



A Report to the  
U.S. Department of Education  
On Educational Challenges and Technical Assistance Needs  
For the Southeast Region

Prepared by the  
Southeast Regional Advisory Committee  
Ms. Cathy Gassenheimer, Chair

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## Preface

This report of the Southeast Regional Advisory Committee (SE RAC) for Educational Needs Assessment was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) under a contract number ED04CO0043/0001 awarded to The CNA Corporation (CNAC). The law governing the RACs requires committee members from the following stakeholder groups: state education agencies, local education agencies, practitioners, both education and non-education researchers, parents, and the business community. RAC members were not regarded as spokespersons for their stakeholder group, but rather as leads in soliciting the views of members of those stakeholder groups. Members of the committee, their professional affiliations and states, are listed below.

Name	Title	State	Stakeholder Group
Cathy Gassenheimer (Chair)	Managing Director, A+ Education Foundation	AL	Business
Sheila Appling	Teacher, Centennial Place Elementary School	GA	Practicing Educator
Hank Bounds	Superintendent, Pascagoula School District	MS	Local Education Agency
Curtis Bynum	North Carolina Title I Director	NC	State Education Agency
Tyna Davis	Manager, Education Policies and Professional Practice	AL	State Education Agency
Cynda Fickert	Teacher, Auburn Junior High School	AL	Practicing Educator
Debra Hamm	Chief Information Officer, Richland School District 2	SC	Local Education Agency
Theresa Hinkle	Teacher, John R. Kernodle Middle School	NC	Practicing Educator
Christy Hovanetz	Educational Program Director, Florida Department of Education	FL	State Education Agency
Mr. Calvin Jackson	Deputy Superintendent, Division of District and Community Services	SC	State Education Agency
Henry Johnson	State Superintendent, Mississippi Department of Education	MS	State Education Agency
Marjorie Murray	Director of Special Projects, Seminole County Public Schools	FL	Local Education Agency
N. Kathleen O'Neill	Southern Regional Education Board	GA	Researcher
Lissa Pijanowski	Director of School Improvement, Georgia Department of Education	GA	State Education Agency
Neva Rose	Program Director, Center for Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing, Georgia Tech, Atlanta Public Schools	GA	Local Education Agency/University
Simone Ruiz-Narcia	Parent	FL	Parent
Laura Searcy	Cobb County Board of Education	GA	Local Education Agency

The SE RAC received support in preparing this report from its Designated Federal Officials, Margaret McNeely and Jenelle Leonard of the U.S. Department of Education and from CNAC and its partners the Institute for Educational Leadership, The McKenzie Group, IceWEB, InterCall, and Kidz Online. The facilitation team for this committee included Linda Cavalluzzo and Miguel Martinez of CNAC. Additional support and assistance on this contract came from Arthur Sheekey, Corbin Fautleroy, Laura Wyshynski, and Tara Harrison also of CNAC.

## Executive summary

In response to a directive from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the Southeast Regional Advisory Committee (SE RAC) provides an assessment of the technical assistance needs of educators in the Southeast Region. This RAC is one of 10 such committees appointed by the Secretary to conduct an education needs assessment over the period of December 2004 through March 2005. The committee, which includes members from the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina first identified the major challenges facing the region in improving student achievement and in implementing the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It then assessed the types of technical assistance that might enable educators in the region to overcome these challenges.

The law governing the RACs requires committee members from the following stakeholder groups: state education agencies, local education agencies, practitioners, both education and non-education researchers, parents, and the business community. RAC members were not regarded as spokespersons for their stakeholder group, but rather as leads in soliciting the views of members of those stakeholder groups. Central to this task has been a series of public outreach efforts that included: an initial meeting in December 2004 in Washington, DC, virtual meetings in January and February 2005, and a final work session and public meeting in March 2005 in Houston, TX. Additional public feedback was received through the RAC Web site ([www.RAC-ed.org](http://www.RAC-ed.org)), e-mail comments from Southeast constituents, and focus groups arranged and facilitated by members of the SE RAC.

As a result of these discussions, the SE RAC concluded that the region faces particular challenges associated with rural schools and urban schools, poverty, ethnic, linguistic, and racial

diversity, and student mobility. In addition, like other regions, the Southeast faces significant challenges as it attempts to meet the legal requirements for highly qualified teachers in core academic subject areas by school year 2006, and to improve the level of achievement and close achievement gaps among student subpopulations by 2013-2014 school year<sup>4</sup>, particularly in the key academic areas of reading, mathematics, and science.

To raise the performance of all students while narrowing achievement gaps among groups, the SE RAC developed a list of technical assistance needs that students and educators throughout the region could benefit from, and categorized them into the following seven priority topic areas. Although they are delineated separately, each must be attended to as part of a systemic approach to improve education and reach the goals set by NCLB.

1. Teaching quality
2. Leadership quality
3. Understanding and use of data and assessments
4. Distribution and support for research-based strategies to turn around low-performing schools
5. Strategies to meet the needs of special populations (Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), poverty, race/ethnicity, migrant, homeless, and highly mobile students)
6. Community and stakeholder involvement
7. Communicating information on NCLB.

In addition, the SE RAC noted a need for at least three national technical assistance centers to meet the needs of educators across the nation, including:

- A center for science and mathematics that would provide resources on best practices, assessments, and professional development



- A directory of available funding resources for improving schools, including foundations, businesses, and multi-state consortia
- A communications center that would provide information on NCLB policies and implementation guidance, including timelines, requirements, national and state policies, and state and district implementation strategies.



# Introduction

The SE RAC provides an assessment of the technical assistance needs of educators in our region in response to a directive from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. This RAC is one of 10 such committees appointed by the Secretary to conduct an education needs assessment over the period of December 2004 through March 2005. This committee, which includes members from the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina, first identified the major challenges facing the region in improving student achievement and in implementing the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. It then assessed the types of technical assistance that might enable educators in the region to overcome these challenges.

## Legislative background

Section 203 of Title II of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279) directs the Secretary of Education to establish 20 comprehensive centers to provide technical assistance to state educational agencies, local educational agencies, regional educational agencies and schools in implementing the goals and programs of NCLB Act, and in the use of scientifically valid teaching methods and assessment tools for use by teachers and administrators in:

- Core academic subjects of mathematics, science, and reading or language arts
- English language acquisition
- Education technology
- Facilitating communication between education experts, school officials, teachers, parents, and librarians

- Disseminating information that is usable for improving academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, and encouraging and sustaining school improvement to schools, educators, parents, and policymakers within the region in which the center is located
- Developing teacher and school leader in-service and pre-service training models that illustrate best practices in the use of technology in different content areas.

In addition, these comprehensive centers are expected to coordinate and collaborate with the regional education laboratories, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, the Office of the Secretary of Education, state service agencies, and other technical assistance (TA) providers in the region.

## **Outreach efforts and data collection procedures**

A main goal of the RAC was to disseminate information regarding their task and to solicit the views of their respective stakeholder groups on the roles of the new comprehensive centers. To ensure that a wide range of voices would be heard, the committees were purposefully organized to include a full range of stakeholder groups, and across-state representation. Members of the committee met for an initial orientation meeting on December 2 and 3, 2004, in Washington, DC. During the initial meeting, the members worked together to draw up a preliminary list of greatest challenges and barriers to improving the quality of education in the Southeast Region. As the committee deliberated, it considered the types of TA activities that could be offered through federally funded comprehensive technical assistance centers to address these barriers in effective, cost-efficient ways. The results of the committee's initial deliberations are summarized in the minutes of the orientation meeting and in a PowerPoint presentation generated by its members. Both documents can be accessed at [www.rac-ed.org](http://www.rac-ed.org).

Following the orientation meeting, members of the committee turned their attention to gathering input from stakeholders throughout the region on the initial list of challenges and TA needs. In particular, members sought additions, modifications, and refinement to their initial list.

