FROM INNOVATION TO DISSEMINATION:

BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO SHARE EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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Submitted to:

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INTRODUCTION

A.   Purpose of the Blueprint

This blueprint describes an approach to building organizational partnerships that support and strengthen educator development. The approach was developed through a U.S. Department of Education (ED) project that developed one-on-one partnerships between ED's Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grantees and a variety of education organizations. Although the blueprint focuses specifically on developing and supporting SEED partnerships, the guidance and tools in the blueprint are relevant for a wide range of organizational partnerships. In addition, a companion brief called [Knowledge Sharing through Organizational Partnerships](#) describes broader lessons learned for building organizational partnerships.

B.   What is a SEED partnership?

In a SEED partnership, a SEED grantee supports a state or local education agency, educator preparation program, or other education organization that is actively working on an innovation to improve educator preparation or development. The SEED grantee serves as an ongoing thought partner by providing feedback and guidance as the organization designs, implements, and refines its initiative. The organization seeking support defines a specific need related to the design or implementation of its initiative, and then holds a series of meetings with the SEED grantee to help address that need. The SEED grantee can help the partner address its need in a variety of ways, for example, providing insights and lessons learned from its experience, offering feedback on the partner's approach, or sharing resources or materials (throughout this blueprint, we use the term "partner" to refer to the organization partnering with a SEED grantee.).

The length of a partnership can vary, ranging from 4 to 5 months to one year or more. They begin with a one-day kickoff session that is followed by monthly virtual sessions lasting 75–90 minutes each. A partnership is not designed to replicate a SEED grantee's program or provide intensive technical assistance, but to support organizations in addressing their needs. Given the scope of partnerships, they work best when focused on specific, bite-sized aspects of the partner's work.

C.   Why participate in a partnership?

A partnership offers several potential benefits to SEED grantees:

- SEED grantees gain insights into the needs of the field and understand how their own expertise can help address those needs.

- SEED grantees can use a partnership to meet the grant program's goal of disseminating effective strategies for developing teachers and leaders.

- SEED grantees can learn from innovative strategies that relate to their own work, but are implemented in different ways or in new or different settings.

As a strategy for sharing the lessons learned from their grants and using those lessons to influence the broader education field, grantees can integrate partnerships into their SEED grant dissemination activities and use their grants to support the time invested in developing and implementing partnerships.

D.   The Partnership Approach

Each partnership is unique. Some SEED grantees will work with organizations that already have clear objectives for the partnership, but others may have partners who need help narrowing in on clear and focused objectives. One grantee's partner may be working toward a single, major implementation milestone during the year, whereas another grantee's partner may be working through a series of smaller milestones or challenges. Therefore, the guidance in this blueprint should not be viewed as a rigid set of rules, rather guidance and lessons learned from a seasoned team of facilitators and partnership participants. What matters is that, over the course of the partnership, the partner has the chance to obtain the feedback and insights needed to help address their need. Likewise, the SEED grantees' experience should be rewarding and allow them to see how their guidance has an impact on their partner's activities.

Although flexibility is important in these partnerships, they also require some structure to be productive. The approach outlined below is meant to guide the work of partnerships and help the partner reach a successful outcome.

Portrait of a Partnership: Recruiting a More Diverse Pool of Teacher Candidates

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) established a SEED partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) that focused on diversifying the teacher workforce. The partnership focused on the recruitment plans that educator preparation programs submit to demonstrate their efforts to diversify their teacher candidates. One challenge was the varying quality of recruitment plans and differences in the amount and type of information that preparation programs included in their plans. The solution was a template to guide preparation programs in developing recruitment plans with clear, measurable, and realistic goals for diversity. CAEP had preparation programs test the template, revised the template based on that feedback, and is now working to incorporate the template into the accreditation process.

Steps for facilitating a SEED partnership

There are four key steps to develop and implement a partnership. This blueprint presents the key steps along with examples from the experiences of previous SEED partnerships. Tools and templates are also available to help in each step. The tools and templates can be found in Appendix A.

- Step 1: Find a partner that is a good fit
- Step 2: Hold a kickoff meeting

- Step 3: Plan and hold the partnership sessions

- Step 4: Conclude the partnership

Role of the facilitator

A facilitator is needed to guide the SEED grantee and partner through each step of the partnership. The lead staff person from the partner or SEED grantee can serve as the facilitator, or they can tap someone form an external organization to perform this role. The facilitator needs to be organized, skilled in managing productive virtual discussions, and familiar with the partnership approach. This role is critical for ensuring that the grantee and partner follow through on partnership activities and achieve the partnership's objective.

STEP 1: FIND A PARTNER THAT IS A GOOD FIT

A.   How to find potential partners

The approach to identifying potential partners can vary depending on the strength of a SEED grantee's existing networks and relationships with organizations. If a SEED grantee has a strong network of organizations that are a good fit for a partnership, it can conduct targeted outreach to those organizations to discuss their interest in a SEED partnership. If a SEED grantee lacks this type of network, it can tap into networks of education agencies and organizations that are actively working on topics in the grantee's area of expertise.

The SEED Partnerships used a structured process for recruiting and selecting a partner. The process involved communicating the partnering opportunity through a variety of state and local networks, including associations, membership organizations, policy organizations, and technical assistance providers.

- *Tool: List of national networks and organizations for communicating the partnership opportunity.* SEED grantees can use this list to identify national associations, organizations, and networks that can be useful outlets for communicating the partnership opportunity to agencies and organizations that are interested in participating.

Outreach for the partnership opportunity should clearly communicate the purpose of a partnership, the benefits of participating, the types of topics or challenges that a partnership can address, and the characteristics of organizations that are a good fit. In addition, outreach should be done in a variety of formats, including emails and social media.

- *Tool: One-page summary of partnership.* SEED grantees can adapt and distribute this one-page summary to spread information about the opportunity and spark interest among potential partners.

- *Tool: Email template for communicating the partnership opportunity.* SEED grantees can send an email based on this template to generate interest in the partnership opportunity and provide information about participating.

