

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED NEEDS & CHALLENGES

Need One: Closing the Achievement Gap

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

Need Two: Effective Instruction

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

Need Three: Common Core State Standards

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

Need Four: Governance & Finance

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

Need Five: School Safety, Culture & Climate

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

Need Six: College & Career Readiness

College and career readiness is essential to the Western region's economic and civic success. The region strives for its graduates to be equipped with 21st Century skills as they enter college and the workforce. The Western RAC identified a clear definition of college and career readiness, and support for curriculum and professional development, as needs in the Western region.

Cross-Cutting Themes

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