

Arkansas Education Renewal Zones Initiative

2007 Final Evaluation Report

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**Arkansas Education Renewal Zones Initiative:
2007 Final Evaluation Report**

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Arkansas Education Renewal Zones Initiative: 2007 Annual Evaluation Report

The Arkansas Education Renewal Zone (ERZ) is a state initiative to identify and implement educational and management strategies to improve public school performance and student academic achievement. Through this initiative, regionalized ERZs provide for collaboration among Arkansas' schools, especially smaller schools, while helping to concentrate and coordinate resources of Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), regional Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs), and other service providers. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) was initially contracted in November 2005 by the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Education Renewal Zones (hereafter referred to as the Division) to evaluate the ERZ initiative. SEDL conducted a statewide evaluation of the eight ERZs established in Year 1. As determined by the Division, SEDL evaluated the same eight sites in Year 2 of the initiative. The eight renewal zones included: Central ERZ, Central and Northeast ERZ, Northwest ERZ, South Central ERZ, Southeast ERZ, Southwestern-A ERZ, Southwestern-B ERZ, and Western ERZ.

The purpose of this evaluation report is to provide a summary of evaluation activities and findings related to SEDL's assessment of the ERZ's initiative in Year 2 (2006-2007) and document progress made from Year 1. This report begins with a section on SEDL's evaluation process, followed by a description of the overall purpose of the Year 2 evaluation. The next sections describe the evaluation activities and findings for the reporting period of July 2006 through June 2007. The report ends with a set of conclusions and recommendations based on SEDL's evaluation findings.

The primary audience for this report is the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the ERZ directors and partners. The information in this report is focused on enhancing and improving the ongoing implementation of the ERZ initiative across the state.

Evaluation Design

SEDL used a cluster evaluation framework to look across the ERZs, rather than evaluating each ERZ individually. In Year 1, SEDL's evaluation focused on defining the ERZ approach, documenting the implementation of the ERZ Year 1 strategic plans, and identifying preliminary promising practices. Evaluation activities included networking and planning meetings; development of a program logic model; review of ERZ plans and reports; and data collection from site visits, surveys, Web sites and other documentation.

SEDL's Year 2 evaluation of the ERZ initiative included a similar approach and methods to those used in Year 1. Based upon legislative mandates outlined in the Arkansas Act 106 (HB 1056), each ERZ is required to actively engage in the following activities:

- enrich collaboration between and among partners
- provide a comprehensive program of professional development by pooling partner funding sources

- enhance and expand partnering school curricula offerings
- facilitate faculty sharing between partnering schools
- develop and implement strategies to recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers
- enhance and expand mentoring offered to teachers with three or fewer years of professional service
- increase community involvement in the work of the school
- increase parental involvement in students’ academic efforts
- collect data to evaluate progress of each partnering school and the ERZ itself.

During Year 1, SEDL worked with the Division and ERZ directors to develop a logic model consolidating the nine legislatively targeted activities into five overarching content linked categories: (1) communication and collaboration; (2) preparation and recruitment of future teachers; (3) support and retention of existing teachers; (4) involvement of families and community members; and (5) improvement of student achievement and enrichment of academic experiences (see Figure 1). The logic model illustrates activities, outcomes and desired impacts of the ERZ initiative in these five content areas. Integrated in the logic model is also the use of distance learning technology, integral to numerous activities and outcomes. SEDL used a variety of methods to answer questions about the implementation and progress of the ERZ initiative tied to the logic model.

Evaluation Questions

To evaluate the Year 2 ERZ efforts, SEDL developed a set of questions related to three important aspects of the initiative’s developmental process: (1) ERZ context; (2) ERZ implementation according to the guidelines specified by the Division and the logic model; and (3) ERZ outcomes resulting from implementing the initiative.

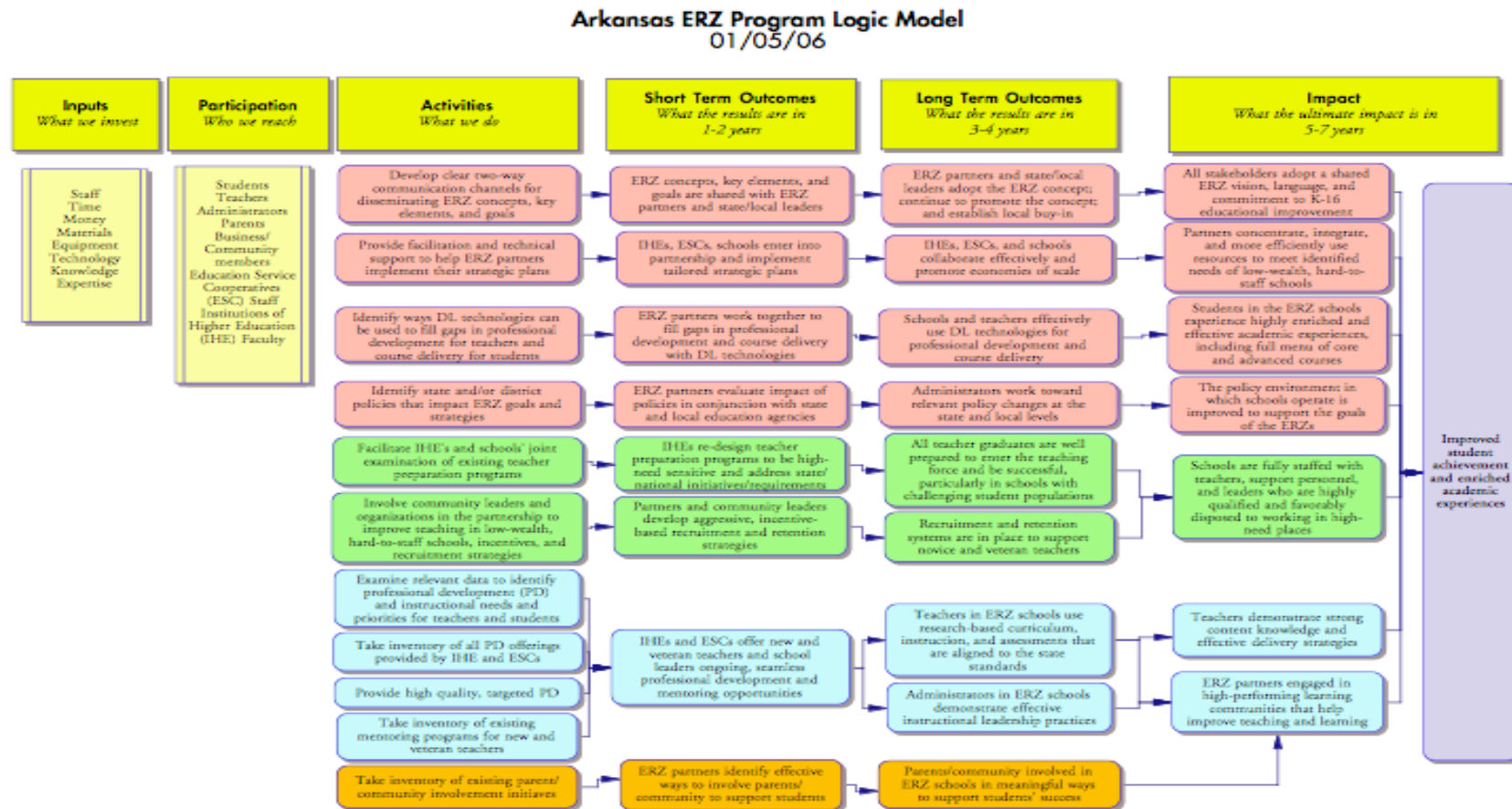
Context Questions

Given the complex nature of the initiative and the variety of approaches used by the ERZs across the state, it is important to consider the contexts in which the ERZs function and how these contexts affect the design and outcomes of the ERZ. Table 1 presents the context questions and their associated methods and data sources in the Year 2 evaluation.

Table 1. Context Related Evaluation Questions, Methods and Data Sources

Evaluation Question	Methods	Data Sources
1. What are the most salient characteristics of the target populations (i.e., student demographics, school characteristics, teacher experience) in each renewal zone?	Scan of Web sites Site Visits Surveys Document Review	Key Web sites ERZ directors School/district staff IHE and ESC staff ERZ strategic plans ERZ annual progress reports
2. What are the needs and desired outcomes of the renewal zone partners?	ERZ Meetings Site visits Surveys Document review	Division director and staff ERZ directors School/district staff IHE and ESC staff ERZ strategic plans ERZ annual progress reports

Figure 1: ERZ Logic Model



Implementation Questions

The implementation of the ERZ initiative is expected to bring about change in the ways that educational entities collaborate to support pre-service and in-service teachers, to implement improved management strategies, and to take advantage of economies of scale and distance learning technologies. A complicating factor of the ERZ initiative is that the means to improve public school performance and student achievement may be as varied as the individual contexts within each of the eight renewal zones. The ERZs operate under a general set of principles, parameters, and guidelines, but each has the flexibility to design a strategic plan tailored to the needs of the schools, districts, and other IHE and ESC partners within its renewal zone. The ERZs made revisions to their initial Year 1 strategic plans. In this second year evaluation it was important to examine if the ERZs were implementing their plans as intended, what progress was made implementing their plans, and what factors facilitated or hindered successful implementation. Table 2 presents the evaluation questions, methods and data sources related to implementation.

Table 2. Implementation Related Evaluation Questions, Methods, and Data Sources

Evaluation Question	Methods	Data Sources
3. To what extent did the ERZs revise or develop strategic plans to address the legislative purposes and requirements that are also aligned to the ERZ logic model?	Document Review	ERZ strategic plans
4. To what extent did the ERZs create annual reports that describe the evidence of progress toward their own goals?	Document review	ERZ annual progress reports
5. To what extent did the Institutions of Higher Education and the Education Service Cooperatives increase their connection to the public schools and the community?	Site visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff
6. To what extent did the Institutions of Higher Education and Education Service Cooperatives make their resources more available to the schools?	Site visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff
7. To what extent did the schools take advantage of those resources?	Site visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff

Outcome Questions

An important component of the evaluation design is to provide information about progress toward the expected outcomes, particularly those identified in the ERZ logic

model. Table 3 presents the evaluation questions, methods and data sources that address outcomes of the initiative that might be expected to occur in the second year of the initiative.

Table 3. Outcome Related Evaluation Questions, Methods, and Data Sources

Evaluation Question	Methods	Data Sources
8. What changes do the ERZ partners perceive to have occurred as a result of the ERZ grants in relation to the improvement of public school performance and student achievement and what evidence supports such perceptions?	Site Visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff
9. What changes do the ERZ partners perceive to have occurred to pre-service and in-service training or professional development programs as a result of the ERZ grants and what evidence supports these perceptions?	Site visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff
10. What promising practices or strategies have emerged from this intervention that could be shared with the wider district and school populations?	Site visits Surveys	ERZ directors School/district administrators and teachers IHE deans and faculty ESC director and staff

Evaluation Methods

SEDL used multiple evaluation methods to collect data from specific sources in order to answer the evaluation questions. These methods included interviews and focus groups, surveys, observations, reviewing documentation/Web sites, and evaluation networking meetings with ERZ staff. The majority of data was collected during site visits to the eight ERZs and via surveys completed by ERZ partners.

Site Visits

An important element of the evaluation was collecting data from site visits to the eight ERZs. The site visits provided a rich understanding of the areas of emphasis in each of the ERZ's strategic plans; the implementation of the various strategies and activities; perceptions regarding the outcomes of the ERZ partnerships; and the factors that contribute to, or detract from, the implementation of various interventions. The site visits followed similar procedures as were used in Year 1 and included meetings, interviews, and focus groups with ERZ staff and others affiliated with the individual renewal zones. SEDL revised the interview and focus group data collection protocols to reflect the developmental process of the ERZ initiative. The Division provided feedback on these instruments prior to their implementation (see protocols in Appendix A). SEDL's evaluation team met to discuss the data collection instruments to ensure reliability and for understanding of their design and process. Four SEDL evaluators visited the eight ERZs

with one evaluator per site. SEDL also conducted debrief meetings with all of the site visit evaluators to share insights across the ERZs that were used to strengthen the evaluation report on the statewide ERZ activities, progress, and challenges.

Site visits for Year 2 to the eight ERZs were planned in collaboration with ERZ directors. SEDL developed a template identifying the type of partners needing to be included in the sample for each ERZ, including the IHE dean and faculty; ESC director, teacher coordinator, and other staff; ERZ school principals and teachers; ERZ district superintendents (or representative); and family and community members serving on the ERZ advisory committee. The template also included the method of data collection with each partner and the approximate time needed for that data collection. Each ERZ director identified individuals, (e.g., Dean of Education and IHE faculty) to participate in the evaluation site visit and scheduled the time spent with each participant. Each ERZ director also selected his or her two partnering schools to participate in the Year 2 evaluation. SEDL requested that the schools and school districts visited in Year 2 be different than those that participated in the Year 1 evaluation to better understand the range of ERZ participation and perceptions. Of the districts and individual schools chosen by the ERZ directors for Year 2, the majority were different; however, two districts (and one school in one of those districts) were the same as in Year 1. Each site visit ranged from three to five days and included brief tours to observe program components firsthand in the two participating schools chosen for each ERZ. The site visits concluded with a debriefing meeting between the evaluator and the ERZ director. Site visits began in February 2007 and concluded in April 2007. Table 4 depicts the individuals interviewed by the evaluation team members during the site visits.

Table 4. Number of Site Visit Interviews

ERZ	Central	Central & Northeast	Northwest	South Central	Southeast	Southwest A	Southwest B	Western	Total
ERZ Director	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Deans and Associate Deans	1	1	1	1 ^a	2 ^b	1	1	1	9
Faculty Focus Groups	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	12
ESC Directors/Staff	1	1 ^a	1	1	1 ^b	1	1	1	8
Superintendents and assistants	1	2	2	2 ^a	2 ^b	3	2 ^a	2 ^c	15
Other School District Representatives	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	6
Principals and Assistant Principals	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Other Schools Representatives	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Teachers Focus Groups	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
Advisory Committee Focus Groups	1	-	1	1 ^a	1	1	2	-	7

^a These interviews were conducted via telephone.

^b In one of these interviews, the Dean/Director/Superintendent was joined by another staff member.

^c One of the two interviews was conducted via telephone.

Surveys

In Year 2, SEDL also surveyed partners from each ERZ. This included school principals and teachers, district superintendents, higher education administration and faculty, ESC staff, and family and community members participating on ERZ advisory committees. The survey instrument was revised from Year 1 and submitted to the Division for review and feedback. SEDL's internal review process also included a series of reviews and checks for item clarity and quality. The Division director and ERZ directors requested at the January 2007 ERZ Director's meeting that SEDL utilize a paper version of the survey for teachers. It was decided that all other ERZ partners would receive an online version. Each ERZ director committed to provide a person to coordinate survey distribution and collection at the schools SEDL selected for the survey sample. The survey was distributed in Spring 2007 online or in a paper version (see survey in Appendix A). The survey, similar to SEDL's site visit protocols, included questions about the ERZ's goals, activities, outcomes, challenges and suggestions for improvement aligned with the content areas of the logic model.