B.   How to select a partner

A key step in selecting a partner is to collect information from interested agencies and organizations about (1) the innovative program or strategy that the partnership will focus on; (2) the specific need or challenge related to the innovative program or strategy; (3) what they hope to accomplish by participating in a partnership; (4) their commitment to improving the design and implementation of their initiative in collaboration with the SEED grantee; and (5) the specific type of guidance or feedback that they would like to receive from a SEED grantee. Grantees can use this information to select agencies and organizations that will be a good fit based on the criteria in Step 1: A.

- *Tool: Expression of interest form.* SEED grantees can use this form to collect information from agencies and organizations that are interested in a partnership. Free online survey tools are available for collecting this information—including Google Forms and SurveyMonkey.

SEED grantees need to review these expressions of interest to select a partner. If there are multiple organizations that expressed interest, we recommend using a clear set of criteria to guide the selection of a partner. This ensures that the SEED grantee (1) considers the characteristics that make an organization a good fit and (2) focuses on those characteristics when selecting a partner. The following criteria are a starting point, but SEED grantees should tailor them to their own needs and interests. We recommend focusing on the extent to which potential partners:

- *Have an innovative initiative relevant to the SEED grantee's work.* The partnerships will focus on partners that are implementing innovative strategies in areas that are relevant for the SEED grantee's work. This ensures that the partnership is productive for the partner (by providing feedback on an ongoing initiative or effort) and rewarding for the SEED grantee (by giving them an opportunity to see how their feedback influences another organization).

- *Have identified a specific design or implementation challenge and want input from a partner on how to address it.* Identifying a partner who has already considered the specific need or challenge that the partnership will address provides a clear goal and cuts down on the time that would otherwise have to be spent at the beginning of the partnership to identify a goal. This is a critical aspect to selecting a partner. Lessons learned from previous partnerships have shown that having an undefined need or challenge can cause the partnership to stall without a clear focus.

- *Have needs that align with the expertise and experience of the SEED grantee.* Each SEED grantee brings unique expertise and experience, and the partner's needs should correspond with these areas of expertise to ensure that the grantee's feedback is relevant and valuable to the partner's work.

- *Have needs that fit the scope of a partnership.* SEED partnerships are designed to be somewhat light touch—the SEED grantee and partner meet every month for one to two hours. Therefore, an appropriate partner is one whose needs can be addressed with this level of effort. This requires a balance between identifying a partner who can get something meaningful out of the partnership, but who doesn't require a level of support that is too

intense or time-consuming. A partner who has a much larger need for support may be appropriate if the partnership can focus on one specific aspect of that broader need.

Before finalizing the selection of a partner, the SEED grantee and prospective partner should hold a call to confirm they are a good fit for working together on a partnership. This pre-partnership call should cover the following:

- Overview of the partner's innovative initiative and goals for the partnership.

- Description of specific types of feedback or guidance that the partner is seeking.

- Overview of the SEED grantee's experience and expertise in the topic area, the lens through which the grantee views the topic area, and the type of feedback or guidance that it can provide in that topic area.

- Discussion about the partner's and grantee's interest in engaging in a partnership with one another.

- Conversation about the partner's willingness and organizational authority to pilot and implement new strategies based on the feedback or guidance provided by the SEED grantee.

- Conversation about the SEED grantee's willingness to share resources, tools, or lessons learned that can help support the partner's work. This includes discussing how or if proprietary content is shared to set expectations among participants.

- Conversation about who will participate in the partnership (including planning calls and partnership meetings) and the expected time commitment.

- Confirmation of commitment to the work. If there are outstanding questions about ability or willingness to commit to the partnership, a follow up call to ensure all members of the partnership are committed to the work before the kickoff meeting is critical.

- Articulation of next steps, such as a follow up call or preparations for the kickoff meeting.

Once a grantee finds a partner, the grantee and partner should establish a common set of expectations for each other's roles and responsibilities. We recommend that they each identify one partnership lead who participates in all activities and remains consistent throughout the partnership. The partner should include one person who has the ability to make and implement decisions and one person who is closely involved in day-to-day implementation of the initiative. Both people should be actively involved throughout the partnership.

- *Tool: Roles and responsibilities of partnership participants.* This is an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the grantee, partner, and facilitator.

Facilitators should ensure partnership team members are committed to the work prior to launching the partnership by soliciting feedback and looking out for cues that demonstrate capacity to engage in the partnership. One finding from the partnerships we have facilitated is that when a team cannot commit to scheduling a pre-partnership meeting or kickoff meeting, difficulties with scheduling and regular meetings often persist.

STEP 2: HOLD A KICKOFF MEETING

A.   Purpose of the kickoff meeting

The next step is a kickoff meeting to build relationships between the participants, ensure a common understanding of the partnership, learn more about the partner's innovation and need for a partnership, and start narrowing the partnership's focus.

Establish relationships. Taking the time to establish positive working relationships can foster sharing throughout the course of the partnership. Partners can share honest, constructive feedback during the partnership if they have had time to establish a relationship. At the kickoff meeting, all participants should have enough time to introduce themselves and share information about their work and their motivation for doing it. We strongly recommend holding the kickoff meeting in person and not remotely, to gather all participants in the same room; future partnership sessions can be held by phone or videoconference. Grantees could avoid additional travel costs by scheduling the kickoff meeting at an annual conference or other gathering that the SEED grantee and partner are both attending.

Ensure a common understanding of the partnership. The SEED grantee and partner need to make sure they are on the same page about the purpose and activities of the partnership, the roles of each participant, and the commitment to the partnership (including time commitment and the partner's role in moving the work forward in-between partnership sessions). The grantee and partner must have open dialogue on their expectations for participating in the partnership (continuing the conversation from the pre-partnership call). This includes the type of expertise and resources the SEED grantee can share, as well as the partner's needs for its initiative.

Understand the partner's need or challenge. Another goal of the kickoff meeting is to better understand the partner's need or challenge. During the meeting, the partner should describe their innovative initiative and the need for support from a thought partner or the specific challenge they are trying to address. The SEED grantee and partner should discuss the potential root causes of the identified challenge. The discussion of root causes should not rely solely on opinions or anecdotes, but should be grounded in evidence from the partner as much as possible.

