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What are the characteristics, qualifications, roles, and functions of school support teams? An examination of survey results for four Northwest Region states

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ISSUES & ANSWERS REL 2010–No. 095

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What are the characteristics, qualifications, roles, and functions of school support teams? An examination of survey results for four Northwest Region states

December 2010

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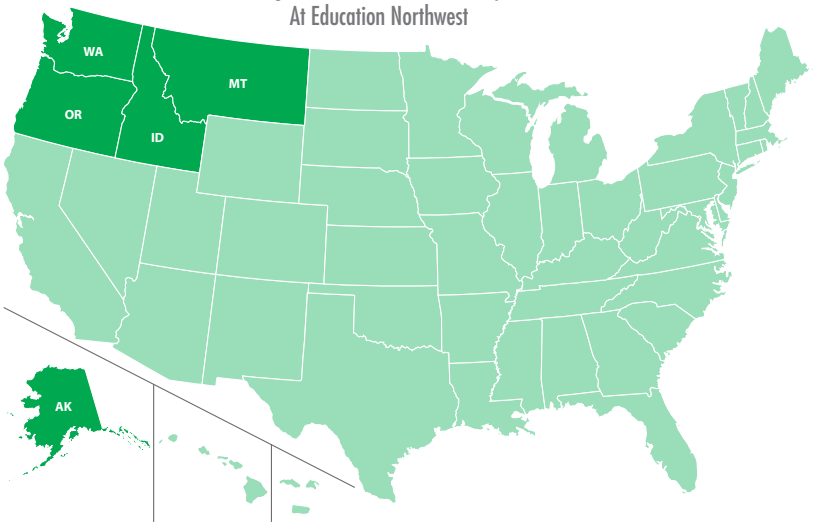

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Summary

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What are the characteristics, qualifications, roles, and functions of school support teams? An examination of survey results for four Northwest Region states

School support teams work as external facilitators of improvement in schools and districts designated as in need of improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act. This study finds that team members in four Northwest regions states share many characteristics and qualifications and work primarily in schools, meeting with administrators on school improvement planning and implementation. Team members differ in time spent on the activities that support these functions.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) requires state education agencies to assist chronically low-performing schools and districts by providing statewide systems of intensive and sustained support. One element of this support is the deployment of school support teams that work as external facilitators of improvement in schools and districts designated as in need of improvement. State approaches to this requirement depend on the number of schools in need of improvement, resources available, state-level priorities, and staff capacity to establish and oversee school support teams. Some states have used school support teams for as many as seven years; others established their first cadre as recently as 2008/09. Across states, the basic roles of school support team members are comparable, but titles, qualifications, and functions vary.

While existing research describes statewide systems of support and school support team structures, it does not provide information about individuals who serve on the teams. An early case study examined the role of experienced educators who were contracted to help build capacity for change, but it gave no insight into their functions. There has been little study of school support team members as currently deployed in schools and districts across the Northwest Region. This study expands on the current literature by focusing on school support team member characteristics, qualifications, roles, and functions in four Northwest Region states: Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

Existing survey data from the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center were analyzed to address two research questions:

- What are the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members working with schools and districts in

improvement status in four Northwest Region states?

- What are the roles and functions of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states?

The total population of 109 school support team members in this study represents the entire 2008/09 cadre across the four study states. This study analyzed survey questions capturing demographic background, educational attainment, professional experience, school- or district-level work focus, and functions of individual school support team members. State education agencies invited the 109 school support team members across the four states to complete the survey, and 91 responded, for an overall response rate of 83 percent. The item-level response rates did not fall below 88 percent and were 95 percent or higher for all but one item.

To report the characteristics and qualifications and the roles and functions of school support team members, summary descriptive statistics (percentages or averages and ranges, depending on the type of data) were calculated for the survey data. The data were calculated for each participating state and across the four states.

Findings indicate that the school support team members in the four study states are highly educated and hold multiple certifications:

- Across the four states, 66 percent of school support team members are women, 72 percent are between the ages of 56 and 64, 80 percent previously retired from a career in education, and 58 percent were most recently employed as a school or district administrator before becoming a school support team member.
- Virtually all hold teaching certificates (99 percent) and administrator certificates (88 percent), with 21 percent certified as superintendents.
- Ninety-six percent hold master's degrees, and 19 percent hold doctorates.
- They work primarily in schools, directly with school principals and leadership teams.
- Top areas of self-identified expertise are professional development for adult learners, literacy, math, and areas other than those in the survey question, such as school reform, change management, and leadership.

Across the four study states, there are similarities in the functions these school support team members performed:

- Ninety percent of the school support team members reported two functions equally among the top three ranked functions that they perform: meeting with district or school administrators about school improvement planning and implementation, and communicating with stakeholders.
- Also reported among the top three ranked functions were facilitating meetings related to school or district improvement (54 percent); collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for decisionmaking (48 percent); leading or supporting

professional development (43 percent); locating and recommending resources (30 percent); observing in classrooms (26 percent); and meeting with administrators on issues other than school improvement (23 percent).

While engaging in similar functions, school support team members across the four states reported spending varying time and energy on the activities that supported these functions.

States are taking different approaches to deploying school support team members for school and district improvement. Their practices are modified each year as experience grows.

The effectiveness of school support teams has not been explored, and the findings raise the question of whether there is a match between the skills of current school support team members and the needs of underachieving student populations. There are also unanswered questions about how state education agencies might plan for school support team cadre sustainability and about the transfer of role-specific knowledge. The retirement status of these school support team members, the fact that their job is predominantly part-time, and the fact that the median tenure of employment is only four years all have implications for state education agencies that are planning professional development for newly hired school support team members.

The study was requested by the Montana state education agency staff, who want the information to support hiring and utilization decisions for school support teams. Future studies might look at using complementary data from state education agency staff members responsible for the recruitment, assignment, professional development, and retention of school support team members. Another avenue for study might be determining appropriate measures of the effectiveness of school support team members in changing improvement status in schools and districts.

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School support teams work as external facilitators of improvement in schools and districts designated as in need of improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act. This study finds that school support team members in Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming share many characteristics and qualifications and work primarily in schools, meeting with district or school administrators about school improvement planning and implementation, and communicating with stakeholders. However, school support team members across the four states vary in the amount of time spent on the activities that support these functions.

WHY THIS STUDY?

Section 1117 Title IA of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (2002) requires state education agencies to provide a statewide system of intensive and sustained support to schools and districts that fail to meet adequate yearly progress proficiency targets for more than two consecutive years. The law prescribes that school support teams be composed of people knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practice related to teaching and learning. School support team members must also have knowledge of successful schoolwide projects, school reform, and improving education opportunities for low-achieving students. School support teams can include highly qualified or distinguished teachers and principals; pupil services personnel; representatives of outside consultant groups; representatives of regional educational laboratories or comprehensive regional technical assistance centers; and individuals from the state education agency in consultation with the local education agency (box 1).

While the types of support to low-performing schools and districts are suggested by law, an individual state's approach to the implementation of school support teams remains flexible, based on state-level needs. From state to state, education landscapes change dramatically for population rates, percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and percentages of English language learner students (table 1). Consequently, state education agencies take various approaches to recruiting, hiring, and assigning school support teams, depending on the number of schools and districts identified as in need of improvement, the resources available (such as whether state funds are used in addition to federal funds), state-level priorities, and the capacity to coordinate team efforts. For example, Washington's student population is the largest, with more than 1 million students, followed by Oregon with more than 500,000, and Montana with more than 144,000. Wyoming has the lowest student population, at just above 85,000. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, an indicator of household income, varies as

BOX 1

Definition of school support teams

The title given to a state's cadre of school support team members depends on the role and specific functions assigned. For example, the title may be "coach," defined as an educator brought in from the outside who collaborates with the school staff as a facilitator rather than as an expert to effect instructional practices that improve the performance of underachieving students (Tung and Feldman 2001); "external consultant" or "change agent," defined as an outsider unhindered by daily operations who helps the district institutionalize innovation (Sula 1998); or "school improvement facilitator," defined as an educator hired by state agencies to work collaboratively with schools and districts to improve student learning by promoting and facilitating models of school reform (Feldman 2001).

Regardless of variation in the titles designated by the four Northwest Region study states included here, "school support team" in Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming refers to the cadre of individually deployed professional educators who typically work on contract and are paid from funds allocated to state education agencies. These states hire school support team members through an application process and assign them to a specific school or district. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) requires that these teams review and analyze all functions of the school's operation; collaborate with the school community in developing, implementing, and monitoring improvement plans; and continue to provide assistance as needed beyond the initial year of service.

The table below compares the basic characteristics of school support team member roles across the four study states in the region, showing the title and focus of the position in each state in 2008/09.

Characteristics of school support team members in four Northwest Region states

	Montana	Oregon	Washington	Wyoming
Number of school support team members	19	18	65	7
School support team member title	School coach	Oregon school improvement facilitator	School improvement facilitator/district improvement facilitator	District coach/ district support and coordination team member
School or district focus	Primarily schools; services may also extend to the district	School	Schools or districts	District

Note: In 2009/10 the numbers and titles of school support team members changed. For example, Washington's "school improvement facilitator" changed to "technical assistance coach."

Source: Authors' analysis of previously collected data from conversations in 2008/09 with state education agency representatives about school support team characteristics.

well. The highest is in Oregon, with about 42 percent of students eligible; the lowest is in Wyoming, with about 30 percent of students eligible. Oregon exceeds the national average for English language learner students at 11 percent of the student population, while Wyoming has only 4 percent of students in this subgroup. Perhaps commensurate with having the highest number of students, Washington has the most schools in improvement and the most school support team members deployed in schools and districts (table 2).

What the research says

There has been scant examination of school support teams deployed in low-performing schools and districts in accordance with the NCLB Act, so little is known about their characteristics and roles or how they operate at the school and district levels. There are two types of research in this field, both of which provide a historical perspective for the current study. The current study extends this research to inform changes to policies and

TABLE 1

Demographic characteristics of the four Northwest Region study states and the country, 2006/07

Characteristic	Montana	Oregon	Washington	Wyoming	United States
Number of students	144,418	562,574	1,026,774	85,193	49,298,945
Racial/ethnic minority enrollment rate (percent)	16.1	26.8	31.1	15.5	43.5
Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (percent)	35.1	41.9	36.5	29.7	41.8
Share of students who are English language learners (percent)	4.8	11.2	8.3	3.5	10.3[a]
Students with an Individualized Education Program[b] (percent)	12.8	13.8	12.0	16.4	13.3[c]

a. Data are from National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (n.d.).

b. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 requires public schools to develop an Individualized Education Program for every student with a disability who is found to meet the federal and state requirements for special education.

c. Excludes Colorado, New Jersey, and North Dakota, which have no reported Individualized Education Program data for students classified with special needs in the latest release of the Common Core of Data.

Source: Total student counts and racial/ethnic minority enrollment rates, Sable and Noel (2008); students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008b); English language learner students and students with an Individualized Education Program, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008c).

TABLE 2

Title I schools identified as in need of improvement in four Northwest Region states, various years

Title I school status	Montana[a] (2008/09)	Oregon[a] (2008/09)	Washington (2009/10)	Wyoming (2009/10)	Total
Number of schools	625	564	923	176[a]	2,288
Schools in improvement status	47 (7.5%)	35 (6%)	481 (52%)	23 (13%)	586 (25.6%)
Schools in improvement Year I	8 (1.3%)	18 (3%)	243 (26%)	16 (9%)	285 (12.5%)
Schools in improvement Year 2	2 (0.3%)	6 (1.1%)	147 (15.9%)	2 (1.13%)	157 (6.9%)
Schools in improvement Year 3	6 (0.96%)	8 (1.4%)	15 (1.6%)	1 (.57%)	30 (1.3%)
Schools in improvement Year 4	3 (0.48%)	2 (0.35%)	34 (3.7%)	3 (1.7%)	42 (1.8%)
Schools in improvement Year 5	28 (4.5%)	1 (0.17%)	42 (4.6%)	1 (0.57%)	72 (3%)

a. Data are from the U.S. Department of Education's 2007/08 Consolidated State Performance Reports at www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/sy07-08part1/index.html.

Source: Authors' analysis based on data from U.S. Department of Education (2007), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008a), Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2009), and Wyoming Department of Education, Standards and Assessment (2009).

programs as state education agencies change their systems of support.

Research on state systems of support in response to schools in need of improvement includes Westat (2006), which provides descriptions of each state's system of support for schools to highlight important elements and facilitate information sharing across states; Redding and Walberg (2008), which found that an effective statewide support system requires incentives and opportunities to build local capacity, thereby building the systemic capacity to achieve continuous improvement; and Davis et al. (2007), which found that providing professional development for principals and assigning external facilitators such as distinguished educators or school

School support team members across the four study states share similar backgrounds and qualifications and perform the same predominant functions but spend different amounts of time and energy on the activities that support those functions

support teams to provide consistent support were common strategies for schools in need of improvement.

Research on the role of external facilitators focuses on their field experiences during the 1980s to late 1990s and includes Sula (1998), which found that the success of the external facilitator depended upon his or her ability to overcome any negative influence of the site-specific factors and to capitalize on their positive influence; Feldman (2001), which found that a coach must work both top-down and bottom-up, help administrators shape a vision and help teachers buy into that vision, provide administrators with training to develop their strengths, and train teachers in classroom practice strategies as well as in developing a "whole school" vision; and Tung and Feldman (2001), which found that coaches were mostly involved in meeting facilitation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving activities.

