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The Policy Center brings clarity to complex issues by examining all sides and presenting objective, research-based views. Staff respond to requests from Congress and federal agencies, and state and local agencies, addressing inquiries from legislators, boards of education, and other policy leaders.

One of the Center's primary initiatives is the California Mayors Education Roundtable, which brings together mayors of California's larger cities, district superintendents, and their key staff to share data, evidence-based and promising practices, and programmatic strategies to address local challenges affecting students' education and career success.

The Policy Center operates the West Comprehensive Center, which helps Arizona, Nevada, and Utah state leaders with their initiatives to implement, support, scale up, and sustain statewide education reforms. The Center also works with the University of Oklahoma to support the states of Colorado and New Mexico. Since 2005, WestEd has operated the center, formerly known as the Southwest Comprehensive Center (2005–2012).

Selected Highlights

- Secured funding and partnership from the Helios Foundation to initiate the Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable, starting with ten of the state's mayors wishing to learn more about ways their cities can help local school districts. This initiative was built on the work and lessons learned from the California Mayors Education Roundtable.
- Awarded funding to operate the West Comprehensive Center and serve as subcontractor for the Central and South Central Regional Centers.
- Secured a \$5-million grant using H-1B visa funds from the U.S. Department of Labor to partner with the city of San Francisco, IBM, AT&T, and the City College of San Francisco to provide training designed to increase the technical skills of workers in the city.
- Partnered with the University of Virginia to offer a training program for 69 school turnaround leaders from 14 school districts in the states served by the Southwest Comprehensive Center; the program is receiving positive attention from the U.S. Department of Education and is in high demand from state leaders in these Southwestern states.

Selected Success Stories

WestEd Partnership Trains School Turnaround Leaders Across the Southwest

Getting Principals to Think Like Managers

WestEd is helping 69 schools across Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico take one innovative step to improve student academic performance. They're sending their principals back to school.

As part of a partnership between WestEd and the University of Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program (developed as a partnership of the Darden School of Business and the Curry School of Education), the K–12 schools are participating in a unique two-year program designed to develop school turnaround leaders.

WestEd and Helios Education Foundation Bring Together Arizona Mayors

The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable, with initial funding from the Helios Education Foundation, will help ensure students in Arizona are both college and career ready.

Recognizing the vital stake that cities have in a quality education for all, 10 Arizona mayors have come together to form the Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable. These mayors are working together and with their local school district and other community leaders to prepare all students to be college and career ready.

Selected Services

Analyses of Pending or Current Legislation

Center staff respond to direct requests from policymakers, resulting in concrete findings and implications that enable them to more thoughtfully consider program impacts in their state.

Convening Key Policymakers and Stakeholders

WestEd's policy conferences and symposia keep stakeholders informed about current education issues and trends, and foster dialogue around high-leverage policy issues.

Selected Resources

A Synthesis of Recent California Education Reform Recommendations

Building a Research Agenda to Improve Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care: What the Experts Say

Education That Works: Ideas for Sacramento

The Latino Education Crisis: Rescuing the American Dream

Selected Research & Evaluation Studies

Comparing Achievement Trends in Reading and Math Across Arizona Public School Student Subgroups

What percentage of Arizona public school students is proficient in reading and math? How does the percentage differ by student subgroup and school level? And what are the results when only charter schools are examined? This study answers these questions and more.

What Works in Developing Nations to Get Children Into School and Keep Them There? A Systematic Review of Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research

What strategies are developing nations using to increase student enrollment, attendance, retention, and grade progression in their schools? This WestEd study aims to find out what works.

Selected Project

West Regional Center

The West Regional Center helps Arizona, Nevada, and Utah state leaders with their initiatives to implement, support, scale up, and sustain statewide education reforms.