Teacher paper survey. At a meeting with the Division and ERZ directors it was determined that SEDL would select a sample for survey distribution. Subsequently, SEDL developed a formula to determine a purposive sample of schools for each ERZ based on the school demographics, (i.e., number of teachers and geographic location) and site visit evaluation participation. SEDL informed ERZ directors of the selected sample of schools. The Division contacted SEDL requesting the sample be revised to enable ERZ directors to choose the schools to be sampled. Because of this request, SEDL asked each ERZ director to ensure that 120 teachers complete the paper survey per school, to approximate the original purposive sampling strategy. SEDL further instructed ERZ directors to choose from partnering schools that were not visited by the evaluation team in Year 2. ERZ directors did not provide SEDL with the schools selected. It should be noted that for three ERZs, partnering schools were included in both the site visit sample, as well as the survey sample.

SEDL sent the ERZ directors the online version of the survey to be copied and distributed to the teachers in their self-selected sample of schools. Teacher surveys were returned to SEDL using two methods. Some schools directly returned their completed surveys to SEDL. Other schools gave their completed surveys to the ERZ director who compiled them and then sent them to SEDL.

ERZ partner online survey. Similar to Year 1, SEDL requested ERZ directors provide a contact database for distributing surveys to partners other than teachers. SEDL sent e-mail announcements inviting the partners to complete the online survey hosted on SEDL's Web site. The partners included IHE deans/associate deans and faculty working with the ERZ, ESC directors and staff, school principals, district superintendents or other district representatives, and family and community members working with the ERZ. It should be noted that there was some overlap of participants who completed the survey and also participated in the Year 2 site visits. Different from Year 1, the ERZ directors were not asked to complete a survey for Year 2.

Survey sample. The survey sample for both the online and paper surveys consisted of 756 respondents, representing various positions within the ERZ partnership. SEDL received paper survey responses from 600 teachers and an additional one online out of the target sample of 960 teachers. Additionally, SEDL received 67 paper survey responses from school staff other than teachers. Since the paper surveys were anonymous, SEDL was unable to determine the possible duplication of these responses matched with online survey responses. Therefore, SEDL made the decision to include all paper survey responses in the final sample of 756. SEDL received 89 completed online surveys from ERZ partners out of a sample of 367 invited to participate.

The majority of total survey respondents (80%) were teachers from the partnering ERZ schools. Since teachers comprised the largest portion of survey responses, the presentation of findings clarifies the type of respondent to help distinguish the variety and weight of partner perceptions. Table 5 presents the number of survey respondents within each position involved across the ERZ partnership.

Table 5. Number and Percent of Survey Respondents by Position

Position	Number who Responded	%
Higher Education Dean	10	1%
Higher Education Faculty	23	3%
School Principal	39	5%
School Teacher	601	80%
District Superintendent (Or other district staff)	33	4%
ESC Staff (e.g., Director, Coordinator, or other)	8	1%
Other	13	2%
School Support Staff (e.g., Math/Literacy Coaches and Interns)	13	2%
Did not identify a position	16	2%
Total	756	100%

Document Review of ERZ Strategic Plans and Annual Reports

The evaluation included a systematic review of ERZ reports to assess adherence to the ERZ guidelines and principles and progress made in Year 2. SEDL developed a matrix, based on the established logic model and state ERZ guidelines, which was used to examine each ERZ's Year 2 strategic plan in order to identify common activities and unique practices. The Division provided SEDL with copies of the seven ERZ strategic plans submitted to ADE in January 2007. This included plans for the following ERZs: Central and Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest A, Southwest B, South Central, and Western. Central ERZ did not submit an updated plan and therefore was not included in SEDL's review. Two evaluators reviewed each of the seven plans individually.

Findings were categorized into the following activities central to the ERZ initiative: communication and collaboration, professional development, curriculum (including the use of distance learning technology), faculty sharing, recruitment and retention, mentoring, student achievement and school performance, and family and community involvement. The results of this review, which were presented in the January 2007 Interim Evaluation Report, provided information about the level of clarity and detail included in the plans.

Scanning of Key Web Sites

To better understand the context of the ERZs, the evaluation team scanned key Web sites (e.g., ERZ Web sites, the ADE, universities, ESCs, and other educator Web sites). These sites provided the evaluation team with information about ongoing ERZ activities, student demographics, student achievement levels, teacher qualifications, and other information that pertains to the renewal zone efforts. Scanning was conducted periodically throughout Year 2 to obtain updated information as it became available. Seven of the eight ERZs had viewable Web sites when the final review was conducted. Each of these Web sites was reviewed for content.

Evaluation Networking Meetings

SEDL participated in evaluation networking meetings and other communication with the Division and ERZ directors to clarify the evaluation process, obtain additional knowledge of the ERZ initiative, and provide findings from the evaluation. A two-day evaluation networking meeting with the Division staff and ERZ directors occurred in August 2006. Evaluation activities for the current year were discussed. It was the intent of that meeting to discuss a review of Year 2 strategic plans; however, the strategic plans were delayed and not submitted to the Division until January 2007.

A second evaluation networking meeting occurred in October 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to begin working together to develop common indicators across sites to inform the site evaluation plans as well as the statewide evaluation. In particular, it was intended the common indicators would assist in creating a parsimonious approach to data collection that is targeted to capture each ERZ's progress and goals. SEDL developed initial common indicators and made revisions as a result of the meeting discussion. The Division later decided not to use the common indicators; therefore, they were not incorporated into the evaluation.

SEDL attended a portion of the November 2006 statewide ERZ Fall Roundup. This meeting enabled networking and information gathering. SEDL developed an evaluation tool for this event.

Another meeting was held in January 2007 to discuss the interim evaluation report as well as ongoing developments related to the ERZ initiative. This meeting was also used to plan for the 2007 site visits. A final evaluation networking meeting occurred in June 2007 to provide feedback on the Year 2 evaluation findings and recommendations.

Data Analysis

SEDL used both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data collected. Qualitative data analysis methods were used to summarize and interpret the information gathered through the site visits (including interviews, focus groups, and observations), open-ended items included on surveys, and document reviews. SEDL developed a qualitative coding framework used in the review of site visit summaries completed by individual evaluation team members who collected data at the eight ERZs (see Appendix

B). Quantitative data collected from the survey were entered into a standard database, analyzed and summarized using SPSS software. All members of the SEDL evaluation team that participated in site visits also met to share data interpretation and analytic results. Data from all sources were triangulated to best answer the research questions. Findings from the analyses provided information about the context in which the ERZ initiative takes place, the degree of implementation of the ERZ strategic plans, changes that occurred in the renewal zones, and perceived relationships between these changes and desired outcomes.

Limitations

As indicated previously, this second-year evaluation examined the collaboration across ERZ partners to coordinate resources directed towards strategies for improving school performance and student achievement across the state. The focus was on which resources, (e.g., pre-service and in-service teacher professional development, teacher recruitment and distance learning technologies) were being offered throughout the ERZ schools, particularly in low-wealth and hard-to-staff schools. Because the ERZs do not systematically document their activities, process and outcomes, SEDL's evaluation was limited in assessing the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of these resources statewide.

This evaluation was intended to provide important information about the implementation and progress of the ERZ initiative. Determining causal links between the ERZ activities and student outcomes is important. However, the second year of implementation of the ERZ initiative is too early a timeframe upon which to fully assess this type of long-term outcome. In addition more resources would be necessary to implement a rigorous study design to document gains in student performance in schools receiving ERZ services compared to schools not involved in the initiative.

Another limitation of this evaluation, as mentioned earlier, was sampling bias for both the survey and site visits in relation to the schools selected. Since ERZ directors chose their sample of schools for both the site visits and surveys, it was not clear that SEDL's guidelines for sample selection were consistently implemented across the eight ERZs. This bias has implications for the generalization of the results.

Findings

This second year of ERZ statewide evaluation targeted the implementation of strategies related to content areas of the logic model developed during Year 1: (1) Communication and Collaboration; (2) Preparation and Retention of Future Teachers; (3) Support and Retention of Existing Teachers; (4) Distance Learning Technology; and (5) Family and Community Involvement. In this section, findings on ERZ accomplishments and progress made in Year 2, as well as opportunities for strengthening the ERZ initiative, are discussed for each of the content areas. SEDL's findings were synthesized across the eight ERZs to provide a statewide perspective of the initiative. Due to the

comprehensiveness of the evaluation, SEDL placed a strong emphasis for this report on the site visit data in conjunction with data from the partner survey, strategic plan review, Web site review and Year 1 annual report review. Integrated within each content area section is the triangulation of findings unless otherwise noted for a specific data source, (e.g., “survey responses indicated...” and “strategic plans indicated...” and “based on site interviews...”).

Communication and Collaboration

A primary task for all ERZs was building a strong partnership with their partnering schools and districts, IHE, ESC(s), and family and community members. The key to any successful partnership is communication and collaboration. Based upon the ERZ logic model, communication and collaboration should remain a priority throughout the project. ERZs recognized the importance of this priority and continually focused on increasing and enhancing the level of communication and collaboration among partners.

Emphasis on Communication and Collaboration

All of the ERZs viewed communication and collaboration as their first priority, as indicated in their Year 2 strategic plans. ERZ partners also noted communication and collaboration was a main focus in their survey responses (see Table 6) and on-site interviews. As one district superintendent described, “The ERZ created a network of collaboration and enhanced the relationship with school districts nearby.”

Rating the amount of focus on a scale from 1 meaning “all of the focus” to 5 meaning “none of the focus”, IHE deans saw the greatest extent of ERZ focus on communication and collaboration (N=10, Average = 2.10 and N=28). On average, all partners described communication and collaboration as being most of the ERZ focus. About half of the teachers who responded to surveys felt they could not determine the amount of focus the ERZs placed in this area (see Table 6).

Table 6. ERZs Focus on Communication and Collaboration

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	2.21	33	0
ESC staff	2.25	8	0
Higher Ed. Deans	2.10	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.29	21	2
School Principals	2.82	28	9
School Support Staff	2.80	5	7
Teachers	2.66	294	282
Other	2.67	6	7
Total	2.59	402	307

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of focus to 5 = none of focus.

Generally, survey respondents indicated on a scale from 1 meaning “strongly disagreed” to 4 meaning “strongly agreed” that they were kept well informed about ERZ activities and developments (N = 475, Average = 2.89). They also acknowledged they generally have regular communication with ERZ partners (N = 469, Average = 2.77). Tables 7 and 8 provide the averages and number of partners, identified by their positions, who

responded to the survey questions about their level of information and regular communication. During site visits, many partners described regular communication they have with the ERZ director; however, they could not always identify activities resulting from the ERZ initiative.

Table 7. Partners Are Kept Well Informed about ERZ Activities and Developments

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	3.67	33	0
ESC staff	3.00	8	0
Higher Ed. Deans	3.90	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.05	22	1
School Principals	3.09	34	5
School Support Staff	2.43	7	6
Teachers	2.74	363	217
Other	3.57	7	6
Total	2.89	475	235

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

Table 8. Partners Have Regular Communication with ERZ Partners

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	3.36	33	0
ESC staff	3.25	8	0
Higher Ed. Deans	3.70	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.81	21	2
School Principals	2.86	35	3
School Support Staff	2.57	7	6
Teachers	2.65	358	214
Other	3.43	7	6
Total	2.77	469	231

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

Methods of Communication and Collaboration

Various approaches and techniques for communication were identified during site visits. The most common approaches to communicating with partners occurred via email, phone discussions, personal interactions and Web sites. A few ERZs provided written updates and/or newsletters to inform partners about ERZ supported activities. Two of the ERZs reported developing list serves to ease communication; another expanded a previous support network of group meetings. Several district and school administrators appreciated receiving emails from ERZ directors. However, they expressed a preference for phone calls and scheduled site visits as they often were overwhelmed by the amount of email they received daily and at times had been unable to read emails from ERZ directors. In addition, teachers requested that ERZ director classroom observations be scheduled ahead of time to prevent conflicts with field trips or special events.

According to ERZ partners, as the ERZ directors gained experience and strengthened their partnerships, more formal processes for communication and collaboration formed. One ERZ director described plans to establish a more formalized process for documenting contact/interaction between IHE faculty/staff and the partnering schools. At

another ERZ, the director maintains a log of contacts and activities with all partners. Several partnering schools identified the ERZ director, or assigned IHE faculty, as their main contact for the ERZ.

Another means to facilitate communication between ERZ partners was ERZ Web sites. Six of the eight ERZs had fully functional Web sites, another Web site was viewable but “under construction”, and the eighth was not available as it was being redeveloped. The six developed Web sites included information such as previously scheduled ERZ activities, pictures of professional development sessions and/or meetings, and contact information so visitors could request additional information. All six functioning Web sites provided their vision/mission statement and/or a brief summary of the purposes of the ERZ. Information on some of these Web sites included: upcoming events, links to information on meetings and professional development opportunities for summer 2007, and newsletters. Three of the six sites also provided links to their 2007 strategic plans, in pdf format, for visitors to view.

All of the ERZ Web sites provided information on their partnering schools by linking to the school district Web sites. Links for the partnering ESC, math and science centers, community partners, and the ADE were found on a “resource” page. In some instances, the ERZ Web sites provided links that were no longer valid and needed to be updated. The Web sites were embedded within their IHE’s site and conformed to the IHE’s Web site layout. ERZ directors and some partners described using the ERZs’ Web sites as a vehicle for information gathering and activity planning.

Other means of communication and collaboration for the ERZs have been through their advisory committees and strategic plans. As recommended by the ERZ guidelines, each ERZ indicated in their strategic plan an existing advisory committee with regularly scheduled meetings. During site visits, partners commented that a number of ERZs had reconstructed their advisory committees to include subcommittees related to specific tasks, events, and topics. Based upon survey responses, the majority of IHE deans, ESC staff and district superintendents indicated they were members of their ERZ’s advisory committee (90%, 75% and 73%, respectively). School staff and IHE faculty were less likely to report being a member of their ERZ’s advisory committee. Respondents who indicated they were on an advisory committee reported they met an average of 3 to 4 times during the second year of implementation.

During site visits partners demonstrated familiarity with their ERZ’s strategic plan and many indicated they had assisted in developing and/or reviewing it. Partners serving on the advisory committee or subcommittees reported the most direct involvement in strategic plan development, review, and implementation. Forty-two percent of survey respondents also indicated they were familiar with the 2006-2007 strategic plans.

Communication and Collaboration on ERZ Goals and Activities

Communication and collaboration around ERZ goals and activities has improved. On the survey, partners indicated they generally have a clear understanding of the ERZ goals; however, this varied according to the partner’s position (see Table 9). IHE deans and

district staff indicated they had the most understanding of ERZ goals and purposes on a scale of 1 meaning “strongly disagreed” to 4 meaning “strongly agree” (Average = 3.50). Based upon interviews and focus groups, the highest level of understanding was found for partnering principals and IHE administration and faculty. This understanding can be seen in a comment made by one of the IHE deans, “We spent a lot of time building capacity and collaboration...among ERZ partners.” It was a slightly different picture for teachers associated with the ERZ. A majority of them were unable to identify specific goals and purposes initiated by their ERZ during site visits. For instance, at one site, teachers directly asked the interviewer to explain the ERZ effort since they were not familiar with it. While on the survey, 63 percent of the teachers surveyed felt they had a clear understanding of their ERZ’s goals and activities; another 37 percent indicated they did not know.

