

Research Agenda Setting: Virginia Improving Postsecondary Transitions Partnership

Meeting of the REL Appalachia Virginia Improving Postsecondary
Transitions Partnership

March 16, 2018



Agenda

12:30	Welcome, purpose, and introductions
12:45	Review partnership logic model and transition to research agenda
1:45	<i>Break</i>
2:00	Refine and prioritize research topics
2:45	Generate research questions and brainstorm activities
4:00	Close and next steps



Welcome

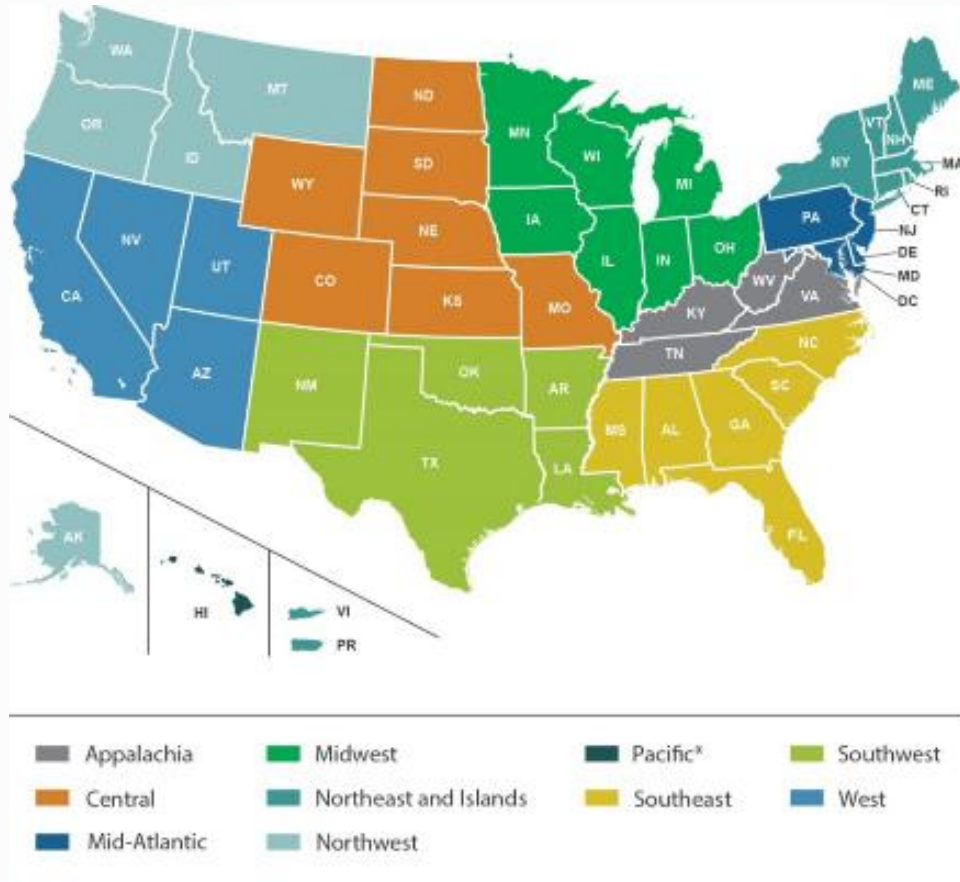
Introductions

Please share your:

- Name
- Affiliation
- Role
- A **problem of practice** or **research topic** of great interest to you



Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program



- Serve the needs of 10 designated regions, helping them improve education through evidence-based practice.
- Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

Key outcomes for the REL Program

- Sustain partnerships that use research to address high-leverage issues.
- Complete coherent and cumulative research agendas.
- Use REL AP as a key resource for credible research and support.
- Increase capacity to access, understand, interpret, apply, and conduct research.
- Increase use of research findings in education decisionmaking.



Achieving outcomes through **three** activities

Training, coaching, and technical support	Applied research	Dissemination of research findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training on logic modeling and research agendas• Technical support to assist with research design, data collection, and/or analysis plans• Informal evidence reviews (e.g., using ESSA standards)• Ask A REL responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive or correlational analyses of extant data• Systematic literature reviews• Effectiveness studies• Technical reports on analytic methods• Empirical studies of communication strategies• Just-in-Time research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• REL website• In-person or virtual bridge events• Light-touch outreach<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletters• Social media• Infographics• Webinars• Short videos• Blog posts

Purpose of agenda setting workshops

- Collaboratively identify research priorities based on our logic model.
- Develop a set of research topics and questions to form a **research agenda** that can guide our work for the next 3–5 years.
- Identify **activities** that will support this work.



Goals for today



- Review the partnership logic model.
- Develop, categorize, and prioritize research topics and questions of interest.
- Brainstorm potential research, TCTS, and dissemination activities aligned with topics and questions.
- Gather input on components of an initial research agenda.