RAC members used a variety of methods to obtain public comments, including:

- Use of a Web site to make available background information, including data and reports, information on RAC objectives and deliberations, and a public forum that permitted asynchronous (threaded) discussion and comment
- Arrangement and facilitation of online and face-to-face focus groups
- Distribution of leaflets at conferences and other places where stakeholders were likely to gather
- Collection of e-mails and letters to members of the committee.

For details on these outreach activities, please see Appendix A.

Two additional public meetings were conducted via the Web. These meetings were used to review comments from the public and to refine the list of challenges and technical assistance needs in the region. During each meeting, information was given on how to view comments received from the public, how to participate in online discussions and how to provide information directly to the committee through e-mail and through traditional mail. Accepting public comments ended on March 1.

Following the second public meeting, report preparation began in earnest. The SE RAC broke up into subgroups, each of which focused on a key challenge that had been identified by the committee. A draft report was completed in early March and revised in time for a final face-to-face public meeting on March 10 and 11, in Houston, TX, where the draft report was reviewed and refined, and final substantive changes were approved.

## **Public interest and input**

The RAC Web site provided the central point for giving the public access to the RAC. The Web site served as the information center for the RAC. The public was encouraged to provide comments both of a general nature and on specific RAC ideas in a variety of ways. The first line in the table shows the number of enrollees on the RAC Web site from the Southeast. The next section of the table shows the amount of input the SE RAC received through online comments and through the RAC Support Office either through e-mail or regular surface mail. The third section of the table tries to discern public interest in a more indirect way by capturing the number of times the public view comments on the Web site. Another indicator of public interest is attendance at RAC meetings. Each RAC convened four public meetings. In the meetings held in Washington, DC, and Houston, TX, the public was invited to observe the proceedings in person. The other two meetings were online teleconferences. For both the face-to-face meetings and the online teleconferences, the public was invited to observe with a link through the RAC Web site. The next section of the table shows the number of public attendees at RAC meetings either in person or through the Web site.

Focus groups, arranged and facilitated by members of the SE RAC, provided another important source of information for the committee. Members used teleconferencing to arrange four focus groups with representation from across the region for executive directors of state school board associations, executive directors of state superintendent associations, teachers, and school administrators. Notes from the teleconferences are available on the SE RAC Web site. Finally, RAC members facilitated three face-to-face focus groups for professional developers, novice teachers, and other stakeholder groups.

Table 1: Public input for the Southeast RAC

<b>Type of Input</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Enrollment on RAC Web site	415
Business	6
Institutions of Higher Education	38
Local Education Agency	66
Parent	31
Principal	15
Researcher	20
School Board Member	11
State Education Agency	59
Teacher	108
Other	61
<i>Comments</i>	71
On Web site Forums	45
Through e-mail to the RAC Support Office	26
Through surface mail to the RAC Support Office	0
Views on the RAC Web site	1,908
Educational Challenges for the Southeast from the First Public Meeting	1023
Focus Group 1 Summary	85
Regional Forums	94
Georgia Governor "Community Conversation"	50
Migrant and ELL Students	20
Technical Assistance Needs of Charter Schools in NC	12
PLATO Learning Inc.'s Statement on Technology Needs In the Southeast	12
General Discussions	709
What are the top challenges of educators in your region and the types of technical assistance would help them to meet those challenges?	144
What are the top challenges that are impediments to implementing the requirements of the NCLB Act in your region?	130
What are the top challenges that educators in your region face in their attempts to improve student achievement?	310
What types of technical assistance could help educators within your region meet the challenges they face?	125
Attendance at RAC Public Meetings	38
Orientation Meeting	1
Public Meeting #1	25
Public Meeting #2	12
Focus Groups	23
Focus Group 1 Executive Directors, State School Board Associations, SE Region	7
Focus Group 2 Executive Directors, State Superintendent Associations, SE Region	8
Focus Group 3 Members of the Teacher Leaders Network	8
Focus Group 4 School Administrators, FL	6
Focus Group 5 Parents, business leaders, lawmakers, GA	NA
Focus Group 6 Novice teachers, Atlanta, GA	3
Focus Group 7 Professional Developers, SE Region	15

\*As of February 28, 2005

Information obtained through public input was critical to helping the SE RAC accurately represent the needs of the education community in implementing NCLB. Public input gathered through the above means from stakeholder groups confirmed issues initially brought up by the RAC, such as the need for disseminating information on effective practices across the south. However, the public input also raised issues that were overlooked, such as the need to include certain special needs groups. These new issues raised through public comment and reaction to posted RAC efforts were incorporated into the developed list of challenges. The RAC took these into consideration when developing technical assistance solutions to address the needs of the region.

## **Regional background**

This section provides an overview for the Southeast Region that will provide a context for the remainder of the report.<sup>1</sup>

### **School and student demographics**

In school year 2003, the Southeast Region was home to nearly 7.3 million students who were served by a total of 12,046 traditional public schools, 369 of which are charter schools, and 1,308 private schools in the following six states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The size and demographic characteristics of the public school systems varies greatly across these states. Florida has the largest school system in the region, serving more than 2.5 million students. Mississippi has the smallest school system in the region, with fewer than half a million students (table 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Data reported in this section come from two reports, the SE Region Profile, prepared by CNAC for the SE RAC, and the State of the South, 2004, MDC. Both documents are available on the SE RAC Web site. Throughout this section, we indicate the primary sources from which the reports derived their information.



Table 2: Number of schools and students

State	Public schools SY2002-2003	Public school students SY2002-2003	Private schools SY2001-2002	Charter schools collected 2003
Alabama	1,534	739,678	126	*
Florida	3,462	2,539,929	496	227
Georgia	2,236	1,496,012	224	35
Mississippi	1,039	493,507	75	1
North Carolina	2,255	1,335,954	284	93
South Carolina	1,151	691,078	103	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,677</b>	<b>7,296,158</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>369</b>

\* Indicates the state does not allow charter schools

Sources: Common Core of Data 2002-2003; NCES: Private School Universe Study 2002-2003, Center for Education Reform ([www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com)) Nov 2003

Almost two-thirds of Mississippi school districts are located in rural areas. Almost one-third of school districts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina are also located in rural areas. In addition to the large number of rural districts in the region, urban centers such as Miami-Dade County, FL, Birmingham, AL, and Atlanta, GA, are home to large urban school districts within the region. Florida differs from the other states in the region, in that 85 percent of districts are in suburban areas. This diversity suggests that the Southeast Region struggles with a wide spectrum of educational challenges (table 3).

Table 3: Percentage of school districts by metro status

State	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Alabama	27	42	31
Florida	9	85	6
Georgia	14	54	31
Mississippi	11	24	64
North Carolina	30	38	33
South Carolina	15	54	31

Source: Common Core of Data 2001

## Diversity and special populations

Table 4 shows the racial distribution of students attending public schools across the Southeast Region. The student population ranges from 47 percent to 59 percent White. The major minority population in the region is African-American, which ranges from 25 percent of the student population in Florida, to 51 percent in Mississippi. In addition to the large African-American population, the southeast has a rapidly growing Hispanic population. In Florida, Hispanic students account for more than one-fifth of the student population. Although the population of Hispanic students is smaller in other southeastern states: six percent in Georgia and North Carolina, three percent in South Carolina, and one and two percent in Mississippi and Alabama, respectively, the rate of growth in this segment of the population is dramatic. Based on data from the U.S. Census, over the 1990-2000 period the Hispanic population grew 394 percent in North Carolina, 300 percent in Georgia, over 200 percent in South Carolina and Alabama, 148 percent in Mississippi and 70 percent in Florida. These changes bring with them new challenges for educators many of whom may be unfamiliar with the language and culture that these students bring to southeastern classrooms.