Fewer partners responded to the question on the survey regarding their views of the ERZ goals as concrete and attainable. As seen in Table 10, of the 379 who did respond they, on average, were in agreement that the ERZs established concrete and attainable goals for Year 2 (Average = 3.04).

Table 9. Clear Understanding of Goals and Purposes of ERZ

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.41	32	1
ESC staff	3.13	8	0
Higher Ed. Deans	3.50	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.05	22	1
School Principals	2.97	35	4
School Support Staff	2.71	7	6
Teachers	2.85	359	223
Other	3.14	7	6
Total	2.93	473	241

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Table 10. Established Concrete, Attainable Year 2 Goals

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.37	30	3
ESC staff	3.20	5	3
Higher Ed. Deans	3.80	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.38	13	10
School Principals	2.88	26	12
School Support Staff	2.80	5	8
Teachers	2.87	287	291
Other	3.40	5	8
Total	3.04	379	335

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Activities identified during site visits followed the logic model and were unique to each ERZ based upon the results of their Year 1 needs assessments. Survey questions related to the implementation of these activities asked partners how they felt about the amount and pace of the activities. On a scale from 1 meaning “strongly disagree” to 4 meaning

“strongly agree” respondents agreed, on average, that they were not overburdened with their ERZ activities (see Table 11). Partners also indicated on their survey responses that the ERZ implementation had not been too slow (see Table 12). It was also evident in partner interviews that they were generally satisfied with the amount and pace of activities, although some provided ideas for additional activities.

Table 11. Not Overburdened with ERZ Activities

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.36	33	0
ESC staff	3.13	8	0
Higher Ed. Deans	3.40	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.00	23	0
School Principals	3.18	33	5
School Support Staff	3.00	7	6
Teachers	2.97	343	227
Other	3.43	7	6
Total	3.02	456	244

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Table 12. Implementation of ERZ Activities Too Slow

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	1.93	30	2
ESC staff	2.00	6	2
Higher Ed. Deans	1.60	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.07	15	8
School Principals	2.24	29	10
School Support Staff	2.83	6	7
Teachers	1.96	254	323
Other	2.00	5	8
Total	1.99	355	360

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Communication and Collaboration among Partners

Partnerships can be highly productive or detrimental often as a result of ambiguity of roles and responsibilities or institutional barriers. Strong communication around partner roles and responsibilities is a necessary component of the ERZ initiative. The ERZ director plays a key role in developing, maintaining and enhancing the relationships among ERZ partners. ERZ partners described the ERZ director as a “facilitator” for brokering collaborative efforts and expanding existing programs. During site visits, ERZ directors were often observed providing information to partners at partnering schools, ESCs and IHEs. Partners showed a genuine respect for ERZ directors. According to survey responses on a scale from 1 being “strongly disagree” to 4 being “strongly agree”, partners strongly agreed that their ERZ director has good skills for working with partnerships (Average = 3.54).

ERZ partners agreed, on average, they have a clear sense of their own ERZ roles and responsibilities (see Table 13). They also perceived that other partners have a clear sense of their own roles and responsibilities (see Table 14). In interviews, partners noted

specific roles they played and changing responsibilities they have taken on during the second year of implementation. These responsibilities often included moving from developing and beginning implementation of strategic plans to responsibilities for professional development and services directly in partner schools.

Table 13. Clear Sense of ERZ Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.36	33	0
ESC staff	2.86	7	1
Higher Ed. Deans	3.70	10	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.05	22	1
School Principals	2.85	33	6
School Support Staff	2.67	6	7
Teachers	2.82	331	246
Other	3.00	7	6
Total	2.91	440	267

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Table 14. Other ERZ Partners have a Clear Sense of their Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.32	28	5
ESC staff	3.00	6	2
Higher Ed. Deans	3.44	9	0
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.07	14	9
School Principals	2.79	19	20
School Support Staff	2.80	5	8
Teachers	2.97	250	332
Other	3.17	6	7
Total	3.02	338	383

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Most ERZ partners described partnerships as being stronger during the ERZ’s second year. Many partners highlighted the positive changes that have occurred over the past year in regard to partnerships with the IHE. According to one IHE dean, “We talk to each other as colleagues, not separated by institutional lines.” Forty-six percent of the partners indicated on the survey they have seen some change in the IHE faculty working more with ESCs (see Table 15). Forty-three percent of the partners responding to the survey indicated they saw some change in the IHE faculty working more with teachers over the past year, while 22 percent saw no change (see Table 15). Although the majority of ERZ directors described the partnership with the IHE as highly collaborative, two ERZs faced challenges with the IHE involvement of their deans and some faculty. A dean in one of these IHEs made a suggestion “to move leadership from the dean level to the department chair level” to increase faculty support and involvement in the ERZ. Another challenge identified was the geographic limitations faced by many of the ERZs. In general, partnering schools located at closer distances to the IHE had stronger partnerships with their ERZ sites in comparison to those further away. ERZ directors found it difficult to conduct frequent visits to partnering schools located over an hour from their IHE. Additionally, the IHE faculty found it difficult to visit schools at greater distances.

Another important partnership described by many of the partners was with the local ESCs. Several ERZs reported more positive relationships with their ESC partner(s) in Year 2. In one ERZ they described the ESC partnership as being “very open.” ERZ partners saw partnerships with their ESCs as critical to their mission; however, a number of ERZ directors and ESCs continued to struggle with their evolving relationship. For example, one ESC director felt ERZ activities were “duplicative of ESC efforts (e.g., establishing professional development directories).” Other ESC partners questioned the purpose and goals of their ERZ.

As the ERZs increased the number of partners they had, communication and collaboration was seen as an even greater priority. It is important to note the ERZs are expected to form new partnerships each year. Forty-six percent of survey respondents indicated that some change had occurred over the past year related to new collaborations with community partners, while 22 percent saw no change (see Table 16). Somewhat contradictory to these findings, partners were often unable to identify new collaborations in their ERZ when asked during site visits.

Table 15. IHE Faculty Communication and Collaboration

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
IHE faculty working more directly with teachers	1	8	13	86	43	282	12	76	22	142	9	56
IHE faculty and ESC staff working more together	1	4	11	69	46	294	12	76	22	138	8	52

Table 16. Collaborations with Community Partners

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
New collaborations developing with community partners	1	6	11	68	46	298	12	75	22	138	9	58

Preparation and Recruitment of Future Teachers

In Arkansas, a challenge commonly faced throughout schools and school districts is the recruitment of highly qualified teachers, especially in rural, low-wealth areas. First, teachers must be adequately prepared for the classroom and second, there must be a pool of teachers from which to recruit when staffing needs arise. The ERZ initiative offers the opportunity for schools and school districts to have an impact on their IHE partner’s teacher preparation program and the pool of future teachers. This is particularly important to the ERZs since much of their focus is in hard-to-staff schools. A goal established for the ERZs has been to build capacity within each partner school to identify needed

teachers and recruit those who are highly qualified. IHE partners, in collaboration with the other ERZ partners, are relied upon to help accomplish this goal. This section of the report describes Year 2 ERZ strategies and activities that focused on teacher preparation and future teacher recruitment.

Preparation of Teachers

Based on the data from a variety of sources, preparing future teachers was some of the focus for the ERZs, but not the main focus in Year 2. According to responses on the survey, district staff saw the preparation of future teachers as more of a focus than other partners (see Table 17). A greater number of partners responding to the survey (17%) saw the preparation of future teachers as a focus for the ERZs in the prior year, rather than a future focus (10%).

Table 17. Focus on Teacher Preparation

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	2.44	33	-
ESC staff	3.00	7	1
Higher Ed. Deans	3.00	10	-
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.95	19	4
School Principals	3.04	26	11
School Support Staff	3.00	6	6
Teachers	3.04	290	282
Other	3.00	5	7
Total	2.98	395	308

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

During site visits, ERZ partners identified few approaches they implemented and more that they are planning to take to change how IHEs are preparing future teachers. One ERZ was actively working towards developing a Professional Development School based in two of its partnering school districts. The district and school administrators viewed the Professional Development School as having the "potential to strengthen the teacher preparation program," as well as "increase their district and school's ability to recruit IHE graduates." On a larger scale, many IHE faculty reported making slight modifications within their lectures to include more "real-world" examples based on their individual ERZ interactions. One IHE indicated they had "brought back" a course on family and community involvement based upon feedback from ERZ schools. Another strategy mentioned in interviews was that IHEs were collaborating with the ERZ director and others to support pre-service teachers through conference attendance and professional development opportunities. This was believed to better prepare students for teaching in their partnering school districts.

In a few of the ERZs, partners were conversing about teacher preparation program redesign. One ERZ's school partners indicated they gained a better understanding of "why changes could not be made to the teacher preparation program, (e.g., state requirements and accreditation standards)." This was a clear illustration of the open dialogue occurring between IHEs and partnering schools. According to survey responses, almost half of the partners perceived some change had occurred in the revision of teacher

preparation courses and requirements for field experiences of pre-service teachers (see Table 18). However, based upon all of the data collected, the majority of partners in most of the ERZs reported they have seen little to no impact on their IHE teacher preparation programs.

Table 18. Frequency of Perceived Level of Change in Teacher Preparation

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Revising teacher preparation courses	1	5	7	45	45	278	15	91	23	140	9	58
Revising requirements for field experiences of pre-service teachers	1	5	8	48	43	266	15	90	24	146	10	60

Recruitment of Teachers

Across all ERZs, partnering schools identified teacher recruitment as an area of high need. In an effort to address this, several ERZs emphasized in interviews and on their survey responses that they increased activities towards teacher recruitment during the second year of implementation (see Table 19). A greater number of partners responding to the survey (16%) saw teacher recruitment as a prior focus for the ERZs rather than a future focus (10%).

Table 19. Amount of ERZ focus on Teacher Recruitment

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	2.50	32	1
ESC staff	2.86	7	1
Higher Ed. Deans	3.10	10	-
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.80	15	7
School Principals	2.93	27	10
School Support Staff	2.83	6	6
Teachers	3.01	284	291
Other	2.67	6	7
Total	2.94	387	323

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

In site visit interviews, ERZ directors could identify partnering schools' staffing needs based on needs assessments and/or informal discussions with district and school administration. Based on survey results, forty-seven percent of the partners perceived some change in the ERZs identifying current teacher staffing needs in partnering schools, while 23 percent saw no change (see Table 20).

The needs identified for hard-to-recruit teaching positions were in the following content areas: special education, math, science and English. Many of the ERZ directors assisted their partnering schools and districts by sponsoring teacher recruitment fairs, providing a directory of IHE education graduates, identifying recruitment strategies and incentives and writing recruitment plans for the IHE. One ERZ director mentioned collaborating

with the ADE Teacher Recruitment Program to develop a series of recruitment workshops. Teacher recruitment was also the focus of the statewide ERZ Round Up held in the Fall of 2006. Forty-five percent of partners responding to the survey indicated there had been some change in designing new recruitment strategies to target high-need staffing levels or content areas and 24 percent perceived no change (see Table 20).

Another teacher recruitment need identified in specific regions of the state was for bilingual teachers. One ERZ was planning to hire a staff member to concentrate on issues related to the bilingual needs of its partnering schools. Another ERZ was working to develop a program to recruit teachers from Mexico to increase the pool of bilingual applicants.

Several ERZs proposed approaching recruitment from a grass roots perspective within their strategic plans. Based upon data gathered during site visits, these ERZ directors have vested a large amount of time in reestablishing grass root efforts to recruit high school students into the teaching field, such as Teachers of Tomorrow and Grow-Your-Own.

Other teacher recruitment approaches have been taken, such as the beginning development of a recruitment video geared towards high school juniors. Another offered a Future Teachers course to high school students. In general, the approaches ERZs have taken demonstrated the individualization of each ERZ to their partners' needs. The majority of district superintendents indicated during site visits that they appreciated the teacher recruitment assistance provided by ERZ directors in Year 2; however, IHE partners did not report an increase in their number of education majors during interviews or focus groups. Almost half of the partners denoted some change in their responses on the survey related to the ERZ designing new recruitment strategies to increase pre-service teacher applicants, similar to their perceptions about recruitment strategies for high-need staffing levels or content areas (see Table 20).

Table 20. Frequency of Perceived Change Related to ERZ Teacher Recruitment

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Identifying current teacher staffing needs in partnering schools	1	5	9	56	47	291	12	73	23	139	9	55
Designing new recruitment strategies to target high-need staffing levels or content areas.	1	10	8	48	45	281	12	72	24	150	10	59
Designing new recruitment strategies to increase pre-service teacher applicants	1	9	8	49	44	271	14	86	24	148	9	58

Support and Retention of Existing Teachers

The support and retention of existing teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff schools, can be a monumental challenge. As established in the logic model, ERZs established a goal to help partnering schools build their capacity to retain highly qualified teachers. Based upon partners' perceptions on the survey, retention of existing teachers was some of the focus across all ERZs in Year 2 (see Table 21). During site visits, it was evident that teacher retention was a focus for several of the ERZs, but not all. According to 15 percent of the survey respondents, teacher retention was a focus during the first year of ERZ implementation and approximately 8 percent indicated that teacher retention would become a focus of the ERZs during their third year of implementation.

Table 21. Amount of ERZ focus on Retention

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	2.74	31	2
ESC staff	3.00	6	2
Higher Ed. Deans	3.00	9	1
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.88	17	6
School Principals	3.15	26	9
School Support Staff	2.80	5	7
Teachers	2.97	282	291
Other	2.80	5	7
Total	2.94	381	325

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

Several district and school administrators noted a retention challenge was losing teachers to school districts offering higher salaries and better benefits. To build the capacity of partnering schools to retain teachers, a few ERZs worked with partnering schools to identify incentives to offer current teachers and provided them with retention information from the literature. Several ERZs co-sponsored teacher fairs as a means to retain teachers and others provided teacher retention workshops for school administrators. While partners reported these activities were helpful, several district and school administrators felt the ERZs provided minimum support in this area.

A strategy for supporting and retaining existing teachers is providing professional development opportunities. This may include training, mentoring, classroom observation and discussion groups. The ERZ partners are expected to facilitate new and veteran teachers' and school leaders' opportunities for ongoing, seamless professional development. Partners saw these opportunities, most often provided through the ESC, the IHE and/or partnering districts and schools, as a cornerstone of ERZ activity. Several ERZ directors directly provided professional development to reduce the cost of hiring an outside consultant. The following sections provide information on the ERZ partners' professional development support for partnering schools and districts and perceived changes in Year 2.

Professional Development Support

According to their Year 2 strategic plans, five of the eight ERZs included activities to support teachers in professional development opportunities to improve student outcomes.

ERZs help to build partner schools' capacities to identify and fill gaps in professional development. The professional development focus and approaches used to support and retain existing teachers varied across the ERZs based upon partners' needs. From multiple sources of data, partners identified professional development as the area most focused upon by ERZs in this second year. School and district staff, in particular, identified this in their survey responses (see Table 22). Overall, 18 percent of survey respondents indicated professional development had been a focus in Year 1 and 10 percent reported it would be a focus during the third year of implementation.

