TALENT FOR TURNAROUND
EQUITABLE ACCESS | SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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 supported by effective leaders,

THEN we need systems that attract, recruit, support, retain and leverage teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills required to turn around low-performing schools and districts.

The **Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy (T4TLA**) is a multi-year initiative designed to help states and districts align equitable access and school improvement efforts. The T4TLA will focus on the development of coherent and aligned talent management systems that attract, support, and retain excellent educators in the lowest performing, highest need schools and districts. The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* emphasizes coordination among and between federal programs, and the T4TLA provides an ideal opportunity to strengthen connections between talent management and school improvement systems at the state and local levels.

The **long-term vision and goals** for T4TLA are for state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to:

- Scale and sustain effective talent development systems in the lowest performing schools and districts
- Attract, support, and retain effective teachers and leaders and reduce equity gaps in the lowest performing, highest need schools and districts
- Close achievement gaps through effective teaching and leadership in the lowest performing, highest need schools and districts

To achieve these long-term goals, T4TLA aims to achieve the following short- and medium-term outcomes in the first two years.

Short-term outcomes (Year 1) include:

- SEAs and LEAs improve alignment, coordination, and communication across their equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school improvement efforts at the state and district level
- LEAs increase the extent to which they engage in cycles of continuous improvement planning, including data review and identification of key challenges, root cause analysis,

and review and reflection of the alignment and effectiveness of existing policies and strategies

- Regional Centers (RCs) improve coordination and collaboration with national content centers and other partners to strengthen their approach to providing outcomes-driven TA to SEAs and LEAs.

Medium-term outcomes (Year 2) include:

- LEA teams design and implement strategies to address identified gaps in the talent pipeline in low performing schools and integrate their selected T4TLA strategy(s) into local improvement efforts
- SEAs support LEAs in the development and implementation of talent management strategies at the local level, and use their learning to inform state-level policy and practice

A more detailed ***theory of action*** that specifies inputs, strategies, outputs, short-, medium- and long-term outcomes appears in Appendix A.

Support Provided

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, the Center on School Turnaround, and RCCs are collaborating to provide participating state education agencies and districts with strategic support from technical assistance providers and content experts to attract, recruit, support, and retain educator talent in high need, low performing schools.

In Year 1 of the T4TLA, participating states and districts:

- Gathered and reviewed talent management data to identify and prioritize key talent management challenges in attracting, supporting, and retaining excellent teachers and leaders in the highest need, lowest-performing schools
- Engaged in root cause analysis to understand the underlying causes of their talent management challenges
- Reviewed their equity and improvement plans for both alignment and coherence, and to understand the extent to which existing talent management strategies and policies are aligned to their talent management challenges
- Identified and built content knowledge on selected talent management strategy(s) to address their identified talent management challenge and underlying root causes
- Identified cross-department partnership opportunities to improve and align talent management processes (e.g., collaboration between preparation and recruitment)
- Began to identify leading and lagging indicators and benchmark targets to support implementation of a monitoring strategy
- Identified technical assistance supports and resources (inputs) from RCCs and other technical assistance partners that will support SEA and LEA teams in achieving their desired outputs and short-, medium- and long-term outcomes

The focus of T4TLA in Year 2 will be to

- Provide coordinated and differentiated technical assistance support to LEA teams (based on readiness and interest) to help them design and launch selected T4TLA strategies on the ground, and collect ongoing data to continuously reflect and strengthen implementation
- Support SEA and LEA teams in designing and implementing plans to address talent gaps based on a theory of action (TOA) or action plan for their selected T4TLA strategies, including how their selected T4TLA strategy(s) will be implemented throughout the year, and how the inputs and outputs related to this strategy will help them achieve short-, medium- and long-term outcomes
- Support SEA and LEA teams in integrating their selected T4TLA strategies into local improvement efforts (e.g., local ESSA improvement plans or state strategic plans)
- Provide technical assistance to SEA teams to build their capacity to support LEAs in strategy design and implementation, and leverage lessons learned in their work to inform SEA policy and practice
- Facilitate regular, virtual cross-RC team collaboration and learning experiences that build RC capacity to support SEAs and LEAs in designing and implementing talent management strategies on the ground
- Strategically communicate about the progress of T4T teams, successes and lessons learned through implementation, and the early impact of the work to the cohort, the comprehensive center network, ED, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Participants

In year 1, T4TLA recruited and on-boarded 9 SEA teams and 15 LEA teams to join the first cohort, spanning six geographical regions that are supported by 6 RCs (an overview of the membership of cohort 1 can be found in Appendix B). Consideration of additional RC, SEA, or LEA teams will be revisited in 2018, based on the progress and outcomes achieved by the first cohort, and the available resources of the T4TLA planning leadership. Teams comprise state and district staff members who represent equitable access (and/or educator effectiveness) and school turnaround systems; teams consist of at least two members from the state education agency and at least two members from each participating district, with leadership commitment at both levels.

