

NWA Educational Service Cooperative Evaluation

Evaluation Date: September 28, 2022

Section 1: User Satisfaction and Service Adequacy

1A. Annual User Satisfaction survey results (all personnel of member districts) (22.2) <i>User Satisfaction Survey - Please show evidence that the survey was sent to all in the ESC area. Focused effort on Superintendent and key personnel who utilize or facilitate PD. Please identify the percentage of districts that responded to your Survey.</i>	
90% or greater satisfied/very satisfied	5 Excellence
80-89% or greater satisfied/very satisfied	4 Exceeding Standards
70-79% or greater satisfied/very satisfied	3 Meeting Standards
60-69% or greater satisfied/very satisfied	2 Alert
50-59% or greater satisfied/very satisfied	1 In Need of Improvement
<p>Evaluation Notes:</p> <p>The evidence shared in the narrative showed an overall average of 94% satisfied. The committee heard overwhelmingly from the superintendent and the administrator groups that different forums held to connect districts with others was invaluable. It was evident the superintendent group is well connected to one another and have established strong working relationships. They all cited NWAESC as a vital part of that collaboration. Several comments throughout interviews referred to regular organized job alike meetings as essential (superintendents, federal programs, curriculum coordinators, principals, etc.). They liked the teacher and principal led meetings where they were able to set their own agendas. Specific programs mentioned were RISE training and support, Illustrative Mathematics, Novice Teacher Support, Capturing Kids Hearts, early childhood programming, and migrant. The Instructional Facilitators network was also mentioned in every interview group we met demonstrating a strong communication network.</p>	
1B. Summative PD Session Evaluation responses (22.2) <i>ESC Works Final Report for 2020-21 or 2021-22</i>	
3.8 or higher on 4.0 scale	5 Excellence
3.4 to 3.7 on 4.0 scale	4 Exceeding Standards
3.0 to 3.3 on 4.0 scale	3 Meeting Standards
2.6 to 3.2 on 4.0 scale	2 Alert
2.5 or below on 4.0 scale	1 In Need of Improvement

Evaluation Notes:

Evidence provided showed a 3.9 score as overall session evaluation. The number of responses in comparison to the volume of teachers served in the region was relatively low. However, through the interview process the TCC director shared how they had to set a goal because she realized that feedback was limited from previous surveys. She switched from the previous survey system to using more google forms in the prospective content areas. Throughout the process the ESC was able to condense it to one survey. This explains why “not applicable” showed up on some responses in the spreadsheet. The responses that were received are scoring very high. The interview sessions provided more proof of administrators and teachers’ satisfaction with the support they are given from NWAESC. Multiple interview groups, including the novice teachers highlighted how they’ve felt supported, even during a pandemic with the programs offered through the novice program at the cooperative. The superintendents at some of the smaller schools that have limited staff and funding really spoke to the support they are provided from the NWA Cooperative and how they couldn’t provide the teachers the support they need without the assistance of the specialists. One superintendent said, “I’ve never left the coop not feeling well served.”

1C. Annual Survey and Needs Assessments (17.00) *One professional development needs survey with evidence that the survey was reviewed by ESC leadership and evidence on on-going input of district needs. (survey, agenda, results, follow-up evidence, etc.*

Meets 4 of the 4 criteria <u>AND</u> Reports survey and needs assessment results to member districts and the Department <u>AND</u> Reports any duplications to the Department (<i>How was information shared with DESE</i>)	5 Excellence
Meets 4 of the 4 criteria <u>AND</u> Reports survey and needs assessment results to member districts	4 Exceeding Standards
Meets 4 of 4 criteria listed below. Evidence that: 1. A PD Needs Survey was administered 2. The survey data was reviewed by cooperative leadership 3. Ongoing input of district needs from various groups (i.e. Teacher Center Committee, job alike groups, etc.) 4. Works with the Department to conduct surveys that complement rather than duplicate the work	3 Meeting Standards
Meets 3 of 4 criteria	2 Alert
Meets 2 or less of the 4 criteria	1 In Need of Improvement

Evaluation Notes:

One of the superintendents said, “they differentiate for our districts.” It was also mentioned that when new mandates were on the horizon, the ESC staff was proactive in providing insight and offering support before it was even released. The NWA cooperative provided opportunities for district’s to participate in networking groups such as the Adolescent Literacy Council, dyslexia group, Facilitators Network and provided mock interviews for administrators to come in and meet candidates from ARPEP. Recruitment and Retention has also made efforts to recruit potential candidates as far down as middle and junior high school based on information collected from the Needs Assessment. In an effort to meet the diverse needs of the region, they are focusing on recruiting more educators of diverse backgrounds. Evidence was presented through interviews that highlighted the multi-year support for novice educators. The efforts in retention and recruitment are well organized and recognized as true support based on the needs of the region.