Table 22. Amount of ERZ focus on Professional Development

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	2.30	33	-
ESC staff	2.86	7	1
Higher Ed. Deans	2.50	10	-
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.68	22	1
School Principals	2.69	29	8
School Support Staff	2.25	8	5
Teachers	2.48	335	244
Other	3.00	7	6
Total	2.48	443	265

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

Professional development needs assessments. Site visit data indicated that all ERZ directors conducted need assessments with their partnering schools to identify common professional development opportunities and areas of specific need. ERZ directors used the information collected to pool resources to cover the cost of training, minimize transportation and staff leave issues, and provide high quality content and delivery. The collaboration on professional development efforts was the best illustration of economies of scale occurring at the ERZ sites. For example in one renewal zone, partnering schools created professional development plans based on the needs assessment results. The ERZ director supported school staff both in completing the needs assessment and by providing feedback on the professional development plans.

Focus of professional development. Based on the professional development needs assessment results, ERZ directors and other partners facilitated or provided trainings and workshops in the following areas: substitute teacher training, classroom management, curriculum alignment, science and math activities/strategies, and special education. In interviews, school and district administrators provided positive feedback on these professional development opportunities.

Two ERZs developed trainings for substitute teachers. Both incorporated classroom management, curriculum alignment, and state benchmarks into their trainings. District and school administrators and teachers described the training as beneficial to substitute teachers and expressed their desire for additional training and on a more frequent basis. One school district adopted the ERZ's training as a requirement for all substitutes working in their district.

At least 2 ERZs partnered with their IHE, ESC and schools to apply for grants to support professional development in the areas of science and math. The grants received varied yet there were some consistencies, such as stipends for teachers, incentives for faculty, costs for materials, and structures for collecting data to assess effectiveness. IHE and school administration spoke highly of the impact on teachers participating in the professional development offered through these grants, especially when follow-up trainings or classroom visits were also implemented. Teachers participating in the grants indicated their knowledge of classroom teaching strategies related to math and science were enhanced by the trainings. Some teachers were able to articulate these professional development offerings were a result of ERZ collaborative efforts, others were not sure how the trainings came about. The additional grants ERZ directors received to support professional development endeavors for schools within their region have enhanced the opportunities available to schools and districts.

In a few of the ERZ sites, rather than focus on a specific content area professional development was focused on newly hired teachers. In one ERZ, additional funding was received to support a new teacher institute. During the institute, teachers received professional development on classroom management and Arkansas state benchmarks. One principal interviewed indicated the institute offered an opportunity for his new teachers to build stronger links to other new teachers and receive trainings that could not be offered during the school's in-service. Teachers in this ERZ indicated the training was beneficial and better prepared them for the classroom experience.

Professional development links with the IHE and community. In addition to providing trainings and workshops, the ERZs supported existing teachers through direct links to the IHE and community. One ERZ implemented a program that paired one IHE faculty member to a partnering school. The faculty member spent time at the school, sometimes directly in the classroom, sometimes providing in-service training. The IHE faculty member served as a point of contact at the IHE for administrators and teachers at that school, often providing literature and research-based resources. As a result of staff networking across ERZ schools and with the ERZ director, faculty members were also asked to sometimes assist partnering schools with whom they were not originally paired. The teachers, at this ERZ, shared they have seen an increase in the level of interaction between their school and the IHE as a result of this program.

Another ERZ effort to link the IHE and community was an annual *Best Practices Conference* hosted by the IHE of one of the ERZs to increase collaboration between its partnering school districts. The conference provided an opportunity for partnering school districts to present initiatives and programs they have successfully implemented. Submission forms were available on the ERZ's Web site to present at this conference. District administrators indicated they enjoyed being able to share and learn more about how other districts were handling various challenges.

Mentoring teachers. Another priority for the statewide ERZ initiative is a focus on mentoring for teachers with three or fewer years of teaching and those identified as "career teachers whose performance indicates the need for such help." A Year 2 goal for

the ERZs was to move forward from identifying mentoring programs to matching novice teachers with strong mentors. Several ERZs identified strategies to increase or assess mentoring efforts within their strategic plans; however, based upon site visit interviews and focus groups, mentoring was not a focus during the second year of implementation.

One ERZ had approached mentoring by matching teachers in partnering schools with an IHE faculty mentor based on content area. For instance, math teachers were matched with the IHE math faculty to strengthen classroom content and activities. Content mentors conducted classroom visits and provided resources to teachers they mentored. Teachers reported having a content mentor as being helpful.

The majority of ERZs continued activities initiated in Year 1 related to mentoring in Year 2. For instance, IHE faculty received training on the Pathwise mentor program during Year 1 and then were able to provide that training during the second year. Other ERZs were beginning to determine their partnering schools' Pathwise needs.

Professional development resources. Increasing awareness of IHE programs and events was the most common strategy ERZs offered to partnering schools to enhance their awareness of professional development resources. For example, several IHEs have state funded Math and Science Centers, which offer professional development and classroom resource kits to schools at no cost. ERZ directors facilitated relationships between partner schools and these centers. Teachers and principals indicated they did not realize the availability of these and other resources from the IHE until the ERZ directors provided them information. IHE faculty and administrators were pleased that the ERZ directors increased awareness of their existing programs and other outreach efforts, commenting that “partnering schools were receiving services they had not before utilized.”

An initial activity established for all ERZs was the construction of a comprehensive professional development catalogue for partnering schools. The comprehensive catalogue was meant to identify all professional development opportunities available to ERZ schools through the partners, (i.e., IHE, ESC and community agencies). To date, only one ERZ reported the completion of their comprehensive catalogue. Several ERZ sites have begun working towards developing a directory. A few have created a customized directory of professional development and services offered through the IHE. Based upon interviews and focus groups, the majority of partners felt a customized directory would be more beneficial rather than a comprehensive directory since the ESCs provide detailed information and registration for their professional development opportunities through their Web sites. The ESC directors and coordinators felt it was duplicative work for the ERZ directors to compile and distribute a list of ESC trainings.

ERZs also provided additional professional development resources via their Web sites. One ERZ provided information and resource links related to each aspect of the ERZ logic model. Another ERZ created an ERZ lending library for use on its Web site. Some ERZs' Web sites devoted pages specific to teacher resources, such as classroom activities and professional development opportunities. The one ERZ that completed a comprehensive professional development catalogue provided a link to this resource on its Web site.

A few ERZ directors developed surveys to assess the potential impact of the professional development facilitated or offered through the ERZ initiative. More commonly, ERZ directors received informal, verbal feedback from attendees or presenters.

Changes in ERZ Efforts in Professional Development

During site visits, the majority of teachers reported no change to the amount and type of professional development they received. One teacher indicated she “did not know the difference from trainings supported by the ERZ and those already offered at the ESC.” Other teachers felt the ESC was already meeting their professional development needs. On the survey, 16 percent of teachers who responded noted no change from Year 1; however, 46 percent perceived some change in regard to ERZ professional development efforts. Survey responses from other key partners indicated similar perceptions as those of the teachers in relation to the amount of change in professional development opportunities in Year 2 (see averages across all partners in Table 23). During site visits some school and district administrators were able to identify and laud new ERZ professional development activities, such as the substitute training mentioned earlier.

Additionally based on survey responses, almost half of the partners also perceived some change in Year 2 activities related to the following: identification of teachers’ professional development needs, coordination between IHE faculty and ESC staff to provide professional development opportunities, and training and implementation opportunities for new mentoring programs.

Table 23. Frequency of Perceived Change Related to Professional Development

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Identify current professional development needs for teachers	3	17	21	134	44	288	9	56	15	101	9	59
Providing more professional development opportunities for teachers	2	14	24	157	44	284	6	42	15	96	9	60
Providing more professional development opportunities for administrators	1	7	13	82	47	288	12	73	18	111	9	57
Coordinating more between IHE faculty and ESC staff to provide professional development opportunities	1	9	12	78	47	300	11	68	21	133	8	53
Providing new mentoring program training and implementation opportunities for teachers.	2	10	13	83	45	287	11	68	22	143	8	54

Distance Learning Technology

In an effort to increase professional development offerings to teachers and curriculum options for students, ERZ partners were tasked with facilitating increased availability and use of distance learning technology (e.g., Compressed Interactive Video) at partnering schools. At this point in time, partners identified that distance learning has received limited focus by the ERZs. However, a number of ERZs invested increased resources in one initiative, the Arkansas Early College High School program, during this second year of implementation. This was the focus of much of the ERZ’s distance learning technology efforts.

Teachers and school administration reported using Compressed Interactive Video (CIV) technology, sometimes within their own schools, through their ESC and/or in conjunction with other resources. The majority of IHE administrators and faculty indicated their campus had CIV capabilities; however, it was not frequently utilized for ERZ events due to cost and scheduling conflicts. In an effort to reduce the cost of CIV, ERZ directors frequently collaborated with their ESC partners to support CIV events.

Partner survey responses indicated distance learning technology had received some focus (see Table 24). A greater number of partners responding to the survey (15%) saw distance learning as a prior focus for the ERZs rather than a future focus (8%). The majority of partners indicated, during interviews, that they were “very happy” with the distance learning options already available through the ESCs and that the ERZ did not need to focus on this area.

Table 24. Amount of Focus on Distance Learning Technology

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of “Don’t Know”
District staff	3.19	31	1
ESC staff	3.29	7	1
Higher Ed. Deans	3.20	10	-
Higher Ed. Faculty	3.21	14	9
School Principals	3.57	23	14
School Support Staff	2.80	5	7
Teachers	3.02	292	285
Other	3.00	5	7
Total	3.08	391	324

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

ERZ directors reported utilizing technology slightly more in Year 2 to conduct ERZ related meetings and to increase the number of schools able to participate in trainings and workshops. Thirty-nine percent of partners who responded to the survey perceived some change in the use of CIV labs for professional development for teachers and 38 percent saw some change in use of CIV labs for course offerings to students (see Table 25). Slightly over one-fourth of survey respondents saw no change in the use of CIV labs. However, in interviews ERZ district and school partners noted a slight increase in courses offered for their students through the AECHS.

Table 25. Frequency of Perceived Change Related to Distance Learning Technology

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Using more CIV labs for professional development for teachers	4	24	9	60	39	247	13	84	27	173	8	49
Using more CIV labs to increase course offerings for students	5	32	14	88	38	239	11	73	24	152	9	54

Family and Community Involvement

Broadening the ERZ network of resources to include family and community members would help to further enhance support to school administrators and educators. As ERZs moved into their second year, it was anticipated they would identify effective strategies to increase family and community involvement to achieve the ERZ goals. According to the logic model, ERZs were to begin making strides towards engaging family and community members in school activities and professional development to increase students' success. ERZs highlighted increasing community awareness of schools within their strategic plans. Partners indicated family and community involvement had been some of their focus on survey responses (see Table 26). According to 15 percent of the survey sample, family and community member involvement was a focus during the first year of implementation and 9 percent indicated it would be a focus the following year.

Table 26. Amount of Focus on Family and Community Involvement

Position	Average	Number who Responded	Number of "Don't Know"
District staff	3.00	32	1
ESC staff	3.17	6	2
Higher Ed. Deans	3.33	9	1
Higher Ed. Faculty	2.88	16	7
School Principals	3.38	24	13
School Support Staff	3.00	5	7
Teachers	3.01	306	268
Other	3.17	6	6
Total	3.04	404	305

Note: Survey ratings from 1 = all of the focus to 5 = none of the focus.

Parent outreach during the second year included: 1) working with parent coordinators to identify strategies to increase parent involvement, 2) increasing parent membership on advisory committees and sub-committees, 3) co-sponsoring a Pre-K teleconference, 4) providing links to parent and community resources on Web sites, 5) a parent involvement DVD (English and Spanish), and 6) providing professional development to parents. Based upon partner perceptions shared during site visits, there had been little change in the amount of parent involvement at partnering schools.

Community partnerships resulted in additional professional development for teachers in Arkansas history, field trips for students offered to partnering schools, community

participation in educational forums, and co-sponsorship of ERZ events. Community members who were interviewed indicated there were a number of community resources that “were not being utilized fully” by the ERZ sites. Identifying current levels of family and community involvement and designing new strategies to increase family and community involvement were also reported by slightly less than half of the partners on the survey as having changed some (see Table 27).

Table 27. Frequency of Perceived Change Related to ERZ Family and Community Involvement

	Total Change		Much Change		Some Change		Little Change		No Change		Changed but Not Related to ERZ	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Identifying current levels of family and community involvement in partnering ERZ schools	1	3	6	41	47	303	13	86	24	152	9	55
Designing new and effective strategies to increase family and community member involvement in ERZ activities	-	1	8	49	48	306	14	87	23	144	8	52

Student Achievement and School Performance

ERZs used data on their partnering schools’ performance needs to develop their strategic plans in Year 1. Based on their updated Year 2 strategic plans, three of the seven ERZs identified strategies to focus on student achievement and school performance. During site visits, ERZ directors and partners provided limited information on specific efforts targeting or measuring student achievement and school performance. However, several ERZ directors commented that all of their efforts have the final outcome of increasing student achievement and school performance. Several ERZs are in the formative stage, (i.e., developing rubrics for skills and processes of student development and prioritizing and sequencing curriculum). One ERZ developed a Hispanic Literacy Initiative to offer direct support for increasing literacy among Hispanic students and their families.

Areas of Overall Improvement During Year 2 Implementation

When considering all areas of progress from the first year of implementation to the second, the most change was attributed to the level and amount of collaboration between the ERZ partners. Several school administrators noted an increase in the number of interactions between their teaching faculty and the partnering IHE. The collaborations varied from being matched with IHE faculty, to IHE staff presenting information on financial aid to students. The IHE administrators and faculty also identified increased collaboration and stronger partnerships as areas of progress during the second year at several ERZs. In addition, two of the ERZs reported more positive relationships with their ESCs during the second year of implementation. It is assumed that as the partnerships continue to strengthen, more collaborative initiatives will occur.

Participants who completed surveys attributed the greatest ERZ accomplishments to support and retention of existing teachers (see Table 28). This was also seen in additional comments provided by survey respondents. Approximately 24 percent of them identified topics related to professional development, such as increasing the number of professional development opportunities, substitute teacher trainings, and meeting with other schools to share classroom practices as accomplishments. Survey respondents also felt gains were made in communication and collaboration. One partner noted that the ERZ director had “brought partners together” and another described the ERZ as “getting everyone on the same page.” While others indicated that, “IHE faculty are working more with students and teachers due to the ERZ” and the ERZ had “created a learning community to share challenges and strategies.” At the same time, approximately 14 percent of the respondents indicated they were not familiar enough with the ERZ initiative to identify an accomplishment and 7 percent perceived there were no great accomplishments associated with their ERZ (see Table 28).