Review Partnership Logic Model and Transition to Research Agenda

Problem statement

There is limited information about effectiveness of and coordination between programs that help students overcome challenges and barriers to postsecondary enrollment and success, making it difficult for students in Virginia, particularly underserved students, to transition from high school to postsecondary education and training programs.

- Challenges and barriers include inequitable access to learning opportunities, limited understanding of pathways from high school through postsecondary education to employment and careers, etc.

Inputs to impact

Inputs

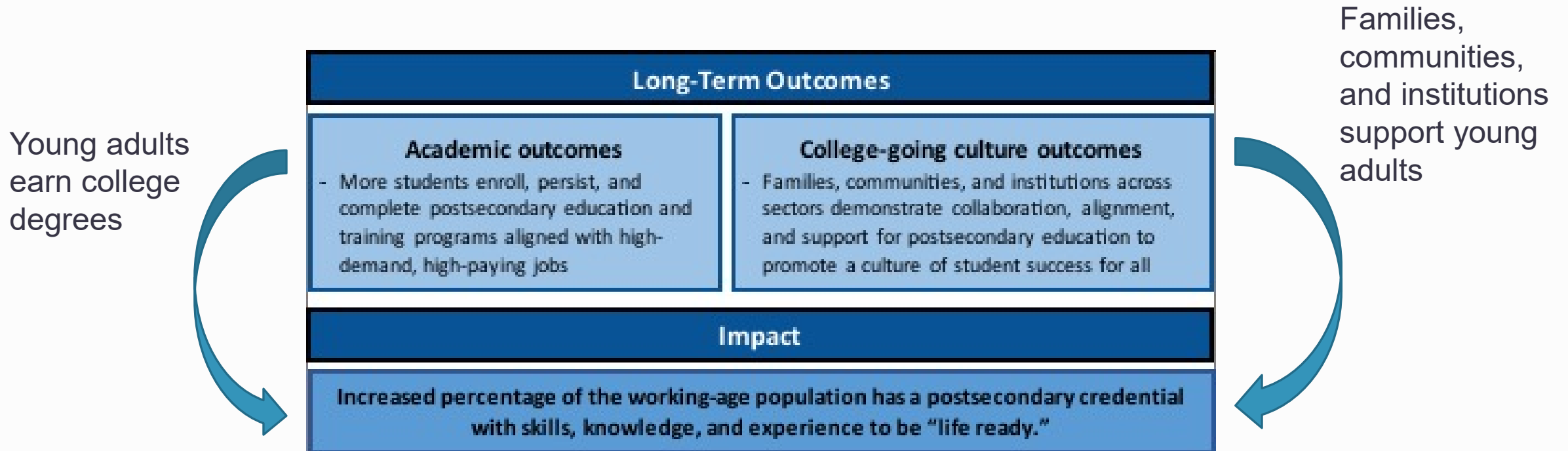
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Data Systems and Tools
- ☐ Human Capital
- ☐ Regional Educational Laboratory



Impact

Increased percentage of the working-age population has a postsecondary credential with skills, knowledge, and experience to be “life ready.”

