2026

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Technical Assistance Highlights From Year 4 of the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center

The Western Educational Equity Assistance Center (WEEAC) serves 16 states and territories in the United States, supporting state and local educational agencies in successfully serving all students. It is authorized under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is one of the U.S Department of Education's longest standing investments in technical assistance.

Figure 1. Subregions We Serve

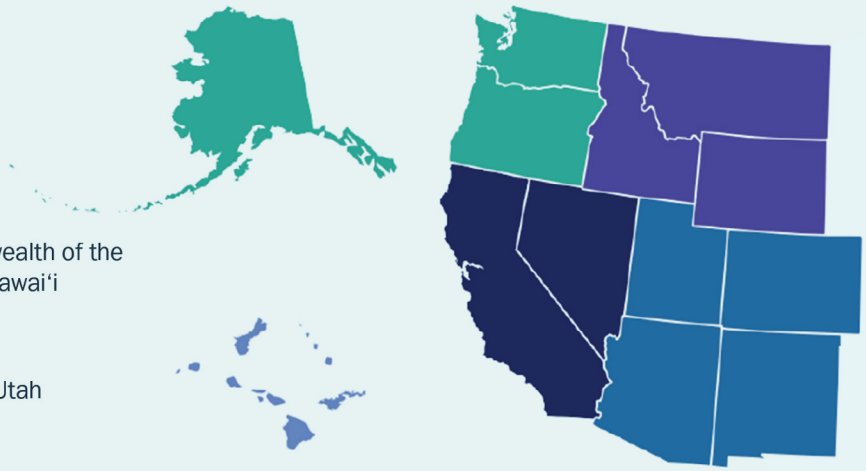
Far West
California, Nevada

Northwest
Alaska, Oregon, Washington

Pacific
American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the North Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawai'i

Southwest
Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah

West
Idaho, Montana, Wyoming



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The WEEAC focuses on building leadership and system capacity to cultivate the academic and community environments necessary for students to learn and thrive. The work is directly informed by the needs expressed by leaders in the Western region, and it centers on eight areas of focus:

- **Academic Excellence:** ensuring all students, including those who require differentiated support, have access to high-quality curricula and instruction
- **A Well-Supported Educator Workforce:** investing in educator training and professional development that prepares teachers to address the complex developmental and academic needs of students, while directing resources and expertise to the schools with greatest need
- **High and Consistent Student Attendance:** using evidence-based strategies to understand and disrupt the root causes of absenteeism
- **Safe and Supportive Learning Environments:** cultivating positive relationships and environments as the foundation for academic success
- **Tailored Supports for Special Populations:**[1] designing evidence-based interventions and building educator capacity to address the root causes of disparities among student groups
- **Authentic Family and Community Engagement:** identifying ways to connect and collaborate with families and communities, drawing on their strengths and assets to improve student outcomes
- **Strategic Resource Allocation:** collaborating with partners and leveraging available assets to "do more with less" in the face of funding deficits
- **System Alignment and Coherence:** working toward shared goals in a systematic and aligned way across agencies and partners

How Technical Assistance Aligned With Regional Priorities

During the 2025–26 school year, the WEEAC provided technical assistance through webinars, resource creation, coaching, consultation, virtual workshops, peer learning networks, publications, and strategic planning support. Altogether, the WEEAC

- worked on 13 Tier 1 resources, which are aimed at broad audiences and intended to be universally relevant;
- facilitated 5 Tier 2 projects, which are intended to support education system leaders across the region around a shared area of interest or need; and
- provided 12 Tier 3 projects, which include direct and targeted coaching and consultation for individuals or a team in the same organization.

1 The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the term *special populations* for students who must overcome barriers that may require special consideration and attention to ensure equal opportunity for success in an educational setting.

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The examples below highlight a selection of projects that respond to the priorities identified by education leaders across the western region.

Academic Excellence

Project: Essential Durable Skills

The WEEAC team is helping the Colorado Department of Education refine its guidance for educators on essential durable skills development and integration across K–12 and postsecondary curricula so that students are prepared to meet the demands of rapidly changing social structures, economies, and employer needs. In collaboration with state leaders, the WEEAC is conducting a landscape analysis to learn how others are integrating instruction and assessment of durable skills. The goal is to align new guidance with current statewide strategic plans. The WEEAC is providing content expertise and research support, including access to national best practices and subject matter leaders.

