



# Parent involvement and extended learning activities in school improvement plans in the Midwest Region





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April 2011

Prepared by

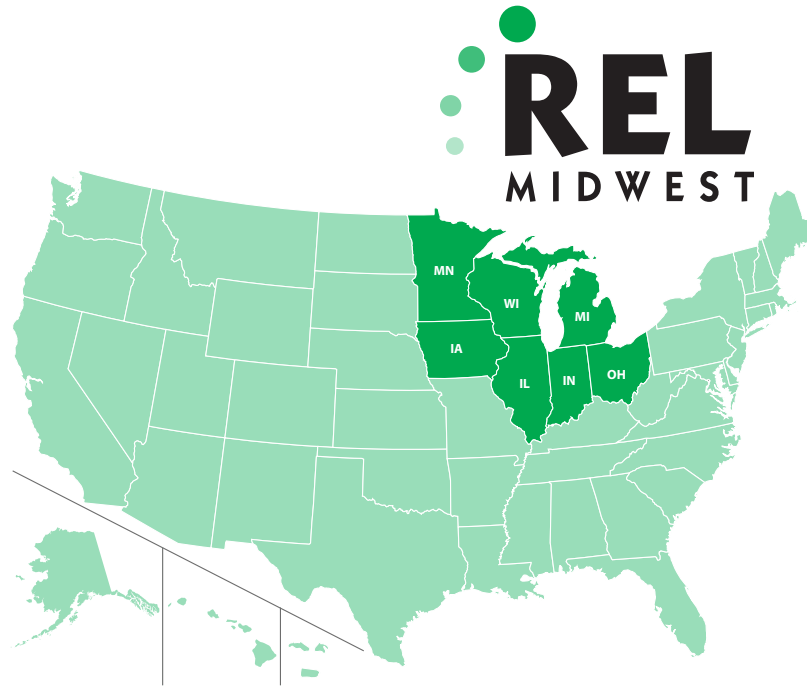
**Julie Reed Kochanek**  
Learning Point Associates,  
an affiliate of the American  
Institutes for Research

**Sara Wraight**  
Learning Point Associates,  
an affiliate of the American  
Institutes for Research

**Sheila Rodriguez**  
Learning Point Associates,  
an affiliate of the American  
Institutes for Research

**Yinmei Wan**  
Learning Point Associates,  
an affiliate of the American  
Institutes for Research

**Leslie Nylan**  
Learning Point Associates,  
an affiliate of the American  
Institutes for Research



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April 2011

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# Parent involvement and extended learning activities in school improvement plans in the Midwest Region

**Analysis of school improvement plans in five Midwest Region states reveals that more than 90 percent of plans included at least one “potentially effective” parent involvement activity and 70 percent included at least one extended learning activity (a before-school, afterschool, or summer program). Few extended learning programs were described as providing academic support.**

According to the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are required to develop or revise school improvement plans aimed at boosting student achievement. Schools must submit the plans, which describe proposed activities, including parent involvement and extended learning activities (a before-school, afterschool, or summer program), to the local education agency for approval.

To determine the extent to which such plans included parent involvement activities and extended learning programs, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest conducted a content analysis of school improvement plans for schools identified for improvement based on 2007/08 assessment data. This study

adopted the methodology of a similar study of school improvement plans in the Northwest Region (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008). Neither this study nor the Northwest Region study assess the effectiveness of particular activities.

This report addresses six research questions:

- How well do school improvement plans align with the requirements of NCLB section 1116 to notify parents of the school’s improvement status, collaborate and communicate with parents, and include strategies that promote effective parent involvement?
- To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in NCLB section 1118—namely, involving parents in decisionmaking, involving parents in advisory committees, developing parent compacts, assisting parents, educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parents’ contributions, coordinating parent involvement activities with other programs, and identifying resources for parent involvement?
- What parent involvement activities not specified in NCLB sections 1116 and 1118 are included in school improvement plans?

- How do school improvement plans detail how information will be provided to parents with limited English proficiency?
- To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in section 1116 for extended learning programs, including activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year?
- What is the focus of extended learning programs, and who provides them?

To examine these questions, this study reviewed school improvement plans in five states in the Midwest Region: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. (Indiana and Michigan were unable to provide their school improvement plans in time to participate.) Plans were obtained for 93 percent of the 1,503 schools identified as in need of improvement in the five states in 2007/08 (1,400 plans). The parent involvement and extended learning activities specified in the plans were coded by categories based on the language of NCLB sections 1116 and 1118, a literature review, and activities identified in the Northwest Region study as “potentially effective.”

The report’s findings include the following:

- About 90 percent of the school improvement plans included plans to notify parents of the school’s improvement status, parents’ rights, or both; 57 percent reported having involved parents in developing or approving the plans; and 91 percent included at least one potentially effective parent involvement activity, as required under NCLB section 1116. About half (49 percent) of the plans met all three section 1116 requirements; another 41 percent satisfied two of the three requirements.
- Very few plans (15 percent) included activities that involved parents in decision-making, but 43 percent of plans included advisory activities for parents. Other activities included developing parent compacts (35 percent); identifying budgetary resources for parent involvement (35 percent); providing assistance to parents in understanding state standards, monitoring their child’s progress, or working with educators to improve the student’s achievement (32 percent); and educating teachers and staff on the value of parents’ contributions (23 percent).
- Across all five states, about half the schools (49 percent) whose plans were reviewed served English language learner students. Among them, 53 percent reported presenting information to parents in a language other than English.
- About 70 percent of school improvement plans included at least one extended learning activity. Just 5 percent of before-school, 20 percent of afterschool, and 5 percent of summer school programs offered tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners.

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**Analysis of school improvement plans in five Midwest Region states reveals that more than 90 percent of plans included at least one “potentially effective” parent involvement activity and 70 percent included at least one extended learning activity (a before-school, afterschool, or summer program). Few extended learning programs were described as providing academic support.**

## WHY THIS STUDY?

According to the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110), commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, schools that receive funds under Title I of the act and fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are required to develop or revise school improvement plans aimed at boosting student achievement. Schools must submit the plans, which describe proposed activities, including parent involvement and extended learning activities, to the local education agency for approval.

Three state education administrators in the Midwest Region requested an analysis of school improvement plans similar to that conducted by Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008). Regional needs sensing also indicated that increased parent involvement was a perceived area of concern to principals and teachers in the Midwest Region.

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, a resource center assisting schools in meeting NCLB requirements, reported that it had received multiple requests for information on extended learning programs in school improvement initiatives. It suggested that the study be expanded to include extended learning programs.

In response, REL Midwest conducted a content analysis of school improvement plans in the region, adapting the methodology of the REL Northwest study (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008) to include data collection on extended learning programs as well as parent involvement activities. Using the REL Northwest framework allows for a comparison of results across the two studies (such a comparison is outside the scope of this report).

This analysis relied solely on document reviews. It does not reveal how—or even whether—schools implemented the activities and programs in their plans. It provides information on the extent to which plans for schools in need of



improvement align with NCLB requirements and the literature base. Such information could shape decisions on the types of support and technical assistance provided to schools in need of improvement.

### Sections 1116 and 1118 of the No Child Left Behind Act

The NCLB Act requires that states set standards and targets for schools in progressing toward 100 percent student proficiency in reading and math

as measured by standardized test scores. A school receiving Title I funds (formula funds allocated to schools serving a minimum threshold of low-income students) that is categorized as in need of improvement must develop or revise a school improvement plan that details the activities over the following two years to increase student proficiency. The NCLB Act specifies that school improvement plans must include parent involvement activities and that extended learning activities be included as appropriate (box 1).

#### BOX 1

#### Parent involvement activities and extended learning options specified by the No Child Left Behind Act

Parent involvement is the proactive engagement of parents in their child's education. It may include a variety of behaviors and practices, such as parents' aspirations for their child's academic achievement, parent participation in school activities, and parent communication with teachers about their children (Fan and Chen 2001). Sections 1116 and 1118 of the No Child Left Behind Act set forth specific requirements for involving parents and including extended learning activities in school improvement plans.

*Section 1116.* Section 1116 specifies the conditions under which schools and districts must be identified for improvement and sets out the requirements for improvement planning. It requires schools to:

- Describe how they will provide parents with written notice of the school's improvement status—when practical, in a language parents can understand.