Appendix A provides a more detailed literature review.

Research questions

This study uses survey data to answer two research questions:

- What are the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states?
- What are the roles and functions of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states?

FINDINGS

States are taking various approaches to deploying school support team members for school and district improvement. The main finding of this study is that school support team members across the four study states share similar backgrounds and qualifications and perform the same predominant functions but spend different amounts of time and energy on the activities that support those functions.

Although the study includes a few comparisons of the characteristics and qualifications and the roles and functions of the school support team members in the four study states, the purpose is not to compare approaches but to provide a descriptive look at each state (see box 2 and appendixes B and C for more on the survey, data, and methodology of the report). The findings below highlight the most frequently reported response category. Discussion focuses on the activities that school support team members reported engaging in most frequently, but categories other than "extensive" are described when there are interesting cross-state comparisons.

What are the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members?

Tables 3–11 describe the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states.

Demographic statistics of surveyed school support team members across the four states indicate that 34 percent are male and 66 percent are female, 72 percent are between the ages of 56 and 64, and 80 percent previously retired from a career in education (table 3). Washington employs the highest percentage of retired educators to work as school support team members (87 percent), while Wyoming employs the lowest percentage (43 percent). The median number of years in retirement for school support team members across all four states is four years (n = 91); Oregon has the highest median, with five years (n = 13), followed by Washington, with four years (n = 52), Montana, with three years (n = 19), and Wyoming, with two years (n = 7).

BOX 2

Data and methodology

To address the two research questions, existing survey data from school support team members in Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming were procured and analyzed. The survey instrument was developed by the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center to determine professional development needs that it might fulfill in its service area. The total population was 109 school support team members, representing the 2008/09 cadre across the four states.

Only survey questions pertaining to individual school support team members' demographic background, educational attainment, professional experience, school- or district-level work focus, and functions were analyzed for this study (see appendix B). Item-level response rates did not fall below 88 percent and were 95 percent or higher for all but one item.

The survey data were reformatted and merged into Predictive Analytics Software, items to be analyzed were finalized, variables were recoded for analysis, and open-response items were recategorized and recoded, where applicable (see appendix C for more on these steps). The data for each research question were summarized in tables for each participating state and across the four states and then used to create descriptive narratives about the school support team members, their characteristics, and support activities.

To address research question 1 on the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members, summary descriptive statistics (percentages or averages and ranges, depending on the type of data) were calculated for the survey data on individual school support team member background characteristics within each state and aggregated across the four participating states (see appendixes B and C for detailed notes on methodology, including variables, item response rates, and analysis and interpretation methods).

To address research question 2 on the roles and functions of school support team members, descriptive statistics were also calculated and displayed. For items that asked respondents to rank various options, two sets of tables were created to examine the top three and top ranked responses for the frequency of working with a particular person or group or serving a particular function (see appendixes B and C, as well as the challenges and limitations section, for more detail on the analyses and limitations of using the data from these items). For items that asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they were involved in particular activities, counts and percentages were calculated for each response category within each state and across all four states.

In reporting findings for both research questions, an overall suppression rule was applied when data were at risk of disclosing individuals. For tables that provided subgroup analyses by state, items with fewer than three respondents were suppressed, as were other items that could be used to calculate the suppressed data. For tables that displayed only state-level data, the suppression rule was not applied because the risk of identifying individuals without state identification was deemed minimal.

The analysis shows that school support team members across the four study states bring extensive experience to their roles due to their previous careers as educators and administrators. Of the 83 school support team members from Montana, Oregon, and Washington who responded to the questions on the last position held in education prior to the school support team role, 58 percent were a principal or school administrator prior to their current role (table 4). The data from Wyoming are suppressed to protect confidentiality, but when the state is included in the analysis, the overall percentage for the four states remains unchanged. It is interesting to note the variation across states regarding prior positions held by school support team members. Montana has an even split between principal or school administrators and other administrators, whereas Oregon and Washington have more principal or school administrators than other administrators.

Of the 91 respondents to the question on advanced degrees held, 96 percent of school support team members across the four states hold a master's

TABLE 3

Gender, age, and retirement status of school support team members in four Northwest Region states

	Montana		Oregon		Washington		Wyoming		Total	
Characteristic	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Gender										
Male	7	37	5	39	15	30	3	43	30	34
Female	12	63	8	61	35	70	4	57	59	66
Age										
36–55	5	26	0	0	6	12	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
56–64	9	48	13	100	38	73	5	72	65	72
65 and older	5	26	0	0	8	15	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
Retirement status[b]										
Retired	14	74	11	85	45	87	3	43	73	80
Not retired	5	26	2	15	7	13	4	57	18	20

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

b. Refers to whether respondent was previously retired from a career in education.

Note: The total response sample size (*n*) for each state and item above can be found by summing the constituent response counts for that item (for example, the total response sample size for gender for Montana is 19, or 7 male plus 12 female). Wyoming has the same sample size ($n = 7$) for all items.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 4

Last position in education held prior to school support team role in three Northwest Region states

	Montana ($n = 18$)		Oregon ($n = 13$)		Washington ($n = 52$)		Total ($n = 83$)	
Position	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principal or school administrator	7	39	7	54	34	65	48	58
District, state, or federal administrator[a]	7	39	3	23	3	6	13	15
Other[b]	4	22	3	23	15	29	22	27

a. Includes superintendent, curriculum director, and state or federal administrator.

b. Includes coach, teacher, consultant, and professor.

Note: Because Wyoming had fewer than three respondents, its data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality. Open-ended responses to this item were categorized into the three position categories above based on substantive groupings in the responses (see appendix C for decision rules). When more than one previous position was specified (in three cases), only the first response was categorized.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

degree and 19 percent hold a doctoral degree (table 5).

Of the 87 school support team members who have master's degrees, 35 percent reported earning the degree in education leadership and administration (table 6). The percentage with a master's degree in this specialty is more than twice that of any other specialty named.

Doctoral dissertation topics cover a broad range of education-related topics and a few non-education-related topics (table not shown to maintain confidentiality). Of the 17 respondents who have doctoral degrees, 14 reported writing a dissertation on an education-related topic (82 percent) such as school finance, trust building between superintendents and union presidents, capacity building to sustain improvements at the high

TABLE 5
Advanced degrees held by school support team members in four Northwest Region states

	Montana (*n* = 19)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 7)		Total (*n* = 91)	
Degree	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Master's	19	100	12	92	52	100	4	57	87	96
Doctorate	6	32	[a]	[a]	7	14	[a]	[a]	17	19

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Because individuals may hold both a master's and a doctoral degree, the total number of degrees held may exceed the number of respondents.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 6
School support team members' master's degree discipline in four Northwest Region states combined

	Total (*n* = 87)	
Discipline	Number	Percent
Education leadership or administration	30	35
Curriculum or instruction	15	17
Elementary or general education	13	15
Subject specific	12	14
Special education	8	9
Guidance or counseling	7	8
Other	2	2

Note: Because an item had fewer than three respondents in each state, only the four-state total is provided to maintain confidentiality. Data for other disciplines were not suppressed because the risk of identifying individuals is minimal without state identification. Open responses to this item were categorized into the seven master's degree discipline categories above, based on substantive groupings of responses.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

school level, strategies for teaching critical and creative thinking, and organizational change in middle school education.

When asked to indicate the education certifications held, 99 percent of 90 respondents reported holding teaching certificates, 88 percent reported holding administrator certificates, and 21 percent reported holding superintendent certificates (table 7).

The survey asked school support team members to select from seven areas of professional wisdom or expertise, with the option of writing in any "other" area not listed. The most frequently selected areas of expertise are professional development for adult learners (74 percent) and literacy (61 percent) (table 8). The "other" category elicited the third largest response. As discussed later, only 3 percent reported spending the most time planning or conducting professional development (see table 18 in the section comparing roles and functions). It is possible that school support team members are construing their professional development expertise more broadly than directly delivering training programs to large groups of adults. Several items indicated that this might be the case.

Also, NCLB requirements of statewide systems of support to chronically low-achieving schools were intended to focus on and close the large achievement gap between white middle class students and their racial/ethnic minority subgroup classmates (NCLB 2002). But few school support team members reported expertise in working with English language learner students or other subgroup populations that are behind academically. This suggests there may be a need for greater support or development in these areas, particularly in building school support team member capacity to help schools and districts better serve subgroup student populations.

Because 44 school support team members marked the "other" category, these responses were recategorized to get a deeper understanding of the range of professional expertise school support team members brought to the role (as described in table

TABLE 7

Education certifications held by school support team members in four Northwest Region states

	Montana (*n* = 19)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 6)		Total (*n* = 90)	
Certification	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Teaching	18	95	13	100	52	100	6	100	89	99
Administrator	17	89	12	92	48	92	[a]	[a]	79	88
Superintendent	8	42	[a]	[a]	9	17	[a]	[a]	19	21
Other	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	4	8	0	0	7	8

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Respondents were asked to check all that apply from the teacher, administrator, and superintendent categories as well as an "other" category. Eleven respondents wrote their education certifications under "other," and some of the responses were recategorized into the existing categories. The remaining "other" certifications include guidance and specialist certifications. Because individuals may hold multiple certifications, the total number of certifications held may exceed the number of respondents.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 8

Areas of professional wisdom or expertise for school support team members in four Northwest Region states

	Montana (*n* = 19)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 6)		Total (*n* = 90)	
Expertise	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Professional development for adult learners	13	68	10	77	40	77	4	67	67	74
Literacy	7	37	10	77	35	67	3	50	55	61
Other[a]	9	47	8	62	22	42	5	83	44	49
Math	6	32	[b]	[b]	18	35	[b]	[b]	27	30
Rural education	8	42	[b]	[b]	10	19	4	67	[b]	[b]
Special education	6	32	[b]	[b]	12	23	[b]	[b]	20	22
English language learner students	[b]	[b]	3	23	13	25	[b]	[b]	19	21
Native American/ Alaska Native	5	26	0	0	4	8	0	0	9	10

a. See table 9 for how the 44 "other" responses were recategorized.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Because individuals may have expertise in more than one area, the total number of areas of expertise may exceed the number of respondents.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

12). Recategorizing the "other" responses yielded a broader range of the school support team members' professional expertise. The two areas of professional expertise from this list mentioned most frequently are school reform, improvement, or change (22 percent of the total item respondents) and administration or leadership (18 percent of the total item respondents) (table 9).

The number of years of experience as a school support team member that the respondents reported covers a wide range, from zero years in Montana (meaning that they were in their first year of

TABLE 9
Recategorized professional expertise "other" responses in four Northwest Region states combined

Other area of expertise	Number	Share of "other" responses (percent) ($n = 44$)	Share of total item respondents (percent) ($n = 90$)
School reform, improvement, or change processes	20	45	22
Administration or leadership	16	36	18
Curriculum or instruction	13	29	14
Other (not recategorized)	11	25	12
Specific student populations (other than those in table 8)	9	20	10
Equity or cultural issues	5	11	6

Note: These open responses were specific to respondents who indicated that their area of professional expertise lay in an "other" category in table 8. None of these items was recategorized into the existing categories. Because individuals may have expertise in more than one area, the total number of areas of expertise may exceed the number of respondents.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 10
Years of experience as a school support team member in four Northwest Region states

Years of experience	Montana ($n = 19$)	Oregon ($n = 13$)	Washington ($n = 52$)	Wyoming ($n = 7$)	Total ($n = 90$)
Minimum	0	1	1	1	0
Maximum	3	5	7	2	7
Mean	1.84	3.15	3.71	1.57	3.08
Median	1	3	4	2	3
Standard deviation	1.068	1.281	1.872	0.535	1.784

Note: The open responses were converted to a continuous measure of years of experience as a school support team member. Experience was capped at seven years, based on the time elapsed between the No Child Left Behind Act requirement and the survey administration and within each state for the number of years its school support team program has existed (three years for Montana, five years for Oregon, seven years for Washington, and two years for Wyoming).

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

service) to five years in Oregon to seven years in Washington (table 10). The median number of years of experience across all four study states is three. This suggests a greater store of school support team experience in some states, which could be tapped by school support teams or state education agencies in other states.

In terms of the portion of a full-time equivalent allocated to school support teams, Washington and Wyoming are the only states that employed school support team members full time—11 percent of all school support team members in Washington and 43 percent in Wyoming (table 11). The majority of the school support team members across the four states (65 percent) work at less than 60 percent of full-time equivalent. In Montana, 74 percent of school support teams work at less than 40 percent of full-time equivalent.

In Oregon, Montana, and Washington being retired may make it feasible for educators to work as school support team members because they do not need to work full time. But this seems less common in Wyoming, where 43 percent of the school support teams are retired and 71 percent are working nearly full time (see table 3). This study did not look at the ways in which school support team

TABLE 11
Portion of a full-time equivalent allocated to work as a school support team member in four Northwest Region States

Full-time equivalent allocated	Montana (*n* = 19)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 7)		Total (*n* = 91)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Full time	0	0	0	0	6	11	3	43	9	10
80–99 percent	[a]	[a]	0	0	7	13	[a]	[a]	9	10
60–79 percent	[a]	[a]	0	0	11	21	[a]	[a]	14	15
40–59 percent	3	16	4	31	22	42	0	0	29	32
20–39 percent	11	58	8	62	6	11	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]
Less than 20 percent	3	16	[a]	[a]	0	0	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

members are compensated or whether benefits are offered.