1D. Provide Assistance (4.2) District Cost Analysis connected to examples provided.	
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria <u>AND</u> Provides evidence that exceeds the expectation in at least two (2) areas such as exceeding accreditation standards and equalizing education opportunities <u>AND</u> A cost analysis study of coordinated service	5 Excellence
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria <u>AND</u> Provides evidence that exceeds the expectation in at least one (1) areas such as exceeding accreditation standards and equalizing education opportunities <u>OR</u> a cost analysis study of coordinated services	4 Exceeding Standards
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria listed below: 1. Assist member districts in meeting or exceeding accreditation standards and equalizing educational opportunities; 2. Using educational resources more effectively through cooperation among school districts; and 3. Promoting coordination between school districts and the Department in order to provide services that are consistent with the needs identified by school districts and the education priorities of the state	3 Meeting Standards
Meets 2 of the 3 criteria	2 Alert
Meets 1 of the 3 criteria	1 In Need of Improvement
Evaluation Notes:	
<p>“Without the coop, what we do with children from birth to age 4 would be nonexistent,” commented a participating superintendent. Early Childhood is providing special education and related services in all 16 school districts in the region. This NWA cooperative is serving 832 novice teachers in their novice teacher program, one of the highest in the state for support. As mentioned earlier, every panel we met had high praise for how much support they receive from the NWESC Recruitment and Retention plan for their novice teachers. The cooperative also shared future CTE partnerships with possible grant funding to create a world class system in career and technical. This was also in line with an identified need shared during interviews. The superintendents also mentioned how they were able to utilize cooperative employees to provide in-service on a variety of topics such as parental involvement within their school districts. NWA ESC also shared the significant numbers of fingerprinting completed for background checks and licensure. They have streamlined the process and provided a needed assistance to their area schools and educators. Fingerprinting was mentioned in interviews as well as a recognized support.</p>	
1E. Teacher Center Committee and 10.00 Other Necessary Committees (9.0) TCC Committee list, noting district and position of each member. Link documentation of at least 3 meetings per year 2020-21 or 2021-22 school year.	
Meets 5 of the 5 criteria <u>AND</u> Lists the other committees and the purposes or responsiveness to member districts <u>AND</u> Best practices are shared publicly	5 Excellence
Meets 5 of the 5 criteria <u>AND</u> Lists the other committees and the purposes or responsiveness to member districts	4 Exceeding Standards

<p>Meets 5 of the 5 criteria listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A teacher center will provide, if funds are available, curriculum development assistance, educational materials, and staff development services to teachers within the area 2. A teacher center committee is composed of at least one (1) representative from the staff of each school district 3. At least one-half (½), but not more than two-thirds (⅔) of the members are classroom teachers 4. The committee meets at least three (3) times per year; and 5. Other committees of local school personnel are convened to be responsive to the member districts. 	3 Meeting Standards
Meets 4 of the 5 criteria	2 Alert
Meets 3 or less of the 5 criteria	1 In Need of Improvement
<p>Evaluation Notes:</p> <p>The Teacher Center Committee has 17 members total, 12 of those are teachers. They meet three times a year and best practices are shared publicly. The Teacher Center Committee felt that their contributions were valued, their time was well spent, and they benefited greatly from collaborating with other districts. It was evident in the interviews that the working Teacher Center Committee meets the established criteria. Examples of how NWA ESC demonstrates responsiveness were shared throughout interviews. The ESC offered flexibility of support via zoom at different hours of the day including after school so that more teachers would have access.</p> <p>One superintendent mentioned that the cooperative works collaboratively with larger districts to purchase professional development slots and provides tickets for smaller schools to attend events, like Solution Tree, when held in bigger districts. Administrators discussed how the network the cooperative provides allows them the opportunity to get ideas from one another. A rural school district superintendent mentioned how he could call a superintendent from a larger school and receive support at any time. It was stated numerous times that they felt like a family in NWA and that collaboration and support happened with and through the work of the NWA ESC. The cooperative also has created a website of PD sessions organized by subject which were based on the needs surveys.</p>	
<p>1F. Liaison with Postsecondary Institutions (16.00) <i>Publicly shared Post Secondary partnerships.</i></p>	
Collaborates with more than two (2) postsecondary institutions or other recognized educational agencies on a regular basis <u>AND</u> Best practices are shared publicly	5 Excellence
Collaborates with more than one (1) postsecondary institutions on a regular basis	4 Exceeding Standards
Shall cooperate with the state-supported postsecondary institution located within its area	3 Meeting Standards
Cooperates with one (1) postsecondary institution within the state	2 Alert
Does not cooperate or collaborate with a postsecondary institution	1 In Need of Improvement
<p>Evaluation Notes:</p> <p>The partnerships with NWACC, Harding, JBU, U of A, Drury were documented and evident. A representative from Harding participated in the interviews and mentioned that the recruitment and retention program was very beneficial for her interns and offered a sense of what to expect and what districts were going to</p>	

be looking for in a candidate. The interns from the University of Arkansas accredited the novice program for their ability to grow as a teacher, specifically in classroom management.