- Involve parents in developing and approving the school improvement plan.
- Include in their school improvement plans “strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the school.” Section 1116 does not specify what is meant by “effective” strategies. Nonregulatory guidance points schools to websites such as the What Works Clearinghouse site for research and resources to help improve parental involvement (U.S. Department of Education 2004, p. 7).
- Include in their school improvement plans activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during any extension of the school year, as appropriate.

*Section 1118.* All Title I schools, regardless of improvement status, must develop parent involvement policies. Section 1118 provides guidance, some of which is voluntary, for Title I schools in developing parent involvement policies. Schools are advised to do the following:

- Involve parents in decisionmaking.
- Invite parent participation in advisory committees.
- Develop a school–parent compact that describes how the school, parents, and students will share responsibility for student achievement.
- Assist parents in understanding key aspects of students' schooling, including state standards and assessments, federal accountability policies, and how to work with educators to help their child succeed.
- Educate staff on the value of parent involvement and strategies for parent outreach and involvement.
- Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with existing programs to help parents participate in their children's education.
- Identify budgetary resources for parent involvement.

## What the research says about parent involvement and extended learning programs

*Parent involvement.* The research on the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement is mixed. Mo and Singh (2008) find a significant, positive relationship between parent involvement and student engagement and school performance. In a synthesis analysis of 52 studies on the relationship between school, family, and community connections and student achievement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) find a positive relationship between family involvement and academic achievement, on the whole. But they also identify five studies that show no correlation and one study that shows a negative correlation between parent involvement and student grades and test scores. Another study, by Coleman and McNeese (2009), also finds a negative relationship between parent involvement and achievement in grade 5 students using a representative sample from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Program of the National Center for Education Statistics. The researchers were surprised by the results and suggest that further research is needed to determine whether the same results obtain at other grades.

Studies suggest that parents' high aspirations for their child will motivate the child to learn and do well in school (Mo and Singh 2008). Research on parent involvement has linked parents' high expectations to increases in the number of credits earned, grade point average, and standardized test scores (Catsambis 1998; Keith and Keith 1993). Henderson and Berla (1994) find that a positive home learning environment, high but realistic expectations for academic performance, and involvement in a child's schooling are accurate predictors of student success.

Research suggests that school-initiated parent involvement activities that engage parents in their child's education are related to higher student achievement. Schools that develop meaningful partnerships with parents and give them a voice in decisionmaking on school improvement have been linked to higher student achievement (Machen,

Wilson, and Notar 2005). A study by Anfara and Mertens (2008) suggests that teachers who reach out to parents see an increase in achievement by students in their classrooms. The study finds that teachers encounter difficulties in developing productive home-school relationships because of the time required and the fear that parents might question their professional competence. Parents are more likely to be connected to their child's school and students are more likely to learn and perform better academically when teachers overcome these difficulties and create two-way communication between schools and parents (Mo and Singh 2008).

*Extended learning programs.* Extended learning programs have existed for more than a century. Federal legislation provided a boost to the movement to use schools more broadly in the community in 1994 by funding the creation of "21st century community learning centers." These centers provide education, health, social service, cultural, and recreational programs for inner city and rural communities (Little 2009).

Extended learning programs are structured opportunities outside the regular school day, often provided by community agencies, youth organizations, and faith-based organizations in addition to schools. The programs vary in structure, duration, and content. Programs may be offered before school, after school, during the summer, or during any extension of the school year. Some extended learning programs are scheduled throughout the school year; others last for several weeks. Content varies and may include sports, art, music, games, character education, homework assistance, and structured subject-specific instructional time.

Correlational studies find relationships between some extended learning programs and student achievement. Lauer et al. (2006) find that participation in afterschool or extended day programs

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**State and local education administrators are interested in identifying school activities intended to boost student achievement, as described in their school improvement plans**

is associated with higher reading and math achievement. Some studies suggest that these programs may be more beneficial to at-risk students (students from low-income households or other at-risk populations) in low-achieving schools (Gayl 2004). However, a national evaluation of 21st century community learn-

ing centers finds that, on average, participation in afterschool programming did not raise student achievement (Dynarski et al. 2003). The evaluation finds variation in programming intent and design across centers, with many programs focused more on athletics or extracurricular activities than on academic instruction. Other rigorous, experimental studies of afterschool programming find similar results. A systematic review of experimental studies finds no significant impacts of afterschool programs on grades or reading test scores (Zief, Lauver, and Maynard 2004).

More recent research suggests that academically focused extended learning programs might have an impact on student achievement. A meta-analysis of 73 studies of afterschool programs finds that programs with an academic component were more likely than those without one to be associated with significant academic improvements (Durlak and Weissberg 2007). A two-year randomized controlled trial finds significant impacts on students who participated in afterschool programming that included math and reading enrichment compared with students who participated in afterschool programs that did not include enrichment (Black et al. 2008). However, reading outcomes were not significantly different for students in reading enrichment than for students in afterschool programs without enrichment, and students in math enrichment had no gains beyond the first year (Black et al. 2009). The What Works Clearinghouse practice guide *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement* recommends that the academic content in extended learning programs align with the in-school curriculum (Beckett et al. 2009).

The evidence for this recommendation is weak, however.

The federal government's commitment to afterschool programs was institutionalized through the reauthorization of the NCLB Act in 2002. The reauthorization narrowed the focus of the 21st century community learning center program to "an afterschool program model that provides academic enrichment and additional services to complement in-school learning as well as literacy and related education development services to families" (Little 2009, p. 10). NCLB section 1116 requires that school improvement plans include extended learning activities "as appropriate."

### What the study examined

State and local education administrators are interested in identifying school activities intended to boost student achievement, as described in their school improvement plans. To provide this information on the five participating Midwest Region states, this study focused on the following research questions:

- How well do school improvement plans align with the following requirements of NCLB section 1116?
  - Notification to parents of the school's improvement status (parents informed of the requirements of the plan and of their rights to be involved and receive timely notification of rights).
  - Collaboration and communication with parents (involvement in developing and approving the school improvement plan).
  - Strategies that promote effective parent involvement.
- To what extent do school improvement plans include the following activities, specified in NCLB section 1118?

- Involving parents in decisionmaking.
- Involving parents in advisory committees.
- Developing parent compacts.
- Assisting parents.
- Educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parents' contributions.
- Coordinating parent involvement activities with other programs.
- Identifying resources for parent involvement.
- What parent involvement activities not specified in NCLB sections 1116 and 1118 are included in school improvement plans?
- How do school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states detail

how information will be provided to parents with limited English proficiency?

- To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in NCLB section 1116 for extended learning programs?
- What is the focus of extended learning programs, and who provides them?

To answer these questions, Title I school improvement plans were collected from state education agencies and examined for activities on parent involvement and extended learning programs. Two states, Indiana and Michigan, were unable to provide access to school improvement plans within the study timeline; therefore, the study focused on the other five Midwest Region states (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). The data sources and study methods are described in box 2, with details in appendix A.

## BOX 2

### Data sources and study methods

State education agencies in the five participating states identified 1,503 Title I schools as in need of improvement based on 2007/08 assessment data. School improvement plans were collected for 1,400 (93 percent) of these schools: 905 primary schools, 194 middle schools, 240 high schools, and 61 “other” schools (including schools without grade levels). Data collection was limited to plans that were readily available through state education agency procedures or on publicly available websites.

Each plan was coded using a checklist of parent involvement developed for a prior Regional Educational

Laboratory Northwest study (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008), supplemented with categories related to extended learning derived from section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind Act and the literature (see appendix B). Each activity was assigned a code based on the best-fitting category (see appendix C).

The lead researcher conducted a workshop with the three-person coding team on the study methodology, coding procedure, and checklist definitions, including joint coded examples of school improvement plans. The lead researcher conducted two follow-up coding sessions to ensure consistency over time.

The coding process involved the following steps:

- One researcher highlighted and then numbered each parent involvement and extended learning activity in all 1,400 school improvement plans.
- Two researchers independently assigned a code to each activity, based on the checklist in appendix B.
- When the two researchers disagreed on the code, the senior researcher made a final determination.
- When patterns in coding disagreements emerged, the research team met to discuss the definitions of codes established at the beginning of the study to maintain consistency over time.

