

ECET²

together with teacher2teacher

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teaching and Teachers (ECET²) community, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the New Venture Fund (NVF), and Arabella Advisors, is pleased to invite you to submit a proposal for financial and technical assistance to plan, organize, and implement a regional ECET² convening.

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Overview of ECET² and its Convenings

ECET² is a project of NVF, a 501(c)(3) public charity, and it receives principal funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It was borne out of the foundation's desire to improve and enhance teachers' professional growth and development; to reduce their sense of isolation from their peers; and to enhance their voices as leaders and advocates in their classrooms, schools, districts, and communities. ECET² offers teachers the opportunity to learn from one another and celebrate their profession through a series of national and regional convenings that are led by teachers, for teachers.

The first ECET² convening was held in 2012 in Scottsdale, Arizona. After that meeting, energized teachers began organizing regional ECET² convenings to inform, inspire, and empower colleagues in their own

communities. Teachers took the lead in organizing these regional events, from identifying venues and supportive partners to developing agendas and content. Nearly 28,000 teachers have since participated in ECET² through six national convenings and 172 regional convenings in 37 states.

At their core, ECET² convenings harness the power of teacher-leader networks to deepen learning and empower teachers to better serve students through improved teaching practices. ECET² is built on the belief that nobody knows teaching like teachers, and that teachers hold the keys to ensuring that policy is well informed, instructional shifts are made with fidelity, and educators are equipped with the right professional development supports to be effective in the classroom. The best way to elevate teachers and the teaching profession is to recognize that teachers are the experts in their field.

THE DESIRED OUTCOMES OF AN ECET² CONVENING

Teachers should leave ECET² convenings with tools, best practices, and hands-on experiences; a network that they can call upon for perspectives, advice, feedback, and successful strategies; and resources that help them improve their classroom practice, build the capacity of their peers, and drive school-level change. They are inspired and empowered to grow, collaborate, and lead in a variety of ways to transform student outcomes and strengthen the professionalization of teaching.

Grow

ECET² convenings should enable meaningful professional growth and learning among participating teachers. Examples include opportunities for teachers to:

- Explore potential pathways to leadership in order to enhance and improve their ability to implement rigorous curricula
- Bring new ideas, tools, and strategies to their schools and communities
- Improve or enhance their classroom practice

Collaborate

ECET² convenings should enable participants to collaborate with peers in their schools, districts, and beyond. Examples include opportunities for teachers to:

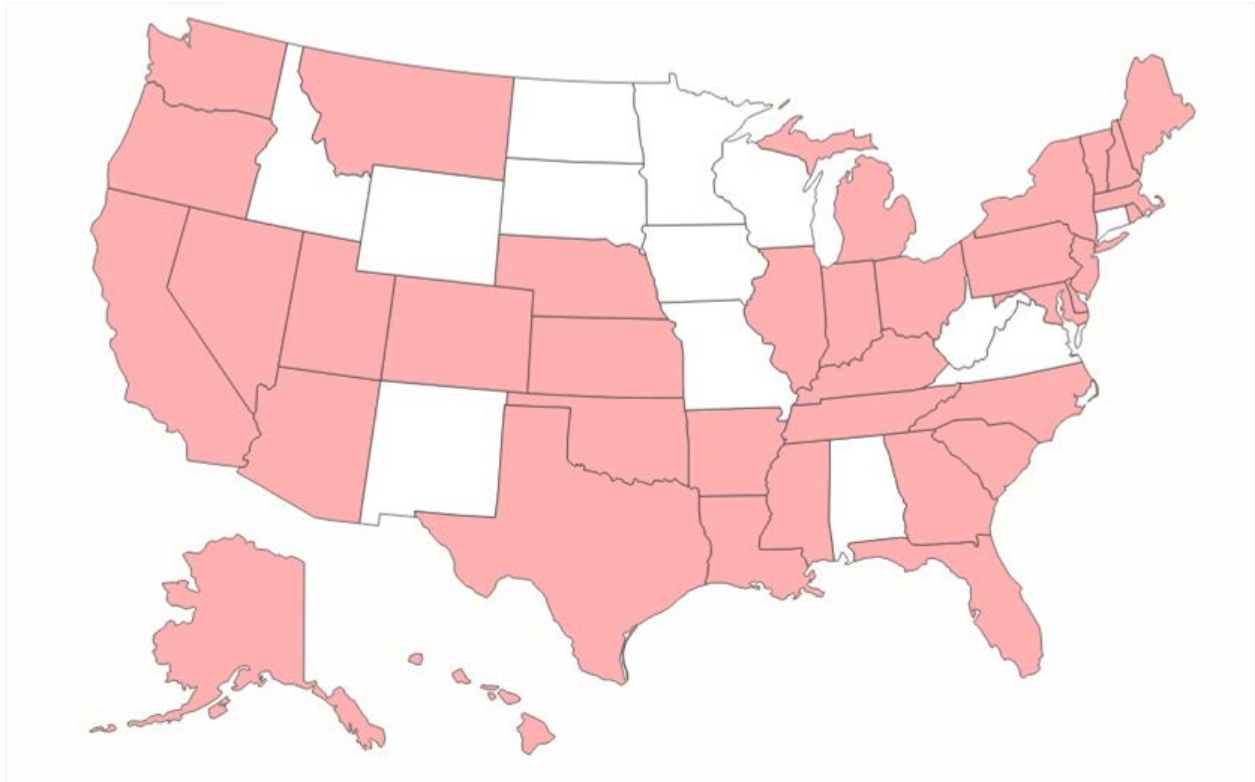
- Build their communication and facilitation skills, and build and strengthen their networks
- Increase their ability to work productively with colleagues to solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict, implement rigorous curricula, and promote meaningful change in student learning and in school policy and culture