What are the roles and functions of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status?

Tables 12–18 describe the roles and functions of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states. (Tables D1–D28 in appendix D contain state-by-state descriptions of the functions of their school support team members.)

In their role as school support team members, all school support team members in Montana, Washington, and Wyoming (87 percent of the total respondents) reported that their direct employer is the state education agency (table 12). In Oregon, 85 percent of the school support teams reported working directly for intermediate education agencies called intermediate service districts. Regardless of this "perceived" difference, funds for the position come from the state, although Oregon may use a fiscal agent to administer them.

Almost all school support team members work at the school level (96 percent), but nearly half (48 percent) work at the district level (table 13). Some

TABLE 12
School support team member direct employers in four Northwest Region states combined

Direct employer	Total (*n* = 89)	
	Number	Percent
State education agency	78	87
Intermediate education agency	11	12

Note: Because an item had fewer than three respondents in each state, only the four-state total is provided to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

respondents indicated that they work at both. In Montana, Oregon, and Washington more school support teams work at the school level, but all Wyoming school support team members work at the district level and 57 percent of them also work at the school level.

School support team members who work at the district level indicated serving 0–36 districts (table 14). The variation of this range may be related to the distance between districts within the state, the number of school support team members available to serve, whether the school support team member was answering from the perspective of the state, or how many schools within each district are in need of improvement. The median number of

TABLE 13
School support team member level of work focus in four Northwest Region states

Level of work focus	Montana (*n* = 18)		Oregon (*n* = 18)		Washington (*n* = 72)		Wyoming (*n* = 11)		Total (*n* = 90)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
School	18	100	13	100	51	98	4	57	86	96
District	10	56	5	38	21	40	7	100	43	48

Note: Because individuals may work at more than one level, the total number of work levels may exceed the number of respondents.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 14
School districts currently served by school support team members in four Northwest Region states

School districts	Montana (*n* = 10)	Oregon (*n* = 5)	Washington (*n* = 21)	Wyoming (*n* = 7)	Total (*n* = 43)
Minimum	1	1	0	1	0
Maximum	3	2	6	36	36
Median	1	1	1	10	1
Standard deviation	0.71	0.45	1.24	12.15	6.08

Note: Data refer only to school support team members who responded "yes" to the question "Do you work at the district level?" The text responses to this open-response item were converted into a continuous measure of the number of districts currently served at the district level in 2008/09.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

districts served by school support team members in Montana, Oregon, and Washington is 1. These states seem to distribute their school support team human resources among a greater number of individuals who work part time and focus on fewer districts. By contrast, Wyoming, with a median number of districts served of 10, seems to concentrate its human resources in fewer school support team members who work with a larger number of districts. If the number of schools and districts in need of improvement increases each year, this may have capacity implications for Wyoming.

Respondents were asked to consider—at the school and district levels—the constituents with whom they typically work most by ranking six choices. Because the set of items associated with this question were open-ended responses, it is unclear whether the lowest ranking meant that the respondent worked with the constituent the least or not at all. Respondents were also able to enter the same number multiple times or not at all. Across the four states the school support team members ranked principals (96 percent), leadership teams (94 percent), and teachers (73 percent) as the top three constituents with whom they work (table 15).

Respondents across the four states reported spending most of their time working with principals (54 percent) and with leadership teams (33 percent) (table 16). The exception is Wyoming, where school support teams reported working primarily with parents (57 percent) and leadership teams (43 percent).

School support team members were asked to rank a list of eight common school support team functions to indicate the functions that they predominantly serve. Like the issue described above regarding constituents with whom school support team members work, the responses to this group of items were open-ended, so it is unclear whether the highest ranking reflects the function performed the least or one not performed at all.

TABLE 15

Top three constituents with whom school support team members work in four Northwest Region states

	Montana (*n* = 18)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 7)		Total (*n* = 90)	
Constituent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principals	16	89	13	100	51	98	6	86	86	96
Leadership teams	17	94	12	92	49	96	7	100	85	94
Teachers	14	82	10	77	42	84	[a]	[a]	66	73
Parents	5	29	4	33	14	27	7	100	30	33
School board or community	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	3	3
District staff	14	78	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	2	2

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Respondents were asked to rank the groups with whom they worked the most (1–6, with 1 indicating the most time and 6 indicating the least time). All responses ranked 1, 2, or 3 were converted into dichotomous measures of whether the respondent indicated working with that group among their top three. Because this was an open-response item, it is unclear whether the highest number entered indicated that respondents worked with that constituent the least or not at all, so the table may overrepresent the extent to which school support team members worked with particular constituents for respondents who work with fewer than three types of people. Table 16 examines only the groups selected as the highest rank. Respondents did not have the opportunity to indicate whether there were groups with whom they work that were not listed.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE 16

Top constituents with whom school support team members work in four Northwest Region states

	Montana (*n* = 18)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 7)		Total (*n* = 90)	
Constituent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Principals	7	39	7	54	35	67	0	0	49	54
Leadership teams	6	33	7	54	14	27	3	43	30	33
Teachers	4	22	[a]	[a]	3	6	[a]	[a]	8	9
Parents	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	5	10	4	57	11	12
School board or community	0	0	0	0	[a]	[a]	0	0	[a]	[a]
District staff	[a]	[a]	0	0	[a]	[a]	0	0	[a]	[a]

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Respondents were asked to rank the constituents with which they worked the most (1–6, with 1 indicating the most time and 6 indicating the least time. Only groups ranked 1 are analyzed in this table. Because this was an open-response item, respondents could enter the ranking 1 for more than one group or none at all, so the total number of constituents ranked may differ from the number of respondents. Respondents did not have the opportunity to indicate whether there were groups with whom they work that were not listed.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

Ninety percent of the school support team members reported two functions equally among the top three ranked functions they perform: meeting with district or school administrators about school improvement planning or implementation, and communicating with stakeholders (table 17).

About half the school support team members reported facilitating meetings related to school or district improvement (54 percent) and collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for decision-making (48 percent) among their top three ranked functions.

TABLE 17

Top three functions served by school support team members as part of their jobs in four Northwest Region states

Function	Montana (*n* = 19)		Oregon (*n* = 13)		Washington (*n* = 52)		Wyoming (*n* = 7)		Total (*n* = 91)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Meeting with district or school administrators about school improvement planning or implementation	16	84	12	92	48	92	6	86	82	90
Communicating with stakeholders	15	79	11	85	49	94	7	100	82	90
Facilitating meetings related to school or district improvement	8	42	6	46	32	62	3	43	49	54
Collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for decisionmaking	[a]	[a]	8	62	28	54	[a]	[a]	44	48
Leading professional development or supporting implementation of professional development	9	47	6	46	21	40	3	43	39	43
Locating or recommending resources	7	37	3	23	13	25	4	57	27	30
Observing in classrooms or assisting administrators with doing this	6	32	[a]	[a]	16	31	[a]	[a]	24	26
Meeting with administrators at the district or school level about things other than school improvement topics	8	42	[a]	[a]	9	17	3	43	21	23

a. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Note: Respondents were asked to rank which function they predominantly served (1–8, with 1 indicating the most time and 8 indicating the least time). All responses ranked 1, 2, or 3 were converted into dichotomous measures of whether the respondent indicated serving that function among their top three. Because this was an open-response item, it is unclear whether the highest number indicated that respondents carried out that function the least or not at all, so the table may overrepresent the extent to which school support team members served particular functions for respondents who provided three or fewer rankings. Table 18 examines only the functions selected as the highest rank; 28 percent of respondents indicated that there were other functions not listed in the survey items and wrote in these other functions, but these were not ranked and thus are not included in the table.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

Because these items elicited open-ended responses that did not require respondents to rank all functions, to provide only a single number to each function, or to leave blank any functions not served, there is some ambiguity about the rankings. While all eight functions were selected as the top ranked function by at least one respondent, 63 percent of the school support team members across the four states reported spending the most time meeting with administrators at the district or school level about school improvement planning or implementation (table 18).

How school support teams spent their time and effort

This section reports on school support team members' responses to questions about the relative time and effort they spent on the functions they primarily perform. For seven primary functions, they were asked to consider specific activities and rate how much of their work time involves each of the activities. The seven functions were:

- Building readiness for improvement activities.

TABLE 18
Top ranked functions served by school support team members as part of their jobs in four Northwest Region states combined

Function	Total (n = 91)	
	Number	Percent
Meeting with administrators at district or school level about school improvement planning or implementation	57	63
Communicating with stakeholders	8	9
Facilitating meetings related to school or district improvement	20	22
Collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for decisionmaking	4	4
Leading professional development or supporting implementation of professional development	3	3
Locating or recommending resources	2	2
Observing in classrooms or assisting administrators with doing this	4	4
Meeting with administrators at the district or school level about things other than school improvement topics	3	3

Note: Respondents were asked to rank which function they predominantly served (1–8, with 1 indicating the most time spent and 8 indicating the least time spent). Only functions ranked 1 are analyzed in this table. Because this was an open-response item, respondents could enter the ranking 1 for more than one function or for none at all, so the total number of functions ranked may differ from the number of respondents; 28 percent of respondents indicated that there were other functions not listed in the survey items and wrote in these other functions, but these were not ranked and are thus not included in this table.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

- Influencing policies and procedures.
- Collecting and interpreting data.
- Setting improvement goals.
- Referencing research-based practices.
- Action planning.
- Implementing improvement efforts.

Figures 1–7 display the data in horizontal bar charts across all four study states. Equivalent data and narratives for each state are displayed in tables D1–D28 in appendix D.

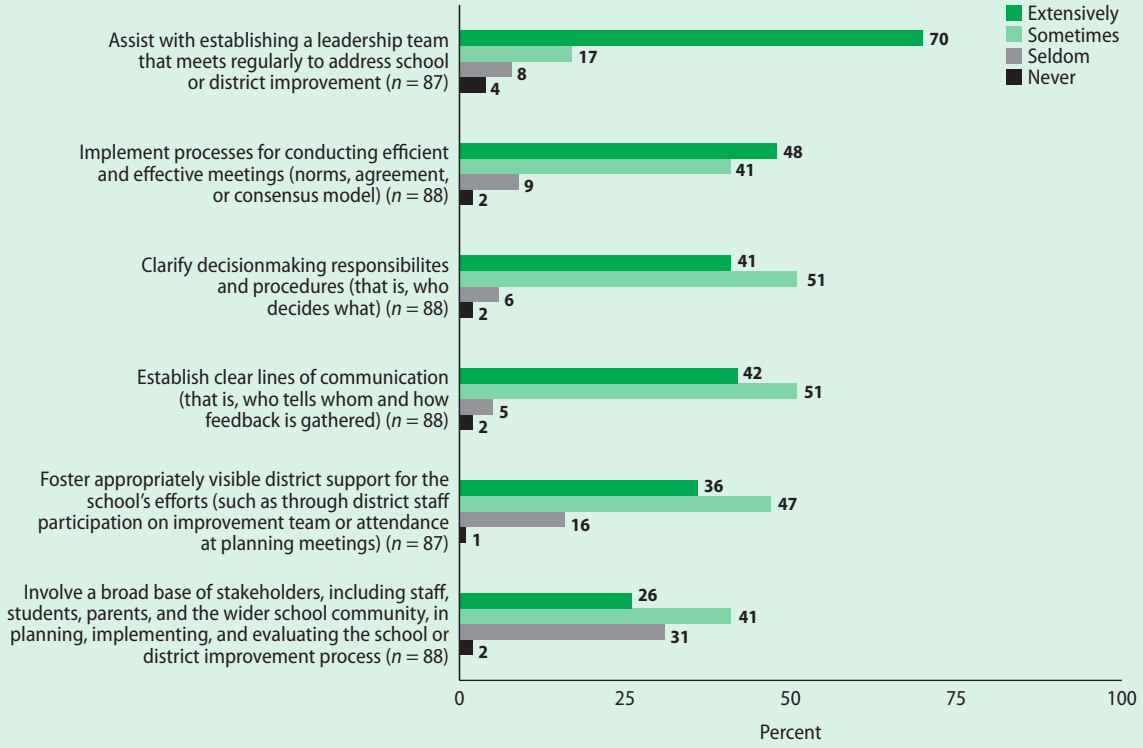
Building readiness for improvement activities. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent building readiness:

- Assisting with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement.
- Implementing processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings.
- Clarifying decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures.
- Establishing clear lines of communication.
- Fostering appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts.
- Involving a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process.

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to build readiness for improvement, across the four states, 70 percent of the school support team members reported extensively assisting with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement needs (figure 1). Approximately half (51 percent) of the school support

FIGURE 1

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to build readiness for improvement efforts



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

team members reported sometimes clarifying decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures and establishing clear lines of communication.

Influencing policies and procedures. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent influencing policies and procedures:

- Reviewing existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.
- Identifying effective policies used by other schools/districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with.
- Recommending new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts.
- Disseminating information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies.
- Reviewing existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.
- Identifying effective procedures used by other schools or districts that might be applicable to the school or district that they are working with.
- Recommending new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts.
- Disseminating information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures.

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to influence policies and procedures, across the four states 34 percent reported extensively identifying effective procedures used by other schools and districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with (figure 2). At least 44 percent of school support team members reported engaging in most of the activities related to influencing policies and procedures sometimes, 57 percent of members reported sometimes identifying effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with, and 56 percent reported sometimes reviewing existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.