## HOW WELL DO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS ALIGN WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND SECTION 1116?

Most of the improvement plans reviewed included at least one activity in each of the three section 1116 requirement categories (table 1). Large majorities of schools in all states notified parents and included at least 1 of the 11 “potentially effective” parent involvement strategies identified in the REL Northwest study (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008; appendix A lists these strategies and describes the process by which they were selected; the activities are also listed in table 3 later in the report). In three states (Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), a majority of plans also described involving parents in developing or approving the school improvement plan.

The number of potentially effective activities in each school improvement plan varied widely across states (table 2).

In Illinois, 86 percent of plans included three to five types of activities, 8 percent included one or two activities, and 5 percent included more than five activities. Just 1 percent included no activities.

Of the five states studied, Illinois had the highest percentage of plans with more than two activities (90 percent).

All 22 plans in Iowa reported at least one potentially effective parent involvement activity. Most plans (86 percent), however, included just one or two activities. Only 14 percent—the lowest percentage across the five states—included three to five activities.

In Minnesota 57 percent of plans included three to five activities, 32 percent included one or two activities, 7 percent included no activities, and 4 percent included more than five activities.

Of the five states studied, Ohio had the highest percentage of plans that included no effective parent involvement activities (17 percent) and the second-lowest (after Iowa) percentage of plans with three to five activities. Two-thirds of plans (66 percent) reported one or two activities. Less than 1 percent of plans included more than five activities.

Wisconsin had the second-highest (after Illinois) percentage of plans that included three to five

TABLE 1

### Percentage of school improvement plans that included parent involvement activities required by No Child Left Behind section 1116, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
Notification to parents of school's improvement status: plan describes informing parents of the plan's requirements and their rights to be involved or parents receive timely notification of rights	88	96	94	92	73	90
Collaboration and communication with parents: plan describes involving parents in developing or approving school improvement plan	90	41	65	28	52	58
Plan includes at least one of 11 “potentially effective” parent involvement strategies <sup>a</sup>	99	100	94	83	100	91

a. See appendix A for description of “potentially effective” parent involvement strategies.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE 2

**Percentage of school improvement plans that included potentially effective parent involvement activities, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Number of potentially effective parent involvement activities	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
0	1	0	7	17	0	9
1–2	8	86	32	66	18	38
3–5	86	14	57	17	82	50
6–11	5	0	4	1	0	3

Note: See appendix A for description of “potentially effective” parent involvement strategies. Activities of the same type were counted once. If, for example, a school improvement plan included two activities coded as “nonacademic communication with parents,” the activities were counted as one activity.

Source: Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

activities (82 percent). All plans reviewed included at least one activity, but no plan included more than five activities.

States also differed widely in the types of potentially effective parent involvement activities they

included in their improvement plans (table 3). Providing materials and trainings to help parents work with their children to improve achievement (77 percent), nonacademic communications with parents (59 percent), regular communications with parents about their child’s educational progress

TABLE 3

**Types of potentially effective parent involvement activities included in school improvement plans, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09 (percentage of all school improvement plans)**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
Nonacademic communications with parents on matters	87	23	63	35	88	59
Regular communications with parents about their child’s educational progress	83	9	51	19	67	49
Home visits	5	9	12	3	6	5
Materials and training to help parents work with their child to improve achievement	93	77	69	66	76	77
Parent–teacher conferences	36	36	55	22	64	33
Student-led conferences	2	5	4	1	6	2
Activities that help parents encourage learning at home	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parent involvement activities linked to major school academic goals	37	0	30	7	9	22
Activities that help parents have high expectations for their child	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities that help parents make their child’s extracurricular activities constructive	16	9	14	8	18	12
Activities that help parents plan with their child for postgraduation opportunities	9	0	4	1	0	4

Source: Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

(49 percent), and parent–teacher conferences (33 percent) were the most frequently cited activities. Iowa and Ohio plans reported fewer activities involving nonacademic communications with parents, regular communications with parents about their child’s progress, and parent involvement activities linked to major school academic goals.

Overall, 49 percent of the school improvement plans reviewed met all three requirements of NCLB section 1116 (table 4). Another 41 percent satisfied two requirements. School improvement plans that met at least two requirements ranged from 85 percent (in Ohio) to 96 percent (in Illinois and Iowa). For the five states, 99 percent of plans met at least one requirement (all plans in Iowa and Wisconsin and almost all plans in Illinois, Minnesota, and Ohio). Appendix D presents alignment with requirements of NCLB section 1116 by school level (primary, middle, and high school).

**TO WHAT EXTENT DO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS INCLUDE ACTIVITIES SPECIFIED IN NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND SECTION 1118?**

Overall, 15 percent of the school improvement plans reviewed included activities that involved parents in decisionmaking, and 43 percent included parents in an advisory role at the school (table 5). Other activities included developing parent compacts (35 percent); identifying budgetary resources for parent involvement (35 percent); assisting parents in understanding state

standards, monitoring their child’s progress, or working with educators to improve their child’s achievement (32 percent); and educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parent contributions (23 percent).

The percentage of plans that included these activities varied widely across states (table 5). For example, 94 percent of plans in Wisconsin but no plans in Iowa reported developing parent compacts. Plans that reported involving parents in advisory committees varied from 74 percent in Illinois to 14–33 in the other states. Eighty-six percent of Illinois plans but just 1 percent of Minnesota and Ohio plans reported identifying budgetary resources for parent involvement.

**WHAT PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES NOT SPECIFIED IN NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND SECTIONS 1116 AND 1118 ARE INCLUDED IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS?**

The REL Northwest study identified six activities not required by NCLB sections 1116 or 1118 that were frequently included in school improvement plans (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008). The five participating states as a whole included these activities to varying degrees. More than half (54 percent) of the plans reviewed listed activities that help build relationships between school and parents (table 6). Other frequently cited activities included using parent surveys to inform decisionmaking (38 percent), using parent volunteers (26 percent), using a parent

TABLE 4  
**Number of requirements of No Child Left Behind section 1116 met by school improvement plans, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09 (percentage of all school improvement plans)**

Number of requirements	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
0	1	0	2	1	0	1
1	4	5	3	14	12	9
2	14	55	35	66	52	41
3	82	41	60	19	36	49

Note: Components may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE 5

**Types of activities specified in No Child Left Behind section 1118 included in school improvement plans, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09 (percentage of all school improvement plans)**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
Involving parents in advisory committees or other advisory roles	74	14	33	23	24	43
Involving parents in decisionmaking (for example, parents participating in school leadership team)	6	46	22	16	76	15
Developing parent compacts	59	0	12	20	94	35
Assisting parents (for example, in understanding state standards, monitoring their child's progress, or working with educators to improve achievement)	63	18	17	9	55	32
Educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parents' contributions	45	14	9	8	36	23
Identifying budgetary resources for parent involvement	86	46	1	1	55	35
Coordinating parent involvement activities with other programs (for example, Head Start, Parents as Teachers)	45	0	5	1	3	19

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE 6

**Percentage of school improvement plans that included selected parent involvement activities not required by No Child Left Behind sections 1116 and 1118, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
Use of parent volunteers	37	14	36	13	33	26
Parent surveys to inform decisionmaking	61	50	25	18	97	38
Activities that build relationships between school and parents	69	68	67	36	82	54
Use of a parent coordinator for outreach	17	14	34	23	49	23
Parent-teacher associations	24	46	28	13	58	21
Activities that increase the cultural competency of staff	1	23	4	2	6	3

Note: Activities are those cited in the REL Northwest study (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008) as frequently used.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

coordinator for outreach (23 percent), and having a parent-teacher association (21 percent).

The use of these activities varied across states. (see table 6). For example, 97 percent of the improvement plans reviewed in Wisconsin but just 25

percent of those in Minnesota reported using parent surveys to inform decisionmaking. Some 58 percent of school improvement plans in Wisconsin but 13 percent in Ohio reported having a parent-teacher association.



