July 24, 2017

To: Collaborative Members and Associates  
From: Lauren Katzman, Executive Director  
Subject: Fall 2018 Member Meeting – Invitation to Participate and Submit a Presentation Proposal

Registration is now open for our Fall 2017 Member Meeting in Seattle, Washington with the focus: Ensuring High Quality Supports and Services. The meeting will be held at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel from November 1-3 and will be co-hosted by Seattle and Tacoma Public Schools. Please attend and take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with your colleagues. We will work together to strengthen your district’s special education services.

As we are all aware, the goal of special education is to protect the civil rights of students with disabilities and provide them with the same opportunities for education as those without disabilities. To do this, we must ensure that we provide the most effective special education supports and services possible that meet students' unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. While special education services have been generally beneficial to a great number of students, there remains a 21 percent gap in graduate rates between students with and those without IEPs, while the vast majority of students with disabilities should be able to meet the same achievement standards as their peers without disabilities.¹

Clearly, educators must be vigilant in providing students’ education in the least restrictive environment, where we know they are most likely to succeed. We also must make sure that special and general education professionals are well-equipped to provide high quality, effective foundational instruction and supports in both academics and social emotional learning. This is the focus of our meeting. To articulate how high quality supports and services are developed and supported, we are focused on the following elements:

- **Pre-service development** – How has your district communicated and collaborated with institutes of higher education in order to assure effective pre-service preparation?
- **Post-service development** – How has your district provided effective professional development?
- **Instruction vs compliance** – How have you managed to blend or balance how your staff attends to both instruction and compliance?
- **Bureaucracy vs Adhocracy** – Does your district effectively address student needs using a problem-solving model, innovative model (adhocracy), a systemic and hierarchical model (bureaucracy) or a combination of both?

At the meeting, you will have an opportunity to share with each other how you develop and support your staff to provide effective supports and services. Because these practices often involve individuals from multiple areas, we encourage you to invite your colleagues who are not from special education to join us for the meeting. More detailed information about the meeting is included with the attached preliminary agenda as well as our registration and travel policy.

If you are interested in having your school district conduct a Concurrent Session at our Seattle Meeting, please submit the [Concurrent Session Presentation Proposal](#) at no later than Friday, September 15, 2017.

We look forward to seeing you in Seattle!

Please read this important document in its entirety **BEFORE** you plan your trip to Seattle. Along with the preliminary agenda, please find the Collaborative’s step-by-step instructions to register, registration and travel policy, and frequently asked questions below. If you have any questions, please contact Pilar Miranda, Member and Partner Manager, at 617- 618-2447 or pmiranda@edc.org.

Please read the following steps carefully:

**Step 1: Register**
Please register at our [Eventbrite registration page](#). Please register **before 5:00 pm EST, October 16, 2017**. Upon receipt of your registration, an email confirmation will be sent to your email address. For more information, please see the step-by-step instructions.

ALL member districts will receive **one free registration** to the meeting. Any subsequent registrations will be charged $200 if attendees register **before October 16, 2017**. Beginning 5:00 pm EST on October 16, 2017, there will be a charge of $300 per registration. Registration fees cover participant materials, breaks, reception, and Friday luncheon. If a district is selected as a concurrent presenter, an additional registration will be waived. Registration fees are **non-refundable** after 5:00 pm EST, October 16.

**Step 2: Make your hotel reservation**
The conference will be held at Fairmont Olympic in Seattle. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible to ensure availability at the reduced group rate. You may make your reservations at the Fairmont Olympic at the negotiated group rate of $229 per night by [booking your hotel online](#). Please note: You will need a credit card to guarantee your reservation. You may also call 1-206-621-1700 x3131. Mention you are calling for the Urban Collaborative Member Meeting for the negotiated group rates.

**Step 3: Book your flight**
Contact Stewart International Travel at 1-800-738-1575 by **5:00 pm EST, October 16, 2017** and ask for Claire to reserve your flights and book your ticket. For fast and efficient service when calling, please state that you are calling for the Urban Collaborative Fall Meeting and have the preferred dates and times of travel ready.