Narrow the partnership's focus and define its objective. Although establishing relationships and understanding the challenge should be the primary focus, the SEED grantee and partner need to determine the objective of the partnership. The partnership objective can be refined over time, but it should be defined at the kickoff meeting or the first partnership session. The objective should (1) fit the scope of the partnership; (2) focus on a specific aspect of the partner's

innovation or a specific challenge faced by the partner; (3) correspond with the SEED grantee's expertise. The objective should be a clear description of what the partnership will accomplish.

Portrait of a Partnership: An Objective for Diversifying the Teacher Workforce Title

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), in a kickoff meeting with the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR), a SEED grantee, defined the following partnership objective:

"This partnership will refine the requirements for how preparation programs meet CAEP's requirement for demonstrating their efforts to recruit and retain diverse teacher candidates."

B.   Planning and implementing the kickoff meeting

The kickoff meeting should last about four to six hours in order to achieve all of the goals laid out in the previous section. We recommend spending 30 minutes starting to build relationships, 15 minutes ensuring a common understanding of the partnership, one and a half hours understanding the partner's need or challenge, and one hour refining the partnership objective (with time for lunch and 15-minute breaks about every 90 minutes).

The partnership's facilitator should plan, coordinate, and lead the meeting. The meeting will work best if structured as a collaborative discussion between the SEED grantee and partner. To prepare for the kickoff, the facilitator should (1) develop an agenda, (2) schedule the meeting with the partner, (3) request any background materials needed from the partner, and (4) develop a presentation to guide the discussion throughout the day.

We recommend the facilitator has a thought partner for the development of the kickoff and as needed throughout the partnership. This could be an experienced facilitator who can provide guidance on facilitation tools or resources or it could be someone familiar with the organizations and partnership members with insight into strategies that have/have not been successful in previous meetings.

- *Tool: Kickoff meeting preparation checklist.* This document provides a list of items for participants to review and gather ahead of the partnership kickoff meeting. This checklist will ensure everyone has consistent information for holding a productive kickoff meeting.

- *Tool: Kickoff meeting agenda.* SEED grantees can use this as a starting point for developing the agenda for their own kickoff meeting.

- *Tool: Kickoff meeting presentation template.* This presentation includes slides for each item on the kickoff meeting agenda. SEED grantees can tailor the presentation to fit their particular context.

During the meeting, the facilitator should use protocols as needed to structure full group and breakout discussions and activities that will ensure a productive kickoff meeting.

- *Tool:* Facilitation protocols for full group and breakout work:
    - [Protocols for Professional Learning Book](#)- Chapters 5 and 6 of this book provide specific examples of protocols that can be used to address challenges and structure and promote discussion among participants.
    - [The Tuning Protocol](#) – This protocol can be used to guide conversations when a facilitator needs to build consensus around the partnership goals or activities.
    - [Discussion Protocols](#) – This resource provides a number of examples for protocols for facilitating activities.

The partner and SEED grantee should develop a Partnership Plan that documents (1) the context for the partnership and the specific need that the partnership will address; (2) the staff from the SEED grantee and partner who will participate; (3) the specific objective for each partnership session and the types of activities needed to accomplish those objectives; and (4) the planned dates for the partnership sessions.

- *Tool: Partnership plan template.* This template can be used to develop a plan for the partnership as described above.

The facilitator should gather feedback from participants at the end of the kickoff meeting to (1) assess the buy-in of participants, (2) determine the types of activities that are a good fit for the partner and SEED grantee, and (3) identify key aspects of the work that need to be clarified or addressed. The facilitator can provide an evaluation for the participants to provide feedback about the kickoff meeting and facilitate a conversation at the end of the meeting to obtain participants' feedback.

STEP 3: PLAN AND IMPLEMENT THE PARTNERSHIP SESSIONS

Most discussions between the SEED grantees and their partners take place during partnership sessions: regular calls or videoconferences that are held monthly and last 75–90 minutes each (approximately). These sessions are an opportunity for the partners to receive guidance and feedback from the SEED grantees as they work toward addressing the partner's need. Each partnership session should have a clear objective and directly focus on taking the steps needed to help address that objective.

The partner needs to invest time in between the monthly partnership sessions to move the work forward. Ideally, the partner will give the SEED grantee materials to review before each session, and the SEED grantee can share and discuss its feedback during the partnership session.

Portraits of Partnerships: One Size Does Not Fit All

Unpacking a challenge. University of Oklahoma focused their partnership with the National Institute on School Leadership on scaling up a professional development program for new assistant principals to support a state leadership program. The partnership focused on identifying content and best practices to incorporate into a logic model.

Feedback on implementing a program. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) launched a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) and partnered with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for feedback during the implementation of the NIC. The partnership focused on refining the design and critical actions for successful initial implementation through the recruitment and launch phases of AACTE's NIC.

A.   Planning and facilitating partnership sessions

The partnership sessions will be virtual, and the SEED grantee and partner should collaborate between sessions to develop the next session's agenda. The facilitator will work with the grantee and partner to ensure that each session has a clearly defined objective and an agenda with activities designed to accomplish that objective and ensure focused and productive conversations. If the partner has a sense of ownership over the agenda items and the session preparation, they will be more engaged during the session.

A partnership is a process. It is difficult for the facilitator and partnership members to know several months ahead of time exactly what the agenda will be for a particular session; this will be shaped by the work the partner has done since the last session. That said, a completely ad hoc process may leave partners spinning their wheels. At any given time, it is important to have a plan for the next few partnership sessions, recognizing that the plan may change as the SEED grantee and partner carry out their work.

The SEED grantee and partner should come up with a regular monthly schedule for the partnership sessions. When possible, this should be done during the kickoff meeting. This helps ensure that participants have the time reserved on their calendars and allows participants to prepare for each session.

The facilitator's role in each session is to lead participants through the agenda, keep the focus on the session's goals, guide the discussion, and ensure the conversation is not one-sided and everyone gets a chance to talk. The facilitator needs to manage the session to make sure things stay on track, but also be flexible enough to allow for unexpected, but productive discussions. Having an opening activity at the start of each session, such as an ice breaker or pulse check, helps to connect participants to the content of the session.