TABLE 7

**Percentage of school improvement plans that reported communicating with parents in a language other than English, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Type of school	Illinois	Iowa	Minnesota	Ohio	Wisconsin	All five states
All schools	44 (n = 537)	27 (n = 22)	58 (n = 185)	2 (n = 623)	18 (n = 33)	26 (n = 1,400)
Schools serving English language learner students <sup>a</sup>	61 (n = 382)	60 (n = 10)	73 (n = 146)	9 (n = 130)	27 (n = 22)	53 (n = 690)

a. Schools serving English language learner students are defined as schools that enrolled at least one student with limited English proficiency according to the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a).

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

### HOW DO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS DETAIL HOW INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY?

About half (49 percent) of all schools in the survey served English language learner students during the 2007/08 school year. Across all five states, 53 percent of these schools reported providing information to parents in a language other than English (table 7).

### TO WHAT EXTENT DO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS INCLUDE ACTIVITIES SPECIFIED IN SECTION 1116 FOR EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS?

NCLB section 1116 identifies four types of extended learning programs: after school, before school, summer school, and during any extension of the school year (such as on weekends or weekends or special sessions during the school day). Most school improvement plans (70 percent) included at least one extended learning activity (table 8). Minnesota (89 percent) and Illinois (85 percent) had the highest percentages of plans that included at least one extended learning activity. Ohio (53 percent) and Wisconsin (55 percent) had the lowest percentages.

The types of extended learning activities varied (table 9). Illinois had the highest percentage of plans that included afterschool (76 percent) and before-school (24 percent) activities. Minnesota had the highest percentages of plans that included

summer school (71 percent) and other extended learning (32 percent) activities.

### WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS, AND WHO PROVIDES THEM?

The focus of extended learning activities also varied across states (table 10). The percentage of plans that provided tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners during their afterschool programs ranged from 3 percent (Wisconsin) to 29 percent (Illinois). No plans in Wisconsin and 3–7 percent of plans in the other states offered tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners in their before-school programs. Among summer programs, 29 percent in Minnesota and 9 percent in Iowa provided tutoring or other academic

TABLE 8

**School improvement plans that included at least one extended learning activity identified in No Child Left Behind section 1116, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State	School improvement plans	
	Number	Percent
Illinois	537	85
Iowa	22	4
Minnesota	185	89
Ohio	623	53
Wisconsin	33	55
All five states	1,400	70

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE 9

**Percentage of school improvement plans that included various types of extended learning activities specified in No Child Left Behind section 1116, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 2)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
After school	76	59	68	31	49	54
Before school	24	14	12	11	3	16
Summer school	40	23	71	31	21	39
Other extended learning activities <sup>a</sup>	26	9	32	23	18	25

a. Extended learning activities occurring during any other extension of the school year, such as programs on weekends.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE 10

**Nature of reported extended learning activities, by type of program and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09 (percentage of all school improvement plans)**

Program type	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 2)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
<b>Afterschool</b>						
Provided tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners	29	18	24	12	3	20
Provided homework support	2	0	4	0	3	1
Activities were academically focused	1	9	25	1	3	4
Activities focused on enrichment	4	0	3	1	9	2
Activities were based on projects and were hands-on	—	—	—	—	—	—
Field trips were included	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Before-school</b>						
Provided tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners	7	5	3	3	0	5
Provided homework support	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities were academically focused	0	0	2	0	0	0
Activities focused on enrichment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities were based on projects and were hands-on	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Summer</b>						
Provided tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners	1	9	29	1	0	5
Activities were academically focused	1	0	13	0	0	2
Activities focused on enrichment	0	0	1	0	0	0
Included emphasis on critical transitions (from prekindergarten and kindergarten to first grade, from elementary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school)	3	0	1	0	0	1
Field trips were included	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Not available.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

supports for struggling learners; none of the summer programs in Wisconsin and 1 percent in Illinois and Ohio offered academic support. None of the plans provided information on whether the programs were project based and hands-on or whether field trips were included.

Among schools whose plans included extended learning activities, the activity provider varied, although most programs were provided by the school or district exclusively (table 11). Across the five states, an outside provider was identified as the exclusive provider in just 4 percent of plans for afterschool programs, in 1 percent of plans for before-school programs, and in none of the plans for summer programs

Not enough data were collected to investigate other characteristics of extended learning activities reported in school improvement plans, such as the certification of teachers, the supervision of

the program, the program's alignment with school curriculum, and the accessibility of the program for students.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

Several limitations to this study need to be considered:

- The study team was not able to obtain school improvement plans for 7 percent of Title I schools identified as in need of improvement based on 2007/08 data (103 schools). Despite the low nonresponse rate, bias analysis revealed some statistically significant differences within and across the five states between schools whose plans were received and schools whose plans were not (see appendix E). This bias suggests that some caution may be warranted in generalizing the findings

TABLE 11

### Percentage of school improvement plans that reported extended learning activities provided by schools/districts or outside partners, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09

Program type and provider	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 2)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
<b>Afterschool programs</b>						
School or district exclusively	55	55	66	29	24	44
Outside partner exclusively	6	5	1	1	18	4
Both school or district staff and outside partner	15	0	1	1	6	7
Total	76	59	68	31	49	54
<b>Before-school programs</b>						
School or district exclusively	21	9	12	10	0	14
Outside partner exclusively	1	5	0	1	3	1
Both school or district staff and outside partner	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	24	14	12	11	3	16
<b>Summer programs</b>						
School or district exclusively	38	23	69	30	7	38
Outside partner exclusively	0	0	0	0	0	0
Both school or district staff and outside partner	2	0	1	0	0	1
Total	40	23	71	31	21	39

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

to the entire population of plans in the five states studied.

- This study relied on the 11 potentially effective parent involvement strategies identified by REL Northwest through a literature review. The study categorized a strategy as potentially effective when at least two studies showed positive correlations between the activity and student achievement. The study made no attempt to find additional studies about these activities that might have found negative correlations. This method was applied in this study to allow comparison with the REL Northwest study.
- For the same reason, this study adopted the list of other frequently used activities used in the REL Northwest study. The list was based on REL Northwest's review of a sample of school improvement plans in the Northwest Region. It is possible that these codes do not capture the reality of plans in the Midwest Region.
- The REL Midwest research team created coding categories for extended learning activities using the language in NCLB section 1116 and a review of the literature on extended learning. These codes provided a grounded basis for categorizing extended learning activities, but another team of researchers examining the same literature might have come up with a different set of codes.
- The results of this study depend on the accuracy and reliability of the coders and the coding. The research team held three training sessions on coding, one at the beginning of the coding and two during coding. All activities were coded by two coders, with differences resolved by a senior researcher. When patterns in coding disagreements emerged, the research team met to discuss the definitions of codes established at the beginning of the study to maintain consistency over time. These procedures minimized inconsistencies between raters; nevertheless, a different team of researchers analyzing the same data might have coded some findings differently.
- This study provides information on parent involvement and extended learning activities specified in school improvement plans in five Midwest Region states. It was not designed to provide information about fidelity in implementing the plans. But by tracking the alignment of these plans with the NCLB requirements, this analysis of school improvement plans allows policymakers to understand any potential mismatches between federal regulations and what schools plan to implement.

## APPENDIX A STUDY METHODOLOGY

This appendix describes the methodology used to collect and code the data analyzed in this report.

### Collecting data

The study team collected Title I school improvement plans from state education agencies and examined the plans for activities on parent involvement and extended learning. Two Midwest Region states, Indiana and Michigan, were unable to provide access to school improvement plans within the timeline of the study and so were excluded from the study. School improvement plans were examined for Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

For each state, a list of Title I schools identified for improvement based on 2007/08 assessment data was created, using accountability data available on the state education agency web site. Where the data were not available on the web site, the study team used the 2007/08 Consolidated State Performance Report for the state (U.S. Department of Education 2008b). Each state's Title I coordinator was asked to verify the accuracy and completeness of the list and to assist with providing the first school improvement plan for each school created after the 2007/08 school year (likely to be the plan dated fall or winter of 2008).

State education agencies in the five study states identified 1,503 Title I schools as in need of

improvement. School improvement plans were collected for 1,400 of them (93 percent; table A1).

Among the 1,400 plans collected and reviewed, 905 (65 percent) were for primary schools, 194 (14 percent) for middle schools, 240 (17 percent) for high schools, and 61 (4 percent) for schools with other grade configurations, including ungraded schools (table A2). About half (49 percent) of schools for which improvement plans were received served English language learner students in 2007/08 (table A3).

