

Comprehensive Center National Project Concept Paper: Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy

IF we want to ensure that students in our lowest performing schools are taught by effective teachers in schools with effective leaders,

THEN we need systems for attracting, recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills required to turn around low-performing schools.

The **Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy (T4TLA)** is a multi-year initiative designed to help academy participants link equitable access and school improvement efforts at the state and district levels through development of coherent and aligned talent management systems that attract, support, and retain effective educators in high-need schools and districts. With the emphasis in the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* on coordination among and between federal programs, the T4TLA provides an ideal opportunity to strengthen the alignment and coherence of talent management and school improvement systems at the state and local levels.

The short-term outcomes (Year 1) for the T4TLA focus on:

- Increasing participants' knowledge and capacity to design and implement talent management systems in the lowest performing schools and districts
- Developing and using research-based tools and resources to support talent management in the lowest performing schools and districts

Longer-term outcomes (Year 2 and beyond) include:

- Sustaining effective talent development systems in the lowest performing schools and districts
- Attracting, supporting, and retaining effective teachers and reducing equity gaps in the lowest performing schools and districts
- Closing achievement gaps through effective teaching and leadership in the lowest performing schools and districts

The T4TLA design is based on a ***long-term vision***. Recognizing that they are in Year 5 of five-year cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Education, the T4TLA partners have designed the initiative within a four-year timeframe, pending subsequent funding. The four-year time frame would allow three cohorts of up to 10 state education agencies and their respective districts and regional comprehensive center (RCCs) to participate. At the same time, the T4TLA is designed such that Year 1 could stand alone if subsequent funding is not forthcoming. A more

detailed theory of action that specifies inputs, strategies, outputs, short- and long-term outcomes, key technical assistance strategies, and metrics appears in Appendix A.

Partners

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, the Center on School Turnaround, and RCCs are collaborating to provide strategic support to participating state education agencies and districts in attracting, supporting, and sustaining educator talent in high-need, low-performing schools. Technical assistance providers and content experts from the comprehensive centers and other partner organizations will provide support to participants.

With technical assistance and support from the partner organizations, in Year 1 of the T4TLA, participating states and districts will:

- Engage in an alignment and coherence review of their equity and improvement plans and identify areas for streamlining or collaboration
- Identify strategies in their equity and school improvement plans for incorporation into their ESSA consolidated plans to leverage ESSA funding for implementation
- Identify cross-department partnership opportunities to improve and align talent management processes (e.g., collaboration between preparation and recruitment)
- Engage stakeholders to identify root causes of talent pipeline challenges and design and implement innovative talent pipeline strategies to tackle identified challenges
- Identify leading and lagging indicators and benchmark targets to support implementation of a monitoring strategy

Participants

In Year 1, the T4T LA will engage leadership teams from up to 10 states. Teams will comprise state and district staff members who represent equitable access (and/or educator effectiveness) and school turnaround systems; the state leadership team will consist of at least two members from the state education agency and at least two members from each participating district.

To maximize participation and ensure optimal benefit, RCCs will support states in self-assessing their readiness and capacity for this work, emphasizing:

- Capacity to assist districts in strengthening turnaround and talent development outcomes
- Commitment to work with state teams, including participation in face-to-face and virtual meetings
- Leadership engagement and support at all levels
- Monitoring of progress in equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround policy alignment, particularly tied to ESSA opportunities
- Performance management routines that include consistent communication, resource integration, and staff accountability measures

- Collaborative organizational structures that connect equitable access, talent for turnaround, and school turnaround efforts
- Policy alignment

The State Participation Readiness Rubric appears in Appendix B.