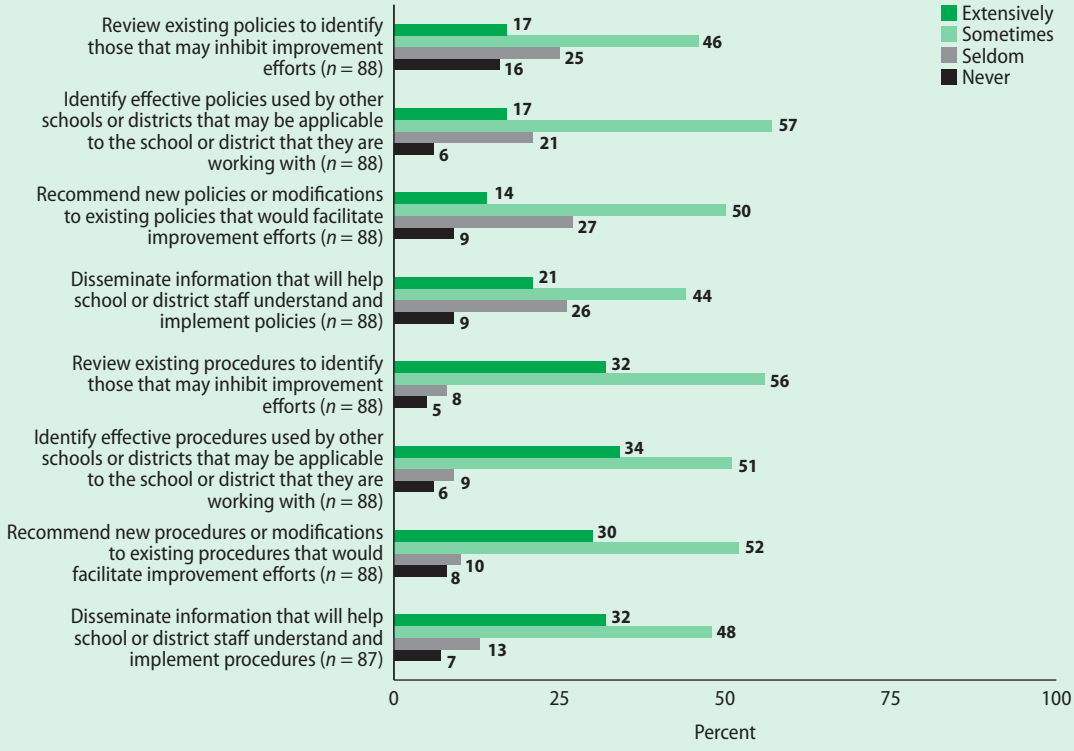
Collecting and interpreting data. School support team members rated the following types of data when considering how much of their work time was spent collecting and interpreting data:

- Achievement data in disaggregated groups.
- Demographic data.
- Data from surveys and other perceptual data.
- Progress monitoring data.
- Attendance data.
- Discipline referral data.
- Parent participation data.

When asked about the degree to which school support team members work with selected types

FIGURE 2

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to influence policies and procedures



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

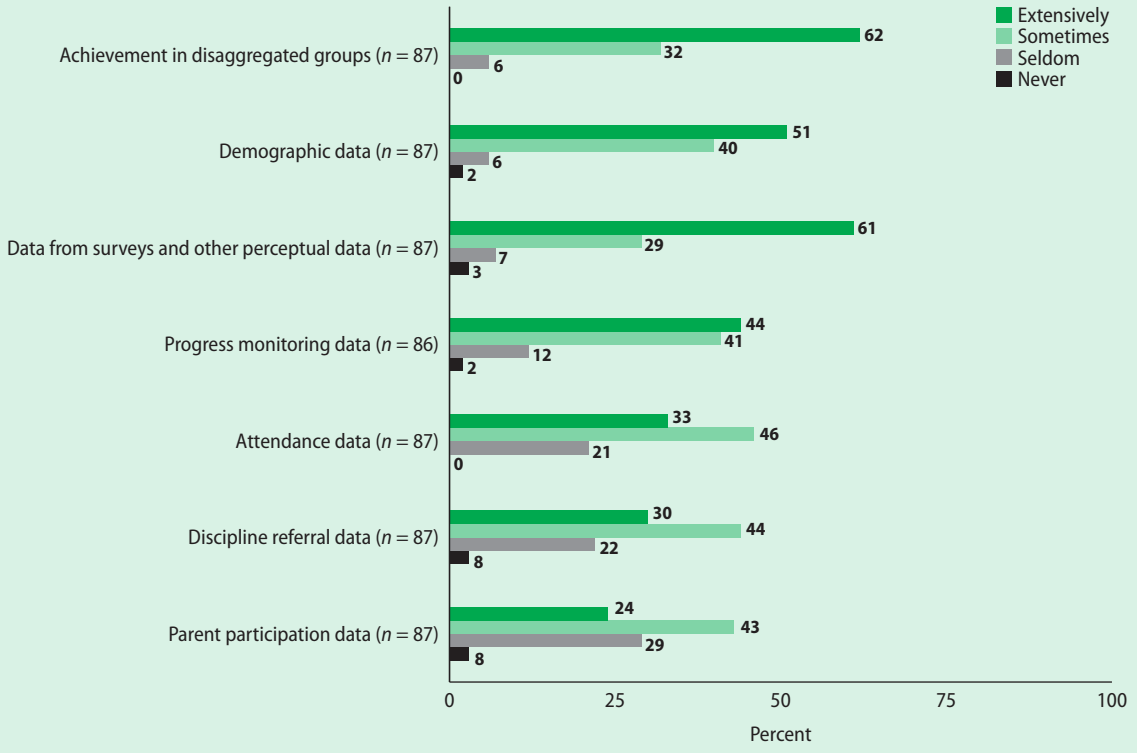
of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts, across the four states, at least 81 percent of school support team members reported extensively or sometimes working with four of the seven types. For example, 94 percent of the school support team members reported extensively or sometimes collecting and interpreting achievement data for disaggregated student subgroups; 91 percent reported extensively or sometimes collecting and interpreting demographic data; 90 percent reported extensively or sometimes collecting and interpreting data from surveys and other perceptual data from parents, teachers, and students; and 81 percent reported extensively or sometimes collecting and interpreting progress monitoring data (figure 3). Three of the seven types were reported as seldom or never worked with by 21–32 percent of school support team members: attendance data (21 percent), discipline referral data (25 percent), and parent participation data (32 percent).

Setting improvement goals. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent setting improvement goals:

- Establishing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART) goals.
- Clearly displaying and publicizing goals.
- Prioritizing goals so the effort can be more focused.
- Regularly reviewing and updating goals.

FIGURE 3

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states work with selected types of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts

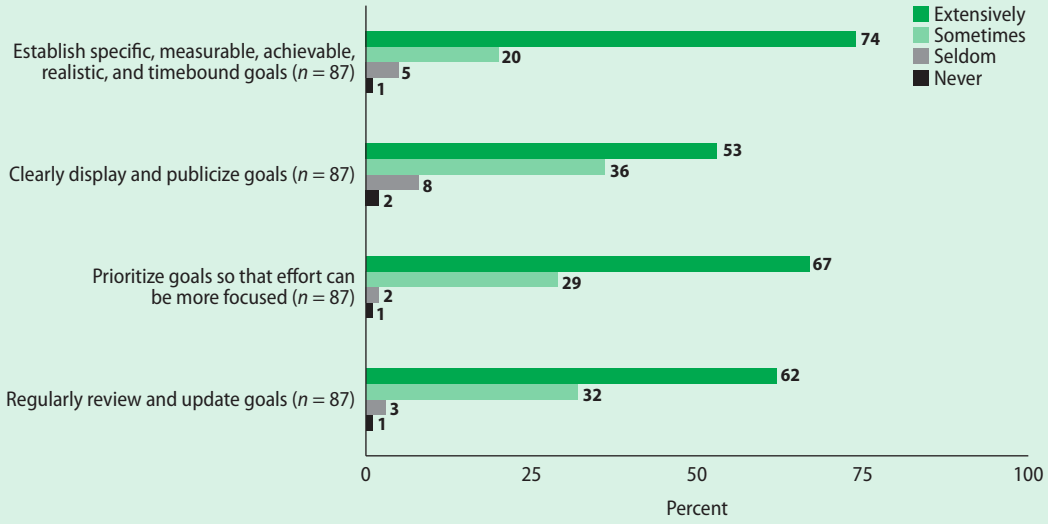


Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

FIGURE 4

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to set appropriate school improvement goals



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to set appropriate school improvement goals, at least 53 percent reported extensively carrying out all four of the setting improvement goals activities (figure 4). Also, 74 percent reported extensively establishing SMART goals, 67 percent reported extensively prioritizing goals so that efforts would be more focused, 62 percent reported extensively working on regularly reviewing and updating goals, and 53 percent reporting extensively working to clearly display and publicize goals. Fewer than 8 percent of the school support team members reported seldom or never engaging in these activities.

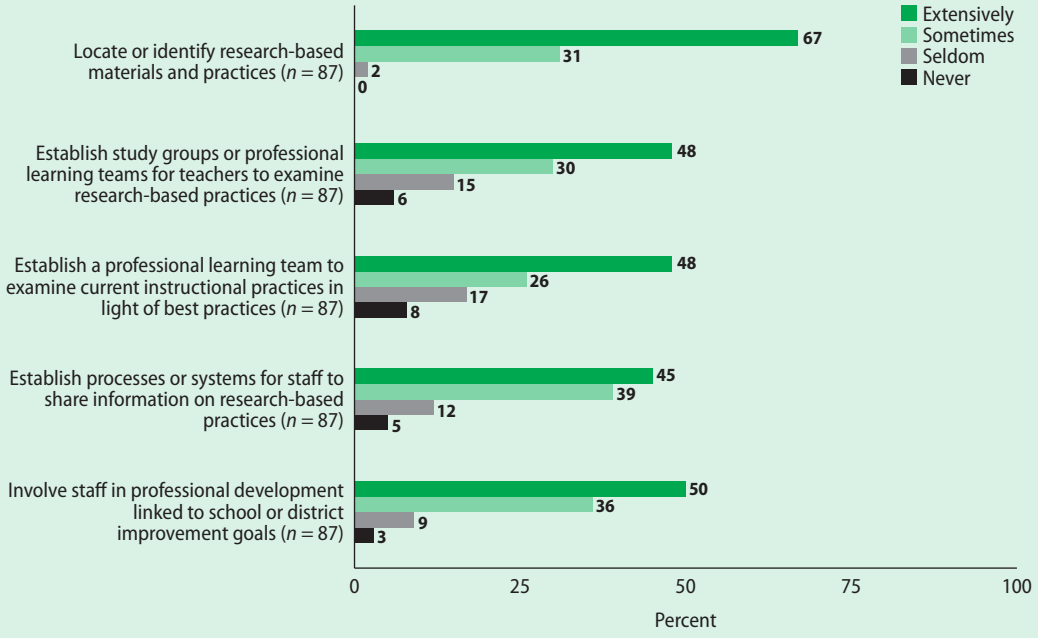
Referencing research-based practices. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent referencing research-based practices:

- Locating and identifying research-based materials and practices.
- Establishing study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices.
- Establishing a professional learning team to examine current instructional practices in light of best practices.
- Establishing processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices.
- Involving staff in professional development linked to school or district improvement goals.

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by research-based practices, across the four states 98 percent of school support team members reported extensively or sometimes identifying and locating research-based materials and practices, whereas only 2 percent reported seldom or never engaging in this activity (figure 5). At least 74 percent of the school support team members engaged extensively or

FIGURE 5

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

sometimes in each of the five activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research.

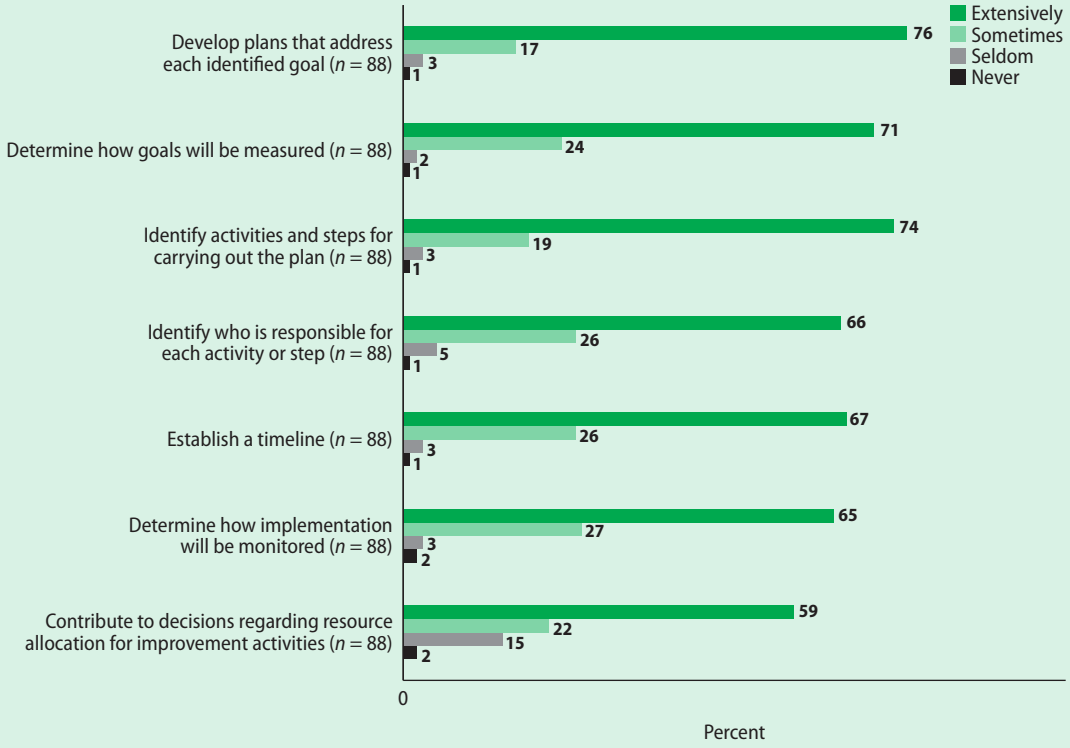
Action planning. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent action planning:

- Developing plans that address each identified goal.
- Determining how goals will be measured.
- Identifying activities and steps for carrying out the plan.
- Identifying who is responsible for each activity or step.
- Establishing a timeline.
- Determining how implementation will be monitored.
- Contributing to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities.