### Coding plan activities

Plans were coded using a checklist of parent involvement and extended learning activities adapted from the REL Northwest study (see appendix B in Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008), supplemented by categories related to extended learning derived from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act section 1116 and the literature (see appendix B of this study for the checklist). Each activity was coded in the best-fitting category (see appendix C). Counts for each code were aggregated and percentages calculated to answer the research questions (see appendix D).

The REL Northwest checklist incorporates parent involvement activities taken from NCLB, potentially effective practices culled from a review of the literature, and activities derived from a sample of school improvement plans. A literature review was used to identify parent involvement activities that were potentially effective in raising

TABLE A1

### Number of Title I schools in need of improvement and school improvement plans received, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09

State	Number of Title I schools in need of improvement	Number of improvement plans received	Percentage of plans received
Illinois	574	537	94
Iowa	22	22	100
Minnesota	201	185	92
Ohio	666	623	93
Wisconsin	40	33	83
All five states	1,503	1,400	93

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE A2

**Number of school improvement plans received, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

School level	Illinois	Iowa	Minnesota	Ohio	Wisconsin	All five states
Primary	322	16	120	434	13	905
Middle	86	6	19	79	4	194
High	125	0	39	63	13	240
Other	4	0	7	47	3	61
Total	537	22	185	623	33	1,400

*Note:* The school-level codes were obtained from the 2007–08 National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). Primary schools are defined as schools with a low grade of “prekindergarten through 03” and a high grade of “up to 08,” middle schools as schools with a low grade of “04 through 07” and a high grade of “04 through 09,” and high schools as schools with a low grade of “07 through 12” and a high grade of “12 only.” Schools with grade configurations not falling within these three categories, including ungraded schools, are classified as “other.”

*Source:* Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE A3

**Number and percentage of schools with plans that served English language learner students, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State	Total number of schools	Number that served English language learner students	Percent that served English language learner students
Illinois	537	382	71
Iowa	22	10	46
Minnesota	185	146	79
Ohio	623	130	21
Wisconsin	33	22	67
All five states	1,400	690	49

*Note:* Schools with plans that served English language learner students were defined as schools that enrolled at least one student with limited English proficiency according to the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a).

*Source:* Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

student achievement. The REL Northwest review found 30 studies that used quantitative data with sample sizes of more than 20; that were published after 1992; and that had experimental, quasi-experimental, or correlational designs. From these 30 studies, 11 potentially effective strategies were identified that were found to be positively related to student achievement in two or more studies:

- Nonacademic communication with parents.
- Regular communications with parents about their child’s educational progress.
- Home visits.
- Materials and training to help parents work with their child to improve achievement.
- Parent–teacher conferences.
- Student-led conferences.
- Activities that help parents encourage learning at home.
- Parent involvement activities that are linked to major school academic goals.
- Activities that help parents have high expectations for their child.

- Activities that help parents make their child's extracurricular activities constructive.
- Activities that help parents plan with their child for postgraduation opportunities (college, trade school).

In addition to the list of activities from NCLB sections 1116 and 1118 and the literature review, the REL Northwest study randomly sampled 20 school improvement plans to identify parent involvement activities not specified in NCLB requirements or the literature review that were included in at least two plans. Six frequently used activities were identified:

- Use of parent volunteers.
- Parent surveys to inform decisionmaking.
- Activities that help build relationships between school and parents.
- Use of a parent coordinator for outreach.
- Parent-teacher associations.
- Activities that increase the cultural competency of staff.

The same checklist of parent involvement activities used in the Northwest Region study was used in this study to maintain comparability across the two studies.

The checklist was then adapted to include extended learning activities. The REL Midwest research team created coding categories for extended learning activities based on the language of NCLB section 1116 and the literature on extended

learning. Using a recent meta-analysis (Durlak and Weissberg 2007), recent reports from randomized controlled trials (Black et al. 2008), and the What Works Clearinghouse IES Practice Guide on out-of-school time (Beckett et al. 2009), this study created codes for characteristics of extended learning programs, including program provider, program focus, teacher certification, school supervision, alignment with school curriculum, and accessibility for students.

The coding team comprised the lead researcher and three other researchers who were trained in NCLB requirements and qualitative research methods. The lead researcher conducted a workshop with the coding team on the study methodology, coding procedure, and checklist definitions. During the workshop, the coding team jointly coded examples of school improvement plans. The lead researcher conducted two follow-up coding sessions to ensure consistency over time.

School improvement plans were maintained in electronic form, and all codes were entered into a database. One researcher highlighted and numbered each parent involvement and extended learning activity in all 1,400 school improvement plans. Two other researchers, working independently, then coded each activity according to the best-fitting category on the coding checklist (appendix C). Of the 22,816 activities identified and categorized, the two researchers agreed on the coding of 18,206 (80 percent reliability). The lead researcher made a final determination on the coding of any activities on which the two coders disagreed. When patterns in coding disagreements emerged, the research team met to discuss the definitions of codes established at the beginning of the study to maintain consistency over time.

**APPENDIX B  
CHECKLIST FOR REVIEW OF PARENT  
INVOLVEMENT AND EXTENDED LEARNING  
ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS  
IN PARTICIPATING MIDWEST REGION STATES**

School \_\_\_\_\_

Rater \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Note:* Each activity should be coded only once. Remember to score the activity in terms of purpose rather than method.

Code/activity	Yes	List specified activities/comments
<b>Parent involvement activity</b>		
1. Parents involved in the development of school improvement plans. Number of parents identified _____		
2. Parents involved in the approval of improvement plans		
3. Parents involved in advisory committees		
4. Parents involved in decisionmaking		
5. School informs parents about the requirements of the plan and the rights of parents to be involved.		
6. Timely notification of rights under NCLB		
7. Nonacademic communications with parents		
8. Regular communications with parents about their child's educational progress		
9. Home visits		
10. School provides materials, training, and workshops to help parents work with their children to improve achievement (for example, literacy training or use of technology).		
11. Parent-teacher conferences		
12. Student-led conferences		
13. Parent compact(s). (Check identified components below.) <input type="checkbox"/> Requirement of school to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Ways parents are responsible for student learning (for example, monitoring attendance, homework completion, volunteering) <input type="checkbox"/> Annual parent-teacher conferences <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent reports on student progress <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable access to staff <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to observe classroom activities		
14. Assistance to parents. (Check types of assistance below.) <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding topics such as standards <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring their child's progress <input type="checkbox"/> Working with educators to improve achievement		

(CONTINUED)



Code/activity	Yes	List specified activities/comments
15. Education of teacher and school personnel on the value and utility of contributions from parents—professional development around parent involvement		
16. Activities that help parents encourage learning at home (for example, workshops)		
17. Coordination of parent involvement activities with other programs (for example, Head Start, Early Reading First, Parents as Teachers)		
18. Parent involvement activities that are linked to major school academic goals (for example, improving literacy, increasing graduation rates, math night)		
19. Activities that help parents have high expectations for their child		
20. Activities that help parents make their child's extracurricular activities constructive (for example, providing materials that inform parents of extracurricular activities or that help parents create more structure at home, or offering workshops and training on parenting skills)		
21. Activities that help parents plan with their child for postgraduation opportunities (college, trade school)		
22. Use of parent volunteers		
23. Parent surveys to inform decisions		
24. Activities that build relationships between parents and school (open houses, back-to-school nights)		
25. Budget identification of resources for parent involvement		
26. Information provided to parents in a language they can understand (translated into at least one language)		
27. Use of a parent coordinator for outreach		
28. Parent-teacher associations/parent-teacher organizations		
29. Activities that increase the cultural competency of staff		
List other specific (and clearly defined) parent involvement activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.		
List other nonspecific (for example, parent groups) parent involvement activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.		
<b>Extended learning activity</b>		
1. Afterschool activities are offered by the school or school district. How many times per week? _____		
2. Afterschool activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit organization). How many times per week? _____		

(CONTINUED)