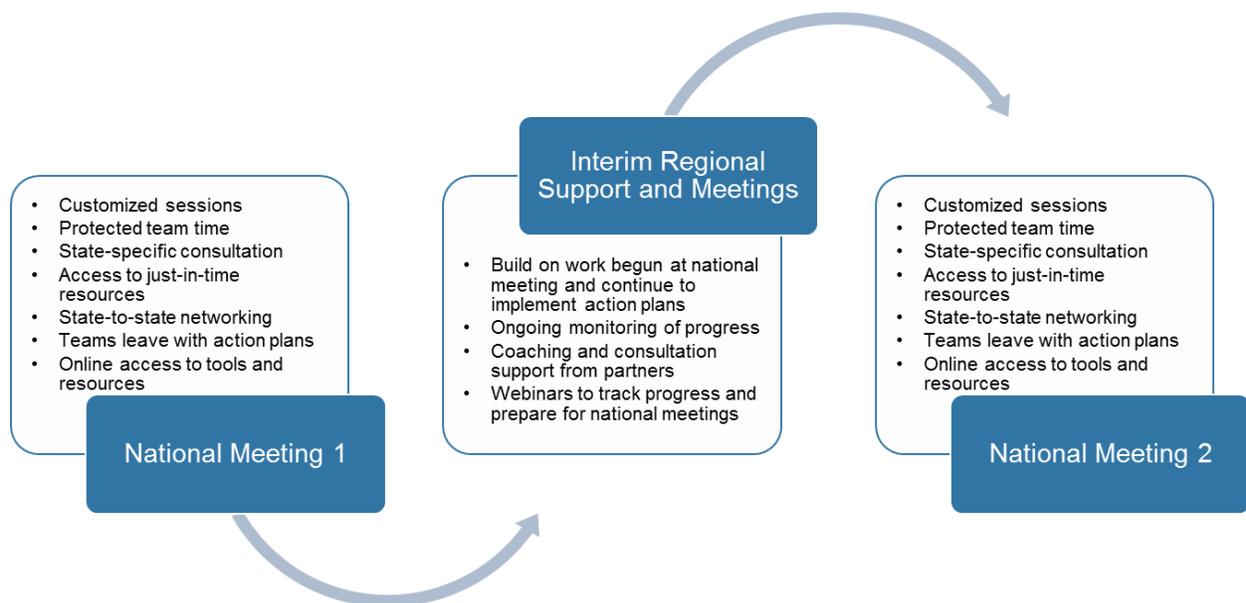
States and districts that are interested in and ready to benefit from participation in the T4TLA will submit a signed memorandum of understanding, outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations to secure their participation. Some state teams that are interested but not quite ready to undertake this effort will be given the opportunity to receive customized support to prepare them for participation in future T4TLA cohorts.

The RCC that serves a participating state also will be an integral part of the team. RCCs that support participating states and districts must have: (1) willingness and commitment (financial and human resources) to participate in T4TLA for Year 1 with intent to participate in subsequent years and (2) experience and interest in working with states regarding equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school improvement.

Content and Structure

The T4TLA will be organized and implemented in both national and regional face-to-face and virtual venues. National meetings will serve as the “hub” of the project, providing a common knowledge base of research- and evidence-based content to all participants. Regional meetings before and after national meetings will provide technical assistance support related to initial needs assessment and priority setting, ongoing support and assessment of progress, and customized application of research and evidence-based practices. Figure 1 depicts the structure of the T4TLA for Year 1.

Figure 1. T4TLA Structure



During the initial needs assessment and priority-setting phase, state and district teams will engage in a coherence and alignment review of their current equity and school improvement plans, examine other relevant data, and identify key talent management strategies to prioritize for implementation. Common themes will emerge on which to focus the sessions during national meetings and interim regional support. Content focus areas might include: identifying, attracting, supporting, and retaining effective educators in high-need schools; identifying and supporting teacher and leader turnaround competencies; innovative approaches to extending the reach of effective teachers; improving teaching conditions in high-need schools; and establishing cohesive performance management systems.