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement, across the four states at least 59 percent of the school support team members reported extensively engaging in these related activities (figure 6). And 76 percent reported extensively developing plans that address each identified goal, while 74 percent reported extensively identifying activities and steps for carrying out the plan. The activity that the school support team members reported engaging in the least was contributing to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities.

FIGURE 6

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

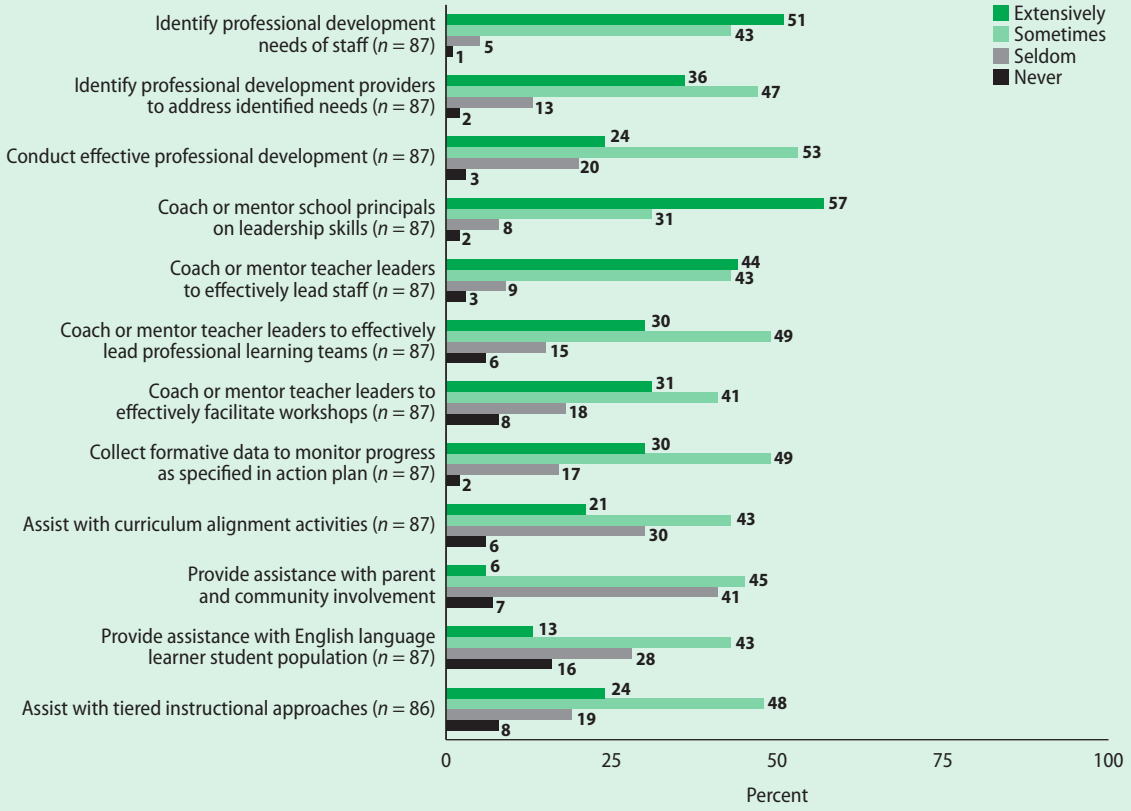
Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

Implementing improvement efforts. School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent implementing improvement plans:

- Identifying professional development needs of staff.
- Identifying professional development providers.
- Conducting effective professional development.
- Coaching or mentoring principal on leadership skills.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead staff.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead workshops.
- Collecting formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan.
- Assisting with curriculum alignment activities.
- Providing assistance with parent and community involvement.
- Providing assistance with the English language learner student population.
- Assisting with tiered instructional approaches.

FIGURE 7

Degree to which school support team members in four Northwest Region states combined carry out selected activities to implement their improvement efforts



Note: Excludes respondents who selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for each item. No data are suppressed because the risk of identifying respondents at the four-state level is minimal.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

When asked about the degree to which school support team members carry out activities to implement school or district improvement plans, at least 77 percent of the school support team members reported extensively or sometimes engaging in 7 of the 12 activities (figure 7). For example, 94 percent reported extensively or sometimes identifying professional development needs of staff, 88 percent reported extensively or sometimes coaching or mentoring school principals on leadership skills, and 87 percent reported extensively or sometimes coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead staff. For the other five activities under this function, 26–48 percent of school support team members reported seldom or never engaging in activities that provided assistance with parent and community involvement (48 percent) or English language learner student populations (44 percent) or assisting with curriculum-alignment activities (36 percent) or tiered instructional approaches (27 percent) or coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops (26 percent).

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

This study faces five main challenges and limitations.

First, although both the overall response rate (83 percent) and the individual item response (88 percent minimum response rate on all items analyzed) are relatively high, survey respondents

The analysis in this study is limited to information queried in the survey and does not include information on characteristics of schools served by school support team members, the frequency of interaction with students and administrators, or information on overall school support team program design, implementation, or oversight

may systematically differ from nonrespondents, introducing nonresponse bias into the findings. Although all nonrespondents are in Oregon and Washington, the survey data do not contain additional information that would enable a comparison of respondents and nonrespondents on other dimensions. Since Oregon and Washington schools serve a higher percentage of racial/ethnic minority and English language learner students than the other states do, the school support team members who serve the schools in these states and who serve higher percentages of racial/ethnic minority and English language learner students could differ from other school support teams in ways that are not apparent in the findings because of this nonresponse bias.

Second, the accuracy of the self-reported data of school support team activities, functions, and expertise collected in the survey was not examined by comparing it with other data sources such as interviews, supervisor surveys, or time logs that might be used to triangulate these self-reports. However, the surveys provide the best available data related to the roles and functions of school support teams in the four Northwest Region states covered in this study.

Third, because the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center survey instrument was originally designed for a different purpose, the analysis is limited to information queried in the survey and does not include information on characteristics of schools served by school support team members, the frequency of interaction with students and administrators, or information on overall school support team program design, implementation, or oversight. In addition, certain items in the survey were not included in this analysis because the design of the items limited analysis and clear interpretation. (See appendix C for a detailed item-by-item justification for why the items analyzed differed from the original plan.)

One type of survey item bears particular mention for the challenges and limitations it imposed: the items that asked respondents to provide rankings to indicate responses with the most time spent to the least time spent working with particular people and serving predominant functions. The discussion in appendix C outlines the limitations in detail. Although the design and structure of item responses for this set of questions were problematic, the content about the functions and primary people with whom school support teams work was deemed too valuable to eliminate the items from analysis, because these items provided the only data on the people with whom school support teams work and the broader categories of school support team functions.

A fourth limitation of the overall data analysis for this study relates to the minimal item response rates in the analyses, by state, needed to maintain the confidentiality of participants. As discussed above, the general suppression rule indicated suppression of the data for all items with fewer than three respondents per state to maintain confidentiality. Since many of the tables included the four-state total and summed to 100 percent, it was necessary to suppress additional data so that the suppressed cells could not be calculated. In three cases, following this rule meant that only the four-state totals could be reported in tables. Thus, the tables do not provide the fullest data available for all states or totals.

Fifth, though this study provides descriptive, comparative data on school support team members, it does not address issues of effectiveness or other evaluative outcomes. However, so little research has been done in this area that this overview of how school support teams are used in four Northwest Region states offers an important starting point for state education agencies to learn from one another.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Future studies might look at complementary data obtained from state education agency staff members responsible for the recruitment, assignment, professional development, and retention of school support team members. Some findings suggest a mismatch between the skills that current school support team members bring to the job and the needs of underachieving student populations.

Interviews with state education agency staff members could address the questions raised by the survey data. Comparing the needs of the schools and districts served and the functions school support team members are predominantly asked to perform would assist state education agencies in recruiting and assigning school support team members. Given the school support team members' retirement status and median tenure of four years, there are unanswered questions about how state education agencies might plan for school support team cadre turnover and the transfer of role-specific knowledge. Determining how to measure the effectiveness of school support team members in relation to the changing needs of student populations and changes in school and district improvement status is also an area for additional study.

APPENDIX A
LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been scant examination of school support teams currently deployed in low-performing schools and districts in accordance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, so little is known about their characteristics and roles or how they operate at the school and district levels. There are two types of literature in this field, both of which provide a historical perspective for the current study: reports on state systems of support in response to schools in need of improvement and early research on the role of external facilitators who worked as education change agents during the 1980s and 1990s.

There are three examples of reports on state systems of support in response to schools in need of improvement. Westat's *Statewide System of Support Profiles* (2006) provides a basic, one-page description of each state's system of support for schools, including organizational structure, school support teams, and services provided to the schools. The profiles were developed to highlight important elements of the state support systems at that time and to facilitate sharing of information across states. The profiles were produced based on information from state websites and feedback from state education agencies. The profiles were reviewed and approved by state Title I directors.

Redding and Walberg (2008) surveyed existing research on statewide systems of support to capture the experience and insights of education leaders on how support might best be conducted to derive actionable principles for improving schools. The researchers concluded that an effective statewide system of support depends on more than the delivery of services by the state education agency and its affiliates; it requires a policy context that spurs change by providing incentives and opportunities to build local capacity, thereby building the systemic capacity to achieve continuous improvement. To successfully sustain improvement requires that state education agencies go beyond their usual assistance with assessing needs and planning improvement to actively assisting with careful monitoring of the implementation strategies based on predetermined checkpoints and benchmarks and course corrections when indicated.

Davis et al. (2007) studied how five Northwest Region states—Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington—support schools in need of improvement, including a single-state case study about the use of school improvement facilitators in Washington. They found that as states and districts provided support for schools facing increasingly stringent NCLB requirements, common strategies emerged, including providing professional development for principals and assigning external facilitators such as distinguished educators or school support teams to provide consistent support.

The research literature on the role of external facilitators focuses on their field experiences during the 1980s and late 1990s. Some facilitators were deployed in response to the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, the predecessor to NCLB. Sula's (1998) qualitative study applied a systems approach to uncover the complexities of the change process and the work of external consultants. She found that the success of the external facilitators depended on their ability to overcome any negative influence of the site-specific factors and to capitalize on their positive influence. Feldman (2001) used case studies to examine the role of skilled educators who were hired as coaches or facilitators from outside the organization to build the capacity for change. His study suggests that a coach must work both top-down and bottom-up, help administrators shape a vision and help teachers buy into that vision, provide administrators with training to develop their strengths, and train teachers in classroom practice strategies while helping them develop a "whole school" vision. Tung and Feldman (2001) studied school coach activity logs and conducted interviews and observations to learn about their primary functions. Their study showed that coaches were mostly involved in meeting facilitation, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

APPENDIX B
SURVEY ITEMS AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS THEY ADDRESS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM ANALYSIS

TABLE B1
Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
BG01	Table 3	Dichotomous	What is your gender?	1 Male 2 Female	89	2	98%	Calculated counts and percentages for each state and across four states
BG02	Table 3	Categorical (1–5)	What is your age range?	35 or younger 36–45 46–55 56–64 65 or older	[b]	[b]	[b]	Collapsed age categories to maximize cell size, calculated counts and percentage in each range per state and across four states[b] (totals suppressed to maintain confidentiality)
BG03	Table 3	Dichotomous	Are you retired from education?	1 Yes 0 No	91	0	100%	Calculated counts and percentages for each state and across four state
BG03a		Text/open response	*(If answered "1" to BG03)* In what year did you retire?	Open text	73	0	100% of those retired	Converted to continuous length of time in retirement (as of 2009) and reported median length of retirement by state and across four states in narrative (no table)
BG04a	Table 4	Text/open response	Please provide the following information regarding the job you held (or currently hold) prior to becoming a school support team member: job title.	Open text response	88	3	97%	Categorized and reported counts and percentage in each position by state and across three states (eliminated Wyoming for confidentiality reasons)[b]: principal or school administrator (including elementary, middle, and high school principals and assistant principals); other administrator (including superintendents, curriculum directors, other district administrators, and state/federal administrators); other (including coaches, teachers, consultants, and professors).
BG06	Table 5	Dichotomous	Do you have a Ph.D. or Ed.D. degree?	1 Yes 0 No	91	0	100%	Calculated counts and percentage for each state and across four states[b]
BG06a		Text/open response	*(If answered "1" to BG06)* What was the topic of your dissertation?	Open text	15	2	88%	Categorized into education (including topics that had to do with schools, districts, teachers, administrators, education policy, or instruction) and non-education (including non-education-related scientific or other studies) and reported only the four-state total in narrative (no table)

