**T4T Round Table Protocol Pre-work**

**Mississippi Team**

* **Overview of the selected strategy**

Based on the accomplishments and identified needs of T4TLA -Year 1, Mississippi set a goal of addressing its educator talent needs through supporting novice teachers and retaining highly effective experienced teachers in Year 2. **The team determined that the most appropriate strategy was to develop a comprehensive mentoring and induction program that would be piloted with the two M&I Affinity Group LEAs–Quitman County and Yazoo City Public Schools–two high-need districts.** The M&I programming would be based on emerging guidance from the M&I Affinity Group, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, and the New Teacher Center. Further, programming would require that LEA leadership utilize a rigorous mentor identification and selection process, provide structured and ongoing professional development support for mentors and mentees, and commit to a schedule that would enable mentors and mentees time to engage purposefully and regularly.

* **Challenges in Implementing the strategy**

Both participating pilot districts, Quitman County and Yazoo City Public Schools, are situated in the Mississippi Delta Region and are widely recognized as under-resourced and lacking in ethnic diversity (a majority of students in public schools are African American). Not surprisingly, the districts were challenged by a number of structural impediments that stood in the way of their vision for addressing educator talent needs and implementing M&I programming. As an example, a number of LEA team members commonly assumed multiple roles that fell under the umbrella of their single job title. As such, a number of them expressed concerned that they did not have the capacity to add to their already overly-taxing multiple job responsibilities the task of facilitating M&I planning and implementation. LEA team members were also concerned that they would not be able to identify a sufficient number of highly effective mentors to satisfy the needs of the schools in their districts. Finally, there was trepidation about the extent to which district leadership would support the initiative and provide for ongoing professional development and protected time allotted for mentor-mentee interaction.

* **Successes in implementing the strategy**

The key successes in implementing the strategy grew out of the state’s willingness to meet districts where they were. During the second convening, the state heard the districts’ concerns and began immediately to act on them. The state assumed a leadership role and took the lead in designing, promoting, and supporting district-level implementation efforts. Within a week or so of the national convening, the state team met with LEA leadership in the pilot districts to provide them with foundational information regarding the strategy and to set expectations for their participation and support of the pilot. The team was able to garner support of district leadership by clarifying the connection of M&I work to school turnaround goals. The team also offered LEA leadership guidance regarding the process for identification and selection of high-performing experienced teachers. Superintendents from both districts commitment to work necessary for the success of the M&I initiative. And while there was a dearth of highly effective experienced teachers serving the schools within the pilot districts, the state team strategized with district leadership to address the issue via the identification and selection of district mentors, rather than school-site mentors.

To spur action in support of the M&I program, the state team built upon the state’s mentoring legislation (Beginning Teacher Support Program Legislation – Mississippi Code §37-9-201-213 and Beginning Principal Support Pilot – Mississippi Code §37-9-251). They arranged opportunities for the pilot districts and the remaining districts across the state to revisit the legislation and reflect upon the extent to which they were adhering to the legislation. Next MDE hosted a statewide Mentoring and induction convening at which they disseminated the contents of the legislation and discussed the latest research on M&I as a talent management strategy. These steps enabled the team to garner widespread support for the initiative and to create a sense of urgency around implementation of the M&I program.

* **How the selected strategy supported achievement of desired outcomes (3 minutes)**

Since the convening, the MDE M&I team, which is a combination of professionals from MDE Office of Teaching and Leading and its Office of School Improvement, has trained, onboarded, and developed and shared guidance documents and support/training resources with mentors and mentees. In addition, the team has developed a number of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the program’s effectiveness.