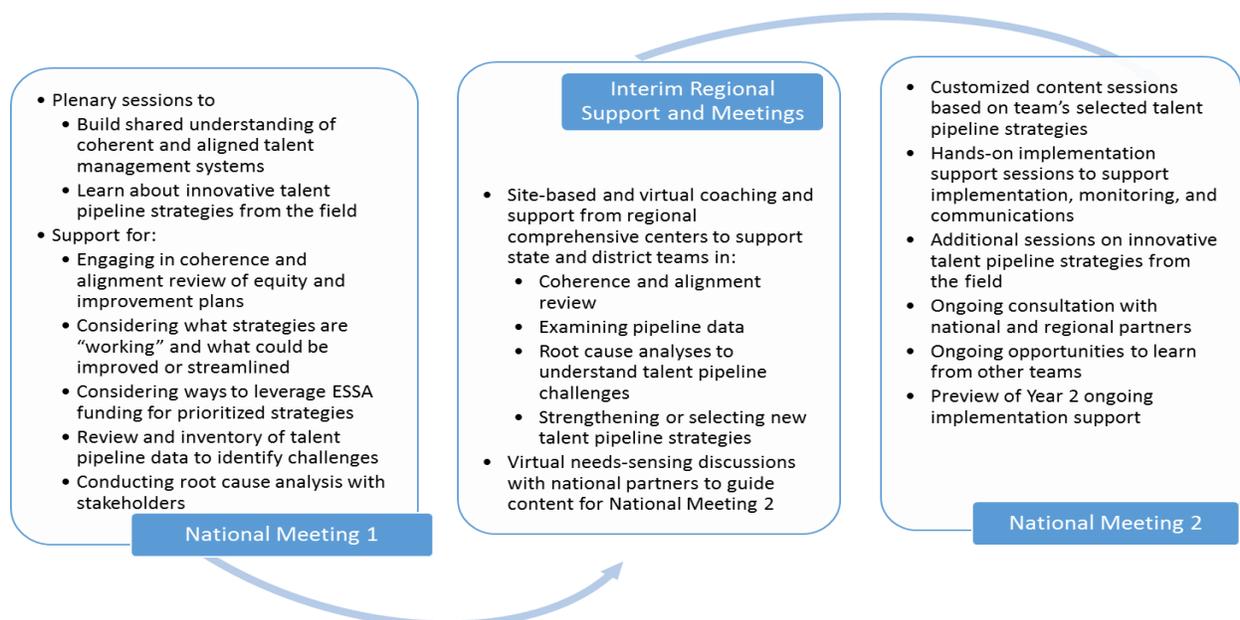
Envisioning Year 1 of T4TLA

In Year 1, RCCs and T4TLA partners will support state and district teams to prepare for and participate in the T4TLA. Preparation support will include the following:

- Partners host pre-meeting webinar to preview agenda and share pre-work expectations
- RCCs support states to gather planning materials and relevant data (e.g., equity and improvement plans, pipeline data)
- States engage in pre-reading to build shared understanding of a vision for cohesive and aligned talent pipeline in the lowest performing schools and districts
- States identify state and district teams that represent their talent pipeline (e.g., staff from preparation, recruitment or human resources, evaluation, professional growth) in the lowest performing schools and districts

Figure 2 provides a more detailed description of what will occur during national and regional meetings.

