

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Note: If you serve at multiple schools, for questions that are specific to a school rather than the program overall, think about this school where you spend most of your time serving.

NOTE: Focus groups with a sample of AmeriCorps members, who serve at case study schools will be conducted in winter 2016.

1. Please tell us your first name and how long you've worked in this school.

2. To get started, I'd like to get a better understanding of exactly what kind of work you're doing here in this school, I'd like you to list off ~~Can you please tell me about~~ Please describe in detail your top three ~~one important~~ activities/responsibilities that you're involved with at this school, in terms of those activities on which you spent the greatest amount of time?.

[Moderator note: write these on an easel. Continue until they stop free-listing.]

[Choose probes as appropriate] Can I see a show of hands for how many of you do [activity name]?

[Moderator note: go through each activity.]

- Do all members here do the same activities?
- — If not, how and why do activities differ for different members?

3. Now I'd like to get some more details about these activities.

-For each of these, I'd [Moderator note: go through activity by activity. If there are a lot of activities, poll the room for the top 3 activities and only do those.]-

Probe: Who do you collaborate with to carry out the activity?

Probe: How did/does this activity support the school's turnaround effort?

Probe: Who ~~it~~ was this activity intended to help or support?

Probe: What ~~it~~ was the frequency and amount of time ~~you~~ spend on the activity? *(If member serves at more than one school, percentage of time should refer to percentage of total hours across schools. Frequency is based on member's time, not per student.)*

[SAMPLE OF HOW AN EASEL PAD MIGHT LOOK AT THE END OF THIS DISCUSSION]

Activity	Collaboration	Targeted Audience	Frequency	Hours per Week &/or Percentage of Time
a.				
b.				
c.				

4. Did Have the your activities changed d throughout the school year (2015-16)? If so, how and then why?

5. Please describe for me how your work is structured in relation to other work that happens at the school. [As needed: That is, is your work stand-alone or do you work closely with other school staff? How involved are you in school operations like faculty meetings, professional development, or other initiatives?]

6. 4-What types of supports have you received, or are available to you, to implement your planned activities at the school? [Supports might include (but aren't limited to) training, other people, and materials.]

- Probe: Supports might include (but aren't limited to) training, other people, and materials.
- Are there any ways that you could have been better prepared to do your work at the school?

7. 5-What have you been told about the reasons that School Turnaround AmeriCorps members are servinneeded in [School Name]?

- Probes: Who told you this information and how?
Note: this may include the grantee organization, school leader, other school staff, students, written materials, etc.
- Probe: Are you familiar with your school's improvement goals and/or turnaround plan? (Yes/No)
What are some of those goals?

8. 6-Now I'd like to hear about your relationships with the staff and faculty at [School name].

- Probes [as needed]: What was the general reaction among school staff and faculty to your presence at the school when you first began serving? How did perspectives, collaboration, and/or relationships with the school staff (principal/teachers/counselor/school leaders) change throughout the year, if at all? How well do you feel school staff understand your role at the school?

9. What are your relationships like with the students you work with directly?

10. What are the ways that AmeriCorps members (yourself or as a whole) contribute to your school's capacity to address its school turnaround goals?

[Moderator note: probe for details about each way they improve the school's capacity.]

As needed [on easel pad, do not list aloud]: Here are some ways AmeriCorps members might help the school build capacity:

- Affecting relationships between students and staff.
- Involving families (e.g. in attending events, providing access to information and resources to support their child's education, helping students complete homework, volunteering in child's classroom).
- Supporting the academic needs of specific groups of students.
- Supporting the behavioral and/or socio-emotional health needs of specific groups of students.
- Improving the school environment and climate.
- Supporting teachers in the use of data/assessments.
- Providing before-school, after-school or extended learning time programming.

h) Other activities and contributions.

11. In your opinion, is your AmeriCorps program successful in helping students you **directly worked** with **directly** at this school to improve? How have you determined this?

How about in these areas [on easel pad]: in the following areas: (Yes/No— Try to get a consensus for each or note disagreement.)

- Academic achievement?
● —
- Academic engagement?
● —
- Behavior?
● —
- Attendance?
● —
- Socio-emotional health?
● —

12. How helpful do you think AmeriCorps memberthe services that you are involved with were implemented this year will helpare to the students you directly work with at this school? Why?

13. What lessons have you learned from working as an AmeriCorps member at this school that might be helpful to other schools/organizations implementing the program?