Lead

ECET² convenings should empower teachers to take action in their classrooms, schools, districts, and communities in meaningful ways. Examples include opportunities for teachers to:

- Harness individual and collective power by working with colleagues to design and implement rigorous curricula and appropriate interventions to address student needs
- Coach, mentor, and support peers within and outside their schools
- Exercise their teacher voice and advocate for the needs of students and the profession
- Partner with central office leaders, parents, and communities to co-create and design solutions, policies, and professional learning that impact the classroom.

States that have hosted a regional ECET² convening since 2013



Grant Opportunity

In 2017, the ECET² community—in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NVF, and Arabella Advisors—aims to empower and connect even more teacher leaders by supporting educators interested in organizing their own regional ECET² convenings. This support will take two forms:

Financial support

NVF will provide grants to teacher-led planning teams to organize and implement regional ECET² convenings. Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$30,000. This financial support can be used for most expenses related to planning and hosting a regional ECET² convening, including:

- Venue fees, food and beverage costs, and A/V needs
- Travel and accommodation costs for convening participants
- Production costs for conference materials and tokens of appreciation for convening participants
- The cost of substitute teachers for convening participants from schools that operate a Title I schoolwide program
- Modest stipends (if required) for outside speakers or presenters from regional and/or national teacher networks, with the express purpose of exposing and connecting convening participants to those new networks
- Support for post-convening activities designed to continue the momentum of the convening in their home districts or schools, such as ECET²- style events that teachers may choose to organize in their schools (up to \$5,000 of the total grant amount)

- Contingency and indirect costs associated with managing the grant funds (up to 15 percent of the total grant amount)

Grant funding **may not** be used for the following purposes:

- Financial compensation for planning committee members, convening participants, and external convening speakers who **do not** represent regional and/or national teacher networks
- The cost of substitute teachers for convening participants from schools that **do not** operate Title I schoolwide programs

Targeted guidance and assistance in planning a regional convening

Arabella Advisors will provide technical assistance (TA) to teacher-led planning teams that receive financial support. This assistance includes guidance on:

- Developing an engaging convening agenda with compelling content
- Designing clear and consistent convening materials and branding collateral
- Using social media for activities before, during, and after a convening
- Managing logistics, budgets, and other financial matters
- Reaching out to local media, funders, and other potential partners

This guidance and assistance will be provided on a one-on-one basis, through check-in calls and emails with regional planning teams, and through webinars, guides, and other materials that will be made available to all regional planning teams. Additional details on the type of support provided can be found in Appendix B.

Grantee Selection Criteria

A successful application will:

1. Propose a convening that is consistent with the desired outcomes of ECET² and with the ECET² convening implementation requirements (described below under Grant Requirements).
2. Articulate goals that clearly align with and address the specific needs of teachers in the local school(s), district(s), region, state, and/or charter management organization.
3. Identify a convening planning team consisting primarily of teachers, including a three-person executive committee that includes at least one teacher who has attended a national or regional ECET² convening since January 2015.
4. Demonstrate an effort to solicit local funding to ensure that the convening will have sufficient financial support to be successful.
5. Identify an eligible entity (such as a 501(c)(3) organization or a school district) that can receive the grant funds.