Table 4: Student racial characteristics in public schools (percent)

State	American Indian/ Alaskan	Asian / Pacific Islander	Black, non- Hispanic	Hispanic	White, non- Hispanic	Other
Alabama	0.8	0.8	35.7	1.8	59.2	1.8
Florida	0.3	2.0	24.7	21.4	51.6	0.0
Georgia	0.2	2.5	38.2	6.2	53.0	0.0
Mississippi	0.2	0.7	50.9	1.0	47.3	0.0
North Carolina	1.5	2.0	31.4	5.9	59.2	0.0
South Carolina	0.3	1.1	41.3	2.7	54.2	0.5

Source: Common Core of Data 2002-2003

## Poverty

Table 5 outlines the percentage of public school students enrolled in a number of federally supported programs designed to aid children with special needs, including the free and reduced-lunch (FRL) programs, and programs to serve the special needs of students who are English Language Learners (ELL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP), migrant students, and/or special education students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

The percentage of students enrolled in FRL programs (an indicator of poverty) ranges from about 34 percent in North Carolina to over 65 percent in Mississippi. Mississippi also has the highest percentage of students in the region (nearly 69 percent) who are in Title I programs. That rate is followed by Alabama with 56 percent of students in Title I schools, Georgia and South Carolina, both of which have over 40 percent of students in Title I schools, and North Carolina and Florida, each with nearly 40 percent of students in Title I schools. In the southeast, Florida has the highest percentage of migrant students (1.9 percent), as well as the highest percentage of students identified as ELL/LEP (8 percent). The share of students across the region who have individual education plans ranges from a low of 11.9 percent of students in Georgia to a high of 15.8 percent in South Carolina.

Table 5: Student demographic characteristics (percent)

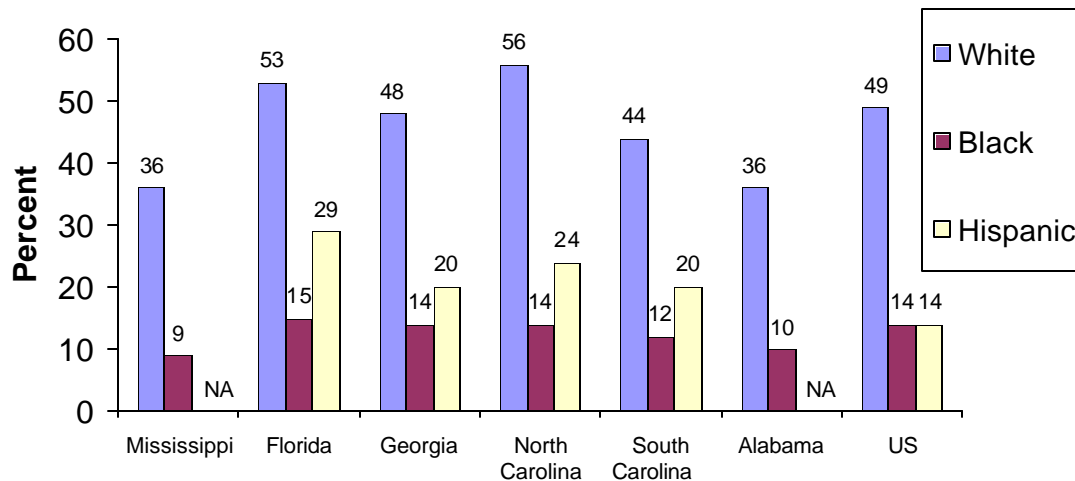
State	FRL	ELL/LEP	IEP	Migrant	Students in Title I schools
Alabama	49.2	1.4	12.8	1.1	56.3
Florida	45.2	8.0	15.3	1.9	38.8
Georgia	45.1	4.7	11.9	0.6	40.7
Mississippi	65.3	0.5	12.9	0.5	68.8
North Carolina	33.9	4.5	14.2	1.1	38.7
South Carolina	49.5	1.1	15.8	0.1	40.4

Source: Common Core of Data SY2002-2003

## Student achievement

Figures 1 through 3 show, by race/ethnicity, the relative performance of fourth grade students on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading, and mathematics, and, in 2000, for science. These data indicate that White students uniformly score higher than minority students on all tests. Although the proficiency rate for Hispanics is slightly higher than the rate for African-Americans, the proficiency rate for Hispanic students across all the tests is *at least 20 percentage points below that of White students*.

Figure 1: NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading: percent proficient or above (2003)



<sup>2</sup> If results are not reported for a subgroup, it is due to an insufficient number of students to report on.

Figure 2: NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics: percent proficient or above (2003)

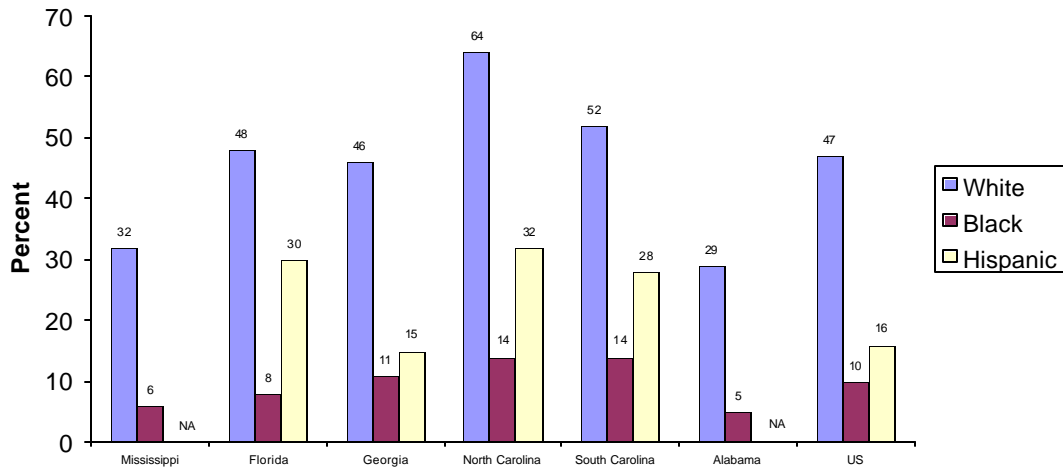
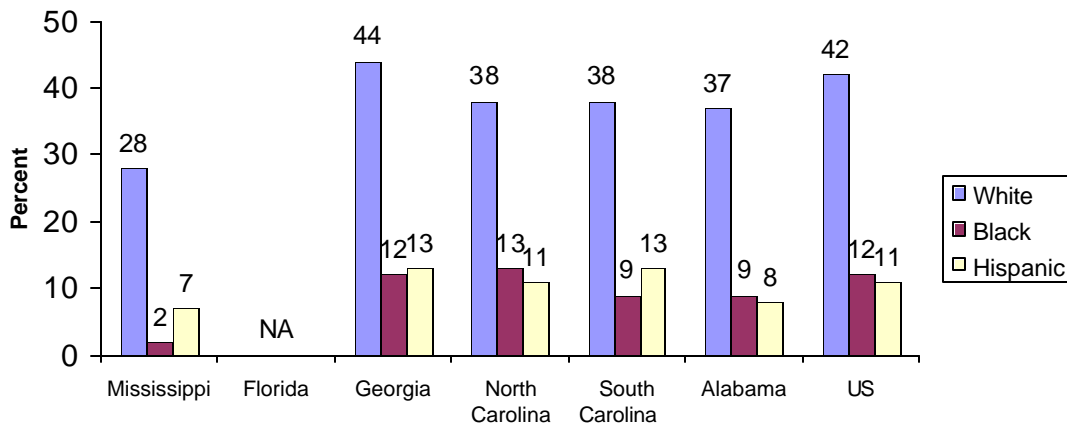


Figure 3: NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade science: proficient and above (2000)



Turning to eighth grade scores on the NAEP, the percentage of students who were considered proficient or above readers ranged from a high of 29 percent in North Carolina to a low of 21 percent in Mississippi. But the overall proficiency rates mask dramatic differences across racial and ethnic groups (figure 4). In Alabama and Mississippi, 30 to 32 percent of White students were considered proficient in reading compared to only 9 percent of African-American students. In Florida, 37 percent of White students were considered proficient compared to 11 percent of

African-Americans and 19 percent of Hispanics. The numbers are similar in Georgia and North Carolina, where 36 and 38 percent of White students tested proficient in reading on the eighth grade NAEP, respectively, compared to 12 to 13 percent of African-Americans and 15 to 16 percent of Hispanics. The gaps among racial and ethnic groups are also large in mathematics and science (figures 5 and 6).