Code/activity	Yes	List specified activities/comments
3. Tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners are offered after school.		
4. Homework support is provided after school.		
5. Afterschool activities are academically focused.		
6. Afterschool activities are focused on enrichment.		
7. Afterschool activities are based on projects and are hands-on.		
8. Field trips are included in the afterschool program.		
9. Afterschool program is staffed by certified teachers.		
10. Afterschool program staff works in collaboration with the regular day teachers, or regular day teachers are part of the staff.		
11. The school principal supervises the afterschool program.		
12. A system is in place to monitor and evaluate the afterschool program.		
13. The afterschool program is open to all students.		
14. Summer program is offered by the school or school district. Number of days/week: _____ Number of weeks in summer: _____ Grade levels eligible for summer program: _____		
15. Summer program is offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit organization). Number of days/week: _____ Number of weeks in summer: _____ Grade levels eligible for summer program: _____		
16. Tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners are offered in summer.		
17. Summer program is academically focused.		
18. Summer program is focused on enrichment.		
19. Field trips are included in the summer program.		
20. Summer program is staffed by certified teachers.		
21. Summer program staff works in collaboration with the regular day teachers or includes regular day teachers.		
22. The school principal supervises the summer program.		
23. A system is in place to monitor and evaluate the summer program.		
24. The summer program is open to all students.		
25. All students who wish to participate are able to do so. (Availability is adequate.)		
26. Summer program includes an emphasis on critical transitions (pre-K/kindergarten to first grade, elementary to middle school, or middle school to high school).		

(CONTINUED)

Code/activity	Yes	List specified activities/comments
27. Before-school activities are offered by the school or school district. How many times per week? _____		
28. Before-school activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit organization). How many times per week? _____		
29. Tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners are offered before school.		
30. Homework support is provided before school.		
31. Before-school activities are academically focused.		
32. Before-school activities are focused on enrichment.		
33. Before-school activities are based on projects and are hands-on.		
34. Before-school program is staffed by certified teachers.		
35. Before-school program staff works in collaboration with the regular day teachers or includes regular day teachers.		
36. The school principal supervises the before-school program.		
37. A system is in place to monitor and evaluate the before-school program.		
38. The before-school program is open to all students.		
List other specific (and clearly defined) extended learning activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.		
List other nonspecific (for example, parent groups) extended learning activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.		

*Note:* Items 1, 2, 14, 15, 27, and 28 in the extended learning activity section collected data on program duration, frequency, and eligible grades (summer programs only) in order to provide context about the characteristics of extended learning programs. Data for these fields were manually entered by coders as text strings. They did not allow for valid and meaningful quantitative tabulation; analysis of them does not therefore appear in the report.

**APPENDIX C  
CROSSWALK BETWEEN CODES  
AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This appendix shows how each activity was coded using the best fitting category.

TABLE C1

**Parent involvement activities and extended learning programs coded by research question, 2008/09**

Research question	Parent involvement activity category	Code used
1. How well do school improvement plans align with the requirements of NCLB section 1116?	Notification: NCLB section 1116 requires that parents be informed of the requirements of the plan and of their rights to be involved and receive timely notification of rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents informed of requirements of plan and their rights to be involved (through meetings, letters, newsletters, conferences, radio, newspaper, phone calls, online, or other means)</li> <li>• Parents receive timely notification of rights (through school letters, during open house, at other meetings)</li> </ul>
	Collaboration and communication: NCLB section 1116 requires that parents be involved in developing and approving the school improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents involved in developing the school improvement plan</li> <li>• Parents involved in approving the school improvement plan</li> </ul>
	Potentially effective parent involvement activities: activities are mentioned but not specified in NCLB section 1116, identified by a literature review, and considered "potentially effective" because of the correlational nature of the studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with parents on nonacademic matters (information related to the school or regular school updates, for example, through newsletters, e-mails, calendars, phone calls)</li> <li>• Regular communications with parents about their child's education progress (for example, through report cards, online grades, phone calls, and web site)</li> <li>• Home visits by a teacher, parent involvement coordinator, or other school staff</li> <li>• Materials and training to help parents work with their child to improve achievement (for example, literacy training, instruction in technology use, or other resources as appropriate)</li> <li>• Parent-teacher conferences</li> <li>• Student-led conferences</li> <li>• Activities that help parents encourage learning at home (such as workshops)</li> <li>• Parent involvement activities that are linked to major school academic goals (improving literacy, increasing graduation rates, literacy nights, math nights, and so forth)</li> <li>• Activities that help parents have high expectations for their child (such as reviewing the school's academic and behavioral standards or standardized test expectations with parents)</li> <li>• Activities that help parents make their child's extracurricular activities constructive (providing materials that inform parents of extracurricular activities or that help parents create more structure at home, or offering workshops and trainings on parenting skills)</li> <li>• Activities that help parents plan with their child for postgraduation opportunities (college or trade school, financial aid night)</li> </ul>

(CONTINUED)

TABLE C1 (CONTINUED)

**Parent involvement activities and extended learning programs coded by research question, 2008/09**

Research question	Parent involvement activity category	Code used
2. To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in NCLB section 1118?	NCLB section 1118 identifies the following activities: involving parents in advisory committees, involving parents in decisionmaking, developing parent compacts, assisting parents, educating teachers and school personnel on the value of parents' contributions, identifying resources for parent involvement, and coordinating parent involvement activities with other programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of parents in advisory committees or other advisory roles</li> <li>• Involvement of parents in decisionmaking (for example, parent involvement in school leadership team)</li> <li>• Development of parent compacts</li> <li>• Assistance to parents (for example, in understanding standards, monitoring their child's progress, or working with educators to improve achievement)</li> <li>• Education of teachers and school personnel on the value and utility of contributions from parents (for example, providing professional development on parental involvement)</li> <li>• Coordination of parent involvement activities with other programs (for example, Head Start, Early Reading First, Parents as Teachers)</li> <li>• Budget identification of resources for parent involvement</li> </ul>
3. What parent involvement activities not specified in NCLB sections 1116 and 1118 are included in school improvement plans?	The REL Northwest study (Speth, Saifer, and Forehand 2008) identifies six other frequently used parent involvement activities from review of 20 randomly selected school improvement plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of parent volunteers</li> <li>• Parent surveys to inform decisions</li> <li>• Activities that build relationships between parents and school (for example, open houses and back-to-school nights)</li> <li>• Parent coordinator for outreach</li> <li>• Parent-teacher associations</li> <li>• Activities that increase the cultural competency of staff (for example, professional development activity on understanding student diversity)</li> </ul>
4. How do school improvement plans detail how information will be provided to parents with limited English proficiency?	NCLB section 1116 stipulates that information on school improvement plans be provided to parents in a language they can understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information provided to parents in a language they can understand (translated into at least one language)</li> </ul>
5. To what extent do school improvement plans include activities specified in NCLB section 1116 for extended learning programs?	Before-school activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before-school activities are offered by the school or district.</li> <li>• Before-school activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit) organization.</li> </ul>
	Afterschool activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afterschool activities are offered by the school or district.</li> <li>• Afterschool activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit) organization. How many times per week?</li> </ul>
	Summer programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer school activities are offered by the school or district.</li> <li>• Summer school activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit) organization.</li> </ul>
	Other extended learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List other specific (and clearly defined) extended learning activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.</li> <li>• List other nonspecific extended learning activities provided by this school not included in the requirements above.</li> </ul>

(CONTINUED)

TABLE C1 (CONTINUED)

**Parent involvement activities and extended learning programs coded by research question, 2008/09**

Research question	Parent involvement activity category	Code used
6. What is the focus of extended learning programs, and who provides them? <sup>a</sup>	Program focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring or other academic supports for struggling learners are offered.</li> <li>• Homework support is provided.</li> <li>• Activities are academically focused (focus on helping students improve achievement in course subjects).</li> <li>• Activities focus on enrichment (not related to course subjects).</li> <li>• Activities are based on projects and are hands-on.</li> <li>• Field trips are included in program.</li> </ul>
	Program provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities are offered by the school or district.</li> <li>• Activities are offered by an outside community partner (business or nonprofit) organization.</li> </ul>
	Certification of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program is staffed by certified teachers.</li> </ul>
	Alignment with school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff work in collaboration with regular day teachers, or regular day teachers are part of the staff.</li> </ul>
	Supervision by school personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School principal supervises the program.</li> <li>• A system is in place to monitor and evaluate the program.</li> </ul>
	Accessibility for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program is open to all students.</li> <li>• Eligible grades for summer program.</li> </ul>

a. Researchers tried to collect information on program focus, program provider, certification of teachers, alignment with school curriculum, supervision by school personnel, and accessibility of programs. Lack of sufficient responses to all questions except those concerning focus forced the researchers to narrow the question; only information on program focus is reported.

