Entry Conversations

This is the first step in beginning to work with an IBC site. Entry conversations are an essential piece of effective consulting and sets the course for the work that is before you and the leadership team. Through the entry conversation the Capacity Builder can begin to determine the technical and adaptive challenges that the site faces. A successful or unsuccessful entry conversation can have a lasting impact on the relationship between the school leaders and the Capacity Builder. Attributes of a successful conversation:

1. Open Ended but focused on discovering the current state
2. Non-judgmental
3. Presuppose the positive
4. Focused on listening, not telling
5. Non-threatening
6. Uses brief para-phrasing when statements are made

| Introduction | 1. Can you tell me a little bit about your school?  
|             | 2. What are you most proud of?  
|             | 3. What are you most concerned about? What keeps you awake at night?  
|             | 4. What are the district and school initiatives that are a focus for this year? |

| Assessment | 1. What does your assessment system look like?  
| Assessment system is fully described, and holes are noted. |  ▪ Can you tell me about any universal screening, diagnostic, or common assessments used in your school?  
| ▪ Universal Screening  
| ▪ Diagnosis  
| ▪ Progress Monitoring  
| ▪ Student Work  
| ▪ Informal Assessments  
| ▪ Interim Assessments | 2. How are assessments results shared with staff, parents, students, and community? |

| Instruction | 1. What is currently happening for your school’s core instruction in English language arts and math?  
| Instructional focus is described and the Capacity Builder probes to understand agreed upon instructional strategies (student engagement, evidence-based practices, explicit instruction, project-based or mastery learning). | 2. What type of variance or consistency do you see throughout the school with core instruction in English language arts and math?  
| 3. What would you say are the strengths of instructional delivery in your school? |  ▪ What conversations or professional development have you had about good instruction? |
| Intervention | 1. When you think about your struggling students, what does your intervention design look like?  
| Placement of students  
| Decision rules on placement  
| Materials used  
| Duration of intervention  
| Assessments that are used in conjunction with intervention  
| Exit plan for students who make sufficient gains |
| Leadership | 1. Tell me about your leadership team.  
| Involvement in collaborative meetings  
| Time in classrooms  
| Distributive leadership opportunities  
| 2. What other teams or standing committees do you have?  
| 3. How often are you able to observe instruction? |
| Collaboration | 1. When is there time set aside for regular collaboration for teachers?  
| 2. What is the expectation for how collaboration time is used?  
| 3. Which collaborative teams are working well and why? |
| Negotiated Work | 1. In twelve weeks, when you look back at the work we’ve done together, what would cause you to say, “Wow, we’ve come a long way?”  
| Secure time on the calendar for regular visits  
| Secure a regular morning or afternoon debriefing for site visits  
| 2. What I heard you say today was... and that I can be most useful to you by... |

Adapted from information presented by Gary Whiteley and Lexi Domaradzki, January 2013.