Grant Requirements

Applicants who successfully meet the criteria above and are awarded funding will be required to plan and organize a regional ECET² convening that seeks to inspire and empower teachers in their communities to grow, collaborate, and lead. The convening must meet the following requirements:

Convening Implementation Requirements

Shortly after receiving funding, successful applicants must participate in a kick-off call with Arabella Advisors to clarify and confirm grant expectations, review planning progress to-date, determine milestones in the planning process, and identify areas in which Arabella's support and assistance may be most helpful. Subsequent check-in calls will be scheduled as needed, based upon identified milestones, to provide ongoing support to regional planning teams.

Specific convening implementation requirements include:

- The convening must adhere to the ECET² Convening Design Principles, as explained in greater detail in Appendix A. Specifically, the convening must:
 - Be conceived and designed from the ground up with the ECET² Key Beliefs in mind
 - Incorporate content that includes (but is not necessarily limited to) teacher leadership, effective collaboration, innovative and effective instructional practices, and equity in education
 - Include at least two Cultivating a Calling Keynote addresses, at least two meetings of Colleague Circles, and at least two blocks of time for teacher-led breakout sessions
 - Incorporate networking opportunities, celebratory elements, and reflection opportunities in the agenda
- The convening must be clearly and directly branded as an ECET² event, with "ECET²" placed prominently in the convening title and all associated materials. For example, a convening could be named "ECET² Tampa" or "Western Nebraska ECET²."
- The convening planning team must identify at least four *focus schools* in their region on which to target their participant recruitment efforts, with the goal of recruiting at least five teachers and at least one administrator from each focus school to participate in the convening.
- The convening must demonstrate a commitment to recruit and engage teachers from high-need schools or who serve high-need students, as defined by schools that operate Title I programs.
- The convening must include content designed to build participants' capacity to use social media, to elevate and celebrate teachers in their home schools, and to continue the momentum after the convening.
- Convening planners must collect the tools and resources presented at their regional convening and share them with Arabella and the national ECET² community to support the development of best-practices and collaboration across planning teams.
- The convening must be held within six months of receiving grant funding, although exceptions to this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Grant Reporting Requirements

Prior to their convening, planning teams must distribute a brief pre-convening survey to convening registrants. This survey will inform Arabella's efforts to track the impact of regional ECET² convenings nationwide. After their convening, planning teams must distribute a post-convening survey to gather participant feedback about their convening. This survey will help planning teams identify remaining priorities for elevating teachers and improving teaching practices in their communities. It also will help improve future regional ECET² convenings around the country. Arabella will provide a template and web

links for both surveys, as well as instructions for how to customize and conduct them. Arabella will share the results of the post-convening survey with planning teams.

Within two months of holding their ECET² convenings, planning teams must submit the following items documenting their convening's successes, challenges, and lessons learned:

- A **one- to two-page narrative report** that includes the planning committee's reflections on successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the convening. Arabella will provide an outline with guiding questions to assist in the preparation of this report.
- A **final list of convening participants, their email addresses, and zip codes** which will allow the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Arabella Advisors to follow-up with participants in the months after their regional convening to learn how their convening experience has affected their teaching practice or enabled them to grow, collaborate, or lead. In addition, planners should report the proportion of convening participants who teach in schools that operate a Title I schoolwide program.
- A **financial report** that indicates how the grant funding was spent in support of the local ECET² convening, including the amount budgeted for each item and the actual amount spent. Arabella will provide a template for this report.

Application Process and Timeline

The application process consists of the following steps:

1. Interested applicants should prepare a brief (200 words maximum) letter of intent that includes:
 - The names of at least three members of a convening planning team, of which at least one must be a teacher who has attended a national or regional ECET² convening since January 2015. These three people will serve as the executive committee for the proposed regional convening, and they will be responsible for leading the convening planning process and communicating with Arabella Advisors.
 - The state, region, or school district(s) that will be the primary audience for the convening.
 - A brief goal statement for your convening, including a summary of what you hope a successful convening will achieve and what you want participants to do after the convening.
 - The anticipated amount of your funding request (not to exceed \$30,000).
 - The name of a fiscal sponsor for the convening (i.e., the organization that will receive the grant funds) and the name and email address of a contact person at that organization.
 - The deadline by which the team expects to submit its final application.