- *Tool: Resources for engaging participants*

- Building Consensus/Quick Feedback: See protocols in "Quick and easy prioritisation" and "Evaluating ideas"
- Engaging Teams: See activities under Check-in, Check-out, Filtering, and Futurespective

At the end of each session, the facilitator will (1) summarize key takeaways from the discussion, (2) confirm next steps for the partnership (including any activities the partner and SEED grantee will complete before the next session), and (3) get feedback from participants about how the session went.

- *Tool: Virtual Collaboration Tools*
  - A Taxonomy of Innovation provides a glimpse at the Luma Institute's tools for design thinking.
  - Online whiteboard tools allow remote teams to collaborate in real time with the flexibility of whiteboard for sketching.
  - Virtual tools allow for decision making among remote teams in meetings.
  - Video conferencing allows virtual teams to access the benefits of a face-to-face meeting while connecting across distance. Multiple free tools exist for videoconferencing and organizations may already have a license for a videoconference platform.

B.   Types of partnership sessions

There are different ways a facilitator can structure a session to ensure it addresses the partnership's objective. In many cases, the session structure will be unique to the needs of the partnership. Below, we describe a few different types of sessions that can be used to plan and implement a partnership session.

Problem of practice sessions. These sessions are designed to help partners solve a specific problem related to the design or implement of their initiative. It begins with the partner describing the specific problem and their efforts to solve it, and then the SEED grantee asks questions to clarify the problem and its context. Next, the facilitator leads a discussion in which the SEED grantee offers reactions to the problem, describes any experience with similar problems, and discusses proposed strategies for solving the problem. The session ends with the partner reflecting on the proposed strategies.

Strategy sessions. When the work of the partner and SEED grantee are closely aligned, the partner can benefit from learning how the SEED grantee approaches its work. The SEED grantee can describe the design or implementation of its initiative, or provide details about a specific aspect of its initiative. This type of session is particularly helpful when the SEED grantee can discuss the reasoning behind why it designed or implemented its initiative a particular way. Understanding the SEED grantee's thinking behind these types of decisions is valuable for helping the partner make similar decisions for its initiative.

Content sessions. These sessions build a partner's substantive knowledge of a particular topic related to its partnership objective. The outcome of a content session is a deeper understanding of central issues as opposed to analysis or a strategy.

Feedback sessions. During the SEED partnerships, partners often sought feedback on a particular aspect of their initiative. At these sessions, the SEED grantee can gain a deep understanding of the partner's approach and share feedback to help guide further refinements or improvements over time. These sessions work best if (1) partners frame the specific aspects of their work for which they would like feedback; (2) the SEED grantee reviews information about the specific aspect of the partner's initiative that will be discussed; and (3) the partxpner provides a set of questions for the SEED grantee to consider when reviewing the information.

Portraits of Partnerships:

A strategy session on building buy-in. The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) used a strategy session with the Rhode Island Department of Education to discuss how to build buy-in among stakeholders who were redesigning principal preparation programs. NISL staff described how they help stakeholders understand and appreciate the need to change the way school leaders are trained.

A content session on effective mentoring. The New Teacher Center (NTC) held a content session as part of its partnership with the Lee County Public Schools. The purpose of the session was to help the district understand the key characteristics of effective mentoring for new teachers. NTC presented its theory of action, which defined those characteristics and explained how they are linked to positive outcomes for teachers and students.

A feedback session on recruitment plans. CAEP was developing a template for educator preparation programs to use for describing their plans for recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of teacher candidates. The template would guide preparation programs in including specific, measurable, and realistic outcomes for recruiting diverse candidates. In an early feedback session, CAEP and NCTR discussed how to design a template, including the purpose of the template, its structure, and the types of information to request from preparation programs. CAEP then used this feedback to develop an initial draft of the template and get more feedback from NCTR in the next partnership session.

STEP 4: CONCLUDE THE PARTNERSHIP

A.   Review progress and advise on partner's next steps

The timeline for a partnership should be determined by the partner's progress in meeting the original goal for the partnership. Some partnerships are focused around a specific time frame for the partner's initiative, others may have a longer-term objective or benefit from an extended engagement that takes the partnership beyond its initial timeline. Throughout the partnership, the facilitator should check with participants to (1) confirm that each partnership session meets its

intended objective, and (2) assess whether the partnership is making progress in addressing the partner's need.

Facilitators should capture feedback throughout the partnership to assess how the partnership is progressing and refine or shift the approach. For instance, a partner organization's priorities may change or the context in which its initiative is being implemented may change as well. Through regular touchpoints, the facilitator can identify if the timeline, objectives, or practice of the partnership are meeting the participants expectations.

The facilitator should assess the partnership timeline about mid-way through the partnership's initial timeline. The facilitator should hold a conversation with the SEED grantee and partner to discuss the extent to which the partnership has met its overall goal and specific objectives, the objectives that still need to be accomplished, the types of sessions that will accomplish those objectives. These considerations should determine the direction and timeline for the remaining sessions, and whether additional time may be needed.

- *Tool: Sustainability planning tool*. The partnership facilitator can use this tool to guide conversations about whether and how to sustain the partnership beyond the original timeline.

At the conclusion of the partnership, the participants should reflect on the original challenge, the partnership's objective, and the progress that was made in accomplishing that objective. At the final partnership session, the participants should discuss next steps for the partner in terms of how it will sustain the progress made during the partnership and apply the lessons learned from the partnership to its work on the challenge going forward.

Partnership Teams Minimize Disruption

All organizations deal with shifting roles or staff turnover at some point. When starting a partnership, grantees and partners should consider the members of their teams and develop a core team who is knowledgeable of the work and can be flexible if roles or priorities shift. When staff turnover affects a strong team, it affects the ability of a partnership to be successful. A SEED partnership with only one member from the partner organization dissolved when that team member left the organization because no one else from the partner organization was invested in taking it over. A partnership where the grantee lead shifted roles had trouble maintaining momentum when meetings needed to be rescheduled while a new staff member was brought up to speed.

B.   Communicate findings and lessons learned from the partnership

Partners who have invested time in the work should share their experience with organization leadership. Through a briefing, memo, or informal meeting, partners can explain the process, lessons learned, and the impact achieved through the partnership. Re-engaging leadership who have provided buy-in and support for the partnership highlights accomplishments and validates the work of the team.

