

Focus Group Guide

INTRODUCTION:

Teachers and school counselors within one school will be asked to participate in focus groups during a site visit. These are designed to create opportunities for idea sharing, provide a sense of the challenges and successes that resonate across respondents, and identify the site-specific and replicable elements of the program's implementation.

NOTES: The focus group is meant to be an open discussion around the key topics we have identified. The probes listed are meant to facilitate the conversation on several broad topics.

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1. I'd like to start by giving each individual a few seconds to introduce himself or herself. Please tell us...
 - Your name
 - Grade/content areas that you teach
 - The number of years you have been teaching (total and in this school)
 2. In what capacity, if any, do you work directly with AmeriCorps members this school year?
 3. What are the key activities School Turnaround AmeriCorps members are engaging in at your school this year? Have these activities changed over the course of the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program?
 4. Can you describe the relationship between School Turnaround AmeriCorps members and school staff? Do members and staff get along? Do staff understand the role of AmeriCorps members? Do members attend any school faculty meetings?
 5. One central objective of School Turnaround AmeriCorps is to help schools meet their turnaround goals. How, if at all, do School Turnaround AmeriCorps build your school's capacity to meet those goals? What is the added value of members?

Probes

- What about the program helps it work well in your school? What allows members to work well with students and support turnaround goals?
 - What specific activities do members engage in that best support turnaround efforts, if any?
6. What barriers or challenges does the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program face in supporting school turnaround in your school(s) this school year?

Probes

- What about the program doesn't work well at your school? What prevents members from supporting turnaround goals?
- What specific activities do members engage in that do not effectively support turnaround efforts, if any?

7. WereAre members well-prepared and doid they have the skills necessary to be effective in your school this year? If not, how do you think they could have-beenbe better prepared?

8. Do you feel that, as staff members, you wereare well-prepared to work with the AmeriCorps members and make use of their services? If not, in what ways do you think In what ways could schools have-been-betterstaff could have-beenbe better prepared to work with School Turnaround AmeriCorps members?

9. What are the unmet needs in your school in terms of supporting students' academic achievement and school turnaround efforts? How could AmeriCorps members and other external partners help address those needs?

10. What lessons have you learned from working with members and separately any other partners about implementing the program at [name of site/school] that might be helpful to other sites/schools? What are your recommendations for improvements to the School Turnaround AmeriCorps program in supporting school turnaround?