Ed Tech Rapid Cycle Evaluation Coach

Discussion Guide

Use this as a template for structuring your initial conversations with educational technology providers.

- ☐ Introduce the RCE project: Consider whether you should:
  - Explain the purpose of the evaluation. Is your goal to:
    - Pilot a new educational technology product?
    - Evaluate the impact of an existing product?
    - Decide whether to renew a license or expand use of the product?
    - Improve implementation?
  - Share initial ideas about the type of evaluation: Will it be backward-looking (that is, examining outcomes for those already using the technology in a certain way) or forward-looking (that is, examining outcomes for new users or those being told to use the technology in a new or specific way)? For forward-looking evaluations, how do you plan to assign access to the technology?
  - Describe what you need from the educational technology provider to move forward with the evaluation

- ☐ [If not already known] Ask the educational technology provider to describe the product and intended benefits.
  - Target users: For whom is this technology designed? What is its intended purpose or benefit?
  - Underlying learning science and active ingredients: What makes this product unique? What is the theory of change?
  - Is the product aligned with your state or district standards?
  - What can the developer tell you about optimal usage? For example, how often should the technology be used, for how long, and over what time frame?

- ☐ [For educational technologies already in use] Ask for a description of how and how much the educational technology product is being used.
  - Which schools and grades use the product?
  - How many students and teachers use the product?
  - Does the developer have any insights about implementation strengths and areas for improvement at your district or school?
  - What professional development or training has the developer provided? What does the developer recommend?
  - Should any other important implementation characteristics be taken into account?

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☐ Ask the educational technology provider to describe any embedded assessments within the technology.

- What are they based on? Are they demonstrated to be valid and reliable?
- Do they correlate with any external measures, such as standardized tests?
- What are the most important indicators of progress within the technology?

☐ Discuss external outcomes to measure and sources of data.

- What kinds of outcomes is the educational technology intended to affect?
- How could these outcomes be measured? What data sources could be used to measure their impact? (For example, would standardized test scores be a good way to measure impact?)
- Over what time frame would you expect to see changes in performance?

☐ Determine what data reports are available from the educational technology product.

- Can any reports be generated automatically?
- Is it possible to obtain customized data reports?
- Is a data dictionary (a document that explains the meaning of each field in the usage data) available?

☐ Agree on next steps. Consider whether you should:

- Schedule a product demo?
- Obtain sample data?
- Obtain a data dictionary?
- Schedule a follow-up call?