Figure 4: NAEP 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading: percent proficient and above

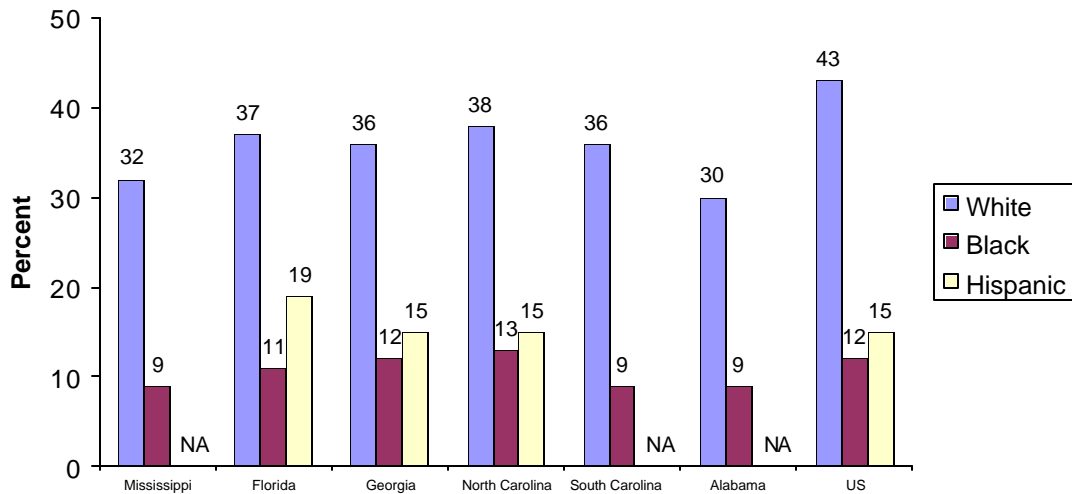


Figure 5: NAEP 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics: percent proficient and above (2003)

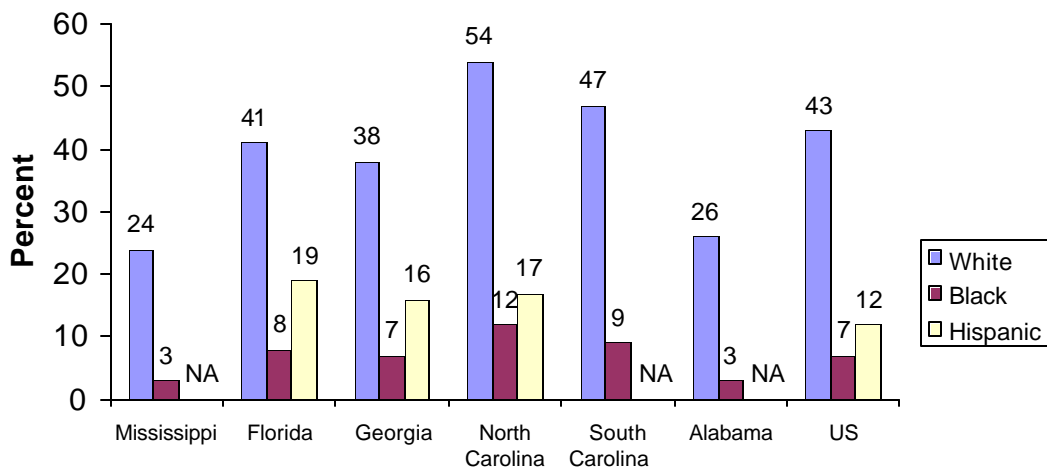


Figure 6: NAEP 8<sup>th</sup> grade science: percent proficient or above (2000)

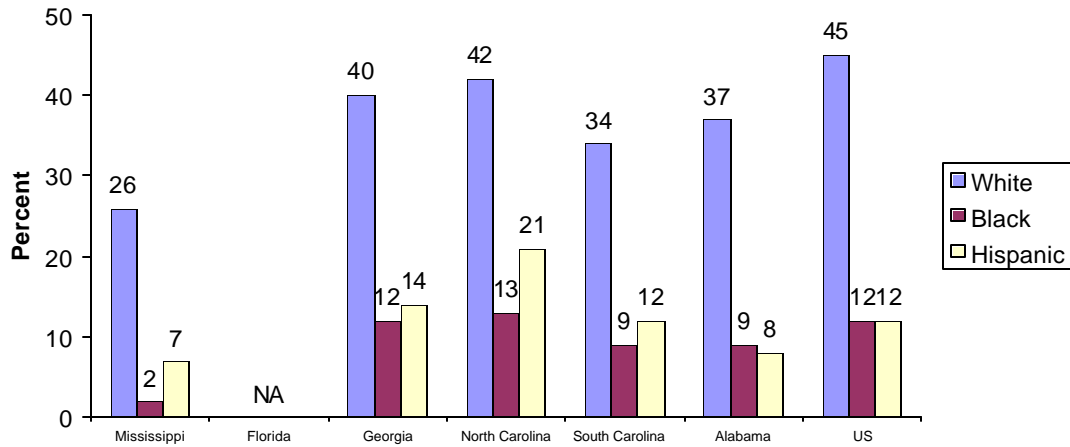


Table 6 presents high school graduation rates and the relative enrollment of students in higher-level mathematics and science courses as other indicators of student achievement. The graduation rates for states in the region range between 66 percent in Alabama to 56 percent in Florida and Georgia based on the percent of students enrolled in ninth grade who graduated with a full diploma four years later and taking into account population changes that affect enrollment. Using the same yardstick for high school graduation rates, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina reported graduation rates of 64 percent, 63 percent, and 57 percent, respectively. By comparison, the graduation rate for the U.S. overall is 70 percent (Greene and Forster, 2003).

Table 6: Other measures of education

State	High school graduation rate 2001	Percentage of high school students taking upper-level mathematics courses 2002	Percentage of high school students taking upper-level science courses 2002
Alabama	66	NA	NA
Florida	56	38	26
Georgia	56	NA	NA
Mississippi	64	50	43
North Carolina	63	59	26
South Carolina	57	NA	NA

NA indicates data were not available for this state. Source: *Education Week's Quality Counts 2004*

## **Teacher demographics and qualifications**

Table 7 reports profiles for several indicators of teacher quality. Column 1 presents the percentage of teachers whom states reported have met their own state-defined standards of quality. Georgia reports the highest percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers with 94 percent, followed by Florida and Mississippi, at 91 and 85 percent, whereas in South Carolina only one-half of the teachers meet their own highly qualified teacher standard and 75 percent do so in Alabama.

National Board Certification (NBC) is a voluntary certification process documenting what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Recent large-scale empirical studies of student achievement in the elementary grades (Goldhaber et al, 2004) and in high school mathematics (Cavalluzzo, 2004) have shown that students who were instructed by teachers with NBC made greater learning gains than their counterparts with similar teachers who lack NBC. Several states offer incentives to teachers to encourage them to earn NBC. Where states have implemented incentive programs, the number of NBC teachers has expanded. North Carolina has the highest rate of NBCs with 8 percent of such teachers compared to Alabama's and Georgia's 1 percent each. Finally, the Carolinas have the highest percentage of teachers who are teaching in their major field of study (74 to 76 percent), followed by Florida (67 percent) Alabama (65 percent), Georgia (61 percent), and Mississippi (58 percent).