Table 28. Frequency of Responses for Areas of Greatest Accomplishments

Area of Accomplishment	Frequency	Number who Responded
Communication	14%	39
Collaboration	14%	41
Preparation of Future Teachers	3%	10
Recruitment of Future Teachers	1%	4
Support & Retention of Existing Teachers	21%	61
Distance Learning	1%	3
Family and Community Involvement	2%	5
Student Related	5%	14
Resources	2%	5
Other	7%	21
None	5%	13
Didn't know enough about ERZ to comment	14%	40
Don't know	11%	33
Total	100%	289

Opportunities for Improvement

Partners had an opportunity to provide suggestions for improvement during site visits and on the evaluation survey. The most common suggestion made during site visits across all of the ERZs was for stronger communication. Approximately 29 percent of suggested improvements from the survey data focused on increasing communication. These suggestions ranged from continuing to increase communication with various partners to scheduling ERZ advisory meetings after school hours to increase teacher attendance. One respondent indicated a desire for “more opportunities for staff and faculty to collaborate.” Table 29 provides the frequency and number of opportunities identified by survey respondents.

At several ERZs, teachers expressed frustration with not being able to identify ERZ initiated or facilitated efforts, particularly related to professional development. One teacher suggested having a slide during ERZ presentations that identified the partners sponsoring the event.

Table 29. Frequency of Responses for Areas of Needed Improvement

Areas of Improvement	Frequency	Number who Responded
Communication	29%	77
Collaboration	5%	13
Preparation of Future Teachers	2%	6
Support & Retention of Existing Teachers	8%	22
Family and Community Involvement	1%	2
Increased Funding	3%	7
Increased Number of Staff	3%	8
Other	13%	34
None	19%	50
Didn't know enough about ERZ to comment	8%	21
Don't Know/Unsure	7%	19
Other	2%	5
Total	100%	264

Partners raised a number of general concerns and made suggestions related to these during interviews and on the survey. For example, several teachers indicated in a focus group that ERZ activities were too time-consuming and that only effective programs and trainings should be continued. One survey respondent noted, “If you really want us [teachers] to use the program, make it relevant, user-friendly, and highly publicized.” Another respondent recommended, “Greater latitude in implementation of strategic plans.”

A few district and school administrators expressed a desire for more individualized ERZ events. For example, a partnering school that did not need additional professional development in classroom management would prefer training focused on special education. The school administrators noted that the final goal for everyone was school improvement, but did not feel that generalizing across partnering schools and pooling resources would help their school achieve that goal. Other district and school administrators felt a stronger focus on distance learning would be beneficial. As mentioned earlier, distances between partnering schools has been a challenge and administrators viewed distance learning technology as a possible solution. They suggested supporting schools, either through direct funding or grant writing, to obtain CIV technology.

IHE faculty expressed the need for a more rigorous evaluation process around ERZ activities. One faculty member noted in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the ERZs' efforts quantitative data are needed. Other faculty members suggested the ERZs need to be held accountable for their efforts and demonstrate a true impact for continued funding. Faculty members suggested more consistency in the activities and supports offered across ERZs along with pre- and post-data collection to demonstrate impact. One survey respondent recommended establishing accountability through the use of “EOC and benchmark scores.”

Partners and ERZ directors identified family and community involvement as an area for improvement. They noted that by increasing the level of community involvement, more

opportunities for professional development might have been available. Some also suggested that community agencies might have been able to offer additional specialized programs to enhance student learning, (e.g., field trips or in-classroom demonstrations). Advisory board members recommended that the ERZs increase their visibility within schools and communities. One community member suggested hiring a “community liaison.” A survey respondent suggested, “developing stronger ties to community agencies and leaders.”

In addition to improvements already identified, partners and ERZ directors noted additional funding and increased staff support for the ERZs would be beneficial. One school principal felt the ERZ initiative would have a stronger impact “if there were more staff members to work with the partnering schools instead of one person for up to 15 schools.” Other partners suggested the funding could be used to provide additional professional development or recruitment support. The ESCs, in particular, suggested that more funding should be funneled into follow-up activities after trainings, (i.e., classroom observations and refresher trainings).

IHE administrators and faculty recommended offering incentives to faculty members working with partnering schools. One IHE administrator suggested the ERZ could “buy” the equivalent of one course per semester of a faculty member’s time. This would allow the faculty member to devote more time to the ERZ initiative and not detract from their IHE responsibilities. It was also suggested that IHE faculty be offered a stipend for working with partnering schools. It is important to note that all ERZs have funding to cover the cost of IHE faculty members’ mileage to partnering schools; however, this incentive was only mentioned during one ERZ site visit.

In order to further assess the challenges associated with implementation of the Year 2 strategic plan, survey respondents were asked to indicate challenges associated with the ERZ initiative, (e.g., policies/procedures, funding, commitment, incentives and time). The item identified as being the greatest challenge, on average, was inadequate funding while personality clashes among ERZ staff/partners and poor communication were the least challenging. A small proportion (19%) of survey respondents felt the ERZs were providing sufficient support and did not identify any areas of improvement. Another 8 percent of individuals responding to the question on the survey about improvements were not familiar enough with ERZ activities to identify opportunities for improvement. Table 30 presents averages on the challenges partners’ identified as being associated with implementing the Year 2 strategic plans.

Table 30. Challenges Associated with Implementing Year 2 Strategic Plan

Perceived Challenge	Response Averages by Partner Position (Ns varied for each cell ¹)								
	District Staff	ESC Staff	Higher Ed Deans	Higher Ed Faculty	School Principals	School Support Staff	Teachers	Other Respondents	All Respondents
Higher education policies/procedures	3.35	3.00	3.40	3.73	3.05	3.67	3.77	3.50	3.68
State policies/procedures	3.50	3.60	2.70	3.33	3.10	4.33	3.75	2.67	3.65
ESC policies/procedures	3.76	4.00	3.20	3.44	3.50	4.33	4.00	4.00	3.92
District/school policies/procedures	3.77	3.40	2.80	2.91	3.64	4.33	3.78	3.67	3.73
Inadequate funding	3.78	3.33	3.20	3.55	2.61	4.00	2.73	3.00	2.85
Turf issues between ERZ partners	4.30	3.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.33	4.13	4.25	4.13
Lack of commitment from university administration	4.07	3.83	4.00	4.47	4.00	4.50	3.79	2.50	3.88
Lack of rewards/incentives for faculty/staff involved	3.92	3.67	2.50	3.27	3.63	4.25	2.90	3.33	3.08
Different commitment/ownership levels of ERZ partners	4.04	3.17	3.20	3.73	3.56	4.00	4.05	3.50	3.98
Personality clashes among ERZ partners/staff	4.73	4.14	4.80	4.47	4.41	4.33	4.27	4.25	4.35
Lack of time for collaborative activities	3.37	3.71	2.90	3.31	3.18	3.75	3.64	2.75	3.55
Poor communication	4.55	4.43	4.80	4.00	4.13	4.33	4.02	4.50	4.13
Others:	-	-	-	2.33	3.00	4.33	3.47	3.00	3.51

¹The number of survey respondents (Ns) varied within each respondent type to each challenge item. A detailed matrix including N's can be found in Appendix C.
Note: Survey ratings from 1 = total challenge to 5 = no challenge.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of data from the ERZ's updated strategic plans and Year 1 annual reports, site visits, surveys, ERZ Web sites, and other documentation provided a rich picture of the current activities of the ERZs and progress made over the past year. The findings across ERZs can serve as an important tool for future ERZ strategic planning. ERZ strategic plans were comprehensive in that they spanned all of the strategies and activities identified in the logic model. Each of the ERZs carried out portions of their strategic plans during Year 2, as reported by all partners. In this current year, ERZs continued to focus heavily on communication and collaboration with partners and provided professional development to pre-service and existing teachers. However, preparation and recruitment of future teachers, distance learning technologies, and family and community involvement received greater focus in ERZs strategic plans than was recognized by partners during data collection.

The ERZ purpose and legislation necessitate that ERZs take an individualistic approach to their efforts and meeting partners' needs. This is reflected in the flexible guidelines for implementing and tracking their strategic plans and the variety of activities included. Findings clearly showed a huge variety of ERZ activities intended to achieve the myriad goals identified in their plans. At times, SEDL found great variance in partners' descriptions of activities their ERZ implemented to achieve their second year goals. This was also seen in their reports on the level of effort, focus and/or importance given to some activities.

The ideal for an effective ERZ is to have all partners highly invested in ensuring goals are met and services are provided that result in student and school success. The ERZ model was based on a structure that begins with the higher education institution but relies on its vast partners. The involvement of the IHE administrators and faculty varied greatly across ERZs which was found to have implications for progress. The most important role in the ERZ was the ERZ director. They play a necessary and essential role and were seen by all partners as the main hub of activity and central to their ERZ's success. The directors were touted for their ability to energize partners and collaborate with others. Findings indicated that the retention of ERZ directors was an important factor in ERZ progress, further reflecting the partners' perceptions that the directors were the impetus behind goal attainment.

During the second year of implementation ERZs strengthened their existing partnerships and involved some new partners. Overall, partners other than teachers demonstrated an increased knowledge of ERZ goals and purposes and have a clear understanding of their roles within the ERZ effort. Communication and collaboration was the area that all partners, including teachers, noted as important and a focus of their ERZ. Findings showed that this area was one of the ERZs' greatest strengths, but at the same time a multitude of suggestions were provided to enhance activities in this area. Many communication and collaboration activities to involve school/district and IHE administrators from Year 1 continued in Year 2. New communication and collaboration strategies, particularly related to teacher recruitment and building relationships with

ESCs, increased in the ERZs' second year of implementation. Although partners reported some communication and collaboration efforts attributed to their ERZ, many efforts were not being linked to the ERZ.

ERZs, for the most part, have moved beyond communication and collaboration to include recruitment of future teachers as a primary focus. Several ERZs worked with their partners to revive organizations encouraging high school students to consider education as a career path, particularly in high-need content areas. ERZ directors attempted to support their partners' recruitment efforts through participation in teacher fairs, development and distribution of recruitment materials and identification of incentives. Teacher preparation was not a main focus for the ERZs; however, IHE partners noted some change in their approaches and course content related to experiences they had with ERZ partner schools. On average, however, partners did not perceive much change had occurred in ERZ activities toward the preparation and recruitment of future teachers.

Professional development as a means to support and retain existing teachers was a large focus of all of the ERZs. The content and delivery of professional development varied across the ERZs, with trainings on a broad range of topics seen more often as additive rather than duplicative of ESC offerings. The majority of ERZs involved IHE faculty in professional development for teachers and some for school and district administrators. IHE partners also were involved in providing information and assistance to students for college preparation. Based on partner needs and geographic location, a few ERZs and ESCs have collaborated to provide professional development using CIV, as well as co-sponsoring training events. Professional development was the one area that ERZs show progress in understanding and implementing economies of scale. Based on partner perceptions, there has been some change in the number of opportunities for professional development offered, some carried over from the ERZ's first year and some expanded to include more partnering schools. ERZ efforts related to offering Pathwise training were the majority of activities for teacher mentoring with few other efforts mentioned.

In the second year, distance learning and family and community involvement were not a primary focus for the majority of ERZs. Some efforts and resources were put into enhancing CIV opportunities for students through the Early College High School Program. Less emphasis was placed on the use of distance learning technologies for professional development. ERZ partners identified family and community involvement as an area needing greater focus. In some cases, the ERZs moved beyond inviting family and community partners to be on their advisory committees to providing professional development directly to parents and supporting community-wide events.

ERZ partners identified a number of challenges in the second year of implementation. Staffing, funding and time were the most typical barriers to implementation mentioned in site visit interviews, as well as in some of the survey responses. At the same time, partners provided ideas for ERZ improvement and some mechanisms to overcome barriers they identified, as mentioned throughout this report.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this report, the SEDL team has drawn the following conclusions about the ERZ initiative in Year 2 and offers recommendations for the Division and ERZ directors to consider as they move forward with the initiative. Due to the Division's desire for formative findings, the majority of the conclusions and recommendations presented here have already been discussed with the Division and ERZ directors in the June 2007 evaluation networking meeting.

Conclusion 1: All ERZs use individualized approaches based on their regional needs to best meet legislated goals.

Although all ERZs are guided by the same legislated mandates, they effectively individualized their efforts for their targeted demographics, as seen in their Year 2 strategic plans. Much of this individualization was built upon results from ERZ needs assessments conducted with their partners in Year 1 and, for some, from ongoing needs assessments in Year 2. ERZs used their results to establish goals, tasks and outcomes that were outlined in their Year 2 plan. Evaluation findings indicated that the processes implemented to develop and communicate the content of these plans were flexible; however, they lacked clear and consistent guidance. As a result, partners had varying levels of understanding of the goals, activities and desired outcomes of the ERZ initiative.

Recommendation related to conclusion 1: Toward the end of this evaluation, SEDL was informed that the Division and ERZ directors were working on a template for the yearly strategic plans. It would be beneficial to include, at a minimum, the following in this developing template: clear goals based on legislated mandates and regional and partner needs, detailed strategies and activities targeting content areas of the logic model, unique and shared partner responsibilities and support to implement these strategies and activities, comprehensive methods for communicating and disseminating purposes and efforts, data-based indicators of progress and developmental steps for continued progress. Establishing a final template with ample time for directors to complete the plans prior to submission to the Division is also recommended. ERZs should ensure that key partners, representing at a minimum the IHE, ESC, schools, and family/community, are involved in the development of the yearly strategic plans and annual reports to increase their partners' commitment to and understanding of ERZ goals and activities.

Conclusion 2: Across the state, the ERZ initiative provided a variety of activities supporting school improvement. However, not all ERZs progressed from Year 1 in the implementation of strategies and activities to meet individual partners' needs.

All ERZ directors worked with their partners to identify high need areas for school improvement. For the majority of ERZs, emphasis was placed on supporting existing

teachers through professional development opportunities seen as additive rather than duplicative of existing efforts. The focus of professional development varied greatly based on partners' needs, the delivery modality (e.g., ERZ director, ESC or IHE faculty), partner buy-in and resources available through the ERZ initiative. For example, professional development strategies ranged from the use of a faculty member working with a school around classroom management, to an ERZ director delivering substitute teacher training, to IHE faculty attending Pathwise training. Similarly, but in fewer ERZs, efforts towards teacher recruitment support were implemented in Year 2. ERZ directors worked with partners to develop new recruitment materials, enhance existing materials and participate in recruitment events. In providing these myriad activities, some ERZs clearly attempted to meet the needs of their individual school partners; however, it was more common that approaches were taken to identify and address professional development and teacher recruitment needs that were more generic to the region or state. As a result, a number of partners described a lack of impact on school improvement and suggested ideas for consideration related to implementing an approach based on individual partners' needs.

Recommendation related to conclusion 2: ERZs must continue to focus on partners' needs, while recognizing their legislative mandate for economies of scale. ERZ directors should continue to emphasize meeting shared needs of partnering schools by identifying common concerns, as well as work individually with schools to identify strategies for using limited resources. An example of this may be balancing activities such as facilitating venues for skill building and information growth across schools, (i.e., regional professional development and student CIV courses) with matching an IHE faculty member to a partnering school based on that school's individual academic needs.

Conclusion 3: All ERZs strengthened partnerships built in their first year with the ERZ director serving as the dominant catalyst for communication and collaboration. The director's characteristics, (e.g., tenure in position and prior community connections) also played a role in these partnerships.