Letters of intent should be sent in a Word attachment to ecet2@arabellaadvisors.com by **Friday, April 28 at 5:00 p.m. PT.**

2. After receiving the letter of intent, Arabella Advisors and NVF will invite planning teams to apply for a grant. Arabella will send the following items to these teams:

- A budget worksheet, to use as part of the funding application
- “A Guidebook for Planning and Hosting an ECET² Convening,” to inform the development of your applications
- Instructions and guidelines for using the online application system
- *[For some applicants]* A set of supplemental questions for planning teams to address as part of their final application

Throughout the application process, Arabella will be available to answer any questions.

3. After receiving the invitation to apply, planning teams should complete and submit their application using the online application system. A complete application will include:
 - Responses to the items listed below (under Application Questions), in a single Word document
 - Responses to supplemental questions sent in response to applicants’ LOI submission (where applicable)
 - A completed budget worksheet, using the Excel worksheet provided
 - The fiscal sponsor’s 990 form and audited financial statements

Applications will be reviewed according to the following schedule:

Applications Received By:	Will Receive a Funding Decision By:	Who Should Apply:
Friday, May 12 at 5:00 p.m. PT	Friday, June 16	Planning teams proposing convenings to take place before 9/30/17 only
Friday, June 30 at 5:00 p.m. PT	Friday, August 11	All planning teams
Friday, August 18 at 5:00 p.m. PT	Friday, September 29	All planning teams

Only applications that propose convenings to take place before September 30, 2017 will be considered in May; planning teams proposing convenings to take place after September 30, 2017 should apply in June, July, or August. Regardless, all applications must be received no later than **Friday, August 18 at 5:00 p.m. PT** to be considered for funding. Please note that applicants may be awarded funding in an amount less than their full request. Successful applicants will receive their funding in a single payment within three weeks of returning a signed final grant agreement.

Application Questions

All applicants should address the following questions in a single Word attachment submitted through the online application system. Applications that do not address each of these items will not be considered for funding. Although the word limits are not mandatory, please try to limit your responses to the recommended length.

1. Regional need (400 words): Please describe the need for an ECET² convening in your region, including:

- A. What are the most significant challenges faced by teachers in your school, district, state, and/or region?

- B. How will your regional ECET² convening directly address these challenges?
- C. If most of your planning team has experience planning previous ECET² convenings and/or if your region has hosted a previous ECET² convening, how will your proposed convening reach a greater number of teachers, achieve greater impact, and/or require less grant funding compared to prior convening(s)?

2. Intended audience (200 words): Please describe the intended audience for your convening, including:

- A. How many teachers will participate in your convening?
- B. What proportion of your convening participants will be new to ECET²?
- C. How do you plan to recruit and engage teachers from schools that operate a Title 1 schoolwide program in your region?
- D. Tentatively identify at least four *focus schools* within your region, from which you would aim to recruit at least five teachers and at least one administrator to participate in your convening.

3. Convening goals (800 words): Please describe how the goals of your regional ECET² convening are consistent with—or reinforce—the desired outcomes of an ECET² convening, as outlined on Page 2 of this RFP, including:

- A. How will your convening help teachers improve their classroom practice?
- B. How will your convening connect teachers to new professional networks and/or build and strengthen their existing networks?
- C. How will your convening connect teachers to resources that can help them improve their pedagogy, practice, and/or leadership skills?
- D. How will your convening empower teachers to build the capacity of peers in their home schools?
- E. How will your convening address challenges related to inequity in education in your region?
- F. How will your convening build and/or strengthen teachers' understanding of—and capacity to teach—college and career ready standards (e.g., the Common Core or other state standards)?

4. Alignment with district- and school-level plans (200 words): Please describe how your convening will align with or complement district- and school- level plans, including:

- A. How will your convening contribute to change in participants' districts and/or schools?
- B. How will you engage school administrators and/or central offices to gain their support for your convening, their input into its desired goals, and/or their participation in your convening itself?