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
BG07	Table 5	Dichotomous	Do you have an M.S. or M.A. degree?	1 Yes 0 No	91	0	100%	Calculated counts and percentage for each state and across four states[b]
BG07a	Table 6	Text/open response	*(If answered "1" to BG07)* Master's degree discipline:	Open text	87	0	100%	Categorized open responses and reported counts and percentage in each discipline across four states only: educational leadership and administration (including school and education administration, organizational and educational leadership); curriculum and instruction (including curriculum and instruction and curriculum development); subject-specific (including math, English, science, natural science, reading, physical education); elementary and general education (including elementary education, teaching, education, and master in education); guidance and counseling (including counseling, rehabilitation and counseling, and guidance and counseling); special education (including SpEd, special education, and hearing impairment); other (including educational technology, educational policy and management).[c]
BG09a–e	Table 7	3 dichotomous	What education certification have you held? (check all that apply) *(If BG09d [Other] = "–1")* In the previous question, you indicated other. What other education certification do you hold?	Teaching (–1, 0) Administrator (–1, 0) Superintendent (–1, 0) Other (–1, 0) Open text	90	1	99%	Recategorized "other" responses into existing categories and created new other category, then calculated counts and percentage holding each certification by state and across four states: teaching, administrator, superintendent, other (included reading specialist, vocational certification, family life specialist, and guidance and counseling).[b]

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
BG10a–i	Tables 8 and 9	7 dichotomous	What are your areas of professional wisdom or expertise? Please mark all areas in which you have particular expertise. *(If BG10h [Other]="1")* In the previous question you indicated other areas of expertise. Please specify.	1/0 English language learner students 1/0 PD for adult learners 1/0 special ed 1/0 Native Amer/ AK native 1/0 Rural ed 1/0 Literacy 1/0 Math; 1/0 Other Open text	90	1	99%	Calculated counts and percentage indicating each area of expertise (=1) by state and across four states[b]; recategorized 44 "other" responses into six new categories (none of the other responses were categorized into the existing eight) and reported across four states only[c]: specific student populations (other than the listed groups); school reform or improvement processes; equity and cultural issues; administration and leadership; curriculum and instruction; other/not recategorized (specific categorization of open responses available by request).
ST01	Table 12	Categorical	As a school support team member, who is your direct employer in this role?	State Education Agency Intermediate Education Agency (ESD) Local Education Agency Institution of Higher Education Other	90	1	99%	Calculated counts and percentage indicating each employer, reported top two categories across four states only[c]
ST01a		Text/open response	*(If ST01 [Other] = "1")* In the previous question you indicated an employer other than the types listed. Please specify the employer type.	Open text	[b]	[b]	[b]	Suppressed due to low response size.

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
ST02	Table 10	Text/open response	How many years of experience do you have as a school support team member?	Open text	91	0	100%	Capped maximum number years at seven to reflect official No Child Left Behind role beginning and capped each state at the maximum number of years its school support team program has been in existence (Montana=3; Oregon=5; Washington=7; Wyoming=2); converted to continuous measure and reported mean, median, range, and standard deviation of years by state and across four states.
ST03	Table 11	Categorical	Which of the following best describes the portion of a full time equivalent (FTE) that is allocated to your responsibilities as a school support team member?	10=Full time (1.0 FTE) 8=0.8 FTE or more but not full time 6=0.6 or more but less than 0.8 FTE 4=0.4 or more but less than 0.6 FTE 2=0.2 or more but less than 0.4 FTE 0=Less than 0.2 FTE	91	0	100%	Calculated counts and percentage indicating each full time equivalent by state and across four states.[b]
ST04	Table 13	Dichotomous	As a school support team member, do you work at the school level? In other words, do you work with individual schools because they are not making adequate yearly progress?	1 Yes 0 No	90	1	99%	Calculated counts and percentage for each state and across four states, examining cross-tabulations with ST05 to determine whether school support team members worked only at the school level, only at the district level, or at both levels.

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
ST05	Table 13	Dichotomous	Do you work at the district level? In other words, do you work with school districts that are in need of improvement or do you work to build district capacity to help individual schools in need of improvement?	1 Yes 0 No	90	1	99%	Calculated counts and percentage for each state and across four states (see above for combined analysis with ST04).
ST05a	Table 14	Text/open response	*(If ST05=1)* How many school districts do you currently (during the 2008/09 school year) serve at the district level?	Open text	41	2	95%	Converted into continuous measure and reported median and range of number districts served by state and across four states (response rate for ST05a was calculated using 48 percent who responded "yes" to ST05).
ST06a–e	Tables 15 and 16	Text/open response	With whom do you work? Include both school and district level. Please number in order of how you typically use your time: • Leadership teams. • Principal. • Individual/small groups of teachers. • District-level staff. • Parents. • School board or other community members.	Ranked 1–6 (1=most time to 6=least time)	90	1	99%	Two strategies: 1) Converted to dichotomous variables (1= ranking of 1, 2 or 3; 0= not ranked or ranking higher than 3) and reported counts and percentages of respondents reporting contact among their top three w/each source by state and across four states. 2) Calculated the counts and percentage of respondents reporting a rank of "1" for each category by state and across four states.[b]

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
ST07	Tables 17 and 18	Text/open response	What functions do you predominantly serve as part of your job as a school support team member? Please number these functions in order of how you use your time.	Ranked 1–8 (1=most time spent to 8=least time spent)	91	0	100%	Two strategies: 1) 1= ranking of 1, 2 or 3; 0= not ranked or ranking higher than 3, and reported counts and percentages of respondents reporting each activity as among their top three by state and across four states.[b] 2) Calculated the counts and percentage of respondents reporting a rank of "1" for each category by state and across four states, excluding the "other" responses entirely, since they were not ranked.[b] The 28 percent of respondents who selected "Other" entered open responses (in ST08a). These were recategorized into the existing functions, but were not used in the final analysis (because they were unranked).
ST07a			Facilitating meetings related to school or district improvement.					
ST07b			Observing in class-rooms and/or assisting administrators do this.					
ST07c			Meeting with admin-istrators at district or school level about school improvement planning or implemen-tation.					
ST07d			Meeting with admin-istrators at district or school level about things other than school improvement topics (discipline, staff-ing, conflict among staff, etc.).					
ST07e			Leading professional development or sup-porting implementa-tion of professional development.					
ST07f			Collecting, organizing, and analyzing school data to make decisions.					
ST07g			Locating and/or recom-mending resources.					
ST07h			Communicating with stakeholders.					

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
ST08		Dichotomous	Do you typically perform any other functions that were not included in the list from the previous question?	1 Yes 0 No				
ST08a		Open response text	*(If ST08 = 1)* In the previous question you indicated another function you served. Please describe that function.	Open text				
BR01	Figure 1, tables D1–D4	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following to establish readiness for improvement efforts.					

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
BR01a			Assist with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address the school/district improvement.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	88	3	97%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
BR01b			Implement processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings (norms, agreement, or consensus model).		88	3	97%	
BR01c			Clarify decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures (i.e., who decides what?).		88	3	97%	
BR01d			Establish clear lines of communication (i.e., who tells who, and how feedback is gathered).		88	3	97%	
BR01e			Foster district support for the school's efforts that is appropriately visible (such as through participation of district staff on improvement team and/or attendance at planning meetings).		87	4	96%	
BR01f			Involve a broad base of stakeholders including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community members in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the school/district improvement process.		88	3	97%	

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
PP01	Figure 2, tables D5–D8	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following.					
PP01a			Review existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	87	4	96%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
PP01b			Identify effective policies used by other schools/districts that may be applicable to the school/district that you are working with.		88	3	97%	
PP01c			Recommend new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts.		88	3	97%	
PP01d			Disseminate information that will help school/district staff understand and implement the policies.		88	3	97%	
PP01e			Review existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.		88	3	97%	
PP01f			Identify effective procedures used by other schools/districts that may be applicable to the school/district that you are working with.		88	3	97%	
PP01g			Recommend new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts.		88	3	97%	
PP01h			Disseminate information that will help school/district staff understand and implement the procedures.		87	4	96%	

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
DT01	Figure 3, tables D9–D12	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration collect the following types of data.					
DT01a			Achievement in disaggregated groups.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	87	4	96%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
DT01b			Progress monitoring data.		86	5	95%	
DT01c			Demographic data.		87	4	96%	
DT01d			Attendance data.		87	4	96%	
DT01e			Discipline referral data.		87	4	96%	
DT01f			Parent participation data.		87	4	96%	
DT01g			Data from surveys and other perceptual data from staff, students, and parents.		87	4	96%	
GL01	Figure 4, tables D13–D16	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following to set improvement goals.					

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
GL01a			Establish SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	87	4	96%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
GL01b			Clearly display and publicize the goals.		87	4	96%	
GL01c			Prioritize goals so that effort can be more focused.		87	4	96%	
GL01d			Regularly review and update the goals.		87	4	96%	
RS01	Figure 5, tables D17–D20	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following?					
RS01a			Locate/identify materials and practices that are based on research.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	87	4	96%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
RS01b			Establish study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices.		87	4	96%	
RS01c			Establish a professional learning team that examines current instructional practices in light of best practices.		87	4	96%	
RS01d			Establish processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices.		87	4	96%	
RS01e			Involve staff in professional development linked to school/district improvement goals.		87	4	96%	

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
AP01	Figure 6, tables D21–D24	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following aspects of the planning process.					
AP01a			Develop plans that address each identified goal.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	88	3	97%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
AP01b			Determine how goals will be measured.		88	3	97%	
AP01c			Identify activities and steps for carrying out the plan.		88	3	97%	
AP01d			Identify who is responsible for each activity or step.		88	3	97%	
AP01e			Establish a timeline.		88	3	97%	
AP01f			Determine how implementation will be monitored.		88	3	97%	
AP01g			Contribute to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities.		88	3	97%	
IM01	Figure 7, tables D25–D28	Categorical	Indicate the degree to which you have carried out or helped school/district staff and administration with each of the following?					

(CONTINUED)

TABLE B1 (CONTINUED)

Survey items for school support team analysis

Item ID[a]	Table or figure number	Type	Item	Response anchors	Number of responses	Number of non-responses	Item response rate	Analysis/presentation
IM01a			Identify professional development needs of the staff.	4 Extensively 3 Sometimes 2 Seldom 1 Never 0 Not applicable or don't know	87	4	96%	Percentages for each response category by state and across four states.[b] Also created stacked horizontal bar charts of four-state totals for interpretation.
IM01b			Identify professional development providers to address identified needs.		87	4	96%	
IM01c			Conduct effective professional development.		87	4	96%	
IM01d			Coach or mentor school principals on leadership skills.		87	4	96%	
IM01e			Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead staff in the implementation of the action plan.		86	5	95%	
IM01f			Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams.		87	4	96%	
IM01g			Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops.		87	4	96%	
IM01h			Collect formative data in order to monitor process as specified in the action plan.		87	4	96%	
IM01i			Assist with curriculum alignment activities.		87	4	96%	
IM01j			Provide assistance with parent and community involvement.		87	4	96%	
IM01k			Provide assistance with English language learner student population.		87	4	96%	
IM01l			Assist with tiered instructional approaches (RTI, Reading First, etc.).		86	5	95%	

a. BG refers to background information, ST to support team role, BR to building readiness, PP to policies and procedures, DT to data, GL to goal-setting activities, RS to research-based practices, AP to action planning, IM to implementing improvement, and EE to evaluating effectiveness.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

c. Only the four-state totals are reported in tables to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Education Northwest (formerly the Northwest Regional Laboratory), Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center School Support Team Member Survey, May 2009.

TABLE B2

Survey items used to address research questions

Research question	Survey question (survey item ID)
1. What are the characteristics and qualifications of school support team members working with schools and districts in improvement status in four Northwest Region states?	• What is your gender? (BG01) • What is your age range? (BG02) • Are you retired? (BG03) • When did you retire? (BG03a) • Job previously held? (BG04a) • Doctoral degree held? (BG06) • Doctoral degree discipline? (BG06a) • Master's degree? (BG07) • Master's degree discipline? (BG07a) • Education certification held? (BG09a–e) • Professional expertise? (BG10) • Years of school support team experience? (ST02) • What is your FTE in this role? (ST03)
2. What are the roles and functions of school support team members working in four Northwest Region states?	• Direct employer? (ST01 and ST01a) • Work primarily at school level? (ST04) • Do you work at the district level? (ST05) • How many districts do you work with? (ST05a) • With whom do you primarily work? (ST06a–f) • Predominant functions? (ST07a–h and ST08a) • Building-readiness activities? (BR01a–f) • Influencing policies and procedures activities? (PP01a–h) • Collecting and interpreting data activities? (DT01a–g) • Setting improvement goals activities? (GL01a–d) • Referencing research-based practices activities? (RS01a–d) • Action planning activities? (AP01a–g) • Implementing improvement efforts? (IM01a–l)

Source: Education Northwest (formerly the Northwest Regional Laboratory), Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center School Support Team Member Survey, May 2009.

APPENDIX C
DETAILED METHODOLOGY

The steps below detail the data collection and analyses not addressed in the report narrative or appendix B.