The partnerships initiated by ERZ directors during the first year of implementation have grown stronger and led to increased collaboration during Year 2. ERZ directors worked towards establishing clear two-way channels for disseminating key ERZ concepts, strategies and goals through various modes of communication, (i.e., newsletters and Web sites). It was evident from the data collected that ERZ directors were the primary lead and facilitator for almost all of the communication and collaboration related to the ERZ and the success of its partnerships. The individual characteristics of directors, including their duration in the position, were seen as vital factors in the strength, depth and extent of the investments and commitments made by ERZ partners.

Recommendation related to conclusion 3: The ERZ initiative must continue to promote two-way and multiple channels of dissemination of key ERZ concepts, strategies and goals, including ongoing posting of successes, accomplishments and future activities. To continue to build strong, long-lasting partnerships that are productive, ERZ partners'

level of understanding and commitment must be enhanced. Partners, besides the ERZ director, need to play a more visible, active and equitable role to accomplish the intent of the ERZ initiative.

Conclusion 4: Much effort in Year 2 was spent on communication and collaboration, teacher recruitment and professional development, with less emphasis on other content areas identified in the logic model.

ERZ partners reported placing a strong emphasis on and making changes to communication and collaboration, teacher recruitment, and professional development activities in Year 2. Many of these activities spanned across the first and second years of implementation; some activities were expanded upon while others remained the same. Partners had positive comments about these ERZ led and facilitated activities but identified fewer activities concentrated in other areas of the ERZ logic model, such as teacher preparation, distance learning technologies and family and community involvement.

Recommendation related to conclusion 4: ERZs are expected to engage in all legislatively mandated areas as represented in the logic model. Across the state, the ERZ initiative has pooled resources in a few of these areas, (e.g., the Round-Up and planned video on teacher recruitment) and now need to ensure they extend this approach to all mandated areas. To do this they must build the capacity of their ERZ partners by involving them more extensively in school and district improvement efforts and expanding opportunities for pooling resources.

Conclusion 5: Economies of scale were accomplished through some of the professional development activities ERZs offered and/or facilitated, but not in other areas.

ERZs were mandated to engage partners in collaborative activities at a reduced cost of resources, thus creating economies of scale. In Year 2, professional development using a variety of different methods, covering numerous topics and involving diverse participants laid the groundwork for the pooling of resources across ERZ partnerships. This is a strong example of how economies of scale can be achieved. Other areas, particularly distance learning technologies and teacher recruitment, could benefit from increased opportunities towards the use of shared resources.

Recommendation related to conclusion 5: The Division and ERZ directors meet monthly to share ideas and discuss challenges. In order to achieve additional economies of scale, ERZs statewide need to not only continue to pool their intellectual resources but also pool some of their funding and partner resources, similar to the current video project they have recently initiated. Additionally, several ERZ directors have joined together to implement the Arkansas Early College High School Program that could be useful to the other ERZs and, hence, another means to economies of scale. Discussions among the Division, ERZ

directors and other ERZ partners around legislated areas of concentration need to occur to further enhance how economies of scale can be replicated in these areas.

Conclusion 6: ERZs made progress in their second year; however, there are few systematic and consistent indicators of progress to demonstrate the accomplishments of the ERZ initiative.

As noted in the findings both this year and in Year 1, ERZs lack plans for collecting systematic evaluation data to monitor the effectiveness of planned and facilitated activities, as outlined in the legislation. IHE partners suggested local ERZ evaluations should include a more evidence-based and formalized process. The lack of data limits both local and statewide assessments of ERZ outcomes and effectiveness. A more rigorous evaluation is warranted at both levels that includes collection of common indicators linked to ERZ objectives across ERZs.

Recommendation related to conclusion 6: Local and statewide evaluations of the ERZ initiative should be conducted at least annually to determine areas of progress and improvement, as well as assess the impact on student achievement and academic performance. ERZs should regularly collaborate with their partnering schools to obtain needed school-level data related to areas needing improvement. Additionally, templates for local evaluation plans and reporting processes would be beneficial to ERZs to ensure consistency in disseminating information about their efforts. ERZ directors could work with IHE partners to enhance their evaluation instruments and plans for their local evaluations.

Appendix A

ERZ Director Interview Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ ERZ Director: _____

Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Notes to Interviewers:

The questions in this semi-structured interview are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering each of the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has already been addressed in an early part of the interview, please continue to the next question.

Welcome

*Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview should take **approximately 60-90 minutes**. Does that work okay for you?*

Goal of the Interview

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including you, the ERZ director, education service center/cooperative staff, school staff, and other university faculty. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

*I also want to clarify that we are **NOT** evaluating your individual ERZ, but rather we are **focusing our analysis at the state level** by looking across all of the ERZs.*

Use of the Information You Provide and Confidentiality

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education in July. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June. We will leave it up to Estelle to determine how to make the information in the report available to the ERZ partners.*

*I want to assure you that you will not be identified in our reports. Nor will the **report identify any individuals or schools** we interviewed. It will be a summary of findings across the ERZ partners. Where quotes or specific schools are described, they will be anonymous. If it okay with you, I would like to **record** this discussion so I can **capture the ideas** you share? The recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Director Interview Protocol 2007

Introduction

Let's begin with the implementation of the ERZ strategic plan.

- 1) What has been the main focus of your efforts to implement the strategic plan in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about the communication and collaboration to implement the ERZ vision.

- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way you communicate with the ERZ partners this past year?
 - (a) with higher education faculty or administrators?
 - (b) with the Education Service Center/Cooperative staff?
 - (c) with teachers, school/district administrators and staff?
 - (d) with advisory committee members?
- 3) To what degree have the various partners' understanding of the goals and purpose of the ERZ initiative changed this past year? (Probe for examples)
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year?
 - (a) working with university faculty?
 - (b) working with community partners?
 - (c) in relation to pre-service team teaching?
 - (d) in relation to distance learning?
- 5) In what ways have the support and communication provided by the ERZ Division Director and Specialists changed in this second year, if at all?
- 6) In what ways, if any, do you need additional support or leadership from the ERZ Division Director and Specialists to help you in your role as ERZ director or to help implement the strategic plan?

Preparing Future Teachers

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about your role in the ERZ to help the university/college improve teacher preparation.

- 7) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative influenced the teacher preparation program at the university/college in terms of current research and strategies for new teachers?
- 8) What changes in professional development for university/college faculty and pre-service teachers have occurred as a result of the ERZ, if at all?
- 9) In what ways are the university/college faculty members connecting more with schools as a result of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping to improve teacher recruitment and incentive programs.

- 10) What are the current projections for staffing needs in the partnering schools? (For example, in what grade levels or content areas are there current or future needs?)
- 11) What is being done to address the staffing needs?
 - (a) by schools/district?
 - (b) by universities ?
 - (c) by Education Service Center/Cooperative?
- 12) What changes, if any, have occurred in teacher recruitment and incentive programs as a result of the ERZ this year?
 - (a) school or district recruitment/incentive programs?
 - (d) College of Education (or other higher ed) recruitment/incentive programs?

Supporting and Retaining Existing Teachers

Now I'll ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping schools to support and retain their existing teachers.

- 13a) To what degree has a customized directory of professional development services for teachers in partnering ERZ schools been developed?
- 13b) Does the directory integrate services from both higher education and the Education Service Center/Cooperative(s)?
- 14a) In what ways, if any, has the professional development in partnering ERZ schools changed as a result of the ERZ initiative this past year?
- 14b) What is being done to monitor the quality and impact of the professional development offered?
- 15) What changes in mentoring programs for new and veteran teachers have occurred this year, if at all, as a result of the ERZ? (probe for examples)

Distance Learning Technologies

Next I'd like to turn to the topic of distance learning technologies.

- 16) Have the partnering schools done anything different this year with CIV labs or other DL technologies to increase course offerings for students as a result of the ERZ?
- 17) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way professional development is offered through CIV labs or other DL technologies this year as a result of the ERZ?

Involving Families and Community Members

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about family and community involvement.

- 18) In what ways, if any, has family or community involvement in the ERZ schools changed as a result of this initiative? (Probe for examples)

Overall Progress & Impact (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 19) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 20) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 21) What programs or strategies in this ERZ show the most promise for achieving the goals of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
 - (a) Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision?
 - (b) Recruiting and preparing future teachers?
 - (c) Supporting and retaining existing teachers?
 - (d) Using distance learning technologies?
 - (e) Involving families or community members in the partnering schools?

Suggestions for Improvement (5 minutes)

- 22) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me and to escort me to all of the site visit interviews.

ERZ Dean of Education Interview Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ ERZ Dean: _____

Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Notes to Interviewers:

The questions in this semi-structured interview are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering each of the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has already been addressed in an early part of the interview, please continue to the next question.

Welcome

*Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for you?*

Goal of the Interview

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including you, the ERZ director, education service center/cooperative staff, school staff, and other university faculty. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

*I also want to clarify that we are **NOT** evaluating your individual ERZ, but rather we are **focusing our analysis at the state level** by looking across all of the ERZs.*

Use of the Information You Provide and Confidentiality

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education in July. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.*

*I want to assure you that you will not be identified in our reports. Nor will the **report identify any individuals or schools** we interviewed. It will be a summary of findings across the ERZ partners. Where quotes or specific schools are described, they will be anonymous. If it okay with you, I would like to **record** this discussion so I can **capture the ideas** you share? The recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introduction

Let's begin with the implementation of the ERZ strategic plan.

- 1) What has been the main focus at your university/college in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about your communication and collaboration with ERZ partners about the ERZ vision and work.

- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way you have communicated with the ERZ partners this past year?
 - (a) with the ERZ Director?
 - (b) with the Education Service Center/Cooperative staff?
 - (c) with teachers, school/district administrators and staff?
 - (d) with advisory committee members?
 - (e) with other faculty or administrators here at your university/college?
- 3) In what ways has the ERZ director supported your role in the ERZ?
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year?
 - (a) working with university faculty?
 - (b) working with community partners?
 - (c) in relation to pre-service team teaching?
 - (d) in relation to distance learning?

Preparing and Recruiting Future Teachers (10 minutes)

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping to improve teacher preparation and recruitment.

- 5) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative influenced the teacher preparation program at your university/college in terms of current research and strategies for new teachers?
- 6) In what ways are the faculty members at your university/college connecting more with schools as a result of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- 7) What changes, if any, have occurred in teacher recruitment and incentive programs at as a result of the ERZ this year?

Supporting and Retaining Existing Teachers (10 minutes)

Now I'll ask a few questions about the university's role in supporting teachers in the partnering ERZ schools.

- 8) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative changed the way faculty/staff provide professional development or other resources to teachers and administrators in the partnering schools? (probe for examples)

Distance Learning Technologies (5 minutes)

Next I'd like to turn the topic to how distance learning technologies are being used.

- 9) As a result of the ERZ, what has your university/college done this past year to use distance learning (DL) technologies to offer (a) courses for students or (b) professional development for teachers in the partnering ERZs?

Involving Families and Community Members (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about family and community involvement.

- 10) In what ways, if any, has your university/college supported the growth of family or community involvement in the ERZ schools as a result of the ERZ initiative?
- 11) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ resulted in changes to the way pre-service teachers in your program learn about involving families and communities in schools in more meaningful ways?

Overall Progress & Impact (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 12) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 13) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 14) What programs or strategies in this ERZ show the most promise for achieving the goals of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- (a) Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision?
 - (b) Recruiting and preparing future teachers?
 - (c) Supporting and retaining existing teachers?
 - (d) Using distance learning technologies?
 - (e) Involving families or community members in the partnering schools?

Suggestions for Improvement (5 minutes)

- 15) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Education Service Center/Cooperative Interview Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

ESC Director: _____

ESC Teacher Coordinator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Notes to Interviewers:

The questions in this semi-structured interview are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering each of the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has already been addressed in an early part of the interview, please continue to the next question.

Welcome

*Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for you?*

Goal of the Interview

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including you, the ERZ director, higher education faculty, school staff, and district administrators. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

*I also want to clarify that we are **NOT evaluating your individual ERZ**, but rather we are **focusing our analysis at the state level** by looking across all of the ERZs.*

Use of the Information You Provide and Confidentiality

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education in July. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.*

*I want to assure you that you will not be identified in our reports. Nor will the **report identify any individuals or schools we interviewed**. It will be a summary of findings across the ERZ partners. Where quotes or specific schools are described, they will be anonymous. If it okay with you, I would like to **record this discussion so I can capture the ideas you share?** The recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Education Service Center/Cooperative Interview Protocol 2007

Introduction (5 minutes)

Let's begin with the implementation of the ERZ strategic plan.

- 1) What has been the main focus at your ESC/Cooperative in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about your communication and collaboration with ERZ partners about the ERZ vision and work.

- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way you have communicated with the ERZ partners this past year?
 - (a) with the ERZ Director?
 - (b) with higher education faculty or administrators?
 - (c) with teachers, school/district administrators and staff?
 - (d) with advisory committee members?
 - (e) with other Education Service Center/Cooperative staff or administrators?
- 3) In what ways has the ERZ director supported your role in the ERZ?
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year?
 - (a) working with university faculty?
 - (b) working with community partners?
 - (c) in relation to pre-service team teaching?
 - (d) in relation to distance learning?

Preparing and Recruiting Future Teachers (5 minutes)

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping to improve teacher preparation and recruitment.

- 5) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative influenced the way your ESC/Cooperative has worked with higher education faculty in the teacher preparation program in terms of current research and strategies for new teachers?

Supporting and Retaining Existing Teachers (10 minutes)

Now I'll ask a few questions about the university's role in supporting teachers in the partnering ERZ schools.

- 6) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative changed the way your ESC/Cooperative provides professional development or other resources to teachers and administrators in the partnering schools? (probe for examples)
- 7) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ influenced the way you work with higher education faculty to coordinate professional development services?

8a) To what degree has a customized directory of professional development services for teachers in partnering ERZ schools been developed?

8b) Does the directory integrate services from both higher education and the Education Service Cooperative(s)?

Distance Learning Technologies (5 minutes)

Next I'd like to turn the topic to how distance learning technologies are being used.

9) As a result of the ERZ, what has your ESC/Cooperative done this past year to use distance learning (DL) technologies to offer (a) courses for students or (b) professional development for teachers in the partnering ERZs?

Involving Families and Community Members (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about family and community involvement.

10) In what ways, if any, has your ESC/Cooperative supported the growth of family or community involvement in the ERZ schools as a result of the ERZ initiative?

11) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ resulted in changes to professional development offerings related to the involvement of families and communities in schools in more meaningful ways?

Overall Progress & Impact (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

12) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?

13) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?

14) What programs or strategies in this ERZ show the most promise for achieving the goals of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)

(a) Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision?

(b) Recruiting and preparing future teachers?

(c) Supporting and retaining existing teachers?

(d) Using distance learning technologies?

(e) Involving families or community members in the partnering schools?

Suggestions for Improvement (5 minutes)

15) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Principal/Superintendent Interview Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ Evaluator: _____

ERZ Principal/Superintendent: _____ Date: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Notes to Interviewers:

The questions in this semi-structured interview are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering each of the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has already been addressed in an early part of the interview, please continue to the next question.