Figure 2. Envisioning Year 1 of the T4TLA

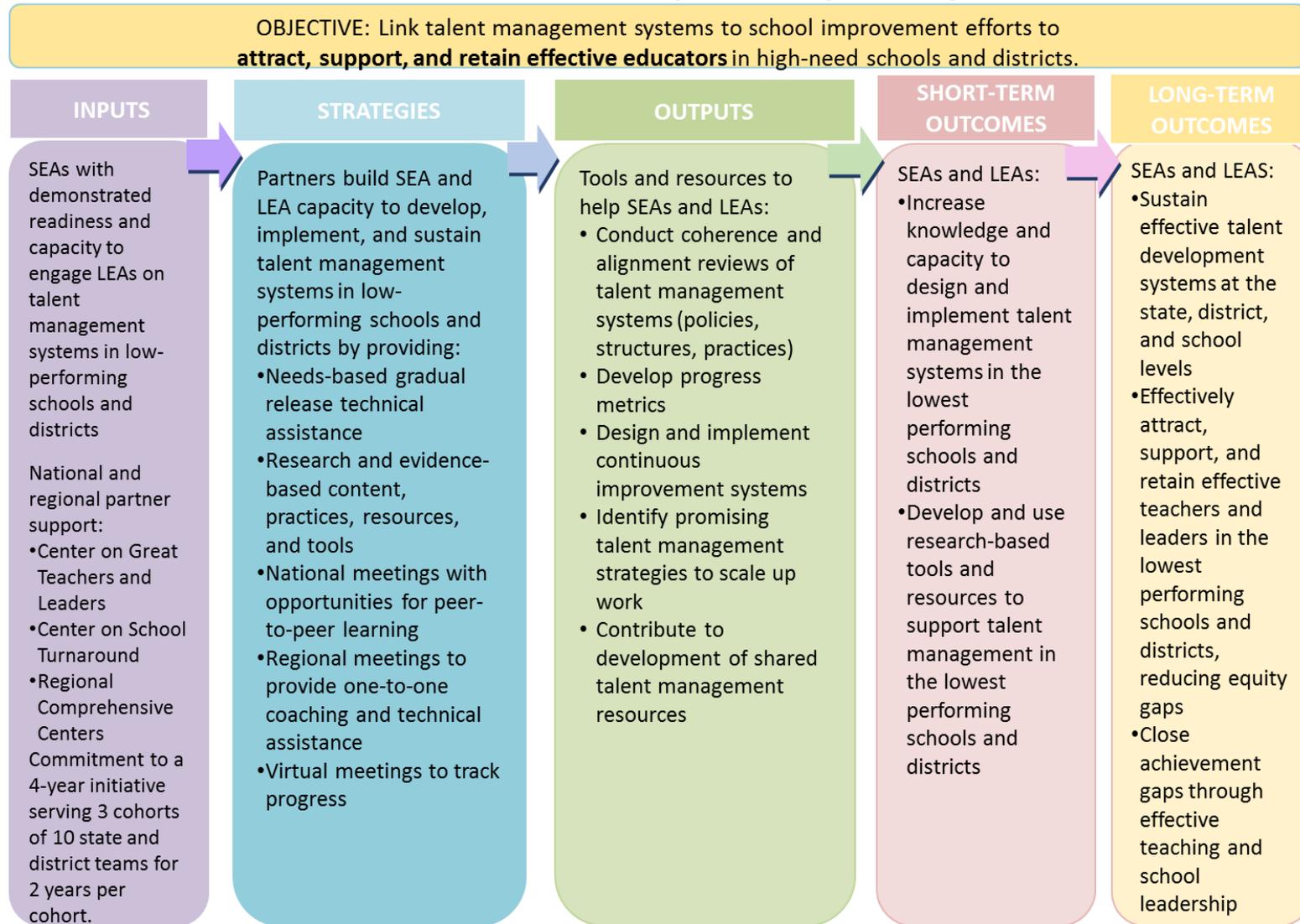


Conclusion

Collaborating partners in this cross-agency T4TLA effort have come together to address the need for states and districts to link talent management systems to school improvement efforts to attract, support, and retain effective educators in our highest need, lowest performing schools and districts. As a result of their engagement, academy participants will be prepared to lead efforts to strengthen, implement, and sustain effective systems and supports for talent development in the lowest performing schools and districts. These efforts will strengthen talent pipelines, help close achievement gaps, and contribute to increased student achievement in the lowest performing schools and districts.

Appendix A: Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy: Theory of Action, Strategies, and Metrics

Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy: Theory of Action



Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy: Key Strategies and Metrics

OBJECTIVE: Link talent management systems to school improvement efforts to **attract, support, and retain effective educators** in high-need schools and districts.