Table 7: Teacher quality indicators

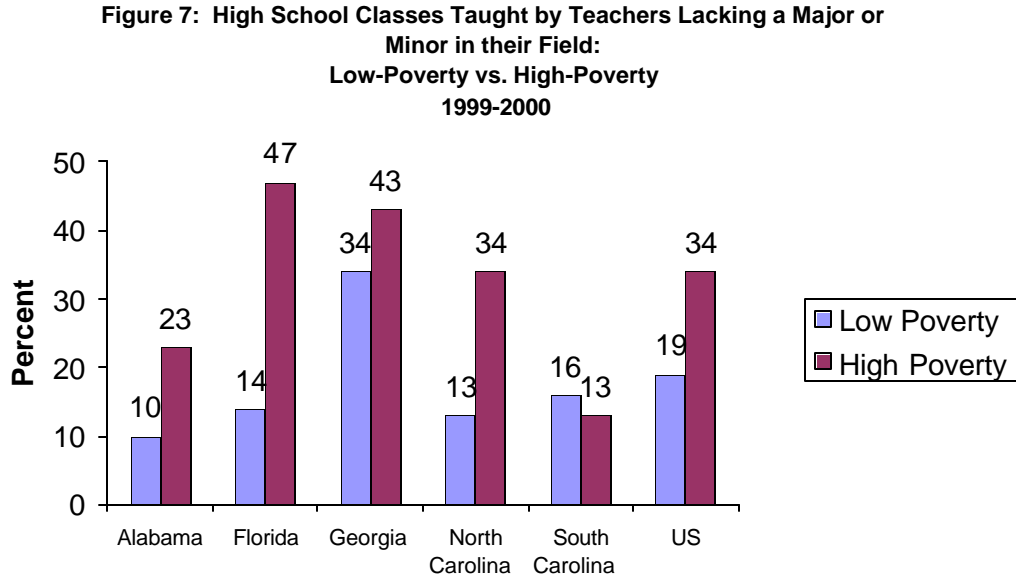
State	Percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers	Number of NBC teachers (SY2002-2003)	NBC teachers as a percentage of all teachers	Percent of teachers with college major in the core academic subjects for high school teachers
Alabama	75*	636	1	65
Florida	91	4,931	4	67
Georgia	94	1,330	1	61
Mississippi	85	1,763	6	58
North Carolina	NA	6,633	8	76
South Carolina	50	3,227	7	74

NA indicates data were not available for this state. Sources: Center on Education Policy Year 2 of NCLB Report (2002-2003), NBPTS (2002-2003), Measuring Up: 2004

\*Alabama Department of Education, school year 2003-2004.

Data compiled by Ed Trust/Ed Watch and reported in State of the South, 2004 show significant disparities in teacher quality by student poverty (figure 7). The percentage of classes taught in low poverty schools in SY1999-2000 by teachers who lacked a major or minor in their field was 19 percent across the United States compared to 34 percent in high poverty schools. That situation was similar throughout much of the southeast where the percentage of classes in low poverty schools taught by teachers who lacked a major or minor in their field ranged from 10 to 14 percent in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina, and from 23 to 47 percent in their high poverty counterparts. Only South Carolina, with 16 percent of classes in low poverty schools and 13 percent in high poverty schools taught by teachers without a major or minor in their field, did not follow this pattern. (Data were not reported for Mississippi.)

Figure 7: High school classes taught by teachers lacking a major or minor in their field: low-poverty vs. high-poverty (1999-2000)



Source: Ed Trust / Ed Watch

Data for Mississippi not available\*

### Alignment with standards

Table 10 reports information on the extent to which the states in the region are meeting the requirements of the NCLB Act to establish state curriculum standards. Information reported by the Education Commission of the States indicates that all of the states in the southeast have adopted state content and performance standards in the core subjects.

Table 8: Meeting requirement to establish state standards

State	Reading	Mathematics	Science
Alabama	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Education Commission of the States NCLB database

# Educational challenges in the Southeast Region

The Southeast Region faces challenges of low student performance and significant gaps in educational attainment and achievement among racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups. To raise performance of all students while narrowing the gaps among groups, the SE RAC developed a list of technical assistance needs that students and educators throughout the region would benefit from, and categorized them into the following seven priority topic areas. Although they are delineated separately, each must be attended to as part of a systemic approach to improve education and reach the goals set out by NCLB.

1. Teaching quality
2. Leadership quality
3. Understanding and use of data and assessments
4. Distribution and support for research-based strategies to turn around low-performing schools
5. Strategies to meet the needs of special populations (Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), poverty, race/ethnicity, migrant, homeless, and highly mobile students
6. Community and stakeholder involvement
7. Communicating information on NCLB.

## **Challenge #1: Teaching quality**

Meeting NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers by 2006 is a particular challenge in the Southeast Region where poverty rates are among the highest in the nation and significant numbers of school districts are located in rural areas. Such areas find that it is extremely difficult to attract and retain teachers who are not homegrown. Faced with expected increases in teacher

retirement rates, more urban high growth areas in the southeast also have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. Yet several states in the southeast, and highest-need districts in the region, are net importers of teachers.

Under NCLB, meeting requirements for highly qualified teachers is especially challenging in the middle school grades where many teachers have K-8 certification but lack certification in core subject areas. Special education classes face similar staffing challenges where teachers often instruct students in multiple subject areas for which they lack specific subject-area credentials. The result has been an exodus of such teachers from middle school and special education classrooms.

Unfortunately, states in the southeast historically under-produce teachers in special education as well as mathematics, science, and foreign languages, (SREB).

Stakeholders in the Southeast envision an educational system that supports teachers in recognizing the differences in student learning needs and providing the training and tools needed to accommodate a diversity of learners within classrooms. In order to raise student achievement in the region and close achievement gaps while maintaining challenging learning experiences for high-achieving students, teachers must learn powerful pedagogies that ensure differentiated instruction in the classroom and growth for all students.

New approaches to pre-service education are needed. Stakeholder groups from the Southeast see a need for an improved system for the development of new teachers and for expansion of the capacities of current teachers. Such a system would bring pre-service programs to rural and impoverished areas by placing teacher education programs in community colleges, so that localities would be better equipped to grow new teachers and to transition teachers' aides who otherwise would lack the opportunity to obtain the additional education that is necessary to qualify for state licensure. Further, pre-service and graduate programs would be cognizant of and responsive to the changing needs of K-12 education systems. Updated programs would prepare

today's teachers in the cultures and research-based pedagogies that enable them to work effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teachers would have better access to site-based professional development experiences. Tools to help teachers communicate with parents who don't speak English would be available so that teachers are empowered to speak with parents, and parents are empowered to help their children succeed. State-of-the-art data systems would give teachers classroom access to student assessment data and information about the educational background of highly mobile students. Site-based training experiences would teach teachers how to make effective use of assessment data and provide training in the purposes and designs of a full range of assessment methods. Technology would be effectively integrated in instruction. Finally, communications would flow easily among teachers in the southeast who may have identified successful approaches to working with students with different needs or overcome other barriers to student success.

It is the vision of education stakeholders in the southeast that states, school districts, and universities would develop an ongoing process that begins with pre-service education, initial credentialing and hiring, and moves through the continuum of induction, mentoring, professional teacher status, professional development, and recertification to improve student learning. In such a continuum, teachers would use research-based professional development to deepen their content knowledge, pedagogy, application of technology, and equitable practices. Universities would emphasize inquiry, applications of knowledge, problem solving, in-depth understanding of concepts, and equity with pre-service teachers. Teachers would practice and model the content pedagogy that they will use with their students during professional development experiences. Schools would build professional learning communities (face-to-face and online). Administrators would support teachers in developing the knowledge and skills to become teacher leaders and action researchers. States,

districts, and schools would evaluate and refine models and practices to ensure that those practices have a positive effect on teacher and student learning, and on leadership.

The following technical assistance activities are proposed by the SE RAC to help achieve this vision for the region.

