

The IDEA Partnership

National Association of State Directors of Special Education
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320
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Professional Development/Adult Learning Communities of Practice:
National Meeting for Member States
March 20-21, 2006

‘Critical Friends’ Debrief

Critical Friends:

- Provide another ‘lens’ through which to examine issues and plans
- Is an advocate for the success of the work
- Understands that ‘critical’ nature of the process applies to the exercise of careful judgment and sensitivity
- Listen more than speak
- Challenge the partner to be reflective...they do not pronounce judgment!
- Respect the confidentiality of the sharing
- Interact in ways that build trust

In the next two sessions...a state teams and their ‘critical friends’ will debrief together. The states will change pairings for each session in order to become familiar with the work of the states and connect with other state teams.

In the first of the tow sessions, each state will present a brief summary of the State goals, Partnership goals, indicators and strategies. They will debrief their *Reflection* on communicating back home and monitoring progress.

In the next session, each state will present a brief summary of its self assessment and Summative State Assessment. They will debrief the *Reflections* on Partnership roles now and in the future.

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Each session will follow the same format:

First Round:

State Debrief (10-15 minutes)

Critical Friend Dialogue (10-15 minutes)

Second Round: Repeat

State Debrief (10-15 minutes)

Critical Friend Dialogue (10-15 minutes)

A critical friend might focus holistically on the report, including

- Kinds of support the state needs given its stage in creating change
- Kind of support the state might need from national organizations and TA Centers
- Kind of support the state might need from other states

Or a critical friend might focus on a particular part of the report, including:

- The State teams thoughts on involving families from diverse backgrounds
- The state teams thoughts on going deep into partner networks
- Whether the community has the support from leadership to implement the plan
- Whether the state community has good connections across the state and local levels
- Whether the state community has good public communication

For the Wrap up/Follow-up, collect your thoughts on these issues:

- *If we continue to employ a ‘Critical Friends’ strategy, what value will it add?*
- *We are thinking of sponsoring ‘Critical Friend Support Calls’ at the request of the state teams. Is this appealing to you?*