SEED grantees can use the partnership to share their findings and lessons learned with the broader field. This allows more organizations to learn from the work of the partnership. The goal is for SEED grantees to inform both (1) the broader field of organizations working on a topic and (2) other SEED grantees and organizations who may be considering the partnership approach.

Tool 1
List of national networks and organizations
for communicating the partnership opportunity

List of national networks and organizations for communicating the partnership opportunity

SEED grantees can distribute information about the partnerships to the following associations, agencies, and organizations.

Associations

- AASA, The School Superintendents Association
- American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- Association of Educational Service Agencies
- Chiefs for Change
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Council of Great City Schools
- Learning Forward
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Southern Regional Education Board

Department of Education Grantees or Networks

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
- Equitable Access Support Network
- Race to the Top District
- Regional Education Laboratories
- School Leadership Program

Organizations

- Alliance for Excellent Education
- Center for Education Policy Analysis (Stanford University)
- Center for Education Policy Research (Harvard University)
- Center for Teaching Quality
- Center on Education Policy
- Education Commission of the States
- Education First
- EdLeader21
- Education Trust

- Envision Learning Partners

- Learning First Alliance

- National Council on Teacher Quality

- Partners in School Innovation

- Public Impact

- Results for America

- Wallace Foundation

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Task Forces

Many states have a task force responsible for overseeing the state's consolidated plan for ESSA. Grantees can send information about the partnership to a point of contact on those task forces.

Tool 2
Summary of Partnerships

PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement is providing an opportunity to receive **support** for your educator preparation and development initiatives. Agencies and organizations implementing **innovative strategies** to improve educator preparation and development will receive a thought partner to support their efforts. The thought partners—national nonprofits that received U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grants—will provide feedback and guidance to support your initiatives.

The support is available to state education agencies, school districts, educator preparation programs, and other organizations that are planning or implementing **innovative** approaches to teacher and principal **preparation or development**. The SEED grantees will provide support that is grounded in their experience implementing evidence-based solutions to support teachers and principals in schools and districts across the country.

We will select up to two agencies or organizations to partner with a SEED grantee. If you are interested, **complete this short form**.

Participating SEED Grantees

SEED grantees have extensive experience implementing educator preparation and development initiatives. The SEED grantees available for a partnership are:

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform
- National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
- National Institute for School Leadership
- National Writing Project
- Teach For America
- WestEd

These SEED grantees will provide support based on the lessons learned from their grants and educator development initiatives.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE PARTNERSHIPS

- Individualized support to tackle a specific innovation related to educator preparation and development initiatives.
- Guidance and advice on best practices for implementing innovative strategies for preparing and developing educators.
- Insight from a ongoing thought partner with first-hand experience designing and implementing evidence-based teacher and principal preparation and development initiatives.

TOPICS ADDRESSED BY THE PARTNERSHIPS

The SEED Partnerships can focus on any of these topic areas:

- Expanding the teacher pipeline for hard-to-staff schools and subjects
- Increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce
- Strengthening principal support, preparation, and development
- Establishing new leadership pathways for teachers and principals
- Using feedback and coaching to improve teachers' classroom instruction
- Preparing teachers to implement college- and career-ready standards

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

- **Attend a full day kickoff meeting.** Meet with your partnering SEED grantee to set out the goals and plan for your partnership.
- **Participate in monthly partnership sessions.** Receive feedback and guidance on your educator preparation or professional development initiative during monthly calls with the partnering SEED grantee (about 90 minutes each). A facilitator will lead these sessions to accomplish the partnership's goals.

HOW TO LEARN MORE AND PARTICIPATE

Agencies and organizations interested in the SEED Partnerships **must complete this short form**. To learn more about the opportunity during an **upcoming webinar** or to ask questions about the partnerships, email Steven Malick at smalick@mathematica-mpr.com.

Read about the first round of partnerships at this website. Mathematica Policy Research, AEM, and Knowledge Design Partners are facilitating the SEED Partnerships.

Tool 3
Email Template for Communicating the Partnership

We are excited to announce that we are launching an opportunity for agencies and organizations that are implementing **innovative approaches** to educator preparation and development. If you are working on an innovative strategy for preparing or supporting educators, you could be matched up with a national non-profit that will serve as a **thought partner** for your efforts. The national non-profits have experience implementing **evidence-based solutions** to prepare and develop teachers and principals. The non-profits will provide **feedback and guidance** based on their extensive experience working with teachers and principals across the country.

If you are interested, **complete this short form** by [**DATE**] to express interest in participating. We encourage you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to receive support for your efforts.

Email CONTACT NAME at CONTACT EMAIL for questions and to **RSVP for a webinar to learn more about the SEED Partnerships**.

Here are key details:

- This opportunity is open to state and local education agencies, educator preparation programs, and other education organizations that are planning or implementing an innovative approach to preparing or developing educators.
- [INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION]
- The partnership involves monthly calls in which ORGANIZATION will provide feedback and guidance to inform your efforts.

Tool 4
Seed Partnership Interest Form

SEED Partnerships: Interest Form

Thank you for your interest in a SEED Partnership. Please complete the form below to provide more information about your interest. We will use this information to determine which agencies and organizations will participate in the partnerships. Our most successful applicants clearly describe their innovative strategies and identify specific and narrow goals for how a partnership can support their efforts.

Please note, the partnership is not an opportunity to implement/replicate a SEED grantee's program or approach. Rather, a partnership provides an opportunity for a SEED grantee to serve as a thought partner and support your innovative strategy/approach.

* Required

Background information for main point of contact

Please provide your contact information so we can follow-up about your interest in the SEED Partnerships.

Name of Main Contact *

Your answer

Role/Title

Your answer

Email address *

Your answer

Phone number *

Your answer

Name of state education agency, school district, preparation program, or organization *

Your answer

Focus of partnership

SEED partnerships provide an opportunity for agencies and organizations to receive support for their efforts to improve educator preparation and development. We are seeking states, districts, preparation programs, and other organizations that are actively working on working on innovations in the area of educator preparation or development. Your response to the below questions will help us understand your current efforts and how a SEED Partnership can support them.