Source: Research questions 1–4 were adapted from table 1 in Speth, Saifer, and Forehand (2008). Research questions 5–7 were designed by the REL Midwest research team.

## APPENDIX D

### SCHOOL-LEVEL ALIGNMENT WITH REQUIREMENTS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND SECTION 1116

Across all school levels in the five participating Midwest Region states as a group, more than 85 percent of schools on average reported notifying parents about the school's improvement status (table D1). The percentage of school improvement plans that reported involving parents in the development of school improvement plans varied across school levels and states: 58 percent of primary school plans, 48 percent of middle school plans, 68 percent of high school plans, and 39 percent of other schools reported involving parents in developing or approving the plan. For the five states as a group, plans for 91 percent of primary schools, 93 percent of middle schools, and 92 percent of high schools included at least one potentially effective

activity (table D2). In Iowa and Wisconsin, plans for all schools across all levels included at least one potentially effective activity.

Across the five states, providing materials and trainings to help parents work with their children to improve academic improvement, communications with parents on nonacademic matters, regular communications with parents about their child's educational progress, and parent-teacher conferences were the most frequently reported activities by schools of all levels. A higher percentage of high schools reported activities that help parents plan for their child's postgraduation opportunities. But higher percentage of primary and middle schools than high schools reported parent involvement activities that were linked to major school academic goals. Across states and school levels, few school improvement plans included activities to help parents have high expectations for

TABLE D1

#### Percentage of school improvement plans that met requirements of No Child Left Behind section 1116, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09

Section 1116 requirement/ school level	Illinois	Iowa	Minnesota	Ohio	Wisconsin	All five states
Notification to parents of school's improvement status: plan describes informing parents of plan's requirements and their rights to be involved or parents receiving timely notification of rights						
Primary	89	94	94	92	54	91
Middle	88	100	100	91	100	91
High	84	na	90	92	77	87
Other	100	na	100	90	100	92
Collaboration and communication with parents: plan describes involving parents in developing or approving the school improvement plan						
Primary	95	50	63	29	62	58
Middle	73	17	74	17	50	48
High	87	na	69	35	39	68
Other	75	na	57	32	67	39
Plan includes at least 1 of 11 potentially effective parent involvement strategies						
Primary	100	100	93	83	100	91
Middle	99	100	95	85	100	93
High	97	na	95	80	100	92
Other	100	na	86	83	100	85

na is not applicable (there were no schools at this level).

Note: See table A2 for the number of school improvement plans received at each school level by state.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE D2

**Percentage of school improvement plans that included potentially effective activities, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
<b>Nonacademic communications with parents</b>						
Primary	92	31	60	36	85	59
Middle	80	0	68	28	100	55
High	84	na	72	27	92	68
Other	75	na	57	32	67	40
<b>Regular communications with parents about their child's educational progress</b>						
Primary	85	13	48	19	62	47
Middle	80	0	69	11	50	47
High	83	na	49	30	77	63
Other	75	na	71	21	67	33
<b>Home visits</b>						
Primary	8	13	12	4	8	5
Middle	8	0	31	0	25	7
High	6	na	8	0	0	4
Other	0	na	0	2	0	2
<b>Materials and trainings to help parents work with their child to improve achievement</b>						
Primary	98	75	78	67	92	80
Middle	87	83	74	72	25	78
High	84	na	44	57	77	70
Other	75	na	57	55	67	57
<b>Parent-teacher conferences</b>						
Primary	25	50	48	22	62	27
Middle	74	0	58	22	25	48
High	40	na	77	27	77	45
Other	0	na	43	17	67	21
<b>Student-led conferences</b>						
Primary	0	0	3	1	8	1
Middle	11	17	21	1	0	7
High	1	na	1	1	8	1
Other	0	na	1	1	0	1
<b>Activities that help parents encourage learning at home</b>						
Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0
Middle	0	0	0	0	0	0
High	0	na	0	0	0	0
Other	0	na	0	0	0	0
<b>Activities that are linked to major school academic goals</b>						
Primary	49	0	43	9	23	28
Middle	38	0	21	4	0	21
High	6	na	0	0	0	3
Other	25	na	14	9	0	10

(CONTINUED)



TABLE D2 (CONTINUED)

**Percentage of school improvement plans that included potentially effective activities, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Activity	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
<b>Activities that help parents have high expectations for their child</b>						
Primary	0	0	0	0	0	0
Middle	0	0	0	0	0	0
High	0	na	0	0	0	0
Other	0	na	0	0	0	0
<b>Activities that help parents make the child's extracurricular activities constructive</b>						
Primary	18	13	13	8	15	12
Middle	11	0	16	4	25	8
High	12	na	15	6	23	12
Other	50	na	14	15	0	16
<b>Activities that help parents plan with their child for postgraduation opportunities</b>						
Primary	3	0	1	0	0	1
Middle	5	0	11	3	0	4
High	25	na	10	0	0	15
Other	50	na	0	0	0	3

na is not applicable (there were no schools at this level).

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

their child or activities that help parents encourage learning at home.

Fifty-nine percent of high schools, 50 percent of primary schools, and 41 percent of middle schools

met all three NCLB section 1116 requirements (table D3). Fifty-one percent of middle schools, 41 percent of primary schools, and 30 percent of high schools met two requirements. About 90 percent of schools at each level met at least two requirements.

TABLE D3

**Percentage of school improvement plans that met requirements of No Child Left Behind section 1116, by number of requirements, school level, and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

Number of requirements/ school level	Illinois (n = 537)	Iowa (n = 22)	Minnesota (n = 185)	Ohio (n = 623)	Wisconsin (n = 33)	All five states (n = 1,400)
<b>Zero requirements</b>						
Primary	0	0	3	1	0	1
Middle	0	0	0	1	0	1
High	2	na	3	0	0	2
Other	0	na	0	4	0	3
<b>One requirement</b>						
Primary	3	6	3	14	23	9
Middle	5	0	0	14	0	8
High	6	na	5	18	8	9
Other	0	na	0	8	0	7
<b>Two requirements</b>						
Primary	10	44	36	65	39	41
Middle	30	83	32	76	50	51
High	12	na	28	59	69	30
Other	25	na	60	66	33	61
<b>Three requirements</b>						
Primary	87	50	58	21	39	50
Middle	65	17	68	9	50	41
High	80	na	64	24	23	59
Other	75	na	43	21	67	30

na is not applicable (there were no schools at this level).

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

## APPENDIX E RESULTS OF BIAS ANALYSIS

An analysis was conducted to identify possible response bias caused by missing plans. The results reveal some statistically significant differences—both within and across the five states—between schools for which plans were received and schools for which plans were not received. The results suggest some caution in generalizing the findings from the plans studied to the entire population of plans in the five states.

Across all five states, the percentage of schools for which plans were not received was higher among high schools (10 percent) and “other” schools (14 percent) than among primary schools (5 percent) and middle schools (7 percent; table E1). This difference is statistically significant at the .01 level.