5. Proposed agenda (200 words): Please outline a tentative agenda for your convening that is consistent with your convening goals and with the ECET² Convening Design Principles described in Appendix A, including:

- A. Possible topics and/or speakers for at least two Cultivating a Calling Keynote addresses
- B. At least two meetings of Colleague Circles
- C. At least two blocks of time for teacher-led breakout sessions
- D. Ideas for teacher-led breakout sessions, including possible session names, descriptions, presenters, and goals.
- E. Opportunities for networking, celebration, and reflection

6. Post-convening momentum (200 words): Please describe how you will attempt to keep participants engaged after the convening, including:

- A. How will you design your convening content to provide participants with the resources, tools, and networks to create post-convening momentum in their schools?
- B. How will you ensure that the resources and tools shared at the convening will be easily available for participants after the convening?
- C. How will you support participants after your convening to keep them engaged with the ECET² network and the connections they made at your event?
- D. How will you use social media to keep teachers engaged after the convening?

7. Convening planning team (200 words): Please identify the members of your convening planning team, indicating the following for each member:

- A. Name, current position, and email address
- B. Participation in prior national or regional ECET² convenings since January 2015
- C. Whether they will be on your planning team's *executive committee*, which will be responsible for organizing the team's activities and communicating with Arabella Advisors
- D. Roles, responsibilities, and/or planning team committee membership
- E. Designated social media expert(s), who will be responsible for managing your convening's social media presence and content before, during, and after your convening

8. Planning Timeline (100 words): Please provide an estimated timeline for planning your regional ECET² convening, including:

- A. Important deadlines and milestones
- B. The anticipated date of your convening

9. Funding Summary (600 words): Please provide a summary of how you will fund your regional convening. This summary should be designed to accompany your convening budget, which you should submit through the separate Excel worksheet. Please note that the review committee may approve grants in amounts less than what is requested, especially in cases in which the majority of the planning team has experience planning previous ECET² convenings and/or in which the applicant region has hosted a previous ECET² convening. Applicants are strongly encouraged to be detailed and specific in their budgets and funding requests. The funding summary should include:

- A. The amount of funding you are requesting through this grant opportunity (not to exceed \$30,000)
- B. A summary of how you intend to use the requested grant funds, as a companion to your submitted budget worksheet
- C. The amount of grant funding you intend to allocate to support post-convening activities (not to exceed \$5,000 of your total grant request) and how you intend to use such funding
- D. Potential sources for additional funding, your efforts to secure that funding, and the likelihood of securing that financial support

Frequently Asked Questions

Must I submit a letter of intent by Friday, April 28 for my application to be considered?

Yes. This will help the selection committee get a sense of the number of interested applicants and the level of funding they will request. Submitting a letter of intent helps to ensure that all interested applicants have an opportunity to receive funding.

Are individuals eligible to receive funding?

No. Only organizations with the proper legal tax status—including nonprofits or school districts—are eligible to receive funding. Please reach out to ecet2@arabellaadvisors.com if you need support identifying a fiscal sponsor.

Must I have received funding from other sources prior to applying for an ECET² grant?

No, but successful applicants should demonstrate a clear and committed effort to secure additional funding from local and regional partners to fully fund the planning and implementation of a local ECET² convening. Strong applications will identify specific potential sources for additional funding, describe efforts to secure that funding, and characterize the likelihood of receiving that additional financial support. Successful applicants **do not** need to match their grant on a 1:1 basis with support from other sources, although applicants who have previously received grant funding to organize a regional ECET² convening will be expected to increase the amount of support raised from local and regional partners.

How can I identify potential planning committee members in my community?

In addition to drawing upon your own networks in your schools and districts, you are encouraged to use Twitter ([#ecet2](#), [#t2t](#)), teacher2teacher.education, and other online communities for ECET² to find other interested teachers in your community with whom you can partner to prepare your grant application.

Contact

Arabella Advisors is happy to help planning teams navigate the application stage, including answering questions and helping to identify potential fiscal sponsors for teams that submit strong applications. Additional questions may be directed to the Arabella team at ecet2@arabellaadvisors.com.

Appendix A: ECET² Convening Design Principles

Every ECET² convening must adhere to a set of common design principles. Taken together, these design principles help to make every ECET² convening a uniquely transformational experience for the teachers who participate, and they differentiate ECET² convenings from other events that focus solely on teacher professional development. The following closely related elements comprise the principles:

1. **The key beliefs**, which represent the foundation of every ECET² event
2. **The content focus**, which guides the professional and intellectual substance of an ECET² convening
3. **The programmatic format and structure**, which governs the types of sessions that comprise the agenda of an ECET² convening

Prospective planners of regional ECET² convenings should use the design principles as a guide to prepare their funding application and develop their convening agenda. Within the parameters outlined by these design principles, applicants are encouraged to think creatively about how they can customize their regional ECET² convening to meet the specific needs of teachers in their community and reinforce the goals of their school, district, and/or state. Any questions about how to use these design principles may be directed to Arabella Advisors at ecet2@arabellaadvisors.com.