What topic area would you most like the SEED Partnership to focus on? [select one] *

Choose

Describe the innovative strategy/approach within that topic area that your agency/organization is working on (i.e. the strategy/approach that the partnership would focus on). Please include the goal of the strategy, the targeted educators, and the current status of the work.

Your answer

Provide one or two specific examples of the type of feedback/guidance you would like to receive from a SEED grantee to support your innovative strategy/approach.

Your answer

A key goal of the partnership is to have a meaningful impact on your work. Describe a specific and meaningful outcome that you hope to accomplish by participating in a partnership. How will you judge if the partnership is successful?

Your answer

Select the SEED grantee that you would be interested in partnering with. [select up to two]

- [ ] National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

- [ ] National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform

- [ ] National Institute for Excellence in Teaching

- [ ] National Institute for School Leadership

- [ ] National Writing Project

- [ ] Teach For America

- [ ] WestEd

Other questions

What type of approval is needed for your agency/organization to participate in a SEED Partnership?

Your answer

We will hold a webinar to share more information about the SEED Partnerships. Would you like to receive information about the webinar?

- ( ) Yes

- ( ) No

Thank you!

We appreciate you sharing information about your interest in the SEED Partnerships. We will follow-up with you by email to let you know about next steps to participate. If you have any questions, email Steven Malick at smalick@mathematica-mpr.com.

Feel free to add any comments or thoughts about the SEED Partnerships below.

Your answer

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Tool 5
Roles and Responsibilities of Partnership Participants

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS, SEED GRANTEES, AND FACILITATORS

SEED Partnerships provide an opportunity for organizations ("partners") to receive assistance from SEED grantees to improve their educator preparation and development efforts. The SEED grantees and partners will share ideas, discuss challenges, develop solutions, and work together on improving the partner's initiatives. This document describes the roles and responsibilities of the partner, SEED grantee, and facilitators.

Partner

Role. The partner's role is to identify an educator preparation and development effort that can benefit from the partnership, and actively participate in partnership activities to improve that effort. Partners will share information about their current efforts, discuss and troubleshoot implementation challenges, and apply what they learn from the partnerships. By sharing their ideas, experiences, and challenges, the partners will also play a valuable role informing the SEED grantee, creating a thought-partnership where both sides have an opportunity to teach and learn from each other.

Responsibilities

- Identify an educator preparation or development effort that can benefit from the partnership.

- Identify a primary contact who will attend the kickoff meeting and monthly partnership sessions and serve as the contact for communications. The primary contact is expected to consistently participate in the monthly sessions to ensure continuity over time.

- Given that a key goal of the partnerships is to improve the partner's current educator preparation and development efforts, the primary contact should have the authority to act on and implement the information gained from the partnership.

- Coordinate with the facilitator to schedule the kick-off meeting and monthly sessions.

- Participate in a kickoff meeting to define the (1) goals of the partnership, (2) activities that will be used to accomplish those goals, and (3) outcomes used to measure if the goals were met. Review and provide feedback on the resulting partnership plan.

- Actively participate in monthly partnership sessions by participating in discussions, sharing information, raising questions, and describing and troubleshooting challenges.

- Be open to feedback and share feedback.

- Serve as both 'learner' and 'teacher' to ensure mutual benefit for both parties.

- Notify the facilitator at least 48 hours in advance when unable to attend a session.

- Respond to communications from the facilitator and SEED grantee in a timely way.

- Use the insights gained from the partnership to inform and improve the partner's educator preparation and development efforts.

- Maintain the privacy of any information the SEED grantee describes as confidential.

- Participate in an interview with the project team to provide feedback about the partnerships and improve partnership activities.

SEED Grantee

Role. The SEED grantee's role is to provide information and assistance to help improve the partner's educator preparation and development efforts. The SEED grantee will use the lessons learned from its experiences to inform the work of the partner. This includes providing feedback on the partner's plans and helping to troubleshoot challenges faced by the partner. The SEED grantee's participation in the partnership provides a valuable opportunity to inform its own work, by applying their lessons learned in a new context, learning about the partner's implementation experiences, and participating in a thought-partnership where both sides have an opportunity to teach and learn from each other.

Responsibilities

- Identify a primary contact who will attend the kickoff meeting and monthly partnership sessions and serve as the contact for communications. The primary contact is expected to consistently participate in the monthly sessions to ensure continuity over time.

- Given that a key goal of the partnerships is to improve the partner's current educator preparation and development efforts, the SEED grantee should provide information and assistance that the partner can act on and implement.

- Coordinate with the facilitator to schedule the kick-off meeting and monthly sessions.

- Participate in a kickoff meeting to define the (1) goals of the partnership, (2) activities that will be used to accomplish those goals, and (3) outcomes used to measure if the goals were met. Review and provide feedback on the resulting partnership plan.

- Actively participate in monthly partnership sessions by participating in discussions, sharing information, raising questions, and working with the partner to address challenges.

- Be open to feedback and share feedback.

- Serve as both 'learner' and 'teacher' to ensure mutual benefit for both parties.

- Notify the facilitator at least 48 hours in advance when unable to attend a session.

- Respond to communications from the facilitator and partner in a timely way.

- Use the insights gained from the partnership to inform and improve the SEED grantee's educator preparation and development efforts.

- Maintain privacy of any information that the partner views as confidential.

- Participate in an interview with the project team to provide feedback about the partnerships and improve partnership activities.

Facilitators

Role. The facilitator's role is to foster a productive partnership between the partner and SEED grantee to improve the partner's current efforts. The facilitator will guide the partner and SEED grantee through a kickoff meeting to establish a relationship between activities: establishing a relationship; defining the goals, activities, and outcomes for each partnership and a plan to accomplish them; engaging in interactive mentoring sessions to address the partnership's goals.

Responsibilities

- Work with SEED grantee and partner to schedule kick-off meeting and monthly partnership sessions.

- Respond to communications from the partner and SEED grantee in a timely way.

- Facilitate a kickoff meeting to define the (1) goals of the partnership, (2) activities that will be used to accomplish those goals, and (3) outcomes used to measure if the goals were met. Draft a partnership plan based on the kickoff meeting and revise it based on feedback from the partner and SEED grantee.

- Work with the partner and SEED grantee to plan and schedule monthly partnership sessions that address the partnership's goals.