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 SEA and district 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 RCC that serves a participating state also will be an integral part of the team. The T4TLA Planning Group has asked that RCCs supporting participating states and districts have: (1) willingness and commitment (financial and human resources) to participate in T4TLA for Year 1 and Year 2, (2) experience and interest in working with states regarding equitable access, educator effectiveness, and school improvement; (3) development and implementation of an outcomes-driven T4TLA TA plan (see Appendix C for the TA plan template) to support T4T SEAs and LEAs in strategy design and implementation, and integration of this TA plan into the RC's annual management plan.

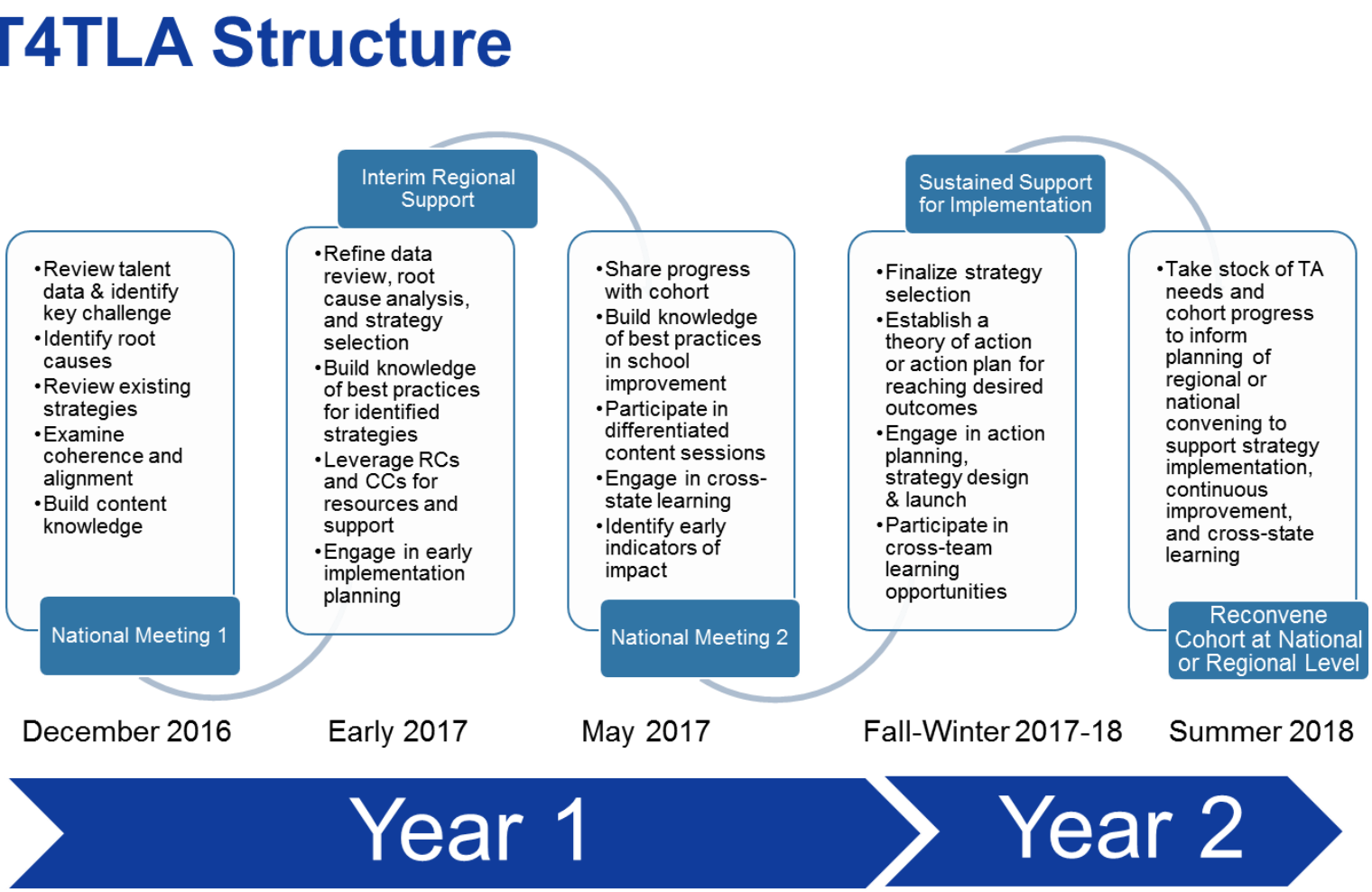
Content and Structure

The T4TLA is organized and implemented through 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 and local support before and after national meetings will provide technical assistance support related to initial needs assessment and priority setting, strategy selection and design, customized application of research and evidence-based practices, and ongoing support for implementation and monitoring assessment of progress.