Across all five states, there was no statistically significant relationship between receipt of a school improvement plan and the school’s locale type (city, town, suburb, rural). In Illinois and Minnesota, however, the distribution of schools for which

TABLE E1

### Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09

State/plan received or not	Primary	Middle	High	Other	Total	Pearson Chi-square significance <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
<b>Illinois</b>						21.59	.000
Received							
Number	322	86	125	4	537		
Percent	97	93	87	67	94		
Not received							
Number	11	6	18	2	37		
Percent	3	7	13	33	6		
<b>Iowa</b>						na	na
Received							
Number	16	6	0	0	22		
Percent	100	100	0	0	100		
Not received							
Number	0	0	0	0	0		
Percent	0	0	0	0	0		
<b>Minnesota</b>							
Received							
Number	120	19	39	7	185		
Percent	93	95	87	100	92		
Not received						2.79	.425
Number	9	1	6	0	16		
Percent	7	5	13	0	8		
<b>Ohio</b>						4.59	.205
Received							
Number	434	79	63	47	623		
Percent	94	95	95	87	94		

(CONTINUED)

TABLE E1 (CONTINUED)

**Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/plan received or not	Primary	Middle	High	Other	Total	Pearson Chi-square significance <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
Not received							
Number	29	4	3	7	43		
Percent	6	5	5	13	7		
Wisconsin						8.09	.044
Received							
Number	13	4	13	3	33		
Percent	93	50	93	75	83		
Not received							
Number	1	4	1	1	7		
Percent	7	50	7	25	18		
All five states						15.19	.002
Received							
Number	905	194	240	61	1,400		
Percent	95	93	90	86	93		
Not received							
Number	50	15	28	10	103		
Percent	5	7	10	14	7		

na is not applicable.

Note: School level codes are from the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a). Primary schools are defined as schools with a low grade of “prekindergarten through 03” and a high grade of “up to 08,” middle schools as schools with a low grade of “04 through 07” and a high grade of “04 through 09,” and high schools as schools with a low grade of “07 through 12” and a high grade of “12 only.” Schools with grade configurations not falling within these three categories, including ungraded schools, are classified as “other.”

a. The Chi-square statistic indicates whether there is a relationship between receipt of a plan and school level. The strength of that relationship is measured by a two-sided significance level ( $p$  value). Significance below a designated value (often .05) would lead to rejection of the hypothesis of no relationship between the two variables.

Source: Authors’ analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

plans were missing and schools for which plans were received was statistically different at the .05 level (table E2). In Illinois all town schools and 96 percent of city schools provided plans, but plans for just 84 percent of rural schools and 87 percent of suburban schools were received. In Minnesota plans from all suburban and town schools as well as 97 percent of rural schools were received, but plans for just 87 percent of city schools were received.

In Minnesota and Ohio, and overall across the five states, a higher percentage of noncharter than charter schools provided plans ( $p < .05$  in Minnesota and  $p < 0.01$  in Ohio: table E3). In Illinois

a higher percentage of charter schools returned plans, but that difference is not statistically significant at the .05 level. In Iowa all schools returned their plans.

A statistically significant difference was found in the characteristics of students served by schools that did and those that did not submit their school improvement plans: on average Minnesota schools that provided plans served a lower percentage of minority students than Minnesota schools that did not submit plans ( $p < .05$ ; table E4). None of the other differences in means—either within or across the five states—was statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E2

**Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by school locale and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/plan received or not	City	Town	Suburb	Rural	Missing	Total	Pearson Chi-square <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
<b>Illinois</b>							18.50	.000
Received								
Number	368	24	129	16	0	537		
Percent	96	100	87	84	0	94		
Not received								
Number	15	0	19	3	0	37		
Percent	4	0	13	16	0	6		
<b>Iowa</b>							na	na
Received								
Number	16	5	1	0	0	22		
Percent	100	100	100	0	0	100		
Not received								
Number	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Percent	0	0	0	0	0	0		
<b>Minnesota</b>							9.07	.028
Received								
Number	103	24	27	31	0	185		
Percent	87	100	100	97	0	92		
Not received								
Number	15	0	0	1	0	16		
Percent	13	0	0	3	0	8		
<b>Ohio</b>							4.84	.304
Received								
Number	402	55	115	45	6	623		
Percent	94	87	94	94	100	94		
Not received								
Number	25	8	7	3	0	43		
Percent	6	13	6	6	0	7		
<b>Wisconsin</b>							na	na
Received								
Number	33	0	0	0	0	33		
Percent	83	0	0	0	0	83		
Not received								
Number	7	0	0	0	0	7		
Percent	18	0	0	0	0	18		
<b>All five states</b>							2.56	.635
Received								
Number	922	108	272	92	6	1,400		
Percent	94	93	91	93	100	93		

(CONTINUED)

TABLE E2 (CONTINUED)

**Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by school level and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/plan received or not	City	Town	Suburb	Rural	Missing	Total	Pearson Chi-square significance <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
Not received								
Number	62	8	26	7	0	103		
Percent	6	7	9	7	0	7		

na is not applicable.

Note: School locale codes are from the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a). The 12 urban-centric locale codes were collapsed into four categories.

a. The Chi-square statistic indicates whether there is a relationship between receipt of a plan and school locale. The strength of that relationship is measured by a two-sided significance level ( $p$  value). Significance below a designated value (often .05) would lead to rejection of the hypothesis of no relationship between the two variables.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE E3

**Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by charter school status and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/plan received or not	Noncharter school	Charter school	Unknown	Total	Pearson Chi-square significance <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
Illinois						
Received						
Number	35	2	0	37		
Percent	6	22	0	6		
Not received						
Number	530	7	0	537		
Percent	94	78	0	94		
Iowa						
Received						
Number	21	1	0	22		
Percent	100	100	0	100		
Not received						
Number	0	0	0	0		
Percent	0	0	0	0		
Minnesota						
Received						
Number	146	39	0	185		
Percent	95	83	0	92		
Not received						
Number	8	8	0	16		
Percent	5	17	0	8		

(CONTINUED)

TABLE E3 (CONTINUED)

**Number and percentage of plans received and not received, by charter school status and participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/plan received or not	Noncharter school	Charter school	Unknown	Total	Pearson Chi-square significance <sup>a</sup>	Two-sided significance <sup>a</sup>
<b>Ohio</b>					9.94	.007
Received						
Number	462	155	6	623		
Percent	95	89	100	94		
Not received						
Number	23	20	0	43		
Percent	5	11	0	7		
<b>Wisconsin</b>					.62	.432
Received						
Number	30	3	0	33		
Percent	86	60	0	83		
Not received						
Number	5	2	0	7		
Percent	14	40	0	18		
<b>All five states</b>					19.79	.000
Received						
Number	1,189	205	6	1,400		
Percent	94	87	100	93		
Not received						
Number	71	32	0	103		
Percent	6	14	0	7		

na is not applicable.

Note: School charter status data are from the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a).

a. The Chi-square statistic indicates whether there is a relationship between receipt of a plan and the school's charter status. The strength of that relationship is measured by a two-sided significance level ( $p$  value). Significance below a designated value (often .05) would lead to rejection of the hypothesis of no relationship between the two variables.

Source: Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.

TABLE E4

**Student characteristics in schools for which plans were received and not received, by participating Midwest Region state, 2008/09**

State/descriptive statistic	School enrollment		Percentage of minority students		Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	
	Plans received	Plans not received	Plans received	Plans not received	Plans received	Plans not received
<b>Illinois</b>						
Number of schools	537	37	536	37	500	29
Mean	808	767	84	86	81	72
Standard deviation	629	665	26	20	23	24
<b>Iowa</b>						
Number of schools	22	0	22	0	22	0
Mean	468	na	51	na	67	na
Standard deviation	154	na	16	na	18	na
<b>Minnesota</b>						
Number of schools	185	16	185	16	185	15
Mean	422	290	63*	82*	68	77
Standard deviation	298	233	34	20	23	20
<b>Ohio</b>						
Number of schools	617	43	617	43	—	—
Mean	422	326	56	53	na	na
Standard deviation	405	217	35	40	na	na
<b>Wisconsin</b>						
Number of schools	33	7	33	7	33	7
Mean	647	349	94	96	82	74
Standard deviation	543	340	6	4	12	20
<b>All five states</b>						
Number of schools	1,394	103	1,393	103	740	51
Mean	576	480	68	72	77	74
Standard deviation	528	487	34	34	23	22

na is not applicable.

— is not available.

\* Difference is statistically significant at the .05 level.

*Note:* Data on school characteristics are from the 2007–08 Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education 2008a). A *t*-test was used to test whether, within each state and across all five states, the difference in means between schools for which plans were received and schools for which plans were not received on each of the three characteristics (school enrollment, percentage of minority students, and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) was statistically significant. The *t*-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. Significance (*p* value) below a certain designated value (often .05) would lead to rejection of the hypothesis of no difference between the two group means. Schools with missing data on a variable were not included in the analysis for that characteristic.

*Source:* Authors' analysis based on review of school improvement plans in the five participating Midwest Region states.



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