out for informational purposes during the second and third quarters. The *AEGIS Report* is sent during the fourth quarter to local programs for required responses and final compliance reports. Local programs may request an *AEGIS Report* at anytime.

Data Required

Texas requires local programs to enter outcome, descriptive, and participation measures into TEAMS.

- Outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained or improved employment, received a secondary school diploma or GED, and placement in postsecondary education or training. With the exception of educational gain, the others are required measures for students with the stated goals and who exit the program.
- Descriptive measures include student demographics, primary and secondary goals, the program, employment status, etc.

- Participation measures include student contact hours and program enrollment type (e.g., family literacy or workplace literacy).

Secondary measures are optional measures of student outcomes and status, but such measures are not used as a basis for assessing state or local performance under the Workforce Investment Act. However, secondary measures are important to the identity of the program and the goals and purposes of adult education. Secondary measures include employment (reduction or elimination of student's public assistance grant as a result of employment *only*), community (citizenship, voting, community involvement) and family (increased involvement in children's literacy activities and in children's education).

Policies and Procedures to Support Data Quality and Program Improvement

Texas promotes data quality and data use for program improvement in several ways. Each program assigns a data entry person whose job it is to enter information into TEAMS. In very small programs, the director may be the data entry person. The state requests that data be entered in regular intervals (e.g., daily, weekly, or monthly) to avoid a large backlog of forms and to allow time to (a) check for completeness and accuracy of the data, (b) resolve issues, and (c) offer professional development to examine problems and issues that support program improvement. Data entry must be completed quarterly. The state also requires each program to assign one or more staff persons to perform data checking functions. Part of the programs' data collection process includes training all data collection staff on their roles and responsibilities and on the importance of data collection. After data is input into TEAMS, program directors must sign off that they gave the data entry person permission to enter the data into the system. The sign-off ensures that data are not compromised and are entered by individuals who are responsible for data entry.

Texas also conducts quarterly desk reviews through AEGIS. Program directors received professional development when the system was introduced in 2005, and as new program directors come on board, they get oriented with the system. Each local program is responsible for its program's performance. If programs do not meet the negotiated federal measures, then the programs must provide the state office with a written explanation and a program improvement plan (PIP) that addresses issues raised in the report (e.g., data collection and entry, local data transmission/submission, retention strategies, professional development plan, pre- and posttesting). Programs must meet at least 50% of their educational functioning level performance targets annually. One AEGIS chart shows every program (a fiscal agent number is assigned so programs remain anonymous) and how each program measures up to state and federal performance measures. Programs that meet performance measures are identified with a "green" bar and those that do not meet such measures are identified by a "red" bar. These charts are shared with programs so they know how they compare with each other. This comparison puts pressure on all programs to meet or exceed performance measures and also identifies the need for professional development and technical assistance. The state also gives certificates—platinum, gold, silver, and bronze—to programs that meet performance measures at various levels. Since the system was introduced, the number of certificates disseminated rose from 10 in 2005 to 100 in 2009.

Texas LEARNS developed a comprehensive report card to showcase the performances of individual programs and to enable comparisons with state and national averages. Programs are trained on how to complete the report cards, with the goal of offering programs a chance to build public support for adult education, inform students and others about program quality, and highlight efforts in program accountability. Report cards provide a ready source of information about local and state performance over time. The cards also assist in addressing the challenges programs face and inform programs of needed improvements.

The state is moving toward performance-based funding based on federal performance measures. Part of the funds will be allocated to programs based on the proportion of measures that they meet. If a program does not meet all federal measures, then the remaining funds will be set aside to provide performance-based funding for state performance measures (number enrolled with at least 12 contact hours; posttest measures; number of GEDs issued to ASE students; and gains on Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) mathematics, reading, and language tests and on Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus oral and literacy tests).

Program Use of Data

Program directors look at data provided by AEGIS. For example, they focus particularly on NRS Table 4 to identify numbers of students served, contact hours, scores on pre- and posttests, and how they relate to the negotiated federal percentages. Programs on a PIP are required to give every teacher a Table 4 for his or her individual class, and the state has convinced programs that are not on a PIP to share Table 4 with teachers. To help teachers plan for instruction, the state developed the "Participant Roster." This report gives individual teachers information about students, including names, results on baseline assessments, types of assessments taken, scores on pre- and posttests, learner gains, etc. The state wants teachers to review this data and make decisions about instruction and assessment. For example, if data show that a student completed an NRS level, then the teacher should use teacher-made tests or other performance-based assessments rather than continuing to administer an NRS standardized test. However, the frequency with which teachers use data varies with the teacher and how much encouragement they receive from administrators of the local program.

PIPs have led to a more intense focus on data than that done in the past. The PIP requires program administrators and data entry staff to interact, and the information in a PIP gets transferred from administrators to data entry staff, thus improving data accuracy and integrity. The state also works continuously to promote data use among local programs. Twice a year, the state holds an all day meeting with the system developer to customize reports for users and make it easier for users to have access to data.

Mechanisms of Professional Development

Professional development is provided to the adult education community through the Project GREAT's Adult Education and Family Literacy Regional Centers of Excellence. Project GREAT's eight regional centers are funded as state leadership activities by TEA. The centers are managed by grantees in collaboration with Texas LEARNS, TEA, and the adult education directors in the region.

State Delivery of Professional Development on Data Use

Drivers of Professional Development

Several factors determine the focus of professional development to support data use.

