



# Discussion Guide: Working with your Ed Tech Provider

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

### □ Introduce the RCE project

- Explain the purpose of the evaluation. Is your goal to:
  - pilot a new education 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 (e.g. examining outcomes for those already using the technology in a certain way) or forward looking (e.g. examining outcomes for new users or those being told to use the technology in a new or specific way)? For forward looking evaluations, how are you planning to assign access to the technology?
- Describe what you need from the education technology provider in order to move forward with the evaluation

### □ [If not already known] Ask the education technology provider to describe the product and intended benefits

- Target users – who is this technology designed for? 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 education technologies already in use] Ask for description of how/how much the education technology product is being used

- Which schools and grades are using 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 do they recommend?
- Are there any other important implementation characteristics that should be taken into account?



- **Ask education 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 be measured and sources of data**
  - What kinds of outcomes is the education technology intended to impact?
  - How could these outcomes be measured? What data sources could be used to measure impact? (e.g. 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 education technology product**
  - Can any reports be automatically generated?
  - 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**
  - Schedule a product demo?
  - Obtain sample data?
  - Obtain a data dictionary?
  - Schedule follow-up call?

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