***Technical assistance for Challenge #1***

- Provide teachers with research-based studies and training materials through a variety of media, including the Internet, on how to engage special student populations in key academic subjects of mathematics, science, and reading. Identify, disseminate, and provide strategies on how to use scientifically based research to differentiate instruction for all students. Develop an online network for teachers that allows them to ask questions of one another and to share successful practices across the region.
- Develop and provide a variety of flexible and contextually appropriate expert professional development models and designs that are aligned to state and national standards in key areas of science, mathematics, and reading, and conduct trainings (including online training), workshops, meetings, and conferences for teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty to jointly engage all students in learning toward high standards. Provide evaluation models that link student learning needs with teacher professional development/learning needs for districts and school districts. Provide resources for teachers on how to use formative and summary assessments for student learning, how to use assessment tools and disaggregate data to draw conclusions and revise curriculum and instruction. Provide guidance and resources in developing content coaches and other coaching models.
- Provide opportunities for SEAs, LEAs, universities, community colleges, and other agencies to collaborate in developing new ways to recruit, prepare, certify, develop, and retain highly-

qualified teachers to meet the evolving needs of students in the region in all areas but especially in hard-to-staff schools and subject areas as evidenced by data.

- Provide opportunities for SEAs, LEAs, universities, community colleges, and other agencies to collaborate in order to ensure alignment between teacher preparation, ongoing teacher education and teacher performance expectations that support high levels of learning required of all students by NCLB.
- Provide professional development in the implementation of rigorous instruction and assessment with appropriate differentiation for all students.
- Provide professional development for teachers to develop and improve technology integration skills and to utilize these skills in daily classroom practices.
- Provide a resource bank for a variety of online resources/software/hardware in support of individualized student instruction (independent student use when possible)
- Provide online resources to train teachers in "best practices" for differentiating instruction in the classroom.

## **Challenge #2: Leadership quality**

In the southeast, school leaders are facing increasing demands to bring students to high standards of performance at accelerated rates. At the same time, there is an exodus of veteran principals from school systems due to retirement, and a paucity of skilled, well-prepared candidates available to fill the positions left by retirees. There is a need for improvement in the school leadership pipeline and in the quality of university programs that are designed to produce instructional leaders. Yet research conducted by SREB on the progress that universities and state leadership academies are making in redesigning their educational leadership preparation and development programs clearly indicates that few programs concentrate on helping aspiring school

leaders master the explicit knowledge and skills they need for leading change in school curriculum and instructional practices.<sup>3</sup> The SE RAC envisions a revitalized leadership system in which (1) states create a seamless system of leadership recruitment and selection, preparation, certification, induction, professional development, and supportive working conditions that focuses on a vision of school leaders as instructional leaders, (2) universities and school districts collaborate to select and prepare school leaders who can lead schools where students achieve at high levels, (3) universities create and deliver redesigned educational leadership programs that include meaningful internships to prepare highly capable instructional leaders, (4) leadership academies are established that work with leadership teams within schools to support comprehensive school improvement, (5) a system that monitors progress and permits improved management of leadership resources is established and, ultimately, (6) the pool of qualified school leaders increases.

Members of the SE RAC believe that school leaders, university faculty, teachers, students, states, and communities would benefit from such a vision and suggest the following types of TA activities to achieve these goals.

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 2***

- Work with states to create a seamless system of leadership recruitment and selection, preparation, certification, induction, professional development, and supportive working conditions that focuses on a vision of school leaders as instructional leaders.
- Create collaboration mechanisms between universities and local school systems to select and prepare school leaders and facilitate their implementation.
- Provide direction and examples of exemplary leadership curriculum and professional development to universities, leadership academies, state agencies, and local school systems

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<sup>3</sup> These findings are based on a study that examined progress on four key conditions of redesign in 22 university-based leadership programs in the SREB region. A full report on the study, *Are Universities in SREB States Making Progress in Redesigning Principals' Preparation?*, is in progress.



(SEAs and LEAs) that will support the preparation and development of instructional school leaders who can create effective schools.

- Provide examples and direction to all relevant agencies in planning meaningful internships for aspiring leaders with on the job opportunities to practice instructional leadership skills.
- Lead the development of meaningful evaluation procedures to measure progress made in leadership recruitment, selection and retention, preparation, certification, induction, professional development, and supportive working conditions and provide data to direct changes and improvements throughout the processes.
- Support the establishment of leadership academies designed to work with leadership teams within schools to build capacity and sustainability to support comprehensive school improvement.
- Work with states and local school systems to research needed changes in working conditions for school leaders, develop plans to implement changes, provide training for school system and state leaders, and track progress made.
- Educate school leaders in the use of technology, such as online education, for improving the quality of instruction, particularly in rural schools, and those with limited resources and a deficit of high-qualified teachers.

### **Challenge # 3: Understanding and use of data and assessments**

The alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is one of the critical attributes of effective teaching and learning. Although state and federal accountability measures have led to more assessments of learning, actually meeting the accountability requirements necessitates assessment for learning. More than ever the expectation for each child to meet state proficiency standards makes it essential that educators effectively use available data from state and local assessments to guide

instruction and diagnose student learning needs. Equally important, educators must be skilled in the development of classroom assessments that support learning. Despite these needs, many educators have little or no formal training in the area of data analysis or educational measurement. Moreover, whereas assessment is a centerpiece of NCLB, the fine-tuning of score reports to meet educational needs and the development of educator-friendly links among assessments, planning, and action are often insufficient.

Technical assistance that targets improvements in educator understanding and use of data and assessments is expected to lead to improvements in student achievement, higher educator satisfaction and retention, improved curriculum and instruction, improved accountability, and better informed parents (Love, 2004). By improving the quality of their classroom assessments educators will be able to increase their students' learning. Wise use of data from assessments will improve student placement, refine curriculum, and help educators meet individual students' needs. At the same time, educators are concerned with their ability to use data and with having enough time to devote to assessment and analysis. By providing tools, professional development and resources, educators will become more skilled and will have resources that will make this component of their work more efficient and effective. Better reporting tools will make it possible for parents to be more informed and effectively involved in their child's learning.

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 3***

A multi-faceted approach to addressing this need will develop educators' skills and provide resources in the area of assessment.

- Provide professional development programs that focus on data analysis and how to use data to inform instructional decisions.
- Undertake a research effort to identify types of score reports that are most useful to stakeholders (including educators, parents, and students) and disseminate score reporting

prototypes that will provide support for improved achievement. Provide assistance to states and local education agencies in the implementation of the effective reporting models. These models should include interactive electronic reports that allow teachers to easily access track and interpret information for particular groups of students and allow parents and students to “drill down” through levels of information from the score report.

- Provide professional development on how to construct formative assessments that support student proficiency in the key areas of reading, mathematics, and science.
- Assist states and foster collaboration among states to create item pools that will provide resources for standards-based classroom assessments that may include the development of computerized delivery systems that will facilitate testing, scoring, and reporting.
- Provide evaluation models that link student learning needs with educator development and learning needs for districts and schools. Provide resources for educators on how to use formative and summary assessments for student learning, how to use assessment tools, and how to disaggregate data to draw conclusions and revise curriculum and instruction.
- Provide assistance with acquisition and use of tools to analyze individual student achievement data benchmarked against curriculum standards to enable classroom teachers to identify specific learning needs of each student, including rapid and periodic assessment of individual student learning in the classroom.

#### **Challenge #4: Distribution and support of research-based strategies to turn around low-performing schools**

The southeast is home to some of the highest poverty rates for school-aged children in the United States (Annual Demographic Survey, 2004). Although poverty does not doom a child to failure, it can be a powerful barrier to high achievement. Schools with large numbers of children in poverty face greater challenges than other schools. Data show that schools with large numbers of

children in poverty often perform less well than schools with more affluent students (Ed Trust). The good news is that there are numerous examples of schools in the southeast and across the country that are both high-poverty and high-achieving. For similar schools to get the same results, it is important that educators understand the key factors to overcoming the barriers of poverty and that they be given information, strategies, and assistance to help them improve the performance of all their students.