Additional detail on each element of the convening design principles follows below.

I. THE KEY BELIEFS

Every ECET² convening should be conceived and designed from the ground up with a set of ingredients in mind. These key beliefs represent the foundation of each ECET² event, and they represent the qualities that every ECET² convening should evoke. Every ECET² event should:

1. **Nurture trust among teachers:** ECET² provides a safe, confidential, and supportive space to build trust among teachers and other educators. Teachers return to their schools and communities eager and equipped to build and nurture trusting relationships among their peers.
2. **Focus on each teacher's potential for growth:** ECET² recognizes the talents each teacher already possesses and seeks to support his/her continued growth. It empowers teachers to both develop their own skills and cultivate those of their peers in a supportive and professional way.
3. **Inspire both the intellect and the passion that drives teachers in their work:** Teachers are driven both by the intellectual challenges inherent in their work and by a passion to serve their students. The power of this balance between the head and the heart is something familiar to every teacher, and ECET² harnesses it to drive, motivate, challenge, and excite teachers.
4. **Provide time for collaboration and learning:** Teachers spend their days helping their students learn. ECET² offers teachers the time and space to learn from inspiring speakers, as well as each

other. ECET² also provides a platform that enables this collaboration to continue far beyond an individual convening.

5. **Put teachers in the lead:** Teachers are leaders in their schools and communities, and ECET² embraces and amplifies their position. ECET² is teacher-led: teachers drive and organize each convening and embrace the opportunity to create a meaningful experience for their peers.
6. **Recognize teachers as talented professionals:** Teachers are the true experts in their field. ECET² recognizes educators as the professionals they are and as indispensable partners in the mission of transforming schools and classrooms to best serve students.
7. **Equip and empower teachers to build the capacity of their peers:** Creating and nurturing a positive and constructive school environment is critical for sustained improvement in student outcomes. ECET² provides teachers with the skills, resources, networks, and inspiration to build the capacity of their peers and work toward school-level change, and it engages principals and administrators to support teachers in that effort.

II. THE CONTENT FOCUS

The content of an ECET² convening must be aligned to outcomes and focus on providing teachers with knowledge, tools, and skills for their professional growth in four areas: teacher leadership, effective collaboration, innovative and effective instructional practices, and equity in education. Teachers should leave a convening with specific tools to help them implement new strategies and techniques in their classrooms and to engage with professional networks in meaningful ways.

- **Teacher Leadership**

Teacher leadership content should focus both on raising teachers' awareness of their own strengths, interests, and potential as teacher leaders, and on giving teachers opportunities to lead. ECET² is committed to elevating teachers' voice and their invaluable perspective on what works to motivate both students and their peers at the school and district level. ECET² convenings aim to achieve this by equipping teachers with the tools to innovate in the classroom, to lead at the school-level as mentors and coaches, and to provide input into decisions affecting teachers and students at the district-level by effectively engaging with administrators. Teachers can start by taking on leadership roles at the convening itself by leading breakout sessions, facilitating Colleague Circles, or contributing to follow-up activities to strengthen the ECET² network. Ultimately, teachers who participate in an ECET² convening should become leaders in driving improvements in the culture, climate, and policies of their own schools, by bringing back the spirit and lessons of ECET² and aspiring to lead similar events at their schools.

- **Effective Collaboration**

Teachers should leave an ECET² convening ready to build strong teams, empower colleagues, and influence those in positions of power within their schools and districts to make the best decisions for students. Collaboration-focused content should guide teachers through the use of

effective techniques for communicating with a variety of stakeholders, including their peers, school administrators, parents, and community members.

- **Innovative and Effective Instructional Practices**

ECET² convenings expose teachers to cutting-edge technologies and pedagogical practices, as well as to high-quality, evidence-based curricular materials and practices that are closely aligned to state standards. Teachers should leave an ECET² convening feeling like they have greater access to these materials and practices, including those that involve the use of technology in the classroom to strengthen feedback mechanisms and empower collaboration with their peers. Teachers also should feel like they have a better understanding of—and are better equipped to teach—college- and career-ready standards (e.g., the Common Core or other state standards). Teachers should leave an ECET² convening with the ability to share these materials and their expertise with peers in their home schools. Content focused on innovative and effective instructional practices should showcase teachers’ mastery of such practices through breakout sessions and other formal and semi-formal meet-ups throughout the convening.