As teams identify prioritized challenges and select strategies designed to address these challenges, the T4TLA will provide coordinated and differentiated technical assistance based on SEA and LEA readiness and interest to support strategy implementation on the ground. This technical assistance will integrate best practices in both talent management and school improvement, to support T4T teams in designing and implementing talent management strategies in a turnaround environment.

Figure 1 depicts the structure of the T4TLA for Year 1 and Year 2.

Figure 1. T4TLA Structure

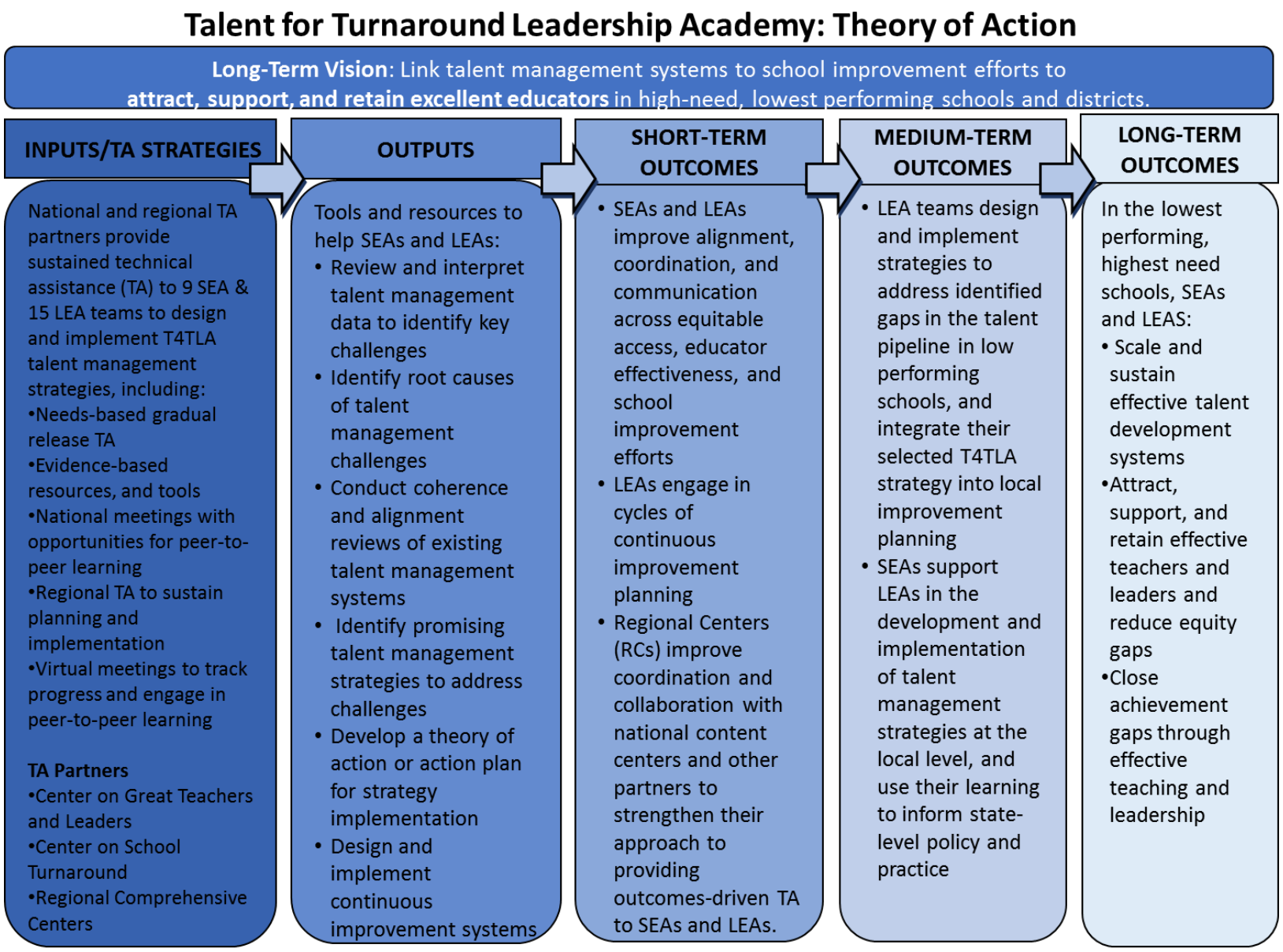


Conclusion & Looking Forward

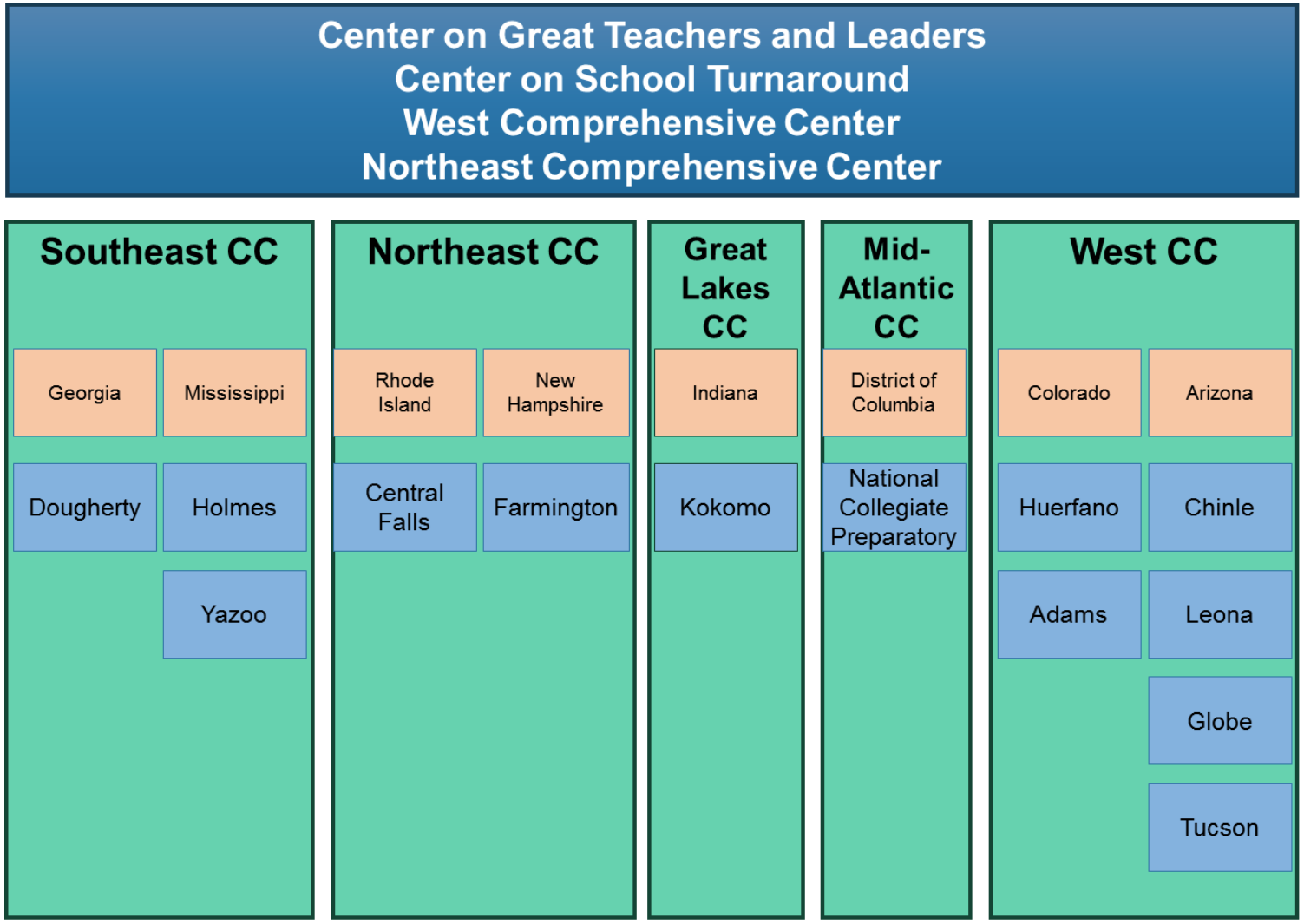
T4TLA partners have come together to address the need for states and districts to link talent management systems to school improvement efforts to attract, recruit, support, and retain effective educators in our highest need, lowest performing schools and districts. As a result of their engagement, T4TLA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

As the T4TLA looks forward to Year 2 and beyond, T4TLA leadership will continue to assess the readiness and progress of the cohort and provide technical assistance aligned to those needs. These regular assessments of progress and readiness will inform planning and focus of additional national or regional meetings, including decisions to recruit additional RCs, SEAs, or LEA teams for participation in T4TLA.