Essential durable skills are traits and abilities—like self-awareness and interpersonal communication—that enable students to adapt to changing industries and different professional settings. They can be intentionally fostered through teaching and assessment across a student's educational journey.

High and Consistent Student Attendance

Project: Coaching for Attendance Improvement

Through a partnership with Attendance Works, the WEEAC provided coaching support for local and state educational agencies and territories to improve student attendance and partner with families, staff, and students to reduce attendance barriers.

With guidance from the WEEAC team, education leaders are using data to explore the root causes of absenteeism; align resources across teams and agencies; and develop strategies that address students' academic, social, health, and school climate needs.

Resource: Improving Attendance Through Human-Centered Leadership Practices

This WEEAC brief offers education leaders an alternative to top-down, compliance-driven approaches to improving attendance: human-centered leadership practices that prioritize empathy, flexibility, and collaboration to understand and address the barriers keeping students out of school.

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Safe and Supportive Learning Environments

Resource: School Climate Data Use Peer Network for Local Educational Agencies

The focus of this Peer Network was on strengthening school districts' capacity to collect and use school climate data in partnership with students, families, and staff. Through a series of five virtual sessions, district teams learned about key concepts, connected with peers to discuss their work and share lessons learned, and engaged in team reflection to advance current practices. Topics include

- collecting school climate data and identifying measures to understand school belonging and connection;
- designing and facilitating data conversations to invite diverse perspectives; and
- taking steps to use data and information about partner perspectives to design interventions that improve school climate, connection, and engagement.

Tailored Supports for Special Populations

Resource: Improving Outcomes for Native Students

WEEAC staff are deeply invested in projects in the region that advance attendance, academic, and graduation outcomes for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. Through work with multiple Tribal education agencies, the WEEAC has supported strategic planning, policy and data review, partner engagement, and implementation of strategies for better reaching and serving AI/AN students and their communities. The WEEAC team supported the launch of a 5-year plan in Nevada that prioritizes decreasing chronic absenteeism, increasing high school graduation, and improving identification of Native students so that they can access important resources and supports.

Resource: Improving American Indian Student Outcomes in Nevada

This resource describes how the WEEAC provided sustained technical assistance to help Nevada develop and launch its Plan to Improve Outcomes for American Indian Students in Nevada 2025–2030.

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Authentic Family and Community Engagement

Resource: Audiocasts on Bright Spot Schools

These audiocasts feature "bright spots" of diverse communities thriving together. These two stories—one from a school and one from a district—describe how education leaders and their teams are effectively engaging families as meaningful partners in their children's learning experiences. The stories were selected through a nomination process that asked WEEAC partners to identify schools that were doing an exceptional job serving diverse learning communities. The stories provide specific, actionable, and inspiring suggestions for fostering family–school partnerships and creating dynamic, rigorous learning environments in which all students can thrive.

Strategic Resource Allocation

Project: Strategic Resource Allocation for State Leaders

The WEEAC team hosted a session designed to help state educational agency leaders make informed decisions about how to invest limited resources to best support student success. It outlined key principles for effective resource allocation, including equity, sustainability, stability, and alignment with priorities. The session focused on results and provided practical guidance for directing resources based on student needs. It also offered strategies for navigating funding uncertainty, responding to budget reductions, and ensuring that investments have the greatest possible impact on student outcomes.

System Alignment and Coherence

Project: Success for All SEA Collaborative

State education leaders learned with and from each other about how to create and sustain the system-level conditions required to promote educational equity and academic excellence for all students. This 7-month engagement was designed to help state teams build their knowledge and capacity to strengthen six domains of aligned and coherent systems: shared goals, interest holder engagement, data use, strategic communication, funding and policy, and capacity building.

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Connect With Us

The WEEAC team is excited to continue connecting with education leaders in the western states and territories to strengthen systems and capacity to serve the region's diverse students. To learn more about WEEAC technical assistance services and request support, please visit the WEEAC website or complete a request form. Subscribe to the WEEAC newsletter to receive periodic updates with new resources and learning opportunities.

To complete a request form, please use the QR Code.

For more information, please email weeac@wested.org or visit the WEEAC website at weeac.wested.org.

Subscribe to the WEEAC newsletter to receive periodic updates.

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