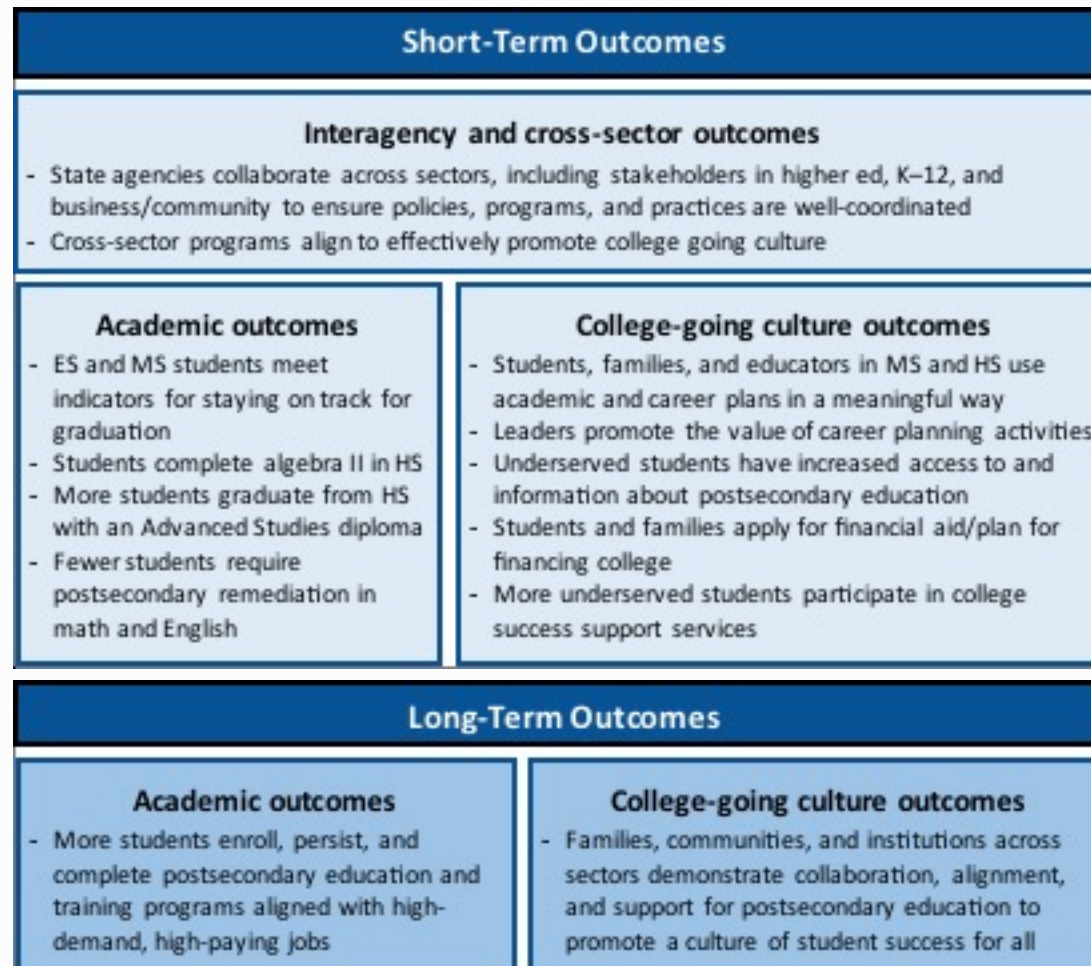
Long-term outcomes



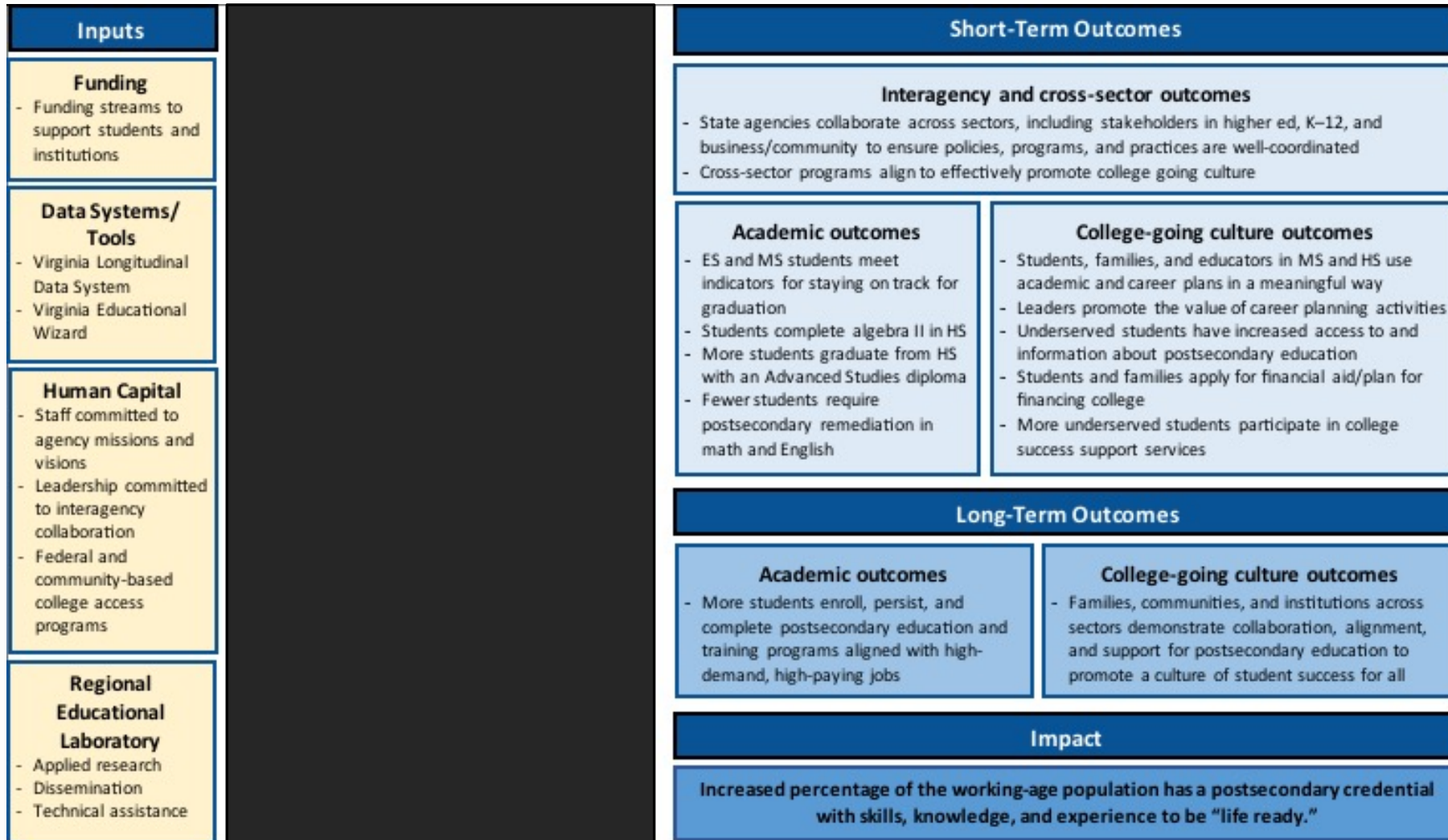
Short-term outcomes

K–12 students
prepared for
college
academically

Families,
communities, and
schools support K–
12 students



Inputs to outcomes to impact



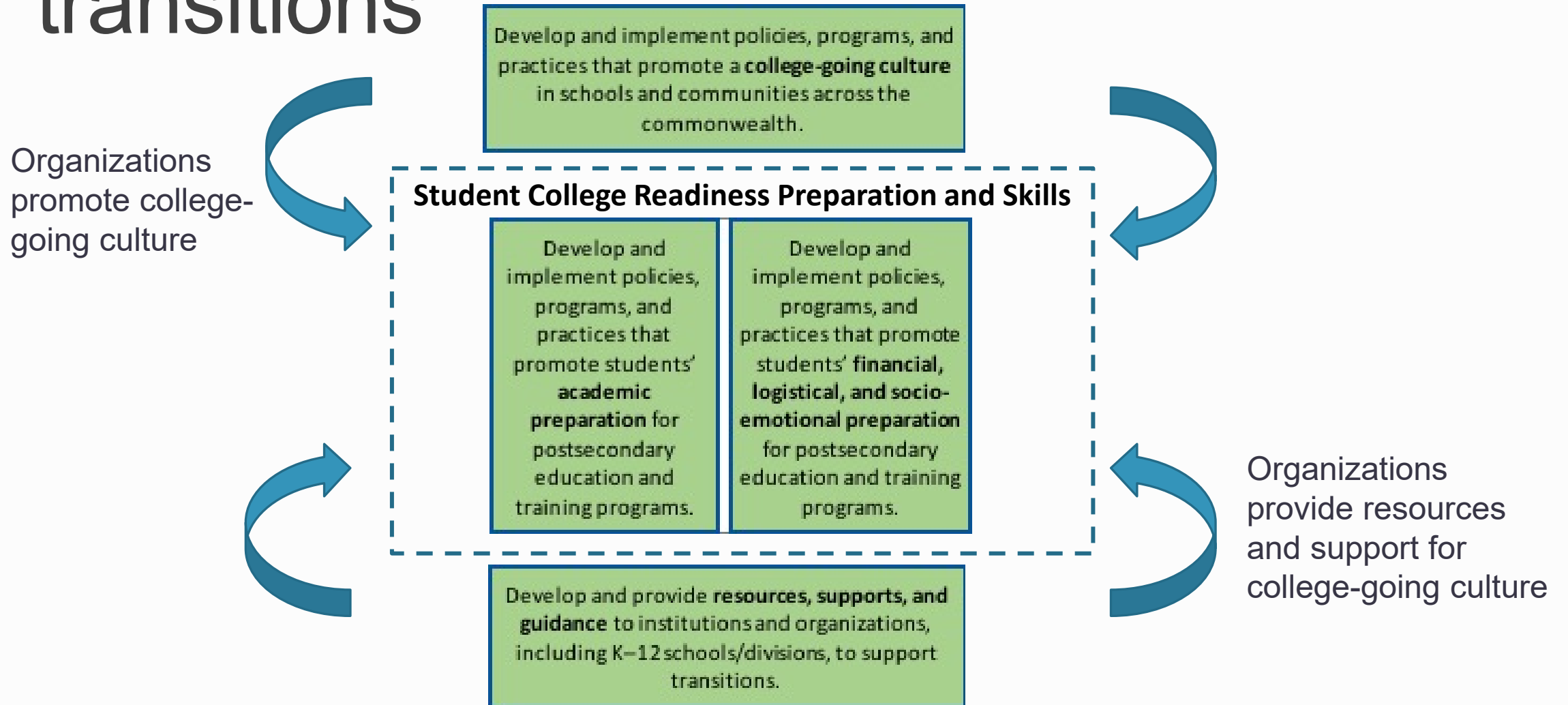
Strategies strengthening postsecondary transitions

Student College Readiness Preparation and Skills

Develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that promote students' **academic preparation** for postsecondary education and training programs.

Develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that promote students' **financial, logistical, and socio-emotional preparation** for postsecondary education and training programs.

Strategies strengthening postsecondary transitions



Strategies strengthening postsecondary transitions

Lead and learn with interagency and cross-sector collaborations.

Develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that promote a college-going culture in schools and communities across the commonwealth.