Welcome

*Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This interview should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for you?*

Goal of the Interview

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including you, the ERZ director, education service center/cooperative staff, school staff, and other university faculty. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

*I also want to clarify that we are **NOT evaluating your individual ERZ**, but rather we are **focusing our analysis at the state level** by looking across all of the ERZs.*

Use of the Information You Provide and Confidentiality

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education in July. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.*

*I want to assure you that you will not be identified in our reports. Nor will the **report identify any individuals or schools** we interviewed. It will be a summary of findings across the ERZ partners. Where quotes or specific schools are described, they will be anonymous. If it okay with you, I would like to **record this discussion** so I can **capture the ideas** you share? The recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Principal/Superintendent Interview Protocol 2007

Introduction

Let's begin with the implementation of the ERZ strategic plan.

- 1) What has been the main focus at your school or district in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about your communication and collaboration with ERZ partners about the ERZ vision and work.

- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way you have communicated with the ERZ partners this past year?
 - (a) with higher education faculty or administrators?
 - (b) with the Education Service Center/Cooperative staff?
 - (c) with other ERZ school or district administrators or staff?
 - (d) with advisory committee members?
- 3) In what ways has the ERZ director supported your role in the ERZ?
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year?
 - (a) working with university faculty?
 - (b) working with community partners?
 - (c) in relation to pre-service team teaching?
 - (d) in relation to distance learning?

Preparing and Recruiting Future Teachers (10 minutes)

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping to improve teacher preparation and recruitment.

- 5) In what ways, if any, are the university/college faculty members connecting more with your school or district as a result of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- 6) What are the current projections for staffing needs in your school or district? (For example, in what grade levels or content areas are there current or future needs?)
- 7) What changes, if any, have occurred in your school or district's teacher recruitment and incentive programs as a result of the ERZ this year?

Supporting and Retaining Existing Teachers (10 minutes)

Now I'll ask a few questions about the university's role in supporting teachers in the partnering ERZ schools.

- 8) In what ways, if any, has the professional development in your school or district changed as a result of the ERZ initiative this past year? (Probe for ways in which professional development has changed in relation to (a) higher ed and (b) the ESC/Cooperative?)

- 9) What changes in mentoring programs for new and veteran teachers have occurred this year, if at all, as a result of the ERZ? (probe for examples)

Distance Learning Technologies (5 minutes)

Next I'd like to turn the topic to distance learning technologies .

- 10) Has your school or district done anything different this year with CIV labs or other DL technologies to increase course offerings for students as a result of the ERZ?
- 11) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way professional development is offered through CIV labs or other DL technologies this year as a result of the ERZ?

Involving Families and Community Members (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about family and community involvement.

- 12) In what ways, if any, has family or community involvement in your school or district changed as a result of this initiative? (Probe for examples)

Overall Progress & Impact (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 13) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 14) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 15) What programs or strategies in _____ ERZ show the most promise for achieving the goals of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- (a) Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision?
 - (b) Recruiting and preparing future teachers?
 - (c) Supporting and retaining existing teachers?
 - (d) Using distance learning technologies?
 - (e) Involving families or community members in the partnering schools?

Suggestions for Improvement (5 minutes)

- 16) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Higher Education Focus Group Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ IHE: _____

Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Focus Group Set-up

- Put sign-up sheet, pen, agenda, and candy (optional) on the table
- Prepare and test recorder and microphone, be sure to turn them on when you begin
- Greet people, direct them to sign in and pick up an agenda
- Follow protocol and take notes

Welcome

*Thank you for participating in our discussion about your involvement in the Education Renewal Zone (ERZ). My name is _____ and I am an evaluator from the **Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)**. We're glad for this opportunity to talk with you about the ERZ initiative.*

Review of Agenda

*Everyone should have a green agenda sheet for jotting down thoughts or ideas you may want to speak about. This focus group should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for everyone?*

Goal of the Focus Group

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including teachers, the ERZ director, university administrators and faculty, education service center/cooperative staff, and other school staff. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

Procedures and Confidentiality

*We want to foster a discussion about what you are doing to implement the ERZ strategic plan and your efforts to achieve ERZ goals for your school. We want to hear from all of you. Please be as candid as possible. No one will be identified in any reports. I would like to **record** this discussion so I can **capture the ideas** you share. I want to assure you that the recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Use of the Information You Provide

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Higher Education Focus Group Protocol 2007

(Notes to Evaluator: The questions are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has been addressed earlier in the focus group, continue to the next question. It will be helpful to review the ERZ strategic plan prior to the focus group. Insert the name of the ERZ at appropriate points in the protocol.)

Focus Group Questions

Introduction (5 minutes)

I'd like to start with a discussion of the implementation of the ERZ strategic.

- 1) What has been the main focus at your university/college in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about your communication and collaboration with ERZ partners about the ERZ vision and work.

- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way you have communicated with the ERZ partners this past year?
 - (a) with the ERZ Director?
 - (b) with the Education Service Center/Cooperative staff?
 - (c) with teachers, school/district administrators or staff?
 - (d) with ERZ advisory committee members?
 - (e) with the other faculty or administrators here at your university/college?
- 3) In what ways has the ERZ director supported your role in the ERZ
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners and the advisory committee this year? (for example: through faculty sharing, pre-service team teaching, distance learning, advisory committees, etc.)

Preparing and Recruiting Future Teachers (10 minutes)

Next I'd like to ask a few questions about the ERZ's role in helping to improve teacher preparation and recruitment..

- 5) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative influenced the teacher preparation program at your university/college in terms of current research and strategies for new teachers?
- 6) In what ways are the faculty members at your university/college connecting more with schools as a result of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- 7) What changes, if any, have occurred in teacher recruitment and incentive programs at as a result of the ERZ this year ?

Supporting and Retaining Existing Teachers (10 minutes)

Now I'll ask a few questions about the university's role in supporting teachers in the partnering ERZ schools.

- 8) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ initiative changed the way faculty/staff provide professional development or other resources to teachers and administrators in the partnering schools? (probe for examples)

Distance Learning Technologies (5 minutes)

Next I'd like to turn the topic to how distance learning technologies are being used.

- 9) As a result of the ERZ, what has your university/college done this past year to use distance learning (DL) technologies to offer (a) courses for students or (b) professional development for teachers in the partnering ERZs?

Involving Families and Community Members (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about family and community involvement.

- 10) In what ways, if any, has your university/college supported the growth of family or community involvement in the ERZ schools as a result of the ERZ initiative
- 11) In what ways, if any, has the ERZ resulted in changes to the way pre-service teachers in your program learn about involving families and communities in schools in more meaningful ways?

Overall Progress & Impact (5 minutes)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 12) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 13) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 14) What programs or strategies in this ERZ show the most promise for achieving the goals of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples related to the following if time permits)
- (a) Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision?
 - (b) Recruiting and preparing future teachers?
 - (c) Supporting and retaining existing teachers?
 - (d) Using distance learning technologies?
 - (e) Involving families or community members in the partnering schools?

Suggestions for Improvement (5 minutes)

- 15) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Higher Education Focus Group 2007

Sign-in Sheet

ERZ: _____ School: _____

Date: _____

Welcome and thank you
for participating!

Name	What grade/subject do you teach?	What role do you have in the ERZ?
<i>Example: Dr. Jane Jones</i>	<i>Education, Secondary Education</i>	<i>Pre-Service Teacher Coordinator</i>

ERZ Higher Education Focus Group 2007

Agenda

Welcome

Review of Agenda

Goal of the Focus Group

Procedures and Confidentiality

What will We do with the Information You Provide?

Focus Group Questions and Answers

- Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision

- Recruiting and preparing future teachers

- Supporting and retaining existing teachers

- Using distance learning technologies

- Involving families or community members in the partnering schools

Wrap Up

Your Notes:

ERZ Teacher Focus Group Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ School: _____

Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Focus Group Set-up

- Put sign-up sheet, pen, agenda, and candy (optional) on the table
- Prepare and test recorder and microphone, be sure to turn them on when you begin
- Greet people, direct them to sign in and pick up an agenda
- Follow protocol and take notes

Welcome

*Thank you for participating in our discussion about your involvement in the Education Renewal Zone (ERZ). My name is _____ and I am an evaluator from the **Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)**. We're glad for this opportunity to talk with you about the ERZ initiative.*

Review of Agenda

*Everyone should have a green agenda sheet for jotting down thoughts or ideas you may want to speak about. This focus group should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for everyone?*

Goal of the Focus Group

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including teachers, the ERZ director, university administrators and faculty, education service center/cooperative staff, and other school staff. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. **The information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

Procedures and Confidentiality

*We want to foster a discussion about what you are doing to implement the ERZ strategic plan and your efforts to achieve ERZ goals for your school. We want to hear from all of you. Please be as candid as possible. No one will be identified in any reports. I would like to **record** this discussion so I can **capture the ideas** you share. I want to assure you that the recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Use of the Information You Provide

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools**. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Teacher Focus Group Protocol 2007

(Notes to Evaluator: The questions are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has been addressed earlier in the focus group, continue to the next question. It will be helpful to review the ERZ strategic plan prior to the focus group, especially any parts related to the school. Insert the name of the ERZ at appropriate points in the protocol.)

Focus Group Questions

Introduction (5 minutes)

I'd like to start with a discussion of the implementation of the ERZ strategic.

- 1) First, what has been the main focus at your school in this second year of ERZ implementation?

Communicating, Collaborating, and Implementing the ERZ Vision (5 minutes)

Now I'll ask about your communication and collaboration with ERZ partners about the ERZ vision and work.

- 2) In what ways, if any, are the university/college faculty members connecting more with your school as a result of the ERZ initiative? (probe for examples)
- 3) In what ways, if any, has the professional development in your school changed as a result of the ERZ initiative this past year?
 - (a) in general?
 - (b) in relation to higher ed?
 - (c) in relation to the Education Service Center/Cooperative?
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year?
 - (a) working with university faculty?
 - (b) working with community partners?
 - (c) in relation to pre-service team teaching?
 - (d) in relation to distance learning?
- 5) What changes, if any, in mentoring programs for new and veteran teachers have occurred this year as a result of the ERZ? (probe for examples)
- 6) Has your school done anything different this year with CIV labs or other DL technologies as a result of the ERZ?
 - (a) to increase course offerings for students?
 - (b) in the way professional development is offered through CIV labs or other DL technologies?
- 7) In what ways, if any, has family or community involvement in your school changed as a result of the ERZ initiative? (Probe for examples)

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 8) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 9) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 10) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Teacher Focus Group 2007

Sign-in Sheet

ERZ: _____ School: _____

Date: _____

Welcome and thank you
for participating!

Name	What grade/subject do you teach?	What role do you have in the ERZ?
<i>Example: Jane Jones</i>	<i>7th Grade Science</i>	<i>Teacher in learning project</i>

ERZ Teacher Focus Group 2007

Agenda

Welcome

Review of Agenda

Goal of the Focus Group

Procedures and Confidentiality

What will We do with the Information You Provide?

Focus Group Questions and Answers

- Communicating and collaborating to implement the ERZ vision

- Recruiting and preparing future teachers

- Supporting and retaining existing teachers

- Using distance learning technologies

- Involving families or community members in the partnering schools

Wrap Up

Your Notes:

ERZ Advisory Committee Focus Group Protocol 2007

ERZ: _____ Date: _____ Evaluator: _____

Pre-Interview Notes: (description of setting/contextual issues that may influence interview)

Focus Group Set-up

- Put sign-up sheet, pen, agenda, and candy (optional) on the table
- Prepare and test recorder and microphone, be sure to turn them on when you begin
- Greet people, direct them to sign in and pick up an agenda
- Follow protocol and take notes

Welcome

Thank you for participating in our discussion about your involvement in the Education Renewal Zone (ERZ). My name is ____ and I am an evaluator from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). We're glad for this opportunity to talk with you about the ERZ initiative.

Review of Agenda

*Everyone should have a green agenda sheet for jotting down thoughts or ideas you may want to speak about. This focus group should take **no more than 60 minutes**. Does that work okay for everyone?*

Goal of the Focus Group

*This is SEDL's second year of visits to eight ERZs. We are interviewing ERZ staff and partners, including you, the ERZ director, university administrators and faculty, education service center/cooperative staff, and school staff. We are interested in what the ERZs accomplished and impact made, especially in relation to a year ago. The **information collected will help SEDL document information about the implementation of the ERZs and develop suggestions for improvement.***

Procedures and Confidentiality

*We want to foster a discussion about what you are doing to implement the ERZ strategic plan and your efforts to achieve ERZ goals for your school. We want to hear from all of you. Please be as candid as possible. No one will be identified in any reports. I would like to **record** this discussion so I can **capture the ideas** you share. I want to assure you that the recording will be for SEDL use only.*

Use of the Information You Provide

*We are very interested in your true opinions and encourage **frank answers**. The more you share with us, the better able we are to use this information to **identify the strengths and difficulties of this statewide initiative and ultimately to improve educational experiences for students in Arkansas schools. Findings from all of the site visits will be synthesized and included in a report SEDL will submit to the Arkansas Department of Education. A draft of the report will first be shared during the ERZ Directors Networking Meeting in June.***

Do you have any questions before we begin?

ERZ Advisory Committee Focus Group Protocol 2007

(Notes to Evaluator: The questions are intended to guide a discussion about the ERZ initiative, covering the logic model areas and evaluation questions. If the answer to any question has been addressed earlier in the focus group, continue to the next question. It will be helpful to review the ERZ strategic plan prior to the focus group. Insert the name of the ERZ at appropriate points in the protocol.)

Focus Group Questions

- 1) First, what has been the main focus for the advisory committee in this second year of ERZ implementation?
- 2) What changes, if any, have occurred in the way ERZ partners have communicated this past year?
 - (a) related to higher education faculty or administrators?
 - (b) related to Education Service Center/Cooperative staff?
 - (c) related to teachers, school/district administrators or staff?
 - (d) related to advisory committee members?
- 3) To what degree have the various partners' understanding of the goals and purpose of the ERZ initiative changed this past year? (Probe for examples)
- 4) Are you aware of any new types of collaborations that have occurred as a result of your work with the ERZ partners this year? (i.e., between partners, through distance learning technologies, etc.)
- 5) In what ways, if any, has the advisory committee supported the connections between higher ed, the Education Service Center/Cooperative and partnering ERZ schools? (probe for examples)
- 6) In what ways, if any, has the advisory committee monitored the implementation of the strategic plan in this second year of the initiative?
- 7) In what ways have the support and communication provided by the ERZ Director changed in this second year, if at all?
- 8) In what ways, if any, do you need additional support or leadership from the ERZ Director to help you in your role as an advisory committee member?

Now I'd like to begin wrapping up the interview by asking about your impressions of the overall progress and impact that you think the ERZ is having or will have.

- 9) What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of the _____ ERZ thus far?
- 10) What have been the biggest challenges in this second year of implementation?
- 11) As a final question, what suggestions do you have for improving this ERZ?

Conclusion

This concludes my questions for you. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss that we have not already addressed?

Thank you for taking time to meet with me.