- Facilitate monthly partnership sessions to accomplish the goals of the partnership.

- Respond to feedback from the SEED grantee and partner about the monthly sessions to ensure the sessions are meeting their needs.

- Maintain the privacy of any information the SEED grantee or partner describes as confidential.

Agreement To Proceed

In signing this document, we agree that this document accurately describes the roles and responsibilities of Partners, SEED Grantees, and Facilitators, and we commit to participating in good faith in the SEED Mentoring Partnerships and fulfilling our respective roles and responsibilities as described above.

Partnership Topic:

SEED Grantee: [name]	Partner: [name]	Facilitator [name]
Signature:	Signature:	Signature:
Print name:	Print name:	Print name:
Title:	Title:	Title:
Date:	Date:	Date:

Tool 6
Kickoff Meeting Preparation Checklist

Kickoff meeting preparation checklist

- The facilitator, SEED grantee, and partner sign Roles and Responsibilities form
- Facilitator
    - Identify preferred days/times for meetings
    - Organize logistics for meeting and send to all participants
    - Hold calls with grantee and partner to plan for kickoff meeting
    - Send participants the SEED Partnership Blueprint to review beforehand
- Grantee
    - List of other individuals involved and contact information
    - Preferred days/times for meetings
    - Discuss with executive team or legal counsel any proprietary information related to this partnership
    - Develop introduction to provide all with a foundational understanding of the grantee's work for kickoff call (PPT slides and send to facilitator ahead of time
    - Register for kickoff meeting
- Partner
    - Provide a brief description of the specific challenge or area of focus for the SEED Partnership. Document any questions they have related to how grantee can support this focus area.
    - Identify preferred days/times for SEED Partnership meetings
    - Ensure organizational leadership is supportive of SEED Partnership and its goals
    - Prepare brief presentation to develop a foundational understanding of its initiative, the local context, and the key challenge faced
- All parties prepare responses to the following:
    - To me, being a thought partners means…..
    - This is what I am looking for in a thought partner…..
    - The ingredients of a successful partnership are…..

Tool 7
Kickoff Meeting Agenda

SEED Partnership Kickoff Meeting Agenda

Date:

Time:

Location:

Attendees:

I.   Welcome, introductions, and meeting overview (20 minutes)

II. Background on SEED partnerships (10 minutes)

   a. Motivation for establishing SEED partnership
   b. Overview of SEED grants
   c. Flexibility in the design and implementation of SEED partnership
   d. Roles and responsibilities of participants

III. Background on the SEED grantee's experience and approach (30 minutes)

IV. Understand the partner's initiative and context (30 minutes)

V.   Narrow and define objective of the SEED partnership (1 hour)

VI. Develop plan for initial SEED partnership sessions (1 hour)

VII. Close out and next steps (30 minutes)

Materials to bring and prepare

- Name tags or tents

- Printed copies of agenda, slides, and roles and responsibilities document

- Large pad, note pads, pens/markers, and sticky notes

- Meeting room setup: put a large note pad on the wall with the words "Parking lot" and use this as a place where participants can use to write questions on a sticky note and put it on the paper throughout the day.

Tool 8
Kickoff Meeting Presentation Template

SEED Partnership Kickoff

[Partner names]

[location]

[date]

Introductions

- Share a bit about your **background**. For example: **How did you come to be in your current role in your organization?**

- Tell us about a past collaboration or partnership that was **particularly productive or valuable**.

Agenda

Time	Topic
20 minutes	Welcome, introductions, and meeting overview
10 minutes	Background on SEED partnerships
30 minutes	SEED grantee efforts
30 minutes	Partner's initiative and context
15 minutes	Break
60 minutes	Narrow and define an objective for the partnership
60 minutes	Lunch
60 minutes	Develop plan for partnership sessions
30 minutes	Close out and next steps

Goals of Meeting

1. Get to know each other

2. Understand the partnership approach

3. Learn more about [partner]'s local context and challenges

4. Share [grantee]'s perspective and lessons learned on preparing and developing school leaders

5. Develop a focus and initial plan for the partnership

Background on SEED partnerships

Motivation for SEED Partnerships

- SEED grant goal: Disseminate effective educator development strategies
- Develop partnerships to share lessons learned from SEED grants and grantees' experience
- Make meaningful contribution to state and local educator development efforts

Keys to a Successful Partnership

- Mindset open to making change/trying new approaches
- Willing to share and provide honest feedback
- Focus on concrete aspect of the partner's work
- Buy-in of partner and grantee for the partnership plan
- Assess progress and check in on a regular basis
- Regular meeting day/time each month
- Move work forward between sessions

SEED grantee efforts

SEED grantee

– **Highlight overall framework and approach to Discuss main components of program and lessons learned**

Partner's initiative and context

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Partner's efforts

- [High-level goal of partner's initiative]
- [High-level challenge or innovation of partner's initiative]
- [High-level goal for partnership]

Debrief of [partner] efforts

Strengths

Opportunities for growth

Outstanding questions or wonderings

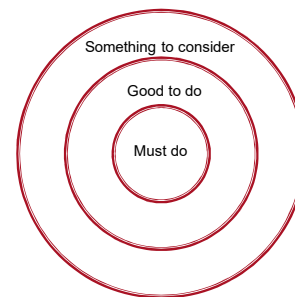## Narrow and define an objective for the SEED partnership

What is the central challenge?

- What aspects of [partner's efforts] do you want to make [high-level goal or challenge]?
- What is the challenge these aspects?
- On which aspect should we focus?

How will we address the central challenge?

- Now, let's focus on how the partnership can address the aspect of the central challenge.
- On your post-it notes, generate ideas for *how* we might address the partnership focus

Bull's-eye

Something to consider

Good to do

Must do

Revisiting our Bull's-eye

- Further refinements or prioritization?

Partnership focus

| What is our broad focus for the partnership? |
| What is our specific partnership objective? |
| How will we know if we are successful? |

Develop a plan for the partnership sessions

Developing a plan to achieve our objective

- Let's take a look at our "must do" list

- Which of these "must do" activities will be most impactful toward achieving the partnership objective?