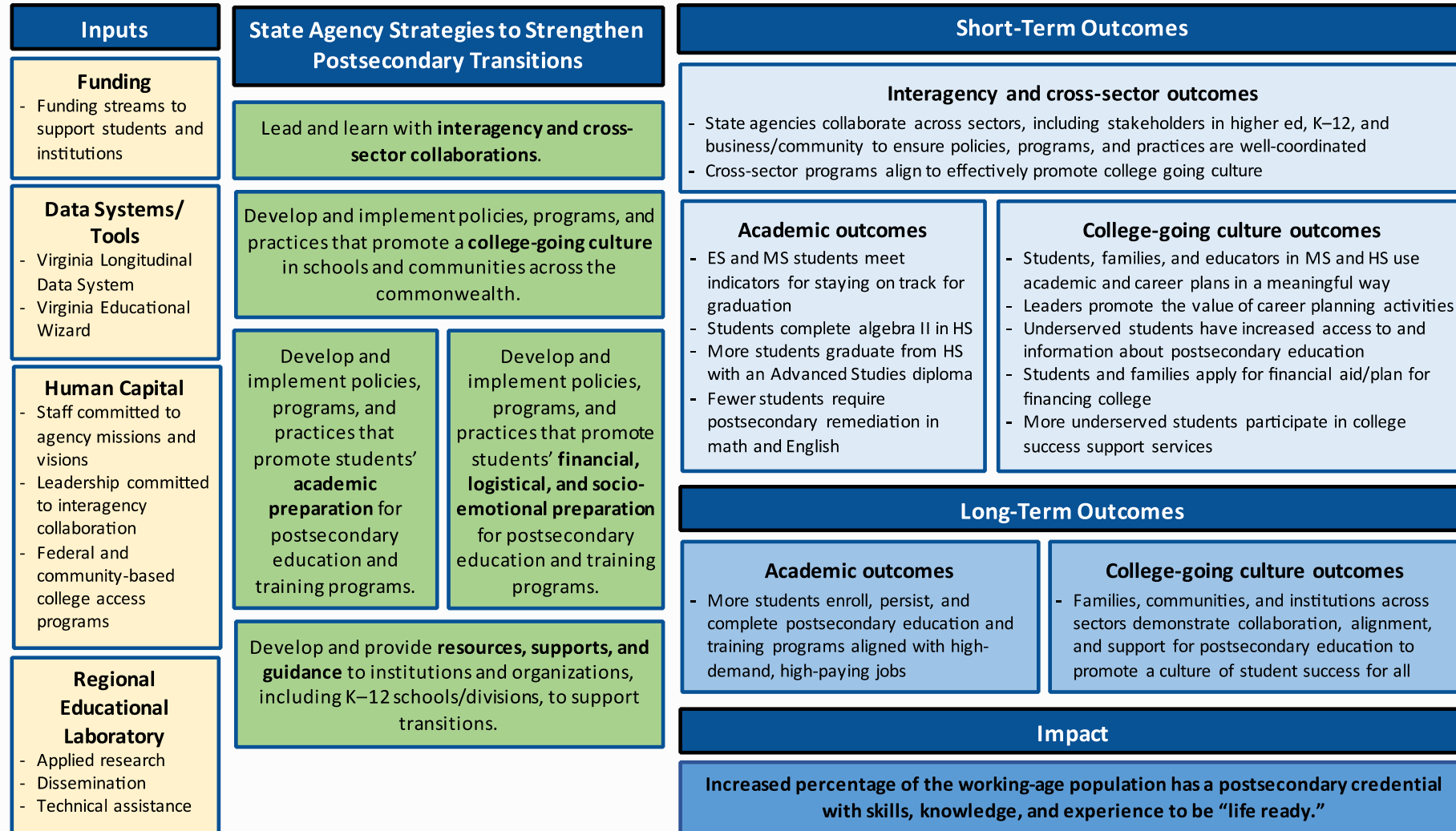
Student College Readiness Preparation and Skills

Develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that promote students' academic preparation for postsecondary education and training programs.

Develop and implement policies, programs, and practices that promote students' financial, logistical, and socio-emotional preparation for postsecondary education and training programs.

Develop and provide resources, supports, and guidance to institutions and organizations, including K–12 schools/divisions, to support transitions.