Key Technical Assistance Strategies

Provide support to SEA and LEA teams to establish coherence and alignment of talent management systems and school improvement policies, systems, and structures (at the school, district, or state level as appropriate)

Provide additional technical assistance to states and districts to support identification, implementation, and monitoring progress of coherent and aligned talent management systems

Year 1: Pre-Implementation Metrics

Percentage of participating SEA and LEA teams that:

- Demonstrate improved understanding and awareness of coherent and aligned talent management systems
- Engage in an alignment and coherence review of their equity and improvement plans and identify areas for streamlining or collaboration
- Identify strategies in their equity and school improvement plans to incorporate into their ESSA consolidated plans to leverage ESSA funding
- Identify cross-department partnership opportunities to improve and align talent management processes in low-performing schools and districts
- Engage stakeholders to identify root causes of pipeline challenges; design and implement innovative talent pipeline strategies to tackle an identified challenge
- Identify leading and lagging indicators and benchmark targets to support monitoring strategy implementation

Year 2: Early Implementation Metrics

Percentage of participating SEA and LEA teams that:

- Identify a project team, including designated roles and responsibilities of team members
- Establish a strategy implementation timeline, including key milestones
- Develop a monitoring plan, including short-term (leading) indicators and longer-term (lagging) indicators and benchmarks determined during pre-implementation phase
- Engage in early implementation of the selected talent pipeline strategy
- Gather implementation data in accordance with their monitoring plan and engage in reflection and plan adjustment based on implementation progress

Appendix B: Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy State Participation Readiness Rubric

Instructions: Working with a team that comprises state education agency leadership and regional comprehensive center technical assistance staff, review the readiness criteria and levels of readiness described below. For each criterion, the minimum readiness level for participation in the T4TLA is highlighted in green. Please determine your current level of readiness. Although we expect that participating state and district teams may be “developing” in some of the criteria, by virtue of participating in the T4TLA, your team is committing to improving your readiness in each of these areas through your participation.

Readiness Criteria	1 Emerging	2 Developing <i>Minimum readiness level</i>	3 Proficient	4 Exemplary
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no state education agency (SEA) staff dedicated to participation in the T4TLA • There is no allocation of time or resources for this work • SEA has demonstrated limited capacity to support local education agencies (LEAs) to accomplish desired results regarding equitable access • SEA has demonstrated limited capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results regarding school turnaround • SEA provides technical assistance to LEAs primarily focused on implementation of state and federal requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one SEA staff member from equitable access (and/or educator effectiveness) and school turnaround is dedicated to the T4TLA for some portion of the staff member’s time • At least one LEA (and no more than two LEAs) has been identified to participate in the T4TLA • Limited time and resources are dedicated to this work • SEA has demonstrated solid although inconsistent capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results regarding equitable access • SEA has demonstrated solid although inconsistent capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results regarding school turnaround • SEA provides technical assistance to LEAs focused on implementation of state and federal requirements and provides professional development to LEAs in equitable access and school turnaround 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one SEA staff member from equitable access (and/or educator effectiveness) and school turnaround is dedicated to the T4TLA for some portion of the staff member’s time • At least one LEA (and no more than two LEAs) has been identified and prepared to participate in the T4TLA • A majority of time and resources are dedicated to this work and will be the case for at least the next two years • SEA has consistently demonstrated capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results regarding equitable access • SEA has consistently demonstrated capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results regarding school turnaround • SEA provides technical assistance to LEAs in the implementation of state and federal requirements and professional development in equitable access and school turnaround and provides adaptive technical assistance to a limited number of schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple SEA staff members from equitable access (and/or educator effectiveness) and school turnaround are dedicated to the T4TLA at least 10 percent of their time • Across departments within the SEA, significant time and resources are allocated to sustain support for the integration of educator effectiveness and school turnaround • SEA has consistently demonstrated capacity to support LEAs to accomplish desired results in integrating educator effectiveness and school turnaround • SEA has consistently demonstrated capacity to increase LEA capacity to sustain the integration of educator effectiveness and school turnaround