- Of those most impactful topics, which are most meaningful and useful to accomplish in the structure of our partnership sessions?
  - Do we need to revise the "grain-size" of each must do?
  - In what order should we tackle each must do?
  - Is each must do a good fit with NISL's experience?
  - How does each must do help us achieve success?

Initial plan

Jan 2019	Topic: Kick off meeting; establish partnership objective
Feb 2019	Topic:
Mar 2019	Topic:
Apr 2019	Topic:
May 2019	Topic:
Jun 2019	Topic:

Close out and next steps

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Planning for our next session

- **What do we need to accomplish at our next session in order to move this effort forward?**
  - Materials to prepare or review?
  - Feedback sought?
  - Drafts developed?
  - Timeline?

Next steps

- **Any remaining questions or outstanding thoughts?**
- **Future partnership sessions scheduling**
- **What needs to happen between now and our next session?**

Closing Reflection Questions

- What aspects of the meeting approach and discussion worked well? What could be improved for future meetings?

- Describe one thing you are excited about for the partnership, and one thing that may need more thought.

- What lingering questions remain for you?

Tool 9
Partnership Plan Template

Partnership plan for [names]

Table 1. Partnership overview

Background and motivation for SEED partnership	
Broad focus of SEED partnership	
SEED partnership objective	
Expected outputs of the SEED partnership	
SEED partnership participants	

Table 2. Initial plan for partnership sessions

Planned date	Topic of session	Session goals	Preparation

Tool 10
Planning Tool for Sustaining SEED Partnerships

Domain	Assess	Plan
A. Overall partnership goal and specific session objectives	• How much progress has been made in accomplishing the overall goal or outcome of the partnership? • What aspects of the partnership goal have and have not been accomplished? • Among the aspects that have not been accomplished, which align well with the SEED grantee's experience and expertise?	• Refine the goal of the partnership, as needed, based on the highest priority aspects that have not been accomplished • Define the specific objectives that are needed to achieve the partnership's refined goal • Describe what success will look like if you are successful in meeting those objectives.
B. Overall timeline and scope	• How many months can each organization commit to continuing the partnership? (assuming one partnership session per month) • Which objectives identified in Section A can reasonably be accomplished in that time frame? • How much time is needed for each partnership session (sessions are typically 90 minutes each)?	• Define the specific objectives the partnership can feasibly accomplish with the remaining sessions • Create a plan that shows each partnership session, the specific objective that the session will accomplish, and the order of the sessions. • Schedule specific dates and times for the partnership sessions.

C. Structure and activities for partnership sessions	For each partnership session:
	• Which objective from Section B will the partnership session address?
	• What types of activities are needed to accomplish the objective? Are activities needed to:
	  – Understand a topic or challenge in greater depth?
	  – Develop an approach or solution to a challenge?
	  – Obtain input or feedback on a proposed approach?
	• What type of activity can you do at the beginning of the session to promote a positive and collaborative environment?
		For each partnership session:
		• Create an agenda that (1) defines the session objective, (2) lists the session's activities with a realistic amount of time for each, and (3) clarifies who will lead/facilitate each activity.
		• Determine the strategies you will use to foster a sense of partnership and build relationships among participants.
		• Ensure that participants are aware of the norms or rules for interacting with each other and determine how you will address any breaches of those norms.

D. Between session preparation	• What information should participants review before each session to prepare for a productive discussion?	For each partnership session: • Identify any materials that are needed for the session and ensure they are developed, reviewed, and distributed in advance of the sessions.
E. Logistics	• Who has time to manage the logistics of the partnership activities?	• Determine who will coordinate those meetings, send calendar holds, distribute agendas and materials, and confirm attendance. • Identify the person who will follow up to ensure that deadlines are met in advance of sessions.

Selected resources to consult to support facilitation

• IDEO.org: Human-Centered Design Facilitators Guide
   – This document provides an introduction human-centered design.
 	
• Mural: Online collaboration platform
       – Mural is an online digital tool that helps remote teams interactively collaborate.
 	
• LUMA Institute: Innovating for People Handbook of Human-Centered Design Methods
       – This text provides helpful human-centered design strategies for planning and facilitating sessions.
 	
• Seeds for Change: Facilitation tools for meetings and workshops.
       – This guide provides examples of tools and techniques to facilitate meetings and workshops.
 	
• University of Wisconsin-Madison: Facilitator Tool Kit
       – This toolkit provides tools, methods, and techniques to support planning for and executing interactive meetings.

Session planning template

Planning questions	Your plan	Examples and considerations
Step 1: Session vision		
1A. What is the objective for this session?		Keep objectives bite sized so that they are achievable
1B. How does achieving this objective connect to the larger partnership goal?		
1C. How will you know if you successfully achieved your objective?		
1D. What are your overall constraints for this session?		How long is the session? Will it be conducted virtually?
Step 2: Create a plan		
2A. What are the main questions with which the partners must grapple to achieve the session objective?		Keep core questions for each session limited. We recommend 2 or 3, but no more than 4.
2B. For each question, what activity will you use to help partners answer the question?		
2C. Why are the activities you chose best suited to help partners achieve the session's objective?		
Step 3: Operationalize your plan		
3A. For each activity you planned, what steps will partners need to complete the activity?		Provide partners with directions for how they should participate, what type of feedback or information they should provide, and how long they have to provide it.
3B. For each activity you planned, what materials will partners need? Will these materials need to be reviewed in advance by partners?		
3C. How will you ensure that partners are identifying key takeaways that will inform their work?		Actively incorporate moments of reflection for partners to process and consider their next steps.

Planning questions	Your plan	Examples and considerations
3D. How will you know if your activity was successful?		Use measures which are both attitudinal (i.e. what people say about the usefulness of the activity) and observable (i.e. written list of next steps or high quality verbal reflections)
3E. How long will each activity take to complete?		Often activities take longer than expected, so be conservative in your allocation of time.
Step 4: Managing the unexpected		
4A. What could happen during the session that could hinder your ability to achieve the session objective? What could you do to proactively address it? What reactive strategies might you employ?		For example, how might you avoid technical problems that prevent people from logging on? And what is the backup plan if that does happen? How might you avoid one person dominating the discussion? And what happens if this actually does happen?

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