Appendix A: Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy: Theory of Action



Appendix B: T4TLA Cohort 1 Membership



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Appendix C. T4TLA RCC Lead Y6 TA Planning Template

These Y6 TA planning templates are intended to provide RCC Leads space to consider the long and short-term goals of their TA support of T4T SEA and LEA teams, and the inputs and outputs required to reach these outcomes. Many fields in this planning template should lend themselves to populating the revised ED Annual Management Plan template.[1]

If you are supporting more than one district, you may wish to complete two separate TA plans that reflect the different work in each district.

Regional Center Leads	
Regional Center	
T4T State	
T4T Districts	

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

What is the prioritized talent management challenge that your T4TLA district(s) are aiming to address through their participation in T4TLA?

Note: This field should describe the "problem" that your RC's TA is intended to address – whether it be a challenge of attracting, supporting, or retaining excellent teachers or leaders in the highest need schools. The problem statement should include both the diagnosed challenge from their data, and the perceived root causes of the challenge.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:

Note: This should be a SMART goal related to student/school or educator workforce outcomes – related to addressing the problem statement above. This should align with your T4T district's long-term goals for this work. (e.g., "My district will improve teacher retention in the highest need schools from 50% to 75% by the year 2021."

[1] Note that this document is separate from the T4TLA Action Plan for your T4T LEAs. This document outlines your TA support plans to help T4T LEAs design and execute a theory of action/action plans.

INPUTS/ TA ACTIVITIES ***(i.e., a detailed itemization of the "Purpose" and "TA approach" in your management plan)*** *What is the technical assistance that you will provide to your T4T SEA and LEA team that will help them achieve the desired outputs and outcomes and address the problem statement outlined above.* *What resources or content expertise should be leveraged as part of your TA support from the RC or other partners? (e.g., content centers, State Support Network, other local or regional partners)*		OUTPUTS OF YOUR RCC'S TA SUPPORT *What outputs might your LEAs produce as a result of their work with you? What outputs might the SEAs produce in support of the LEAs as a result of your support? For example, will LEAs have produced results of a data analysis and root cause analysis? Will they have conducted a strategic plan review and identified areas for alignment? Will they have developed an action plan or monitoring plan that details their plans for implementing a selected T4TLA strategy? Will SEAs have developed an approach to supporting LEAs that can be scaled to other districts?* ***One primary output of your support of SEAs and LEAs should ideally be a clear theory of action or logic model that shows how their selected strategy will lead to the desired outputs and short and long-term outcomes. For more intensive TA support, this may also be accompanied by a detailed implementation plan.***		SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES OF YOUR RCC'S TA SUPPORT *What are the short-term measurable outcomes of your support? Consider the knowledge building, data review, root cause analysis, strategy selection, or overall pre-implementation planning you would like to see your T4T team accomplish as a result of their work with you.* *Note that you will want to consider the outcomes of your T4T LEAs, but also any outcomes for SEAs as they relate to supporting LEAs in achieving their goals.*		MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES OF YOUR RCC'S TA SUPPORT *What are the medium-term measurable outcomes of your support? Consider the policies, practices, programs, or behaviors you anticipate your T4T districts having designed or implemented as a result of their work with you. Note that this should <u>not</u> include the longer term school or student outcomes that your district has identified as their desired goals.* *Note that you will want to consider the outcomes of your T4T LEAs, but also any outcomes for SEAs as they relate to supporting LEAs in achieving their goals.* ***One primary outcome of your support of SEAs and LEAs should ideally be the integration of their T4T theory of action and/o implementation plan into local improvement plans, and the inclusion of any T4T talent management strategies reflected in local improvement plans.***	
What is the input?	When will it happen?	What is the output?	When will it be produced?	What is the short-term outcome?	How will it be measured?	What is the medium-term outcome?	How will it be measured?
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Roles & Responsibilities

As you document roles & responsibilities, consider the following TA planning needs:

- Project management (developing and overseeing the project timeline, hosting and facilitating check-in calls, ensuring that each party is on track with their respective roles and responsibilities, etc.)
- Agenda, presentation, training, or other materials development
- Meeting or training facilitation (for each meeting, workshop, or other type of TA support)
- In-person meeting support (e.g., meeting space, food, travel costs, materials reproduction, technology, sign-in sheets or nametags, etc.)
- Evaluation (e.g., surveys, interviews)

Partner	Roles & Responsibilities
Regional Center	
SEA	
LEA	
Content center(s)	
Other partner(s)	