To reduce the number of low-performing schools, stakeholders in the region envision better access to easy-to-review information and research on proven strategies to turn around low-performing schools for pre-service and existing educators. They envision teacher and administrator preparation programs that are regularly updated to reflect this body of research. And they envision that schools that have beat the odds will share their successful strategies with similar schools in the region that are struggling to become high performing. To reach these objectives, the SE RAC proposes the following technical assistance activities:

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 4***

- The proposed Technical Assistance Center for the Southeast should serve as a Bank of Best Practices of strategies to turn around low-performing schools. Information should include but not limited to:
  - ? Synthesized research about proven strategies that, when implemented with integrity, can result in higher student achievement
  - ? Case studies of schools in the region that are high-poverty and high-achieving (both written and video/DVD)
  - ? A contact list of school-based experts in the region with experience in turning around a high-poverty school.

- Convene state teams to examine strategies to turn around low-performing schools. Feature educators from the region with successful track records in turning around low-performing school. Consider inviting as a keynote speaker a noted researcher or author with expertise in this area.
- Identify demographically diverse high performing schools in the region that could:
  - ? Serve as professional development centers for pre-service and existing teachers
  - ? Provide mentoring to current and aspiring principals working in high poverty schools
  - ? Be open for site visits by schools in the region
- Collaborate with higher education to develop and/or strengthen curricula for pre-service and graduate programs to better prepare teachers and administrators for work in high-poverty schools.
- Support the establishment of leadership academies designed to work with leadership teams within low performing schools to build capacity and sustainability to support comprehensive school improvement.

**Challenge #5: Strategies to meet the needs of special populations (Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), poverty, race/ethnicity, migrant, homeless and highly-mobile)**

Within the Southeast Region, there is a rapidly growing population of English Language Learners (ELL) who do not currently possess the minimum levels of literacy skills necessary for them to succeed academically. Educators in the region are faced with this ethnic diversity and need assistance especially with literacy development and assessment to help these children succeed. Yet even as educators struggle with new diversity in their schools race continues to play a far too important role in the quality of education provided in the region. High rates of child poverty across

the southeast present a further challenge to educators. The complexities of the many cultures subsumed under broad racial categories often mask the general racial designation. These individuals and unique cultural and ethnic factors influence the way students are taught and how they learn. Many children from poor and ethnically diverse backgrounds face further barriers to success in school as a result of high rates of mobility and, sometimes, homelessness. The poor quality of education that cuts across racial and economic groups contributes to large performance gaps across groups and large gaps in educational attainment. For example, in Georgia and Florida, graduation rates in 2001 were 63 percent and 61 percent, respectively, for White students, but only 46 and 47 percent, respectively, for African-American students. For Alabama and Mississippi, the gap in high school graduation rates was 11 and 7 percentage points, respectively (Greene and Forster, 2003).<sup>4</sup>

For migrant students, obstacles to achievement exist at the earliest point of entry to the school system. The parents of migrant students find it difficult to assess quality school readiness programs because of language barriers and cultural differences. Often, the parents' experience with the educational system of their native countries differs greatly from that of the U.S. Parental involvement is often a new concept for them. Assuming that this obstacle is overcome by school districts' outreach activities targeting migrant parents, teachers, and administrators are unable to communicate with these parents. Thus, the educational concerns of both parents and teachers often go unexpressed and the partnership between parents and educators necessary for student achievement is not forged. On their part, migrant students who received the first years of schooling in other countries are confused because of differences in teaching methodology between U.S. schools and schools in their countries of origin. Due to their mobility, migrant students also experience interruption in their education.

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<sup>4</sup> Alabama's graduation rate for Whites was 70 percent and 59 percent for African-Americans. Mississippi's rates were 61 and 68 percent for African-Americans and Whites, respectively. Data were not available for North and South Carolina.

Students identified for Special Education present yet another challenge in this region. The Special Education population is required to meet the federal government proficiency measurements. Many schools and districts failed to meet AYP standards based on this measurement. There are not enough documented strategies available that address the special needs of the Special Education population.

Education stakeholders in the southeast envision an education system that can close gaps in achievement and educational attainment by ensuring that teachers have the proper training to recognize and address the special needs of individual students and the tools to help them address those needs. The following technical assistance activities are suggested to help educators meet this challenge:

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 5***

*In general:*

- Provide professional development for educators on how the unique needs and the racial and cultural differences of special populations impact classroom interaction and academic performance.
- Engage social service agencies and other community organizations in efforts to meet the needs of special populations and promote family literacy.
- Serve as a clearinghouse and disseminate information about research, resources, and grant opportunities for special populations, using technology as appropriate.
- Provide consultants who have expertise in the legal issues associated with special populations.
- Provide resources and strategies for effective involvement of parents of students from special populations.

*For special education:*

- Study state and local school district identification and classification criteria and identify best practices or technical assistance to support appropriate placement and instruction.
- Develop strategies for alternative formative and summative assessments.
- Develop and implement strategies for efficient and effective IEP development and monitoring.

*For ELLs:*

- Provide consultants with expertise in literacy development as it relates to ELL and an understanding of ELL program development.
- Assist in the identification or development of assessments that are reliable and valid for ELL students.
- Develop one or more cost-effective systems for communicating with parents who do not speak English.

*For poverty:*

- Conduct regional forums on poverty and its effect on achievement.
- Assist schools and school districts in accessing resources and strategies to meet the needs of poverty students in non-Title I schools.

*For migrant students:*

- Facilitate efforts to exchange educational information (state-to-state, bi-national, school-to-school) including credit accrual, transfer, and appropriate grade placement.
- Facilitate interstate coordination and collaboration among migrant programs, especially between home-based states and receiving states.
- Provide best practices training in the identification and recruitment of migrant families for funding and providing services.



- Assist LEAs with post-secondary transition for migrants.

*For homeless and highly mobile:*

- Develop training materials for school districts and schools on the rights of homeless children and youth and their responsibility in ensuring those rights.
- Research and disseminate best practices in the school enrollment and instructional support of homeless and highly mobile students.

## **Challenge #6: Community and stakeholder involvement**

Parent, community, and business involvement in local schools improve school resources and student success. Clearly, schools and families must form a partnership in the educational process of children. Research on parent involvement specifically indicates that student achievement improves, attendance increases, and discipline problems decline (Henderson and Berla, 1994). These results have been replicated in schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic families and low student achievement (Kellaghan et al, 1993).

A research study involving three southeastern metropolitan high schools reveals parental involvement challenges specific to this region. Teachers and parents disagreed on the appropriate level of involvement for parents in the school setting. Parents reported teachers were defensive, at times seeing the parents as invading their professional turf. Teachers reported parents were putting too much stress on the students by setting unattainable goals. Parents felt removed from the schools, and many have lost faith in the local schools to be a vehicle for “economic stability and upward mobility” (Philipsen, 1996).

The results of a statewide survey in South Carolina add weight to the charge of widespread dissatisfaction with some areas of home-school interaction. For example, data from the survey indicate a concern regarding communication between teachers and parents, and parents cite work

schedules as the greatest obstacle to school involvement. South Carolina also mirrors the national trend of home-school relations declining as students move to middle school and high school. A nationwide study of parents of eighth grade students revealed that one-half of these parents had not attended a single school function during the entire school year (Lynn, 1997).

Schools are obligated to bridge this chasm and schools in the southeast need assistance in doing so. Teacher preparation programs do not meet this professional need, thus making professional development the primary source of improvement strategies. Schools must show evidence of school/family partnerships to receive Title I funds and teachers would benefit from technical assistance related to this area.

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 6***

Facilitate the development and implementation of effective community engagement strategies that target key stakeholders:

- Identify and disseminate information about effective models that show successful alignment of parental and community involvement with student learning outcomes.
- Develop professional learning models and training (onsite and online) for educators related to promoting parent and community involvement in schools.
- Provide parent involvement surveys and data tabulation services for schools.
- Establish a resource network for community stakeholders, including Web resources as well as printed material and facilitate online discussions.