- **Equity in Education**

ECET² convenings should include content that promotes educational equity and advances efforts to close the achievement gap. The content should be designed specifically to support teachers who work with high-need students or who work in high-need schools, and to engage all teachers in creating a network of support, connection, and inspiration. This content can be delivered through breakout sessions on relevant topics such as culturally competent teaching, keynote addresses from inspirational teachers or recognized experts, opportunities for teachers from high-need schools to build connections with peers, and access to resources and materials to support teachers from schools that operate Title I programs to build the capacity of their peers.

In addition to the content focus areas described above, convening planners are encouraged to be creative with the content of their convening. They should ensure that their convening addresses topics that are aligned with the goals of their school or district, and that are relevant for teachers in their community.

III. THE PROGRAMMATIC FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

To fulfill the ECET² key beliefs and content focus, every ECET² convening **must include** the following session types and formats, with most led or facilitated by current classroom teachers:

- **Cultivating a Calling Keynotes**

The Cultivating a Calling Keynotes are designed to reignite teachers’ passion for their chosen profession by having other teachers share their stories of why they teach via teacher-like TED Talks. Teacher keynotes can be brief (15 to 30 minutes each), and they should provide emotional and candid stories that get at the heart of why they teach and what keeps them going despite the challenges they face in their day-to-day work. They showcase a diverse set of experiences, with care taken during the selection process to ensure varied demographics, grade levels, and subject matter of the teachers, as well as different thematic content for the stories.

Each ECET² convening should include between two and four Cultivating a Calling Keynotes, in addition to any other keynote addresses that may be part of the convening agenda.

- **Colleague Circles**

Colleague Circles are groups of teachers that meet as small support communities throughout the convening to share and address problems of practice together. They can serve as a central hub for teachers throughout the convening and can quickly build intense professional, social, and emotional bonds. Some teachers report forming relationships in Colleague Circles that continue far beyond the convening, and many teachers believe that Colleague Circles are the most important and rewarding part of ECET² convenings. The best Colleague Circles include action planning or some other take-home element—including a best teaching practice or a plan to stay connected to one another via social media—as a way of continuing the momentum of the convening. Every ECET² convening should include at least two meetings of Colleague Circles, with each meeting at least one hour in length.

- **Teacher-Led Breakout Sessions**

Breakout sessions at ECET² convenings empower the teachers that lead them and engage the teachers participating in them. These sessions allow teachers to learn new skills and techniques, access actionable tools and information, strengthen feedback mechanisms, better understand college- and career-ready standards, and build their capacity to develop into teacher leaders. Teachers should be positioned as the primary presenters and content experts in each breakout session, and can be supported by non-teacher experts and facilitators. Participants should learn by doing and creating during the session, and facilitators should take care to move quickly from concept to application by focusing more on the how than the why. Teachers should leave each session with takeaways and tools they can bring to their classrooms and buildings immediately after the convening. Every ECET² convening should include at least two breakout session time blocks, with multiple options for teachers to choose from during each session. Breakout sessions should be approximately one hour in length.

In addition to these specific session formats, every ECET² convening should include four additional programmatic elements that can be embedded within the convening agenda or creatively incorporated in other ways. These more-flexible programmatic elements include:

- **Networking Opportunities**

Deliberate networking opportunities throughout the convening serve to expand teachers' connections within their states and districts. This networking enables teachers to know that even if they are isolated within their team, school, or district, they can still draw upon the strength and knowledge of their ECET² colleagues. These networking opportunities should connect teachers not just with one another, but also with existing regional and/or national teacher networks (such as the Center for Teaching Quality, Hope Street Group, and others). They should also provide a platform through which teachers can easily find resources to improve their classroom practice. Regional convening planners can feel free to design formal and/or informal networking opportunities to fit their convenings' specific needs, and they should try to incorporate digital and in-person networking opportunities in complementary ways. ECET²

convenings should also incorporate specific opportunities to build teachers' capacity to use social media to stay connected with each other and with new networks following the convening. Convening planners should develop a clear follow-up plan to regularly engage participants after the convening through in-person meetings, professional development opportunities, and social media groups. Ultimately, teachers should leave an ECET² convening feeling less isolated and more connected with teacher network organizations, their colleagues, and helpful teaching resources.