- **Desk reviews.** AEGIS is the desk review tool that provides quarterly reports to local programs and state staff. The desk reviews demonstrate how well programs are meeting state and federal performance measures. Programs that fail to meet the educational functioning level performance measure targets are required to develop a PIP. Texas LEARNS provides technical assistance to these programs to foster program improvement.
- **Quarterly meetings of Project GREAT's regional centers.** Each of Project GREAT's regional centers holds quarterly meetings with local programs to identify needs for professional development. One of the centers with access to all the program data in the region reviews gains in content areas and looks at trends across the region. These reviews help the center to determine the professional development that it will provide to support program improvement. For example, based on reading scores, a center hired a consultant to provide 3 days of professional development on reading strategies to teachers of low-level readers.
- **New program staff.** These individuals receive professional development on the accountability system.
- **Program and assessment changes.** Changes in programs and assessment measures spur professional development—for example, changes in assessment requirements (e.g., the 60-hour rule before posttesting students); clarification in definitions (e.g., the definition for program "exiter"); changes in the BEST Plus, a new form of BEST Literacy; changes in program delivery (e.g., implementation of managed enrollment to support the completion of an educational functioning level); and changes in the ESL levels from OVAE.

Modes of Delivering Professional Development

Technical assistance provided as a result of the desk reviews occurs two ways. If many programs have similar issues, then the state brings administrators to the state office. If only some programs require a PIP after the desk review, then the state provides technical assistance via distance (e.g., e-mail, telephone) or onsite.

In addition to delivering technical assistance, Texas provides professional development through multiple modes of delivery:

- **Face-to-face professional development.** This is the state's preferred mode of delivery. Workshops are provided regionally based on the need for training. In 2009, Project GREAT provided 38 workshops on TEAMS or data quality at the local or regional level. Texas LEARNS provided four statewide updates and user meetings for administrators of TEAMS.
- **Webinars.** If Texas LEARNS plans to make changes to the accountability system, then it provides a series of Webinars for program staff and administrators. In 2009, Texas LEARNS provided two Webinars due to changes, with followup occurring at the local or

regional levels. The Webinars allow program staff to log in at a specific time and Texas LEARNS to address questions from staff of local programs.

- **Listserv.** The deputy state director of Texas LEARNS developed a listserv that provides an opportunity for data entry staff to raise questions and gather information. Responses to questions are provided within 24 hours. state staff, veteran local data entry staff, or a system developer respond to the questions.
- **One-on-one professional development.** Project GREAT's centers provide training for new data entry staff.

Content of Professional Development

The PIP, developed as a result of findings from desk reviews, determines the focus of customized technical assistance. The state provides a variety of other professional development opportunities and posts opportunities on the statewide calendar.

- **Professional development on monitoring tools.** When monitoring tools were introduced, the state provided a 3-day retreat for local program directors. The local program directors were required to use the monitoring tools to enter their own data and interpret and explain their program outcomes to peers. Directors then had to train local staff on using and interpreting data.
- **Data detective.** This workshop is based on the NRS guide and uses data tables that are customized to the programs in each region. The workshop is offered as needed and is required of programs with a PIP. Professional development is targeted to multiple audiences at the program level. Staff who are responsible for training on TEAMS follow up on data detective training with local programs that have a PIP. Local program administrators check whether changes are being implemented as a result of the professional development. In addition, programs may raise questions on the listserv or by e-mailing the deputy state director who then shares responses with all listserv participants.
- **Persistence quotient.** During the past 2 years, a major focus of professional development was on student persistence. Thus far, 1.5- to 2- hour statewide workshops have been offered twice to administrators. Program staff look at student data to see what is required of the average student to persist and complete a level. The goal is to help students make an informed decision about the commitment necessary to be successful in the class, given the student's individual circumstances.
- **Training for test administrators.** Texas LEARNS provides certified trainers through Project GREAT's regional centers. The centers provide administrator-level training on TABE–Reading, Writing, and Language; TABE Complete Language Assessment System–English (CLAS-E); BEST–Literacy; and BEST Plus–Speaking and Listening Skills.
- **Training for local program directors.** Twice annually the state provides training for local program directors that includes issues related to data collection, entry, quality, and use.

Support for Professional Development

The state provides resources to support professional development on data use. It allocates funds for trainers and training facilities. Programs use program funds to pay for participant travel costs and staff time. Data entry staff are generally full time and are paid for participation in professional development.

Challenges in Delivering Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The state indentified a few challenges in delivering professional development and technical assistance:

- Limited travel funds limit participation in professional development.
- The timing of professional development events may coincide with other activities (e.g., submitting a program grant application) and may preclude staff from participating.
- Lack of time, money, and expertise hinder the development of a series of Webinars that could focus on key issues of program improvement (e.g., reading NRS Tables 4 and Table 4B, implementing managed enrollment). These Webinars could provide “just in time professional development” and be housed on the state’s Web site.

Lessons Learned

Lessons learned from the delivery of professional development and technical assistance on data use includes the following:

- Requiring programs to write a PIP is a strong motivator for ensuring accurate and timely data. Programs do not want to lose funding and are taking data collection and use seriously. The PIP also forces communication between program directors and data entry staff so that everyone gets on the same page: Directors and data staff exchange information, and directors share training information with data entry staff. The PIP also allows for targeted technical assistance.
- Carefully looking at the business rules in the management information system ensures that staff are following the correct procedures for meeting performance standards.

Recommendations for States

Texas offered several recommendations for states that want to promote the use of data:

- Look at NRS data to see where the performance levels in your state fall among all other states. Determine why a state is at a specific level and then take action. Call other state directors to see how they support the use of data. Determine whether their efforts will work in your state, given its population and geography.
- Create a need for local programs to use data. The PIP and a state’s move to performance-based funding require programs to track their progress in meeting state-negotiated targets.
- Use professional development as means for changing the way the state does business.