Pulling it all together



From logic model to research agenda



Creating a cohesive research agenda



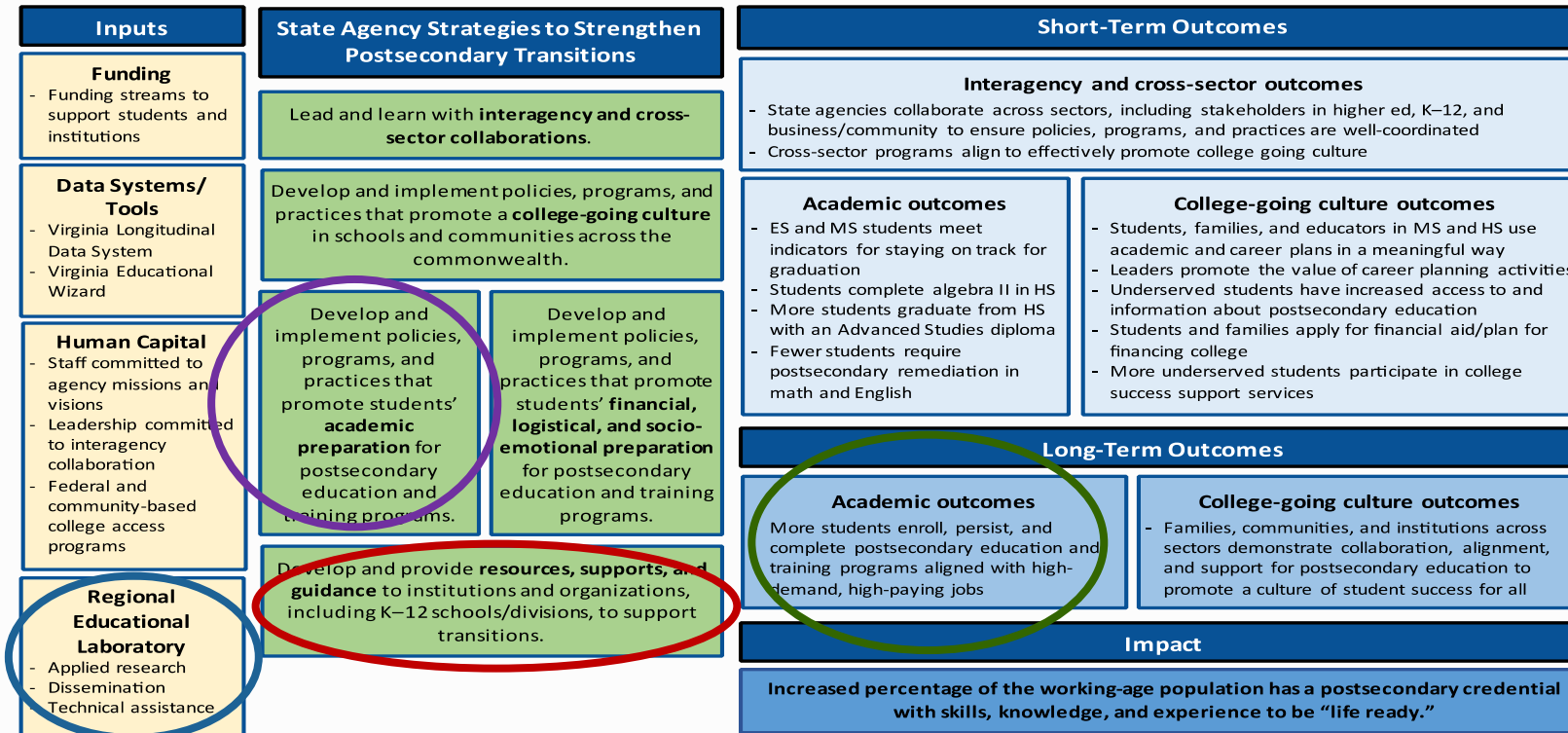
First steps to generating a research agenda

- “Map” or catalogue of available support programs and policies
- Stackable credentials
- College outreach and access programs
- College/career advisement and planning
- Career exposure and exploration
- Collaboration between high schools and postsecondary programs
- Accountability for postsecondary preparation and college readiness
- New graduation requirements
- Workforce learning opportunities
- Postsecondary application and enrollment process
- Dual enrollment
- Affordability of postsecondary pathways and programs

Year 1 REL AP projects

Activity	Topic and Description	Timeframe
Dissemination	SW Virginia Academic Preparation Networking Event in southwest Virginia with networking and information about academic preparation for local postsecondary opportunities	October 2017
TCTS	Logic Model/ Research Agenda Workshop series to support the development of a partnership logic model and research agenda	November 2017– June 2018
TCTS	Virtual Virginia Program Workshop series to assist with research design, data collection, and analysis plan for an evaluation of the Virtual Virginia program	July 2017–June 2018
Research	Virtual Virginia Program Just-in-Time study using existing data to evaluate the performance of students in the Virtual Virginia program compared to their peers	September 2017– Spring 2018
Research	High School Industry Credentials and Postsecondary Outcomes Research project to understand the association between high school industry credentials and postsecondary outcomes	September 2017– Summer 2019