- **Celebratory Elements**

Celebrating teachers and teaching is at the heart of every ECET² convening, and convenings can often change the way teachers approach their futures and professions by giving them the space to celebrate themselves and their chosen profession. Good food, nice venues, social activities, and tokens of appreciation are critical elements of an ECET² convening. Planners have the discretion to pick how and when to infuse celebrations into their convening.

- **Reflection Opportunities**

Planners should carefully consider how and when to give teachers opportunities to reflect during the convening. Reflection opportunities can help teachers process the experience and ultimately begin planning for action, either individually or in teams. These opportunities can take the form of informal sessions such as meet-ups to talk about specific topics or takeaways that resonate with attendees. Colleague Circles can provide opportunities for teachers to plan for action within the safety and trust of a supportive community of peers and can encourage continued dialogue and progress check-ins during the months after the convening.

Appendix B: Technical Assistance for Regional Convening Planners

Successful applicants for regional ECET² funding will receive technical assistance from Arabella Advisors, a philanthropy consulting firm that is partnering with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop the ECET² network. Fundamentally, ECET² convenings are designed by teachers, for teachers. Arabella's support is designed to help regional convening planners turn their energy and ideas into reality in the form of a transformational ECET² convening that benefits teachers and students in their own communities.

Arabella's technical assistance for successful applicants takes three principal forms:

1. **"A Guidebook for Planning and Hosting an ECET² Convening,"** a manual that provides an overview of the ECET² network and the design principles to which every convening must adhere, step-by-step guidance on how to plan an ECET² convening, and supporting tools and templates that regional convening planners may use or adapt for their own purposes
2. **One-on-one technical assistance,** to support and guide regional convening planners as they design and organize their specific ECET² event
3. **Additional resources, guides, and/or webinars,** produced on topics of general interest to regional convening planners, and informed (or even led) by fellow teachers and/or regional convening planners

The one-on-one technical assistance provided by Arabella includes the following:

- **Guidance on agenda content and development**
Arabella can help convening planners design and refine their convening agendas so that they embrace regional needs and interests while still adhering to the ECET² convening design principles. Arabella can brainstorm session or speaker ideas with convening planners; offer suggestions about how to facilitate Colleague Circles or breakout sessions (or how to prepare facilitators for such sessions); provide feedback on the spacing, timing, and logistics of programmatic elements; and provide suggestions about how to meaningfully engage participants before, during, and after the convening itself.
- **Review of convening materials and branding collateral**
In addition to providing guidance on convening agendas, Arabella can review other relevant convening materials. These materials include external-facing collateral such as press releases, promotional materials, supplementary funding requests, and social media outreach. It also includes materials for the convening itself, such as session descriptions, signage, and celebratory material. Arabella can also provide official ECET² logos and graphics for use in convening materials.
- **Mentorship on the use of social media before, during, and after a convening**
Arabella can provide guidance on how to use social media to amplify the impact of an ECET² convening and continue the momentum and energy following the convening. Arabella can provide tools, resources, ideas, and coaching on how to develop convening content to build participants' capacity to use social media to stay connected with each other and with other

teacher networks. In addition, Arabella can provide access to social media forums through which convening planners can connect with one another to share tips, tools, best practices, and motivation.

- **Logistical, budgetary, and financial guidance**

Arabella can provide guidance on a range of relevant logistical considerations, such as venue identification, vendor management, participant identification and invitation strategies, and navigating relationships with local administrators and district officials. Arabella can also provide guidance to regional convening planners on the appropriate use of grant funds, as well as supporting their efforts to research, identify, and communicate with potential funding partners. Arabella can work constructively with convening planners to proactively manage budget shortfalls or overages, so that grant funds are used in the most efficient manner possible to meet the obligations of a successful ECET² convening. In addition, Arabella can support convening planners' efforts to identify and recruit non-financial or in-kind support for their local convening.

- **Support for outreach to media, funders, and other potential partners**

Arabella can help convening planners identify the correct language and methods to approach the media, potential funders, and potential partners and invitees. This support includes providing language for convening planners to adapt and use as part of their outreach; helping planners think through which organizations to target and how to communicate the mission of ECET² in a compelling way; and supporting planners' research into potential partners. Arabella can connect convening planners with fellow planners elsewhere in the country for motivation, ideas, and support, as well as with social media experts, to help shape their convening's social media strategy.