Readiness Criteria	1 Emerging	2 Developing <i>Minimum readiness level</i>	3 Proficient	4 Exemplary
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No executive leadership support exists SEA and LEA teams are unable to confirm one-year commitment SEA and LEA teams commit to attending some but not all meetings in Year 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive leadership supports the work going forward; however, competing priorities could alter the ability of the SEA to participate in the T4TLA after Year 1 SEA and LEA teams confirm one-year commitment to T4TLA SEA and LEA teams commit to attending all national and regional (in-person and virtual) meetings and pre-meeting webinars, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 pre-meeting webinars 2 national meetings 2 regional meetings 2 local training, coaching, or consulting sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong executive leadership support and commitment to two-year participation SEA and LEA teams commit to two-year participation SEA and LEA teams commit to attending all national and regional (in-person and virtual) meetings and pre-meeting webinars, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 pre-meeting webinars 2 national meetings 2 regional meetings 2 local training, coaching, or consulting sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong executive leadership support, including that a member of the executive leadership team is directly involved in the effort SEA and LEA teams commit to two-year participation and agree to serve on the planning and implementation of academy events for future SEA and LEA cohorts SEA and LEA teams commit to attending all national and regional (in-person and virtual) meetings and pre-meeting webinars and agree to present and/or facilitate at academy events, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 pre-meeting webinars 2 national meetings 2 regional meetings 2 local training, coaching, or consulting sessions
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an articulated vision for equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround known within SEA but little, if any, knowledge of the vision by LEAs There is no communication plan for how SEA will communicate with LEAs and other stakeholders There is little, if any, history of collaboration within SEA and between SEA, LEAs, and regional comprehensive center (RCC) There is little, if any, demonstrated success within the SEA to serve as change agent in achieving results in equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an articulated vision for equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround known within SEA and by LEAs There is a communication plan for how SEA will communicate with LEAs and other stakeholders although implementation of the plan is inconsistent There is some history of collaboration between SEA, LEAs, and RCC There is demonstrated success within SEA to serve as change agent in achieving results within targeted projects focused on equitable access, educator effectiveness, and/or school turnaround 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an articulated vision for equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround, including a theory of action, and is known within SEA and by LEAs and stakeholder groups; the vision has positively influenced stakeholder efforts related to equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround There is a communication plan for how SEA will communicate with LEAs that is consistently implemented There is a consistent history of collaboration between SEA, LEAs, and RCC There is demonstrated success within SEA to serve as change agent in achieving results within the majority of SEA projects focused on equitable access, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vision for equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround includes a theory of action and is known within SEA and by LEAs and stakeholder groups and is reviewed on a regular basis with stakeholder input to revise if necessary There is a communication plan for how SEA will communicate with LEAs that is consistently implemented and revised, as needed, based on stakeholder input There is a consistent history of collaboration between SEA, LEAs, RCC, and other states and RCCs There is demonstrated success within SEA to serve as change agent in achieving results within all SEA projects and priorities focused on equitable access,

Readiness Criteria	1 Emerging	2 Developing <i>Minimum readiness level</i>	3 Proficient	4 Exemplary
			educator effectiveness, and school turnaround	educator effectiveness, and school turnaround
Monitoring of Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term and long-term outcomes are loosely defined • Short-term and long-term outcomes do not include measures of success • There is little, if any, internal stakeholder engagement included in the monitoring of progress • There is no external stakeholder engagement used in the monitoring of progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term and long-term outcomes are clearly defined • Measures of success are defined for short-term and long-term outcomes • Outcomes are measured only through self-report and anecdotal data • Collection of data is sporadic • Data are used in limited way to inform the work • Internal stakeholder engagement is used inconsistently in the monitoring of progress • There is little, if any, external stakeholder engagement included in the monitoring of progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term and long-term outcomes are clearly defined within a logic model or theory of action • Measures of success and impact are defined for short-term and long-term outcomes • Outcomes are measured through qualitative and quantitative data • Data are analyzed to identify successes, challenges, and root causes for challenges; adjustments are made based on data analysis • Continuous assessment of technical assistance provided by SEA is in place • Internal and external stakeholder engagement is used consistently in the monitoring of progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term and long-term outcomes are clearly defined within a logic model or theory of action • Measures of success and impact are defined for short-term and long-term outcomes • Outcomes are measured through qualitative and quantitative data • Data are analyzed to identify successes, challenges, and root causes for challenges; adjustments are made based on data analysis • Continuous assessment of technical assistance provided by SEA is in place • Longitudinal data system is in place that links student learning and other data • Internal and external stakeholder engagement consistently informs SEA decisions and the monitoring of progress