Survey administration and data collection

Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center's partner, RMC Research Corporation, administered the school support team member survey electronically between March 13 and May 4, 2009. The survey population comprised all school support team members in the four participating states during the 2008/09 academic year, regardless of whether they served schools or districts in need of improvement. School support team members are trained and assigned to schools and/or districts to serve for at least the duration of one academic year. Because additional members are not added to a state's cadre after the beginning of each school year, the 109 school support team members in the frame represent the total target population. State education agency coordinators sent email invitations to all 109 individuals as well as follow-up reminders to participate; 91 people responded for an overall response rate of 83 percent (table C1).

School support teams were assured that the data would be confidential and shared only in aggregate with the state education agencies. Identifying information has been removed from the data: school support teams are identified only by codes in the dataset, and the key is kept in the locked office of the project coordinator. Because subgroup analyses with fewer than three responses per state are potentially problematic for confidentiality reasons, cell sizes below three in state-level tables were suppressed (as described in detail for each individual item in appendix B).

Data analyses

For each research question summary descriptive statistics (percentages or averages and ranges, depending on the type of data) were calculated for the relevant survey data within each state and aggregated across the four participating states. For example, the number and percentage of school support team members within each age range in each state were computed, and then the counts and percentages were calculated across all four states. For open-response items, some of the responses were recategorized prior to summarization in tables. As noted in each table, the recategorizations created for open-response items in tables were based on either existing categories or a substantive grouping of actual response data. Tables for which the original data were derived from questions that allowed respondents to "mark all that apply" or to select multiple responses are indicated with notes. See below for details on further analytic issues related to specific item types.

Recoding open-response items. In several cases the open-response data needed to be converted from string variables to continuous variables before they could be statistically described. Some required manipulation and recoding—for example, respondents who answered "yes" to "Are you retired from education?" (BG03) were asked

TABLE C1
Response rates to survey of school support teams, by state

Item	Montana	Oregon	Washington	Wyoming	Total
Number of school support team members	19	18	65	7	109
Completed surveys	19	13	52	7	91
Response rate (percent)	100	72	80	100	83

Source: Education Northwest (formerly the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory), Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center School Support Team Member Survey, May 2009.

to write their response to "In what year did you retire?" (BG03a). We recoded this variable into a continuous number of years in retirement, as of the date of the survey (2009). See appendix B for other specific items.

Recategorization (and recoding). Several items required some form of recategorization prior to analysis to enable succinct and meaningful descriptions. These fell into three primary categories.

One type of variable recategorization had to do with open-text responses that needed to be substantively grouped and recoded to place in tables. Each open-ended response item that was recategorized is detailed in appendix B, along with examples of information about which responses were grouped in each category.

A related issue had to do with the quantity of items for which respondents marked "other." In many cases, the option of "other" was accompanied by open responses that necessitated a substantial amount of recategorization and recoding to allow analyses that would provide meaningful results. In some cases the responses to the open-response items were simply recategorized into the existing categories because the text entered by respondents did not differ sufficiently from the original categories to warrant a separate category. In other cases the responses could not be fit into an existing category, so a new set of categories was created. For example, nearly 50 percent of respondents indicated "other" as their response to item BG10 (about school support team members' areas of professional wisdom or expertise), but the open responses that accompanied this option were rich with data that would be part of the analysis only if recategorized and coded.

The final type of recategorization had to do with the ranking items (ST06a–f and ST07a–h, ST08, and ST08a). These items required a considerable amount of recoding prior to analysis. A limitation of the findings from these items stems from the fact that the responses cannot be strictly compared or prioritized, due to the structure of the item response and type. These responses were "multitext-type" open responses, which meant that respondents could enter any number (or none) in any space. Some respondents filled each space with a number from 1–6 (or 1–8, where 1 = most amount of time spent and 6 or 8 = least amount of time spent), but others numbered only some spaces up to 4 or 5, and a few even entered the same number more than once. To calculate response rates, the entire group of items was considered a single question, so if a respondent entered a number for any category, he or she was considered to have responded to the question.

To avoid making direct comparisons of rankings given these response inconsistencies, the first strategy for analysis was to convert rankings in the top three indicated by respondents into dichotomous variables, indicating whether they designated that group or served that function as one of the top three. This provided an overall picture of the highest ranked people with whom school support team members work and the functions they serve, without regard to the amount of time spent.

However, there were two limitations to this strategy. First, the question regarding people with whom school support teams work (ST06a–f) did not offer respondents the opportunity to select "other," so there may be people other than those listed in the question with whom school support team members spend time working. The question regarding predominant functions (ST07a–h) did provide participants with the opportunity to indicate whether they served other functions (ST08) and an open-response item to write in those functions (ST08a), but these were unranked and could not be used in the final analyses.

A second limitation of this strategy is that it was unclear whether a respondent's highest number indicated that he or she spent the least amount of time on that category or no time on that category. This strategy potentially overstates the case in which school support team members work with fewer than three groups or serve fewer than three functions.

To address these limitations, a second strategy was employed to analyze these items. Only the items ranked "1" were analyzed to provide the number and percentage of respondents who indicated a given category as the one on which they spent the most time. However, for the predominant functions question (ST07a–h) respondents were not able to rank the "other" functions indicated relative to those provided, so these were not included in the table. In addition, several respondents indicated more than one category as the highest ranked, so the total numbers and percentages exceed the number of respondents.

Data displays and suppression

As described in the analysis section of this report, a general suppression rule was applied to prevent the identification of individuals. For state-level tables cell sizes below three were suppressed, as were other cells that could be used to calculate the suppressed data (for example, the total number of respondents and percentages). Because this sometimes led to a table with a predominance of suppressed data, final table reporting was determined with an effort to maximize the amount of data that could be reported in the tables while adhering to the general suppression rule. This was accomplished in one or more of the following ways, in the order of preferred application:

- Collapsing categories in substantively meaningful ways to exceed three responses for a given state.
- Reporting only the data for three states instead of four, generally omitting Wyoming, which has only seven school support teams and frequently had cell sizes below the minimum reporting size.
- Reporting only the four-state total data.
- Eliminating the table altogether.

APPENDIX D
STATE-BY-STATE FUNCTIONS TABLES

Tables D1–D28 report on a state-by-state basis the responses of the school support team members when asked to consider the relative time and energy they spent on the specific activities related to the functions they primarily perform. Under each of the primary functions, they were asked to consider specific activities and to rate how much of their work time involves each of the activities. They were asked to rate activities under the following seven functions:

- Building readiness for improvement activities.
- Influencing policies and procedures.
- Collecting and interpreting data.
- Setting improvement goals.
- Referencing research-based practices.
- Action planning.
- Implementing improvement efforts.

The data across all four study states are displayed in the findings section of the report. The data displayed in the following tables was not discussed in the findings section of the report where the figures showing across state data are displayed and narrated. The tables that follow report on the activities related to each of the seven functions performed by the school support team members in each of the study states.

Related to figure 1: building readiness for improvement activities

School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent building readiness:

- Assisting with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement.
- Implementing processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings.
- Clarifying decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures.
- Establishing clear lines of communication.
- Fostering appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts.
- Involving a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process.

In Montana 42 percent of school support team members reported extensively building readiness for improvement (table D1), in Oregon 92 percent did (table D2), and in Washington 81 percent did (table D3). In Wyoming 43 percent of school support team members reported extensively fostering district support for the school's improvement efforts (table D4).

Related to figure 2: influencing policies and procedures

School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent influencing policies and procedures:

- Reviewing existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.
- Identifying effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with.
- Recommending new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts.
- Disseminating information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies.

TABLE D1

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to build readiness for improvement efforts (BR01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Assist with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement	42	26	16	[b]	[b]
Implement processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings (norms, agreement, or consensus model)	26	47	21	[b]	[b]
Clarify decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures (who decides what)	21	68	[b]	[b]	0
Establish clear lines of communication (who tells whom, and how feedback is gathered)	32	58	[b]	[b]	
Foster appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts (such as through participation of district staff on improvement team and attendance at planning meetings)	37	47	16	0	0
Involve a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process	16	21	53	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is nine.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D2

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to build readiness for improvement efforts (BR01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Assist with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement	92	[b]	[b]	0	0
Implement processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings (norms, agreement, or consensus model)	69	31	0	0	0
Clarify decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures (who decides what)	77	[b]	[b]	0	0
Establish clear lines of communication (who tells whom, and how feedback is gathered)	38	62	0	0	0
Foster appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts (such as through participation of district staff on improvement team and attendance at planning meetings)	[b]	62	30	0	[b]
Involve a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process	23	38	39	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D3

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to build readiness for improvement efforts (BR01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Assist with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement	81	17	[c]	[c]	0
Implement processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings (norms, agreement, or consensus model)	57	39	[c]	[c]	0
Clarify decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures (who decides what)	45	49	6	0	0
Establish clear lines of communication (who tells whom, and how feedback is gathered)	53	43	[c]	[c]	0
Foster appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts (such as through participation of district staff on improvement team and attendance at planning meetings)	42	46	12	0	0
Involve a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process	33	47	20	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49, unless otherwise noted.

b. Number of responses for activity is 48.

c. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D4

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to build readiness for improvement efforts (BR01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Assist with establishing a leadership team that meets regularly to address school or district improvement	[b]	[b]	43	[b]	0
Implement processes for conducting efficient and effective meetings (norms, agreement, or consensus model)	0	57	[b]	[b]	0
Clarify decisionmaking responsibilities and procedures (who decides what)	0	86	[b]	[b]	0
Establish clear lines of communication (who tells whom, and how feedback is gathered)	0	71	[b]	[b]	0
Foster appropriately visible district support for the school's efforts (such as through participation of district staff on improvement team and attendance at planning meetings)	43	[b]	[b]	[b]	0
Involve a broad base of stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the wider school community, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the school or district improvement process	[b]	57	[b]	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is seven.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

- Reviewing existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts.
- Identifying effective procedures used by other schools or districts that might be applicable to the school or district that they are working with.
- Recommending new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts.
- Disseminating information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures.

In Montana, while 60 percent of school support team members reported sometimes influencing policies and procedures, 84 percent reported sometimes reviewing existing procedures to identify policies and procedures that might inhibit improvement efforts (table D5). In Oregon 61 percent of school support team members reported extensively identifying applicable policies and procedures (table D6). In Washington 39 percent of school support team members reported extensively reviewing existing procedures to identify policies and procedures that might inhibit improvement efforts (table D7). In Wyoming 57 percent of school support team members reported extensively reviewing existing procedures to identify those policies and procedures that might inhibit improvement efforts, and 71 percent reported sometimes identifying applicable policies and procedures used by other schools or districts (table D8).

Related to figure 3: collecting and interpreting data

School support team members rated the following types of data when considering how much of their

TABLE D5

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to influence policies and procedures (PP01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Review existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	[b]	42	26	21	[b]
Identify effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	15	60	[b]	15	[b]
Recommend new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts	[b]	53	21	16	[b]
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies	21	31	32	16	0
Review existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	[b]	84	0	[b]	0
Identify effective procedures used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	32	53	[b]	[b]	0
Recommend new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts	16	68	0	16	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures	21	58	[b]	16	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D6

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to influence policies and procedures (PP01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Review existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	[b]	69	23	[b]	0[0]
Identify effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	[b]	61	23	[b]	0
Recommend new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts	[b]	61	23	[b]	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies	31	46	23	0	0
Review existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	54	38	[b]	[b]	0
Identify effective procedures used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	61	23	[b]	[b]	0
Recommend new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts	54	38	[b]	[b]	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures	42	42	[b]	[b]	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13, except "Disseminate information that will help school/district staff understand and implement the procedures," which had 12 responses.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D7

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to influence policies and procedures (PP01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Review existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	25	42	25	8	0
Identify effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	20	53	22	[b]	[b]
Recommend new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts	16	50	31	6	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies	20	45	29	6	0
Review existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	39	49	8	[b]	[b]
Identify effective procedures used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	33	53	6	8	0
Recommend new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts	33	51	8	8	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures	39	45	10	6	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D8

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to influence policies and procedures (PP01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Review existing policies to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	43	[b]	[b]	0	0
Identify effective policies used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	0	71	[b]	[b]	0
Recommend new policies or modifications to existing policies that would facilitate improvement efforts	0	43	[b]	[b]	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement policies	[b]	71	[b]	0	0
Review existing procedures to identify those that may inhibit improvement efforts	57	[b]	[b]	0	0
Identify effective procedures used by other schools or districts that may be applicable to the school or district that they are working with	0	86	[b]	0	[b]
Recommend new procedures or modifications to existing procedures that would facilitate improvement efforts	0	43	57	0	0
Disseminate information that will help school or district staff understand and implement procedures	0	57	43	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 7, unless otherwise noted.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

work time was spent collecting and interpreting data:

- Achievement in disaggregated groups.
- Demographic data.
- Data from surveys and other perceptual data.
- Progress monitoring data.
- Attendance data.
- Discipline referral data.
- Parent participation data.

In Montana 26 percent of school support team members reported extensively collecting and interpreting achievement data in disaggregated groups (table D9), while in Oregon 77 percent did (table D10) and in Washington 78 percent did (table D11). Also in Montana 31 percent reported extensively collecting and interpreting progress monitoring data. Wyoming's school support team members did not report extensively engaging in any of the activities related to collecting and interpreting data (table D12).