Section 2: Staff Qualifications and Administration Effectiveness

2A. Director; personnel; general policies, rules and regulations; policies, procedures, expenditures, reports, and audits. (11.00, 12.00, 14.00, 21.00)
Spreadsheet of positions occupied with appropriate licenses noted; Evaluations will be checked during site visit; Personnel policies and procedures will be part of the site visit; 2020-21 and 2021-22 annual reports.

Meets 5 of the 5 criteria <u>AND</u> All audit findings are addressed <u>AND</u> Best practices are shared publicly	5 Excellence
Meets 5 of the 5 criteria <u>AND</u> All audit findings are addressed	4 Exceeding Standards
Meets 5 of the 5 criteria listed below: 1. All positions requiring licensure are occupied by personnel possessing licensure or approved alternatives. 2. Evidence of staff formal evaluations including performance evaluation of director 3. Personnel policies are in place and current 4. Annual reports are compiled and disseminated to individuals and entities required by statute 5. There is no evidence of fiscal distress as witnessed by any one of criteria in 27.00 of the Rules	3 Meeting Standards
Meets 4 of the 5 criteria	2 Alert
Meets 4 of the 5 criteria	1 In Need of Improvement

Evaluation Notes:

An artifact was provided that listed all positions and certifications. All employees are certified in their current role. The NWAESC confirmed the use of an evaluation tool for all employees. In addition, leadership has reviewed job descriptions to determine alignment with current roles. Personnel policies were board approved and shared publicly on the NWAESC website as required by statute. The NWAESC annual report was presented to the Board of Directors and shared publicly on the NWAESC website as required by statute. No audit findings were present on the 2021 - 2022 Arkansas Legislative Audit Report.

The NWA ESC highlights districts and cooperative activities on social media as well as differentiates for districts based on size, needs, strengths, and capacity. One superintendent shared that “districts have an equitable voice” in the ESC. Based on interviews, it appears all stakeholder groups believe the staff are high quality and provide support to build the capacity of teachers and leaders within the school buildings and within the whole district.

2B. Board of Directors and Executive Committee
Documentation of Board of Directors meetings according to rubric.

The Board of Directors meet more than eight (8) times each year, and written policies and procedures for operation are filed with the State Board <u>AND</u> Records of internal improvement in efficiency of operation are available upon request or <i>MAY Substitute: <u>The executive committee and board of directors meets more than required.</u></i>	5 Excellence
The Board of Directors meet more than eight (8) times each year, and written policies and procedures for operation are filed with the State Board <i>MAY Substitute: <u>The executive committee or board of directors meets more than required.</u></i>	4 Exceeding Standards
The Board of Directors meet at least eight (8) times each year, and general fiduciary responsibilities for the cooperative are documented <u>OR</u> The executive committee meets at least nine (9) times per year, and the board of directors meets at least three (3) times annually. The president of the board shall serve as chair of the executive committee	3 Meeting Standards
The Board of Directors meet less than eight (8) times each year, and/or general fiduciary responsibilities for the cooperative are minimally documented	2 Alert
The Board of Directors meet less than eight (8) times each year, and/or general fiduciary responsibilities for the cooperative are not adequately documented	1 In Need of Improvement
<p>Evaluation Notes:</p> <p>The Board of Directors met a total of 10 times for regularly scheduled board meetings, which is more than required and meets the excellence rating. The NWAESC maintains a President, Vice President and Secretary and keeps proper agendas and minutes for each meeting. Climate and Culture are evident in the manner in which the cooperative hosts the required board meetings. Personalized and professional space is provided for each participant and meetings follow the proper protocol.</p>	

Section 3: Extent of Local Financial Support

3A. Program Services; participation of local districts; extent of local financial support; technology center; Math and Science Center (18.00, 19.00, 22.2, 24.00, 25.00)	
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria <u>AND</u> Programs and services are documented based on needs assessment and evaluation is reported <u>AND</u> Resources of the educational service cooperative are enhanced by forming support networks among the member schools to provide extended services, provide new services and combine funding to support programs such as group purchasing, thus maximizing local school district funding. 90% or more of member districts participate by purchasing services and providing release time for staff to engage in specialized training & services <u>AND</u> Cost analysis study has been performed for ⅓ of member districts annually and the findings have been shared in a face-to-face meeting with the superintendent <u>AND</u> Best practices are shared publicly	5 Excellence
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria <u>AND</u> Programs and services are documented based on needs assessment <u>AND</u> 50% or more of member districts support the cooperative in offering extended services in two (2) or more activities or events or purchased services with local funds <u>AND</u> At least one (1) cost analysis study has been performed and the findings have been shared in a face-to-face meeting with the superintendent(s)	4 Exceeding Standards
Meets 3 of the 3 criteria listed below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programs and services are based on the needs of the member districts and priorities of the state 2. Each member district is entitled to participate in programs and services that are fully supported by state funds 	3 Meeting Standards