Year 1 REL AP projects: Where we are



Logic Model/ Research Agenda

- Workshop series with partnership members

Virtual Virginia Program

- TA on analysis plan
- Research study

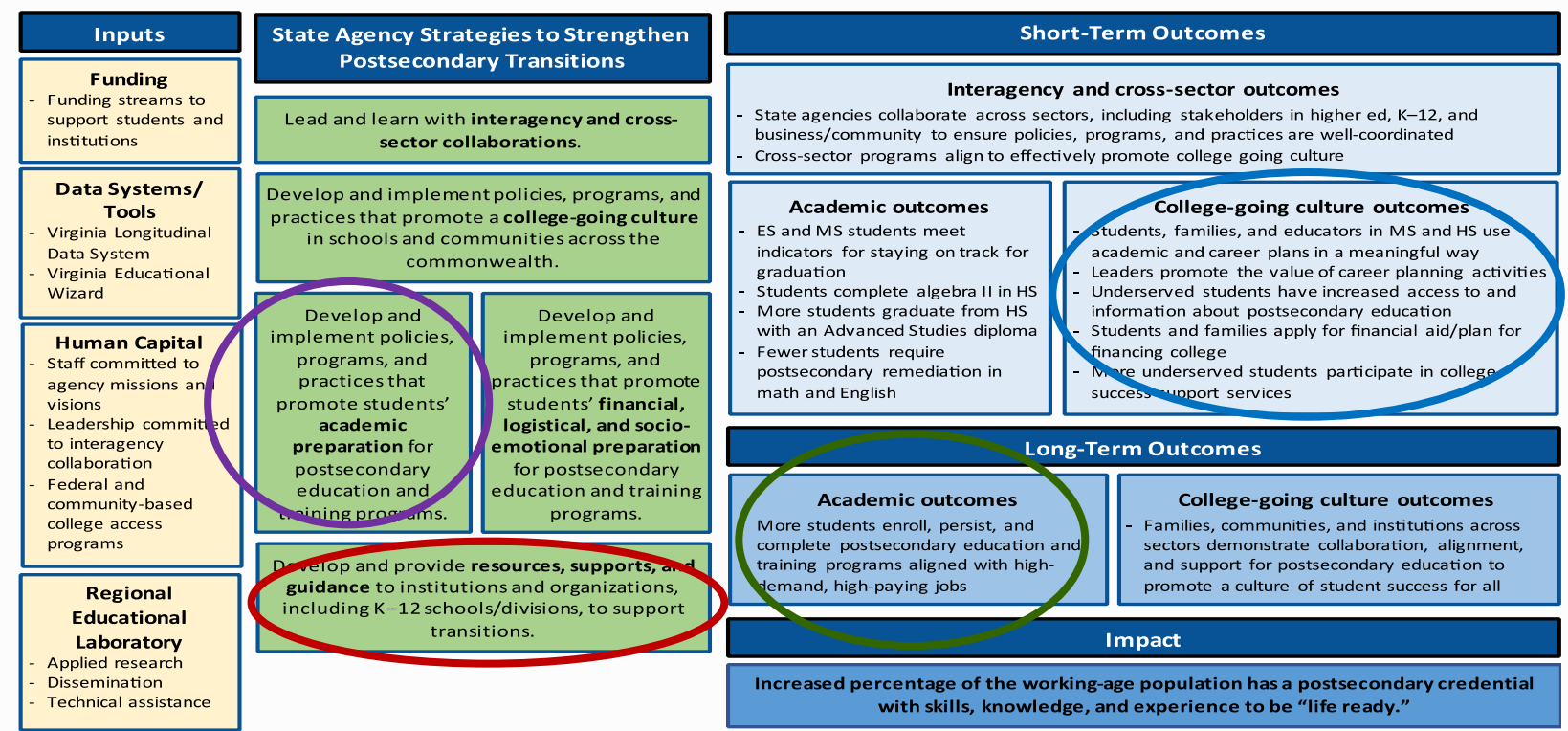
SW Virginia Academic Preparation Networking

- Dissemination event across community colleges and K-12

High School Industry Credentials and Postsecondary Outcomes

- Research study using VLDS

Year 2 REL AP projects: Where we are going



Develop indicators to measure community support for postsecondary education and training

Continue industry credentials research study

Continued support for Virtual Virginia Evaluation

Workshop series on socio-emotional preparation for postsecondary education

What is a research agenda?

- A road map or framework that guides inquiry
 - Serves to guide the direction and development of new research topics and research questions
 - Specifies gaps about a research topic(s)
- Typically includes 2–4 topics (each with 3–5 questions) but can vary in organization and design
 - Linear
 - Topical



Generating research topics: Your turn

- Review the topics generated in **prework** (available on index cards).
- **Refine** and **add** topics, as needed.
 - Refer to our partnership's logic model.
 - Consider breaking topics into subtopics.
 - Combine similar topics into categories/subcategories.



Activity 2

Break

(15 MINUTES)





Refine and Prioritize Research Topics

Creating a cohesive research agenda



Modified Focus Four process: Your turn

Goal: Narrow our list of research topics (and accompanying subtopics) to constitute an initial research agenda.

1. **Brainstorm:** We grouped the initial brainstorming ideas into research topics and subtopics.
2. **Clarify:** We will review and clarify topics and consider moving or splitting topics.
3. **Prioritize:** We will discuss why certain topics may be priorities in our work together.
4. **Select:** We will individually vote on priority research topics to constitute our initial research agenda. We each have 3 votes to use to indicate priority topic(s).