Related to figure 4: setting improvement goals

School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent setting improvement goals:

- Establishing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART) goals.
- Clearly displaying and publicizing the goals.
- Prioritizing goals so that effort can be more focused.
- Regularly reviewing and updating goals.

The school support team members seemed to be engaged to a similar degree in all activities

TABLE D9

Degree to which school support team members work with selected type of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts (DT01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Achievement in disaggregated groups	26	53	21	0	0
Demographic data	21	42	21	[b]	[b]
Data from surveys and other perceptual data	21	42	26	[b]	[b]
Progress monitoring data	31	32	26	[b]	[b]
Attendance data	[b]	53	37	[b]	
Discipline referral data	[b]	42	42	[b]	[b]
Parent participation data	[b]	32	47	16	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D10

Degree to which school support team members work with selected type of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts (DT01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Achievement in disaggregated groups	77	23	0	0	0
Demographic data	62	38	0	0	0
Data from surveys and other perceptual data	69	23	[b]	0	[b]
Progress monitoring data	54	46	0	0	0
Attendance data	46	46	[b]	0	[b]
Discipline referral data	23	61	[b]	[b]	0
Parent participation data	38	46	[b]	[b]	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

related to setting improvement goals, but there was a common focus on setting SMART goals. In Montana, 37 percent of school support team members reported extensively helping to set SMART goals (table D13). In Oregon 69 percent did (table D14), in Washington 88 percent did (table D15), and in Wyoming 83 percent did (table D16).

Related to figure 5: referencing research-based practices

School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent referencing research-based practices:

- Locating/identifying materials and practices.

TABLE D11

Degree to which school support team members work with selected type of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts (DT01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Achievement in disaggregated groups	78	22	0	0	0
Demographic data	63	37	0	0	0
Data from surveys and other perceptual data	80	20	0	0	0
Progress monitoring data	50	40	8	[b]	[b]
Attendance data	41	41	18	0	0
Discipline referral data	43	39	18	0	0
Parent participation data	31	47	22	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D12

Degree to which school support team members work with selected type of data when collecting and interpreting data to inform planning of school improvement efforts (DT01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Achievement in disaggregated groups	[b]	67	[b]	0	0
Demographic data	[b]	67	[b]	0	0
Data from surveys and other perceptual data	[b]	67	[b]	0	0
Progress monitoring data	[b]	67	[b]	0	0
Attendance data	[b]	67	[b]	0	0
Discipline referral data	[b]	50	[b]	[b]	0
Parent participation data	[b]	[b]	50	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 6.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

- Establishing study groups or professional learning teams to examine research-based practices.
- Establishing a professional learning team that examines current instructional practices in light of best practices.
- Establishing processes or systems for staff to share information.
- Involving staff in professional development linked to school/district improvement goals.

Within each state, school support teams were engaged extensively in identifying and locating materials and practices that are based on research: in Montana, 58 percent (table D17); in Oregon, 85 percent (table D18); in Washington, 67 percent (table D19); and in Wyoming (table D20), 50

TABLE D13

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to set appropriate school improvement goals (GL01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound goals	37	37	16	[b]	[b]
Clearly display and publicize goals	26	37	21	[b]	[b]
Prioritize goals so the effort can be more focused	26	58	[b]	[b]	[b]
Regularly review and update goals	26	58	[b]	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D14

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to set appropriate school improvement goals (GL01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound goals	69	23	[b]	0	[b]
Clearly display and publicize goals	69	23	[b]	[b]	0
Prioritize goals so the effort can be more focused	77	[b]	[b]	0	0
Regularly review and update goals	77	23	0	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D15

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to set appropriate school improvement goals (GL01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound goals	88	12	0	0	0
Clearly display and publicize goals	63	33	[b]	[b]	0
Prioritize goals so the effort can be more focused	82	18	0	0	0
Regularly review and update goals	76	20	[b]	0	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D16

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to set appropriate school improvement goals (GL01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Establish specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound goals	83	[b]	0	[b]	0
Clearly display and publicize goals	[b]	83	[b]	0	0
Prioritize goals so the effort can be more focused	50	50	0	0	0
Regularly review and update goals	[b]	67	0	0	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 6.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D17

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research (RS01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Locate or identify research-based materials and practices	58	42	0	0	0
Establish study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices	[b]	37	32	21	[b]
Establish a professional learning team to examine current instructional practices in light of best practices	[b]	21	37	26	[b]
Establish processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices	26	37	21	16	0
Involve staff in professional development linked to school or district improvement goals	[b]	58	16	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

percent. Washington had a broad range of activities that the school support team members engaged in extensively, including involving staff in professional development linked to improvement goals (71 percent), establishing study groups or professional learning teams to examine research-based practices (69 percent), and identifying and locating materials and practices based on research (67 percent).

Related to figure 6: action planning

Tables D21–D24 display the percentage of school support team members in each of the four states engaged to varying degrees in developing effective action plans for school improvement. The following are the specific activities school support team

TABLE D18

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research (RS01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Locate or identify research-based materials and practices	85	[b]	[b]	0	0
Establish study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices	54	38	[b]	0	[b]
Establish a professional learning team to examine current instructional practices in light of best practices	62	23	[b]	[b]	0
Establish processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices	38	54	[b]	[b]	0
Involve staff in professional development linked to school or district improvement goals	54	38	[b]	0	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D19

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research (RS01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Locate or identify research-based materials and practices	67	32	0	0	0
Establish study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices	69	25	6	0	0
Establish a professional learning team to examine current instructional practices in light of best practices	65	31	[b]	[b]	0
Establish processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices	57	37	6	0	0
Involve staff in professional development linked to school or district improvement goals	71	27	[b]	0	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

members rated in terms of the amount of their work time spent on each:

- Developing plans that address each identified goal.
- Determining how goals will be measured.
- Identifying activities and steps for carrying out the plan.
- Identifying who is responsible for each activity or step.
- Establishing a timeline.

TABLE D20

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to ensure that improvement efforts are guided by current research (RS01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Locate or identify research-based materials and practices	50	[b]	[b]	0	0
Establish study groups or professional learning teams for teachers to examine research-based practices	0	[b]	50	[b]	0
Establish a professional learning team to examine current instructional practices in light of best practices	[b]	[b]	83	0	0
Establish processes or systems for staff to share information on research-based practices	[b]	[b]	50	0	0
Involve staff in professional development linked to school or district improvement goals	0	[b]	67	0	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 6.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

- Determining how implementation will be monitored.
- Contributing to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities.

Within each state, school support team members were extensively engaged in most of the activities related to action planning to equal degrees, with only subtle variation. Montana school support team members reported focusing most on determining how the goals would be measured (42 percent; table D21). Oregon school support team members focused unanimously (100 percent) on determining how implementation would be monitored (table D22). Washington school support teams reported extensively developing plans that addressed each identified goal (88 percent; table D23). And in Wyoming 67 percent of school support team members reported focusing on five of the seven action planning activities equally (table D24).

Related to figure 7: implementing improvement efforts

School support team members rated the following activities when considering how much of their work time was spent implementing improvement efforts:

- Identifying professional development needs of staff members.
- Identifying professional development providers.
- Conducting effective professional development.
- Coaching or mentoring school principals on leadership skills.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead staff members in the implementation of the action plan.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams.
- Coaching or mentoring teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops.
- Collecting formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan.

TABLE D21

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement (AP01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Develop plans that address each identified goal	37	42	[b]	[b]	[b]
Determine how goals will be measured	42	37	[b]	[b]	[b]
Identify activities and steps for carrying out the plan	37	42	[b]	[b]	[b]
Identify who is responsible for each activity or step	37	32	21	[b]	[b]
Establish a timeline	37	37	16	[b]	[b]
Determine how implementation will be monitored	32	42	16	[b]	[b]
Contribute to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities	21	26	37	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D22

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement (AP01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Develop plans that address each identified goal	92	[b]	[b]	0	0
Determine how goals will be measured	85	[b]	0	[b]	0
Identify activities and steps for carrying out the plan	92	[b]	0	0	[b]
Identify who is responsible for each activity or step	85	[b]	0	[b]	0
Establish a timeline	85	[b]	[b]	0	0
Determine how implementation will be monitored	100	0	0	0	0
Contribute to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities	92	[b]	[b]	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

- Assisting with curriculum alignment activities.
- Providing assistance with parent and community involvement.
- Providing assistance with the English language learner student population.
- Assist with tiered instructional approaches.

Within each state school support team members' engagement in activities related to implementing improvement efforts varied distinctively. In Montana school support team members reported sometimes coaching or mentoring principals (68 percent; table D25). In Oregon most school support

TABLE D23

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement (AP01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Develop plans that address each identified goal	88	10	[b]	0	[b]
Determine how goals will be measured	80	18	[b]	[b]	0
Identify activities and steps for carrying out the plan	84	14	[b]	[b]	0
Identify who is responsible for each activity or step	72	26	0	0	2
Establish a timeline	74	24	0	[b]	[b]
Determine how implementation will be monitored	68	28	0	[b]	[b]
Contribute to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities	70	22	6	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 50.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D24

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to develop effective action plans for school improvement (AP01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Develop plans that address each identified goal	67	[b]	[b]	0	0
Determine how goals will be measured	50	50	0	0	0
Identify activities and steps for carrying out the plan	67	[b]	[b]	0	0
Identify who is responsible for each activity or step	67	[b]	0	[b]	0
Establish a timeline	67	[b]	0	0	[b]
Determine how implementation will be monitored	67	[b]	[b]	0	0
Contribute to decisions regarding resource allocation for improvement activities	[b]	50	[b]	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 6.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

team members (77 percent) reported extensively identifying the professional development needs of staff, and 61 percent reported extensively coaching or mentoring school principals (table D26). In Washington 71 percent of school support team members reported extensively coaching or mentoring principals (table D27). In Wyoming 50 percent of the school support teams reported spending equal time identifying professional development providers to address identified needs of staff and collecting formative data to monitor progress as specified in the action plan (table D28).

TABLE D25

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to implement their improvement efforts (IM01), Montana (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Identify professional development needs of staff	21	63	[b]	[b]	[b]
Identify professional development providers to address identified needs	16	47	16	[b]	[b]
Conduct effective professional development	37	53	[b]	[b]	0
Coach or mentor school principals on leadership skills	[b]	68	[b]	[b]	[b]
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead staff	0	42	42	16	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams	0	42	42	16	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops	[b]	21	32	32	[b]
Collect formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan	[b]	42	32	[b]	[b]
Assist with curriculum alignment activities	[b]	37	26	26	[b]
Provide assistance with parent and community involvement	0	[b]	63	21	[b]
Provide assistance with English language learner student population	[b]	26	16	53	[b]
Assist with tiered instructional approaches	[b]	47	16	21	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 19.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D26

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to implement their improvement efforts (IM01), Oregon (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Identify professional development needs of staff	77	23	0	0	0
Identify professional development providers to address identified needs	23	54	23	0	0
Conduct effective professional development	[b]	69	[b]	0	0
Coach or mentor school principals on leadership skills	61	31	[b]	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead staff	54	31	[b]	0	[b]
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams	46	46	[b]	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops	39	38	23	0	0
Collect formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan	31	54	[b]	0	[b]
Assist with curriculum alignment activities	23	46	31	0	0
Provide assistance with parent and community involvement	[b]	54	31	[b]	0
Provide assistance with English language learner student population	23	54	[b]	[b]	0
Assist with tiered instructional approaches	31	54	[b]	[b]	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 13.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D27

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to implement their improvement efforts (IM01), Washington (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Identify professional development needs of staff	59	41	0	0	0
Identify professional development providers to address identified needs	49	45	6	0	0
Conduct effective professional development	31	55	12	[b]	[b]
Coach or mentor school principals on leadership skills	71	25	[b]	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead staff	61	39	0	0	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams	41	55	[b]	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops	39	55	6	0	0
Collect formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan	39	51	10	0	0
Assist with curriculum alignment activities	26	47	26	0	0
Provide assistance with parent and community involvement	8	57	33	[b]	[b]
Provide assistance with English language learner student population	14	51	33	[b]	[b]
Assist with tiered instructional approaches	29	48	19	[b]	[b]

a. Number of responses for each activity is 49.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

TABLE D28

Degree to which school support team members carry out selected activities to implement their improvement efforts (IM01), Wyoming (percent)

Activity[a]	Extensively (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Not applicable or don't know
Identify professional development needs of staff	[b]	[b]	50	0	0
Identify professional development providers to address identified needs	[b]	50	[b]	0	0
Conduct effective professional development	[b]	[b]	67	0	0
Coach or mentor school principals on leadership skills	[b]	[b]	50	[b]	[b]
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead staff	0	[b]	66	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively lead professional learning teams	0	[b]	60	[b]	0
Coach or mentor teacher leaders to effectively facilitate workshops	[b]	0	66	[b]	0
Collect formative data to monitor progress as specified in action plan	[b]	50	[b]	0	0
Assist with curriculum alignment activities	[b]	[b]	66	0	0
Provide assistance with parent and community involvement	0	[b]	67	0	[b]
Provide assistance with English language learner student population	[b]	0	67	[b]	0
Assist with tiered instructional approaches	[b]	[b]	50	0	0

a. Number of responses for each activity is 6.

b. Because an item had fewer than three respondents, some data have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis based on survey responses from school support team members in four Northwest Region states (March 13–May 4, 2009).

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