

## Indiana Department of Education

### School Improvement Summit

March 10, 2020

#### School Improvement Technical Assistance Partner Profile

##### **Background**

*Organization name:* Community Training and Assistance Center, Inc. (CTAC)

*Organization address:* 30 Winter Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02108

*Organization contact person, contact email, and phone number:* William J. Slotnik, Executive Director, bslotnik@ctacusa.com, 617-423-1444

*Organization mission:* The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) has a 41-year track record of helping districts and schools link on-site practice, research, and public policy to achieve sustainable improvements in student learning outcomes. CTAC adds expertise and capacity to schools with persistent challenges by partnering with district and school leaders to identify the conditions that help or hinder performance, find their root causes, and create and implement improvement strategies. As a minority-controlled non-profit organization, CTAC provides on-site and virtual assistance to support systemic reforms and improvements in school districts serving diverse and at-risk populations in high-poverty communities. CTAC provides professional development to district administrators, school leaders, teachers, parents, boards of education, and community leaders.

##### **Please identify the area(s) that your organization supports:**

CTAC supports all five areas: Effective Leaders, Ambitious Instruction, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, and Involved Families.

##### **Approach**

*Describe your organization's school improvement services:* CTAC provides comprehensive school improvement services, incorporating leadership development, teacher development, and data-informed decision making training into the fabric of our change process. We guide school-based leadership teams through a series of protocols, building their skills in data-informed decision-making and collaboration with peers, and leveraging the professional talents of each individual to reach the best possible solutions for the school.

A key element of our work is the nature of solutions developed — teacher-leaders and administrators develop their own pathways to improvement with the assistance of CTAC expert facilitators. It is a true collaboration and cohesive inquiry process, sharing of ideas and combining our collective skills and talent to arrive at solutions for sustained growth.

Support across five areas, Effective Leaders, Ambitious Instruction, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, and Involved Families, is rooted in our professional learning series Quality Teaching Practices and Quality Leadership Practices.

*Describe how your organization differentiates its services to meet the unique needs of districts and schools.* The approach we take is inherently conducive to differentiation. Rather than approach districts and schools with preconceived notions of what they need, CTAC actively collaborates with leaders to identify the root causes of student underperformance and to develop and implement responsive solutions in a collaborative fashion. There are commonalities between

schools and within districts. However, unique contextual and personnel considerations shape which solutions will be feasible and which are likely to garner staff buy-in.

CTAC has found that onsite educators who serve as agents of change generate the most effective solutions. This strategy works because solutions, built with the staff who will remain at frontline educators after the technical assistance provider has completed its responsibilities, is key. CTAC's goal is to extend the existing staff's skills, knowledge, and experiences that prepare them for leading the change.

We work alongside the staff, providing support for improving school functioning as well as teacher and principal practice. We provide expertise based on our 41 years of experience in the field as well as our knowledge of the most effective evidence-based strategies for school improvement.

We understand that not everyone is ready for change. We encourage all staff members to be part of the process, allowing their input and involvement from the start to shape the outcomes. Most often, participants appreciate the opportunity to be heard and have others truly listen and engage with them.

*Describe the attributes of your organization's ideal partner district and/or school:* Simply this, a *willingness* to follow data inquiry where it leads and an *openness* about the possibilities of affecting the lives of students.

### **Impact**

*Describe your organization's track record of dramatically improving schools or systems and/or radically increasing outcomes for targeted subgroups of students:* CTAC has worked with a wide variety of low-performing schools with state-mandated improvement required, ranging from urban to rural contexts, with significant populations of English Learners and students of low socioeconomic status. When schools collaboratively engage with us, it is common for us to see double-digit increases in proficiency during and following our partnerships. Examples underscoring this impact:

- At an elementary school in Virginia, the average percentage of students testing at proficient levels in ELA increased by 38 points from the two-year period preceding our partnership to the subsequent three-year period. Similarly, the average percentage of students testing at proficient levels in Math increased by 31 points despite a change in the assessment in the middle of the study period.
- A community middle school in Nebraska, student proficiency in ELA and Math increased by 16 and 17 percentage points respectively.
- A middle school in Nevada improved from a two-star rating on the state's accountability system to a four-star rating in its first year collaborating with CTAC.
- An elementary school identified as one of the lowest performing schools in Massachusetts, reached its three-year exit criteria goals for ELA and Math, after its first full year of working with CTAC

These schools and others successfully reached their goals; your schools can as well.