Activity 3

Clarify

- Do we need to clarify any topics or subtopics on the list?
- Do the groupings make sense? Should we move any items or split any groupings?
- Can any topics be combined or removed?



Prioritize

- Think about which groups of topics, taken together, provide the best research direction for the partnership.
- Provide a few positive reasons why you think the topic group should be a priority for our partnership.



Select

- Use your votes to indicate your priority research topic(s) for the partnership.
 - You can vote for the same topic more than once or vote for up to 3 different topics.
- At the end of voting, we will review the results and our priority topics.





Generate Research Questions and Brainstorm Activities

Creating a cohesive research agenda



Researchable questions



What is a researchable question?

- **Reasonable:** Is the research question realistic and achievable? Will conducting the research have an impact on your overarching goal? Are you attempting too much or too little?
- **Appropriate:** Is the question important, relevant, and aligned with your goal(s)? Is it well grounded in current theory and knowledge?
- **Answerable:** Can the question be answered within your proposed timeframe and with the available resources and support?
- **Measurable:** Is the question founded on a clear hypothesis and operational definitions? Can you quantify your objectives—evaluate according to standards? What do you expect in terms of change from baseline?

Researchable questions

How do you develop researchable questions?

- Questions, concerns, and values of stakeholders/community
- Important issues raised in the field or literature
- Professional standards or guidelines
- Views and knowledge of experts
- Your own views and judgment



Example: Research that informs and promotes mathematics achievement

1. Identify relevant research topics and subtopics

Topic	Subtopic	Questions	Data sources	Potential activities
Success in algebra I	Access to algebra I in grade 8			
	Access and passing rates by student subgroups (e.g., EL, disabilities, race, gender)			
	Effective mathematics instructional approaches and interventions			

2. Identify research questions

Subtopic	Questions	Data sources	Potential activities
Access to algebra I in grade 8	What is the effect of participation in algebra I in grade 8 on students' math achievement in high school?		
	Are there differences among student subgroups in algebra I access rates?		
Access/passing rates by student subgroups	Are there gender differences in algebra I passing rates?		
	How do we know if a student is ready for algebra I?		
	What can schools do to increase access to algebra I?		
Effective instructional approaches and interventions	Does our mathematics intervention program have an impact on the achievement of students with disabilities?		

A fully specified research question

A general question that can be used to develop a set of research questions

Generating research questions: Your turn

- Do a gallery walk and select one topic of interest to start.
- Refine and generate additional research subtopics and questions.
 - The goal is to have 2–3 subtopics with about 3–5 questions each.
 - Start to think about what data would be needed and potential activities that could address these questions and note your ideas on the worksheet.
- If you finish with one topic, find another and repeat the activity (total activity time = about 30 minutes).

Activity 4

Achieving outcomes through **three** activities

Training, coaching, and technical support	Applied research	Dissemination of research findings
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Research agenda considerations:

Your turn

- Would these studies require a particular sequence?
Consider:
 - Partnership goal and timeline
 - Short and long-term nature of the work
- What are possible data sources?
- What TCTS or dissemination activities could support this work?

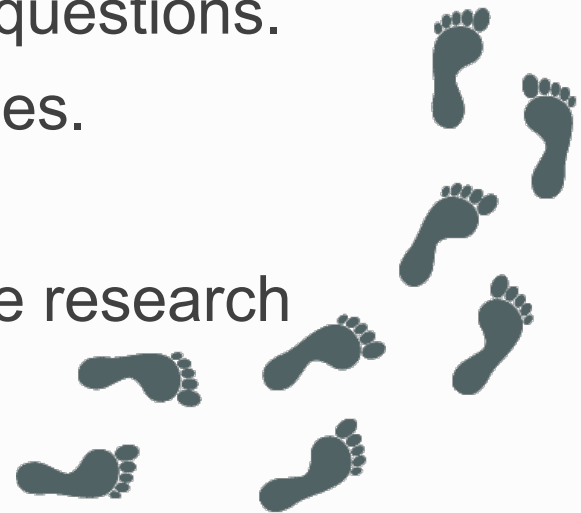
Activity 5



Close and Next Steps

Next steps

- Compile a summary research agenda from this workshop.
- Review and refine the agenda, a living document.
- Collaborate to:
 - Identify existing research relevant to priority topics and questions.
 - Identify existing data or data collection process for studies.
 - Develop study and data collection designs.
 - Identify TCTS and dissemination activities to support the research agenda.



Upcoming activities

REL AP staff will draft the research agenda and meeting notes (within 2 weeks).

- You will be asked to send feedback and suggested revisions.

Next meeting (May/June 2018).

- Review link between logic model and research agenda priorities.
- Finalize plans for upcoming activities in year 2.



Thank you for your participation!

How did we do?

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