**IMPORTANT**: Before booking your ticket, please make sure that you are have district approval and are committed to attending the meeting.
Fall 2017 Member Meeting November 1–3, 2017 • Seattle, WA
Ensuring High Quality Supports and Services

Preliminary Agenda:
Wednesday, November 1
8:00 am – 12:00 pm Host District School Visits/Presentations
1:30 pm – 1:45 pm Welcome from Collaborative and Host Districts’ Leadership
1:45 pm – 3:30 pm Keynote Address
3:45 pm – 5:00 pm Size-Alike Meeting*
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Reception

Thursday, November 2
7:30 am – 4:30 pm Collaborative Partner and Sponsor Expo
7:30 am – 8:30 am Breakfast (provided)
8:30 am – 9:30 am Partner Focus Group
9:45 am – 12:00 pm Concurrent Sessions
1:15 pm – 3:45 pm Consultancy Sessions**
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Town Hall

Friday, November 3
7:30 am – 12:15 pm Collaborative Partner and Sponsor Expo
7:30 am – 8:30 am Breakfast (provided)
8:30 am – 9:30 am Partner Focus Groups
9:45 am – 12:00 pm Concurrent Sessions
12:15 pm – 1:45 pm Luncheon
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm World Cafe Session

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

*Size-A-like
This session will provide an opportunity for representatives from our large, medium, and small school districts to meet in groups according to district size. Groups will participate in a facilitated conversation regarding a contemporary issue in urban special education and discuss technical skills used to overcome challenges around that issue.

**Consultancy Sessions with Seattle and Tacoma Public Schools
These sessions will provide us with an opportunity to serve as consultants or “critical friends” to our colleagues in Washington. We have invited leadership from our host district to each present a dilemma that they would like our meeting participants to consider and on which to share their experience and expertise. We will be guiding participants through a facilitated protocol whereby the school district leaders might learn how others would advise they respond to the specific areas of need. At the same time that we are helping our colleagues, we are certain that all participants will benefit from the sharing and bring home new strategies and ideas.
REGISTRATION AND TRAVEL POLICY & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q: How many registrations are included with membership?
A: ALL member districts, regardless of size, will receive one free registration for the meeting. Any subsequent registrations will be charged $200 per participant if registered before October 16, 2017. Beginning 5:00 pm EST, October 16, there will be a charge of $300 per registration. Registration fees cover participant materials, breaks, reception, and Friday luncheon.

Q: Can I send additional representatives from my district?
A: Yes. Member districts are encouraged to register additional participants. Also, it is not required that the Member or Associate from the district attend, you may send any district staff in your place. If you would like to pay by check/purchase order, see information below. You must send via mail as we cannot accept checks in person.

Please make check payable to: Education Development Center, Inc.,
Please send to: Pilar Miranda
c/o Education Development Center, Inc.
43 Foundry Avenue Waltham, MA 02453

Does the Collaborative pay for my airfare?
A: One of the benefits of membership in the Collaborative is paid airfare to our semi-annual meetings. The number of airline tickets paid for by the Collaborative is dependent upon your school district’s size:

- If you are a small school district with enrollment of less than 15,000 students, your membership fee pays for one (1) participant’s airfare per meeting.
- If you are a medium school district with enrollment of between 15,000 and 50,000 students, your membership fee pays for two (2) participants’ airfare per meeting.
- If you are a large school district with enrollment of more than 50,000 students, your membership fee pays for three (3) participants’ airfare per meeting.

You must make your flight reservations before 5:00 pm EST, October 16, if you would like the Collaborative to pay for your airfare. All participants are responsible for baggage fees, ground transportation, and incidentals.

Q: Can I choose the flight I want?
A: Please help the Collaborative stay within budget by making your reservations early. The Collaborative and Stewart International Travel will try our best to accommodate your travel preferences. We will seek out the most reasonable airfare at the time of booking, but please be aware that you may be required to book an itinerary with a connecting flight.

IMPORTANT: Before booking your ticket, please make sure that you are have district approval and are committed to attending the meeting. Unused tickets result in lost money for the
Collaborative and risk our ability to continue offering airfare as a benefit. Please note that airfare is not refundable or transferable to another person.

**Q: What if I live locally and do not need to fly to the meeting?**

**A:** For members that do not require airline travel, the district can substitute their airline cost benefit for extra participant registration fees. As with airline tickets, the number of registration fees paid for by the Collaborative depends upon your district’s size. That is:

- For **small** districts, instead of paying for one (1) participant’s airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fee for one extra participant for a total of two registrants at no cost.
- For **medium** districts, instead of paying for two (2) participants’ airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fees for two extra participants for a total of three registrants at no cost.
- For **large** districts, instead of paying for three (3) participants’ airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fees for three extra participants for a total of four registrants at no cost.

**Q: What if I need to make changes or cancel?**

**A:** Please email Pilar Miranda at pmiranda@edc.org to inform us of a cancellation. For all cancellations made after **October 16, 2017**, registration fees are non-refundable and participants will be held responsible for that fee. However, if a registered participant cannot attend and would like to send another individual in their place, no additional charge will be incurred. Please contact Pilar Miranda regarding any changes.

Once an airline ticket has been issued, the **ticket holder is responsible for all costs associated with any changes.** Change fees may include a $200 airline fee and the difference in airfare. Again, to avoid these extra fees and to help the Collaborative, **please be sure that you are able to attend the meeting before booking your airline ticket.**