ERZ Advisory Committee Focus Group 2007

Sign-in Sheet

ERZ: _____ School: _____

Date: _____

Welcome and thank you
for participating!

Name	Title/Position/Affiliation	Member of any ERZ subcommittee?

ERZ Advisory Committee Focus Group 2007

Agenda

Welcome

Review of Agenda

Goal of the Focus Group

Procedures and Confidentiality

What will We do with the Information You Provide?

Focus Group Questions and Answers

Wrap Up

Your Notes:

Arkansas Education Renewal Zone Initiative Spring 2007 Evaluation Survey

Please take a moment to read this information before you begin the survey.

The Arkansas Education Renewal Zone (ERZ) initiative is a statewide effort to significantly improve public school performance and student academic achievement through partnerships between higher education, education service cooperatives, public schools, and their communities. The information collected will help SEDL document the progress of this initiative and develop suggestions for improvement. The survey should take about 15-20 minutes. We greatly appreciate your time and candid feedback. Your responses are strictly confidential. No individual responses will be used in any report.

The following acronyms will be used throughout the survey:

ERZ = Education Renewal Zone ESC = Education Service Cooperative

1. In which ERZ are you participating?

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Central | <input type="radio"/> Southeast | <input type="radio"/> Southwest-B |
| <input type="radio"/> Central & Northeast | <input type="radio"/> South Central | <input type="radio"/> Western |
| <input type="radio"/> Northwest | <input type="radio"/> Southwest-A | <input type="radio"/> Don't know |

2. What is your position?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Higher Education Dean | <input type="radio"/> School Teacher |
| <input type="radio"/> Higher Education Faculty | <input type="radio"/> District Superintendent (or other district staff) |
| <input type="radio"/> School Principal | <input type="radio"/> ESC Staff (e.g., Director, Coordinator, or other) |
| <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ | |

3. Are you a member of an advisory board or steering committee for your ERZ?

- Yes If yes, how many times have you met in the current school year? _____
- No

4. Are you familiar with the strategic plan for Year 2 (school year 2006-2007) of your ERZ?

- Yes No

5. How much focus was given to the activities below in this 2nd year of implementation of your ERZ?	(check only one related to 2 nd year activities)						Was a focus last year	Will be a focus next year
	All of the focus	Most of the focus	Some of the focus	Little of the focus	None of the focus	Don't know		
a. Communication/collaboration of ERZ partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Preparation of future teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Recruitment of future teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Retention of existing teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Distance learning technologies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Family/community member involvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Other, please describe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use this space to clarify any of the above answers:

6. Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your ERZ:

Factor	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Clear and realistic goals	a. I clearly understand the goals and purposes of our ERZ.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	b. We have established concrete, attainable Year 2 goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear roles and guidelines	c. I have a clear sense of my ERZ roles and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	d. Other ERZ partners have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular Communication	e. I am kept well informed about our ERZ activities and developments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	f. I have regular communication with ERZ partners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appropriate pace of implementation	g. I am not overburdened with my ERZ activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	h. Our implementation of ERZ activities has gone too slow.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate funds and staff	i. Our ERZ has adequate funds to accomplish our goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	j. Our ERZ has adequate “people power” to accomplish our goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skilled leadership	k. Our ERZ Director has good skills for working with partnerships, (i.e., people and organizations).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use this space to clarify any of the above answer

7. How much change occurred in the following activities during the 2006-2007 school year <u>as a result of the ERZ?</u>	Total change	Much change	Some change	Little change	No change	Changed but not related to ERZ
<i>Communication and Collaboration</i>						
a. Higher education faculty working more directly with teachers in the partnering schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Higher education faculty and ESC staff working more together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. New collaborations developing with community partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Preparation and Recruitment of Future Teachers</i>						
d. Revising teacher preparation courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Revising requirements for field experiences of pre-service teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Identifying current teacher staffing needs in partnering ERZ schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Designing new recruitment strategies to increase pre-service teacher applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Designing new recruitment strategies to target high-need staffing levels or content areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use this space to clarify any of the above answers:

7. cont. How much change occurred in the following activities during the 2006-2007 school year as a result of the ERZ?	Total change	Much change	Some change	Little change	No change	Changed but not related to ERZ
Support and Retention of Existing Teachers in Partnering ERZ schools						
i. Identifying current professional development needs for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Providing more professional development opportunities for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Providing more professional development opportunities for administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Coordinating more between higher education faculty and ESC staff to provide professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Providing new mentoring program training and implementation opportunities for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distance Learning Technologies in Partnering ERZ schools						
n. Using more Compressed Interactive Video (CIV) labs for professional development for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Using more CIV labs to increase course offerings for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family and Community Involvement						
p. Identifying current levels of family and community involvement in partnering ERZ schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Designing new and effective strategies to increase family and community member involvement in ERZ activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use this space to clarify any of the above answers

8. To what extent have the following factors been a challenge to implementing your Year 2 ERZ strategic plan?	Total challenge	Much challenge	Some challenge	Little challenge	No challenge	Don't know
a. Higher education policies/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. State policies/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. ESC policies/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. District/school policies/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Inadequate funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Turf issues between ERZ partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Lack of commitment from university administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Lack of rewards/incentives for faculty/staff involved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Different commitment/ownership levels of ERZ partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Personality clashes among ERZ partners/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Lack of time for collaborative activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Poor communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Other (explain):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use this space to clarify any of the above answers:

9. What do you see as the greatest accomplishments of your ERZ thus far?

10. What suggestions do you have for improving your ERZ?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!!

Questions? – Please contact:

Zena Rudo

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

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Appendix B

ERZ Year 2 Site Visit Coding Framework

ERZ Year 2 Site Visit Coding Framework	Number of Sites	Frequency
Communication & Collaboration		
Main Focus of ERZ	5	63%
Establishing Credibility with partners	1	13%
Partners have input into strategic plan	5	63%
University faculty & admin familiar with goals	4	50%
Teachers familiar with goals	1	13%
School admin familiar with goals	6	75%
ERZ presented goals/purposes to partners	5	63%
Increasing partners' awareness of ADE	1	13%
Open communication with ESC	5	63%
Established list serves	2	25%
Partners are aware of strategic plan (Based on summary)	2	25%
Emails partners	8	100%
Phone conversations	8	100%
Website	3	38%
Personal interactions	8	100%
Written updates	1	13%
Newsletter	2	25%
Facilitated communication between partners	5	63%
Strengthening relationships	7	88%
Challenge of involving university	2	25%
New Network opportunities (e.g., Job alike group)	1	13%
Preparation & Recruitment of Future Teachers		
Main Focus of ERZ	5	63%
Has not been a focus of this ERZ	1	13%
Re-design teacher prep program	2	25%
Conferences for pre-service students in PD	3	38%
Individual faculty modify lectures	3	38%
Better understanding of why changes could not be made immediately	1	13%
Challenge recruiting special education teachers	6	75%
Challenge recruiting English teachers	1	13%
Challenge recruiting Speech pathologist	1	13%
Challenge recruiting math & science teachers	6	75%
Challenge recruiting foreign language	2	25%
Challenge recruiting ELL teachers	3	38%
Linked with ADE	4	50%
Recruitment/Teacher fair	5	63%
Assisting Univ. to write teacher recruitment plan	1	13%
Grow-your-Own/Teachers of tomorrow	4	50%
Identification of incentives & strategies for recruitment	3	38%
Future teachers course	1	13%
Recruitment video for high school students	1	13%
High Yield Consortium	1	13%
Graduate directory for recruitment	2	25%

ERZ Year 2 Site Visit Coding Framework	Number of Sites	Frequency
Support & Retention of Existing Teachers		
Main Focus of ERZ	6	75%
Has not been a focus of this ERZ	1	13%
Conducted needs assessment	8	100%
Math & Science teacher support (e.g., PD/linking to the university)	6	75%
Direct contact between Univ. faculty & teachers	6	75%
ERZ director provides direct PD	6	75%
Co-teaching	1	13%
PD for special education	1	13%
Univ. faculty trained on providing PD	2	25%
Partners developing PD plan	1	13%
Informal assessment of trainings	2	25%
Support for new teachers	6	75%
Customized directory of pd & services from IHE	2	25%
Comprehensive Professional Development Catalogue	1	13%
Facilitates PD at ESC to meet partnering school needs	2	25%
ERZ viewed as competition for providing PD	3	38%
Identified incentives to retain teachers	1	13%
Gathering retention information	1	13%
Teacher Fairs	5	63%
Teacher retention workshop	1	13%
University presentations to students	2	25%
Mentoring support for teachers	5	63%
Distance Learning		
Main Focus of ERZ	1	13%
Has not been a focus for this ERZ	7	88%
Planning strategies for use	3	38%
Available through ESC	7	88%
AECHS	6	75%
Used for meetings	1	13%
Provided CIV classroom for University	1	13%
Family & Community Involvement		
Main Focus of ERZ	1	13%
Has not been a focus for this ERZ	3	38%
Activities only reported by ERZ director	1	13%
Increased awareness at community level	2	25%
Career Fair	2	25%
Partnering with community agencies	1	13%
Education Forum (involved both community & parents)	2	25%
After school tutoring programs (community & parents)	2	25%
Outreach to parents	3	38%
PD for parents	1	13%
Partners		
Added partners	4	50%
Lost partners	3	38%
Geographical challenges	4	50%
Unable to identify ERZ initiated PD/events	3	38%

ERZ Year 2 Site Visit Coding Framework	Number of Sites	Frequency
Promising Practices		
Energy and personality of director	5	63%
Assisting low income district to prepare for teacher recruitment	1	13%
Mock audits and Praxis	2	25%
University faculty attended training	2	25%
Level of family and community involvement	2	25%
PD offered/provided	4	50%
Professors Partnering with Professionals	1	13%
Teacher recruitment	2	25%
New Teacher Induction	1	13%
Professional Development collaboration	3	38%
Director		
Experienced turnover	2	25%
Positive perception by partners	8	100%
Economies of Scale		
Has not been addressed	1	13%
Professional Development	7	88%
Collaboration between school districts	3	38%
Use of ESC resources	4	50%
Teacher recruitment	2	25%
Areas of Overall Progress		
Hiring new director	2	25%
Become more entrenched with constituents	1	13%
Levels of collaboration	4	50%
Positive relationship with ESC	4	50%
Additional staff member (ELL)	1	13%
Increased community involvement	3	38%
Stronger partnerships	3	38%
Collecting data to demonstrate effectiveness	3	38%
Pre-service modifications	1	13%
Suggestions for Improvements		
Stronger communication	8	100%
Distinguish ERZ work from other pre-existing relationships	3	38%
Prioritize needs of partners based upon desire	1	13%
Stronger focus on Distance Learning Technology	4	50%
Create lab school	1	13%
University involvement has been low	2	25%
Family and community	3	38%
Having additional funds to support PD	4	50%
Stronger evaluation process	5	63%
Alignment of standards & curriculum	1	13%
Improve relationship with ESC	3	38%
Consistency in programs offered	2	25%
Incentives needed for University faculty who provide PD/mentoring	2	25%
Increase staff	3	38%
Other Involvement		
Provides PD to University	3	38%
University faculty trained in Pathwise	2	25%

Appendix C

Survey Responses to ERZ Challenges

Extent that the following factors have been a challenge during Year 2 Implementation										
1=Total Challenge to 5=No Challenge										
		District Staff	ESC Staff	Higher Ed Deans	Higher Ed Faculty	School Principals	School Support Staff	Teachers	Other Respondents	All Respondents
Higher education policies/procedures	Average	3.35	3.00	3.40	3.73	3.05	3.67	3.77	3.50	3.69
	N	23	4	10	15	19	3	271	4	354
	“Don’t Know”	10	4	-	8	-	10	301	7	340
State policies/procedures	Average	3.50	3.60	2.70	3.33	3.10	4.33	3.75	2.67	3.65
	N	28	5	10	12	20	3	264	3	350
	“Don’t Know”	5	3	-	11	-	10	309	8	346
ESC policies/procedures	Average	3.76	4.00	3.20	3.44	3.50	4.33	4.00	4.00	3.93
	N	25	6	10	9	16	3	239	3	316
	“Don’t Know”	8	2	-	14	-	10	321	8	363
District/school policies/procedures	Average	3.77	3.40	2.80	2.91	3.64	4.33	3.78	3.67	3.72
	N	30	5	10	11	25	3	283	3	368
	“Don’t Know”	3	3	-	12	-	10	284	8	320
Inadequate funding	Average	3.78	3.33	3.20	3.55	2.61	4.00	2.73	3.00	2.83
	N	23	6	10	11	18	3	262	4	337
	“Don’t Know”	11	2	-	12	-	10	308	7	350

Extent that the following factors have been a challenge during Year 2 Implementation										
1=Total Challenge to 5=No Challenge										
		District Staff	ESC Staff	Higher Ed Deans	Higher Ed Faculty	School Principals	School Support Staff	Teachers	Other Respondents	All Respondents
Turf issues between ERZ partners	Average	4.30	3.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.33	4.13	4.25	4.12
	N	27	8	9	13	19	3	247	4	333
	“Don’t Know”	5	-	-	10	-	10	321	7	353
Lack of commitment from university administration	Average	4.07	3.83	4.00	4.47	4.00	4.50	3.79	2.50	3.88
	N	27	6	10	15	21	4	247	4	338
	“Don’t Know”	6	2	-	8	-	9	315	7	347
Lack of rewards/incentives for faculty/staff involved	Average	3.92	3.67	2.50	3.27	3.63	4.25	2.90	3.33	3.08
	N	26	6	10	15	19	4	267	3	355
	“Don’t Know”	7	2	-	8	-	9	300	8	334
Different commitment/ownership levels of ERZ partners	Average	4.04	3.17	3.20	3.73	3.56	4.00	4.05	3.50	3.98
	N	27	6	10	15	18	2	244	4	330
	“Don’t Know”	6	2	-	8	-	10	322	7	355
Personality clashes among ERZ partners/staff	Average	4.73	4.14	4.80	4.47	4.41	4.33	4.27	4.25	4.35
	N	26	7	10	17	22	3	249	4	341
	“Don’t Know”	7	1	-	6	-	10	319	7	350

Extent that the following factors have been a challenge during Year 2 Implementation										
1=Total Challenge to 5=No Challenge										
		District Staff	ESC Staff	Higher Ed Deans	Higher Ed Faculty	School Principals	School Support Staff	Teachers	Other Respondents	All Respondents
Lack of time for collaborative activities	Average	3.37	3.71	2.90	3.31	3.18	3.75	3.64	2.75	3.57
	N	30	7	10	16	22	4	282	4	379
	“Don’t Know”	3	1	-	7	-	9	290	7	317
Poor communication	Average	4.55	4.43	4.80	4.00	4.13	4.33	4.02	4.50	4.14
	N	31	7	10	18	23	6	282	4	383
	“Don’t Know”	2	1	-	5	-	7	288	7	310
Other challenges	Average	-	-	-	2.33	3.00	4.33	3.47	3.00	3.51
	N	-	-	-	3	2	3	55	1	67
	“Don’t Know”	3	-	-	1	-	7	227	6	244