

# LDOE Focus Group Guide



Strong School Systems  
Strategic Planning Resource

## Notes for TA provider

- Aims:
  - Start to build a relationship.
  - Make interviewee/ focus group participants feel heard.
  - Develop your understanding of the school district's strengths and challenges.
- Recommended length: 45 min for focus groups
- Preparation:
  - Review survey responses collected to date and note 1-2 themes re: challenges about which you can ask the interviewee.
  - Script your concise framing.
- As you listen, take notes for your team's later review and synthesis (e.g., along with survey responses)

## Agenda/ questions (blue = highest priority)

- **Frame** (< 2 min)
  - Introduce yourself; briefly share your background/experience;
  - Briefly share background on the strategic planning effort, and the purpose of this conversation;
  - Note that you will share back themes and quotes with system leaders, without attribution.
- **What are [school system] 2-3 greatest strengths?**
  - **[Version for students] What does your school do best?**
- **What are [school system] 2-3 biggest challenges?**
  - **[Version for students] What do you wish were different about your school?**
    - BPQ: How do students treat one another at your school?
    - BPQ: Are you challenged academically by your classes?
- **What do you think should be the top 2-3 strategic priorities for the system over the next 3-5 years?**
  - **[Version for students] If you were made principal for a day, what would you change to improve your school?**
- **[Staff only] How are teachers coached and developed?**
  - What's working well/ not working well with those structures?
- **[Staff only] How might you rate the adult culture at your school from 1-10, and why?**
- **Though the survey isn't yet closed, we noticed that some of the early responses from teachers suggest \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you think that is the case?**
- **Some of the early responses from families suggest \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you think that is the case?**
- **What else do you think would be helpful for me to know?**
- **Close: Frame next steps.**
  - We'll use your input, along with what we hear from other stakeholders, and our analysis of data and classroom observations, to prepare a comprehensive diagnostic.
  - The Steering Committee will review the diagnostic and prepare a strategic plan by which to respond to it: including strategic priorities, initiatives, and goals.
  - We'll reconvene as a focus group on \_\_\_ to review a summary of the diagnostic and get your feedback on the draft strategic plan.