Readiness Criteria	1 Emerging	2 Developing <i>Minimum readiness level</i>	3 Proficient	4 Exemplary
Performance Management Routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no communication exists within or across divisions or departments within the SEA • Use of resources are siloed in support of educator effectiveness and school turnaround work • Measures of staff accountability are undefined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent communication exists within educator effectiveness division or department and SEA leadership • Consistent communication exists within the school turnaround division or department and SEA leadership • Inconsistent communication exists between educator effectiveness and school turnaround divisions or departments and SEA leadership and other relevant divisions or departments • The integration of resources between educator effectiveness and school turnaround divisions or departments are beginning to occur • Staff accountability measures are clearly defined • Inconsistent support is provided to staff to meet accountability measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent communication exists within and across educator effectiveness, school turnaround, other relevant divisions or departments and SEA leadership • Resources are fairly well integrated between educator effectiveness and school turnaround divisions or departments • Staff are held accountable to achieve clearly defined measures and are provided consistent support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent communication exists within and across educator effectiveness, school turnaround, other relevant divisions or departments and SEA leadership and other SEAs in the same T4TLA cohort • Resources are fully integrated between educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and all other relevant divisions or departments • Staff are held accountable to achieve clearly defined measures and are provided consistent and differentiated support, including regular coaching
Organizational Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing organizational structures create a culture in which equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround teams work independently, with little, if any, autonomy within teams to make decisions about their work • Existing organizational structures are compartmentalized with little, if any, cross-department or cross-division collaboration • Technical assistance provided to the field is limited to support to LEAs to fulfill state and federal requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing organizational structures create a culture in which equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround teams work both independently and collaboratively, with some authority to make decisions about their work • Existing organizational structures allow for cross-department or cross-division collaboration on special projects • Technical assistance provided to the field includes some cross-agency collaborative support to LEAs to fulfill state and federal requirements; customized or adaptive technical assistance is provided to targeted LEAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing organizational structures create a culture in which equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround teams work collaboratively, with autonomy to make decisions to move the work forward in timely ways • Existing organizational structures allow for seamless cross-department or cross-division collaboration on all projects • Technical assistance provided to the field includes consistent cross-agency collaborative support to LEAs to fulfill state and federal requirements and customized or adaptive technical assistance to the majority of LEAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing organizational structures create a culture in which equitable access, educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and other relevant teams work collaboratively, with autonomy to make decisions to move the work forward in timely ways • Existing organizational structures allow for seamless cross-department or cross-division collaboration on all projects and allow for nimble re-deployment of staff to respond to emerging priorities • Technical assistance provided to the field includes consistent cross-agency collaborative support to LEAs to fulfill state and federal requirements and customized or adaptive technical assistance to all LEAs

Readiness Criteria	1 Emerging	2 Developing <i>Minimum readiness level</i>	3 Proficient	4 Exemplary
Policy Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little, if any, policy alignment related to equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school turnaround • Efforts to support teacher development from recruitment, preparation, retention, and ongoing learning are not aligned • There is little, if any, evidence of leveraging equitable access, educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and <i>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</i> in the consolidated plan process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies related to equitable access and educator effectiveness are aligned to one another but are not aligned with school turnaround policies • Efforts to support teacher retention and ongoing learning are aligned with one another but are not aligned with teacher recruitment and preparation efforts • There is some evidence of leveraging equitable access, educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and <i>ESSA</i> in the consolidated plan process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies related to equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school around are aligned • Efforts to support teacher recruitment, retention, and ongoing learning are aligned with one another but are not aligned with teacher preparation efforts • There is strong evidence of leveraging equitable access, educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and <i>ESSA</i> in the consolidated plan process through cross-agency collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies related to equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school around are aligned • Efforts to support teacher preparation, recruitment, retention, and ongoing learning are aligned with one another • There is strong evidence of leveraging equitable access, educator effectiveness, school turnaround, and <i>ESSA</i> in the consolidated plan process through cross-agency collaboration and with LEAs regarding their consolidated plan