



Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center

Year 3 Annual Evaluation Report

September 2008



Mid Continent Comprehensive Center Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

The Educational Training, Evaluation, Assessment, and Measurement (E-TEAM) Department at The University of Oklahoma conducted an external evaluation of the **Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center (MC3)** to assess the extent to which MC3 is making progress towards meeting its performance measures in Year 3 for each program objective. This report details the evaluation findings for July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008.

The evaluation of MC3 is utilization-focused¹ and participatory in nature, incorporating a strong and ongoing feedback loop for continuous quality improvement that includes evaluation processes in ascertaining the **utility, relevance, and quality** of service delivery activities and strategies. The evaluation is designed to assess program efficacy based on the congruence of MC3 goals and objectives with MC3 technical assistance (TA) service delivery. In this third year of the MC3 program, there are two primary evaluation foci:

1. to ascertain the status and efficacy of MC3's organizational infrastructure, processes and strategies in supporting their mission of building state education agency (SEA) capacity for NCLB implementation statewide, and
2. to examine the evidence about the **utility, relevance, and quality** of MC3 TA service delivery and how MC3 TA serves to build SEAs' capacity to support NCLB implementation.

Three levels of evaluation are used to determine program

efficacy: accountability, progress toward objectives, and program impact using both process and outcome methodologies in the form of qualitative and quantitative data methodologies.

The MC3 program objectives are to:

1. assist SEAs with interpreting NCLB guidelines and regulations;
2. improve SEA capacity to support schools' use of research-based instructional practices;
3. coordinate MC3 and SEA resources to deliver technology-based TA that supports implementation of NCLB;
4. provide professional development to SEA staff to support their work with helping districts and schools receiving Federal funding, not making adequate yearly progress, or facing other performance related needs and challenges; and
5. provide customized professional development and TA to build states' capacities to meet the educational and cultural needs of racial, ethnic, low-income, and special needs populations.

The Year 3 evaluation focuses on program processes and TA service outcomes to determine MC3's progress in implementing the processes and strategies necessary to achieve its objectives and outcomes detailed in the Year 3 Plan. The process evaluation is structured to:

- ascertain whether the strategies and activities/ services are implemented as planned.
- determine client satisfaction with the services in

¹ As defined in *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, Patton (1997).

terms of **utility, relevance, and quality** (accountability and progress toward objectives).

- determine the degree of utilization of planned training and technical assistance approaches and strategies.
- ascertain the match between the technical assistance approaches and strategies and the identified needs of the SEAs and changes/enhancements in their systems of support.

The outcome evaluation assesses the evidence for how MC3 TA services contribute to and promote SEAs' capacity to support schools and districts in the implementation of NCLB and other Federal programs.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Evidence across multiple methods and multiple sources converge to indicate that MC3 continues to make significant progress towards its goals and objectives. The findings confirm that:

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1. the program's infrastructure and foundation are firmly in place and clearly serve to facilitate MC3's program goals and objectives;
2. the participants deem the TA services as useful, relevant, and of high quality; and
3. MC3 TA services are tailored to relate directly to states' needs and are potentiating SEA actions and activities that build their capacity to implement NCLB and other Federal programs.

Evidence for the efficacy of MC3's infrastructure and internal processes in Year 3 is supported by findings indicating that MC3 leadership and staff have:

- established and continually reinforced relationships with the U.S. Department of Education, other Comprehensive Centers, Content Centers, and state education agencies (SEAs) in all four MC3 states through various networking opportunities and provision of TA services at the national and regional level,
- continued to garner organizational infrastructure support in the SEAs through the MC3 SCCs (State Coordinating Councils)—established in

Year 1 and the "go-to-groups" for MC3—and the SEA-embedded MC3 liaisons to facilitate provision of useful, relevant, and well-coordinated TA services,

- developed a Year 3 Work Plan for Regional TA and individual State Work Plans, which are tailored to the needs of the region and each state,
- developed efficient and productive program mechanisms to collaborate with the other comprehensive centers and content centers, including teleconferences, email, listservs, work groups, Knowledgebases and the Community of Knowledge website,
- continued to expand the Community of Knowledge website to provide Tier 1 information dissemination, addressing universal state needs, that is delivered electronically, telephonically, or in written form, and Tier 2 high leverage TA for targeted state needs delivered electronically or through TA service events (conferences, summits, etc.), and
- continued to provide Tier 3 service delivery, high-impact TA to address intensive regional and state needs.

Evidence about MC3 TA service delivery in Year 3 indicates that MC3 leadership, staff, partners, collaborators, and consultants have:

- effected change in the SEAs as demonstrated by the adoption/adaptation of tools, models, strategies, and revised or new internal structures and processes,
- provided TA at the regional and state levels relevant to regional and state needs,
- continued developing working relationships and collaborated with other Federal and non-Federal TA providers, content centers, and expert consultants, and
- provided TA at the regional and state levels that was perceived by the SEA leadership and staff as useful, relevant, and of high quality.

The work of MC3 with the SEAs demonstrates sustainable efforts at capacity building. The evaluation found persuasive evidence of the value and effectiveness of MC3 TA in building SEA capacity to support NCLB across the region.