

## **Appendix: Study Methods for Reports Based on CEP's Fall 2011 State Survey**

The findings presented in this series of reports are based on responses to a survey that the Center on Education Policy (CEP) and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (CEP's contractor for this project) administered to the deputy state superintendents of education between early October 2011 and late November 2011. The survey team invited the deputies in the 50 states and the District of Columbia to complete the survey.

Following consultation on item development with staff in the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and consultants, the survey team sent initial letters to the deputies that explained the purposes of the survey and invited them to participate. The team distributed the survey to each state via email and followed up with non-responders at approximately weekly intervals by phone and by e-mail. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia submitted surveys for an overall response rate of 75 percent.

The survey, titled "Survey of State Fiscal Conditions, Reform Capacity, ARRA Reforms, Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and Changes in ESEA, Fall 2011," included 34 questions, divided into the following five sections.

***State fiscal environment for elementary and secondary education.*** Questions in this section asked about changes in funding for elementary and secondary education in the state as well as changes in funding for the state education agency (SEA). States that reported decreases in funding were asked a second series of questions regarding personnel actions or reductions in services to districts as a result of the budget cuts.

***SEA staff and capacity to carry out current and planned reforms.*** Questions in this section asked SEAs to describe shifts in staffing levels in a number of areas over the past 12 months as well as shifts anticipated in the coming 12 months. SEAs were also asked to indicate whether they felt they had adequate staff expertise, staffing levels and fiscal resources in five areas of SEA capacity.

***State efforts associated with each of the four American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) assurances.*** In this section, states were presented with a series of questions about implementation of strategies associated with the four ARRA assurances as well as whether these assurances had affected the state's reform agenda and what impact ARRA and EduJobs funds had on elementary and secondary education.

***State adoption and implementation of the CCSS.*** The questions in this section asked about the impact of the CCSS within the state, anticipated challenges, and the communication strategies the SEA was using to prepare for statewide implementation. States were also asked to indicate areas in which they would need to make changes to their P-20 policies and practices and when they anticipated that the CCSS would be fully implemented.

***Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization and state plans to apply for waivers.*** Questions in this section asked states to indicate whether and when they anticipated they would apply for a waiver of certain ESEA requirements, in which of the 10 areas outlined by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) they anticipated requesting a waiver, and the current status of the state's efforts to address ED's four principles for improving student academic achievement and increasing the quality of instruction.

Most of the questions in the survey asked respondents to select a response (or multiple responses in some cases) from a set of options. Seventeen questions provided respondents with space to insert comments or explanations regarding their responses. The approach was slightly different for the four questions relating to the ARRA assurances (in the third section of the survey). Each of these questions provided a list of reform strategies related to an assurance and states were asked to indicate whether each of the reform strategies was planned or underway in the state. For all strategies that were SEA activities, states were asked to indicate the expected school year of full implementation. The study team coded the implementation year information into three categories: *Implemented* (the state had implemented the strategy prior to the end of the 2010-11 school year), *Implementing this year or later* (the state was implementing the strategy starting in 2011-12 or later), and *Ongoing or unknown date* (the data of full implementation was unknown or the strategy was one the state engaged in on an ongoing basis).

The survey team used statistical analysis software to store, clean, and analyze the survey data. The team handled missing data in one of two ways. In most cases, if a respondent completely skipped a question, the response was counted as missing but not reported in the totals in this series of reports (this is why not all of the response totals sum to 38). Some items asked respondents about specific changes or reform activities and the year in which the changes or reforms are expected to be completed. In these cases, if a respondent indicated that a change or reform was expected but did not indicate an anticipated year of completion, the response was counted in the frequency totals and the year was coded as unknown. Finally, because there were very few responses to open-ended items, the survey team did not include these responses in any statistical analyses or frequency calculations. However, the report authors did review the open-ended responses and inserted them in the text where appropriate to help illustrate key points and findings.