

## **Breakout Session Facilitator Guide LEA Recruitment**

This document is, as it says, a guide to facilitate discussion. The nature of these discussions is qualitative – i.e., we are not trying to get results like “5 responded ‘no’ to question #5” but rather get ideas and feedback, and read non-verbal messages such as attitude, body language and rhythm. Indeed, some of the indirect messages, both verbal and non-verbal, are the most informative.

Goals of sessions are:

- Give participants a positive experience– this will result in direct and indirect positive feelings about R2T. (This is chiefly accomplished by allowing them to participate and listening to them.)
- Gain input from participants that can help inform our R2T response – and could lead to ‘breakthrough ideas’
- Provide information about R2T – opportunities and requirements

When we breakout to groups, begin the session with an explanation such as:

*Thanks so much for participating. We want to use this time to hear from you. Your thoughts and ideas are important to us and to the success of this application -- not to mention its successful implementation.*

*You may have many questions for us, and we want to get those answered. I would like to use the next \_\_\_\_\_ minutes, however, to get your input. After this session, Kathy Taylor is going to get us back together to answer your questions. I will give you my card, in case your questions aren't answered here today, and invite you to call me after the session. In the meantime, I have a few topics for your input and discussion. I will listen, facilitate and take notes. This is your time – so please help me learn what you want to impart.*

To facilitators:

I like to loosen things up and get people talking by letting them introduce themselves and what their roles are. (Note: at entrance we should have sign in with email addresses and provide write-in name tags.)

Start each topic area with a broad question. As they start to provide input, you can start to drill deeper with progressively more directed questions. Be careful to not ‘direct the witness’ as that will not lead to the outcomes we desire.

If they get off topic or start to ask questions, get them back on track. Tell them those are valid points/concerns, and that you will make a point to get back to them after this session.

Keep track of time; allow time to cover the key topic areas and, optional, a few minutes at the end for questions. We may want to use the last couple of minutes to discuss how they can get involved in the process and get their info.

Take notes. Don't try to capture every word, just the important points. And it's very helpful to capture quotes as closely as possible – these don't have to be attributed – but they add much credibility to our future products.

Below, you will find the main topics to discuss and ideas for follow up questions. Use this as a guide – you need not follow precisely. Be flexible to go where the respondents go. And feel free to use your own vernacular – and have *fun!*

**Discussion Guide:**

**1. Great Teachers and Leaders**

**a. Are there any immediate ideas you have or things you would like to implement to allow great teachers and leaders to become more effective?**

**b. What impediments exist today?**  
**i. Regarding recruitment?**

**ii. Retention?**

**iii. Existing policies?**

**iv. Evaluation?**





**b. Where has reliance upon data/technology been underwhelming?**

**c. Any ideas you can draw upon, regarding data and technology, that you would like to see implemented in your schools/classrooms?**

## **5. STEM**

**a. How would you feel about a statewide vision to set more rigorous expectations for math & science?**

**b. Do you think developing alliances with higher ed, business, or other community partners would be beneficial? Which partners would work best with your school/district?**

## **6. Student Achievement**

**a. Would setting goals for NAEP, ESEA high school graduation and college enrollment be effective? Why or why not?**

**Of everything we have discussed today, what holds the most promise and why?**

**What key barriers or challenges do you think we will need to navigate in order to succeed?**

**If you had a magic wand, and could change anything about your work, your school, your district, what would you change?**

*Thank you for taking this time with us. It is invaluable to this process and our application for Race to the Top.*