**Challenge # 7: Communicating information on NCLB**

Communication in any arena is challenging. The communication of NCLB information, technical guidance, and policy from ED to states, from states to districts, districts to schools, and schools to parents is no exception. Accurate, timely communication is critical to accomplish the

federal requirements of improving the performance of schools and levels of student achievement. Major challenges encountered at the state level include: getting timelines and having time to implement the new information; knowing what answers the district are given directly from the ED without flow through to the states. (In a few instances, lack of such information has led to miscommunication and confusion about federal policies that are being implemented by the state); consistency in information passed along to the states; getting clear answers when there are questions resulting from a policy memo or “Dear colleague” letter sent to the states; universal use of terms and consistent definitions (for example, what alignment means in assessment); communication of one thing to the state and different implementation in other states (for example, cell size and proficiency requirements). In addition, states are experiencing challenges in communicating to parents regarding NCLB policy and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) information.

States in the southeast want well-functioning information systems to eliminate these problems.

***Technical assistance for Challenge # 7***

- An information and policy clearinghouse for NCLB.
  - ? A technical assistance center with such a mission as one of its components would provide clear policy guidance, technical assistance, and interpretation to the states and can also assist in communicating with other stakeholders such as parents at the state’s request. Such assistance would help states become fully compliant with NCLB and provide common understanding across states of what compliance looks like and what is expected of them. Further, achieving these goals would speed achievement of the objectives of NCLB through a clear understanding of its requirements and the benefits those requirements will bring to public education.



## Suggestions for national centers

The Southeast RAC suggests topic areas for three of the 10 anticipated national technical assistance centers.

- A center for science and mathematics that would provide resources on best practices, assessments, and professional development.<sup>5</sup>
- A directory of available funding resources for improving schools, including foundations, businesses, and multi-state consortia.
- A communications center that would provide information on NCLB policies and implementation guidance including timelines, requirements, national and state policies, and state and district implementation strategies.

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<sup>5</sup> The need for focused support to improve science, mathematics, and technology education is widely documented. See for example, *Learning for the Future: Changing the Culture of Math and Science Education to Ensure a Competitive Workforce: A Statement on National Policy*, Committee for Economic Development, NY, N.Y., 2003. [http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report\\_scientists.pdf](http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report_scientists.pdf)



## Appendix A: Outreach activities in the Southeast Region

Outreach Activity Type	Target Group	Estimated No. of Recipients
Distribution of Materials	Parents for Public Schools Membership	N/A: Distributed via Listserv nationally
Distribution of Materials	AL PTA Executive Director	150+ local PTA chapters
Distribution of Materials	School Superintendents of AL Executive Director	130 superintendents
Distribution of Materials	Columbia Group	8 statewide education advocacy groups in the southeast
Telephone Call	AL Deputy State Superintendent of Education	NA
Distribution of Materials	College of Education and Arts and Science Faculty	200
Distribution of Materials	30 Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics (6 universities and 20 school districts)	30
Distribution of Materials	GA members of Federal Relations Network	15
Distribution of Materials	Executive Administration staff of Cobb County School District	15
Distribution of Materials	School Board Members in GA	1,051
Distribution of Materials	School Superintendents in GA	180
Distribution of Materials	State PTA Executive Director	1
Distribution of Materials	Members of Cobb County Association of Gifted Students	NA
Public Announcement (Televised School Board Meeting)	Cobb County Residents	up to 550,000
Distribution of Materials	NCMSA membership	30,000
Distribution of Materials	Southern Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform	30
Distribution of Materials	All Educators in Mississippi	NA
Distribution of Materials	Leaders of All State Education Agencies	NA
Distribution of Materials	All Educators in SC	NA
Distribution of Materials	SCASCD Membership	275
Presentation	All District Superintendents and School Principals in SC	85
Distribution of Materials	Mississippi CSR Meeting Participants	60
Distribution of Materials	Members of the FL Assn of State and Federal Education Program Administrators	100
Presentation	East Coast Technical Assistance Center Meeting Participants	35
Distribution of Materials	Representative Ed Lindsey	1
Distribution of Materials	GA PTA	NA

<b>Outreach Activity Type</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Estimated No. of Recipients</b>
Distribution of Materials	GA Governor's Office	NA
Distribution of Materials	Coverdell Leadership Institute	NA
Distribution of Materials	GA Department of Education	30
Distribution of Materials	President of APS and Board Members	3
Distribution of Materials	Donuts for Dad	NA
Distribution of Materials	PTA Centennial Place Executive Committee	NA
Distribution of Materials	S. Fulton Rep. Breakfast	NA
Distribution of Materials	Representative of NAACP	NA
Distribution of Materials	Legislative Agenda Board Member	1
Distribution of Materials	Co-Council of CINS/NAPPS	1
Distribution of Materials	GDOE and BOR Teacher preparation Conference on the New GA Performance Standards	200
Distribution of Materials	Technical Assistance Academy for Mathematics and Science Services (TAAMSS)	100
Distribution of Materials	Georgia Staff Development Council	150
Distribution of Materials	NASSP Annual Conference	50
Distribution of Materials	AASA Annual Conference	50

\* NA = not available



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# Glossary

**AYP**—Adequate Yearly Progress, defined in the NCLB Act as a way to measure the academic achievement of elementary and secondary school students in relation individual state student academic achievement standards.

**CHARTER SCHOOLS**—Public schools that are largely free to innovate, and often provide more effective programs and choice to underserved groups of students. Charter schools subject to the “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) and other accountability requirements of the NCLB Act.

**COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS**—Centers authorized by Section 203 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279). Appropriations for the centers in Fiscal Year for 2005 would enable the U.S. Department of Education to support 20 centers, 10 of which must be in current regions.

**COMMON CORE OF DATA**—The National Center for Education Statistics’ comprehensive, annual, national statistical database of information concerning all public elementary and secondary schools and local education agencies.

**CONSOLIDATED STATE PLAN FOR NCLB**—Plan from each state that demonstrates it has adopted challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards that will be used by the state, its local educational agencies, and its schools.

**CORE SUBJECTS**—English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography (Section 9101(11)). Although the federal statute includes the arts in the core academic subjects, it does not specify which of the arts are core academic subjects; therefore, states must make this determination.

**DFO**—Designated Federal Official acts as a liaison between a federal advisory committee and federal agency and must be present at all committee meetings.

**ELL**—English Language Learners

**FACA**—Federal Advisory Committee Act was created in 1972 (Public Law 92-463) by the U.S. Congress to formally recognize the merits of seeking the advice and assistance of our nation’s citizens. Congress sought to assure that advisory committees: provide advice that is relevant, objective, and open to the public; act promptly to complete their work; and comply with reasonable cost controls and recordkeeping requirements.

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**—States must define a “highly qualified” teacher. The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to all public elementary or secondary school teachers employed by a local educational agency who teach a core academic subject. “Highly qualified” means that the teacher: has obtained full state certification as a teacher or passed the State teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state, and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; and has demonstrated subject matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the state and in compliance with Section 9101(23) of ESEA.

**IDEA**—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**IEP**—Individualized educational plan required by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**IES**—Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education that was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002

**LEA**—Local Education Agency

**OESE**—Office of Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education

**RACs**—Regional Advisory Committees that are authorized by Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279)

**RAC QUORUM**—A majority of appointed members. A RAC must have a quorum to meet or hold an official meeting.

**REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES**—Federally-supported regional institutions that have operated since 1966 and reauthorized by Section 174 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002

**SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH**—Section 9101(37) of ESEA, as amended by NCLB, defines scientifically based research as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.” (P.L. 107-279)

**SEA**—State Education Agency

**STATE**—References to “states” include the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the freely associated states, and the outlying areas.

**SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**—Additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in schools that have not met state targets for increasing student achievement (AYP) for three or more years. Services may include tutoring and after-school services by public or private providers approved by the state.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**—Assistance in identifying, selecting, or designing solutions based on research, including professional development and high-quality training to implement solutions leading to improved educational and other practices and classroom instruction based on scientifically valid research; and improved planning, design, and administration of programs; assistance in interpreting, analyzing, and utilizing statistics and evaluations; and other assistance necessary to encourage the improvement of teaching and learning through the applications of techniques supported by scientifically valid research (P.L. 107-279)

**WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE (WWC)**—Clearinghouse established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education.

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