3. Programs and other services may be supported by local funds	
Meets 2 of the 3 criteria	2 Alert
Meets 1 or less of the 3 criteria	1 In Need of Improvement
<p>Evaluation Notes: The NWAESC cooperative showed evidence that programs and services were designed to meet the indicated needs from member districts along with state identified priorities. Each district is provided the opportunity to participate and “offered the flexibility of services to cater to individual school and district needs”. Examples include: NWAESC collects consortium fees from participating districts, actively seeks additional funds for new initiatives, realigned positions to gain funds for services provided i.e. fingerprinting. NWAESC evaluation reported 100% of districts participated in PD and cost analysis was met for 1/3 of districts. NWAESC highlights districts on social media, including relevant links in social media and in email correspondence.</p>	

Total Evaluation Score

Determination of Rating	Cooperative Evaluation Level
Must receive a majority score of 5 on categories (at least 6 out of 9 categories); and NO scores below 3	5 Excellence
Must receive at least 6 scores of 4 or some combination of 4 or 5; and NO scores below 3	4 Exceeding Standards
Must receive at least 6 scores of 3 or some combination of 3, 4, or 5; may include only one score of 2 (if some combination of 4 or 5 was assigned) with no additional scores below 3	3 Meeting Standards
Scores 2 in 2 or more categories	2 Alert
Scores 1 in 1 or more categories	1 In Need of Improvement

Evaluation Notes:

The evaluation team of 9 members representing the various roles outlined in legislative rules conducted the evaluation onsite on September 28, 2022. The Northwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative (ESC) was welcoming and well organized for a comprehensive review of their services and educational support provided to the area school districts.

The Northwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative (ESC) overall evaluation score meets the “excellence” criteria. The evaluation committee conducted seven group interviews made up of over 50 stakeholders within the cooperative service area. Higher education, cooperative employees, novice teachers, principals, and superintendents all expressed an appreciation for the work of the cooperative and a desire to participate in the evaluation process due to the vital role that the ESC plays in supporting education in the region.

The committee felt strongly that the ESC has established a culture of collaboration between districts and differentiated their services based on the needs of each district. It was also noted that many of the participants commented on the proactive approach to providing timely support. Examples include organizing Capturing Kids Heart for a smaller district by sponsoring the professional development at the cooperative and opening it for other districts to participate, well-organized job-like monthly collaboration, individualized federal program support, literacy support, etc.

The ESC highlighted their retention and recruitment efforts. Last year, they mentored 752 novice educators and provided a robust menu of support focusing on key areas over a three-year period. First year teachers focused on classroom management, while second year teachers studied instruction and assessment. In their third year of mentoring novice teachers focused on culturally responsive teaching. Three novice teachers spoke to the value of the support provided and that they didn’t feel alone, they had mentors to support them. Collaborative efforts with higher education, hosting non-traditional educators, and career enhancement opportunities were all part of their overall retention and recruitment efforts.

Bryan Law, NWA ESC Director shared a vision of being more innovative in the career and technical field and working with industry to promote student opportunities through the cooperative. This is a new area for the cooperative to expand into and he is excited about the possibilities. Missy Hixson is a communication rock star and organizer extraordinaire. The committee was impressed with the overall organization and ease in which communication is put out to the school districts in a timely manner. The ESC is proactive in reaching out to districts that need additional support. Examples were given throughout the interviews of proactive support from a key district person on medical leave and the district needing hands on support to a district struggling with federal programs and the cooperative recognizing it through the regular meetings and offering individual support. Districts were appreciative of this support and recognized that it was going the extra mile.

The interview groups did suggest areas of need from the cooperative in behavior support and inclusive practices. While Inclusive Practices is a state support initiative the cooperative will have to take an active role in assisting districts to begin to implement more inclusive practices following the state timeline. The State will continue to support the ESC in this transition. Behavior was another area that the districts expressed a need for more support and training.

Overall, the committee felt that the “Excellence” rating was appropriate and well deserved.

Committee Members:		
Stacy Smith, DESE Deputy Commissioner	Brad Horn, Current ESC Director	Sheila Whitlow, Educator & Coop.
Shawn Halbrook, Superintendent	Lori Blew, School Board Member	Cindy Love, Parent & Educator
Lindsey Swagerty, U of A ERZ Director	Jeff Oxford, Business and Industry	Natalie Hutto, Parent & Educator

Committee Chair Signature: *Stacy Smith*

Date: 10-16-22