BUILDING IMPACT

A Closer Look at Local Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education

Carolyn J. Riehl | Jeffrey R. Henig | Jessica R. Wolff | Michael A. Rebell

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collective Impact and the Renewed Interest in Cross-Sector Collaboration for Education

In the fall of 2011, John Kania and Mark Kramer published an article in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* that laid out a vision for what they referred to as "collective impact," an approach for addressing a wide range of challenges in local contexts through cross-sector partnerships. Both the idea and the practice spread rapidly; many local initiatives were begun, and organizations such as StriveTogether were formed to provide affiliation and support.

These developments are not completely new; some forms of local cross-sector collaboration have been around for over a hundred years. But aspects of the contemporary context may set the new wave of collaborations apart from past efforts. These include fiscal constraints brought on by the Great Recession, declining confidence in top-down reform, an acknowledgment that both in-school and out-of-school factors are consequential for student success, and frustrations with the fragility of reform efforts. In addition, contemporary approaches to cross-sector collaboration incorporate some new elements and strategies that could improve impact and sustainability. These include the use of a dedicated organizational structure, an emphasis on data, and the emergence of national network organizations supporting local efforts.

Study Rationale, Components, and Methods

In spite of all the attention to cross-sector collaboration, little research has been conducted to explore these new phenomena. To fill this knowledge gap, The Wallace Foundation commissioned our team of researchers at Teachers College, Columbia University, to carry out a three-pronged study. In the first report from the study, we summarized the historical development of cross-sector collaborations to improve education and address other social issues, and we synthesized the research literature, drawn largely from sociology, management studies, and politics and public policy, to highlight prior knowledge that could be relevant for understanding current efforts (Henig, Riehl, Rebell, & Wolff, 2015).

In a second report, we presented findings from the publicly available websites of a nationwide sample of 182 contemporary cross-sector collaborations for education that were operating across the United States in 2015 (Henig, Riehl, Houston, Rebell, & Wolff, 2016). Based on our sample, we learned that more than half (58) of the nation's 100 largest cities had cross-sector collaborations for education. In numerous locals, more than one was operating. Many pre-date the current wave of interest in "collective impact," and many, but not all, were linked to national networks for guidance and support. There was variation in geographic scope, in the breadth and depth of their membership, and in their governance and operational structures. Many of the collaborations expressed a focus on equity.

The third component of our charge from The Wallace Foundation was to conduct detailed comparative case studies of collective impact initiatives. This is the focus of this report. To gather data, our research teams visited each site one or more times between 2015 and 2017, observed program meetings and other activities, and interviewed participants and stakeholders. In all, we conducted over 290 interviews and observations and gathered extensive documentation on the initiatives.

We studied three collaborations in depth:

- *Say Yes Buffalo*, the second full-city implementation of the Say Yes to Education national organization's framework for supporting student success through wraparound services and a college scholarship promise, in Buffalo, NY;

- *Milwaukee Succeeds*, a "cradle to career" initiative serving the city of Milwaukee, WI, and an early member of the StriveTogether network of collaborations; and

- *All Hands Raised*, another Strive initiative, partnering with six school districts, including Portland Public Schools, in Multnomah County, OR.

We studied five additional collaborations in a more limited fashion:

- *Alignment Nashville*, a locally developed, business-supported cross-sector collaboration working closely with the metropolitan school district in Nashville, TN;

- *Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority* in Savannah, GA, the one collaboration in our set that has experienced a full life cycle and has now ended;

- *Northside Achievement Zone* in Minneapolis, MN, a neighborhood-based collaboration, initially funded through the federal government's Promise Neighborhoods program;

- *Oakland Community Schools* in Oakland, CA, a city-wide community schools initiative based in the Oakland Unified School District; and

- *Providence Children and Youth Cabinet* in Providence, RI, an effort at cross-sector collaboration and community change that was briefly affiliated with the Strive network and later became part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Evidence2Success initiative.

Collaboration Up Close: Key Findings from the Case Studies

Getting Started

Collaboration needs a credible and compelling rationale as well as committed advocates to initiate and then shepherd the process. In our cases, early champions included local business executives, philanthropic foundation leaders, elected officials, educators, and community activists. These leaders expressed a sense of frustration over low and inequitable patterns of student achievement as a motivating force for initiating collaboration. Another vital impetus, however, was a sense of optimism that collaboration might provide a solution that had not existed before.

The collaborations took pains to involve local individuals who were deemed essential for obtaining resources, breaking down barriers to partnership, providing high-level legitimacy and visibility, and ensuring ongoing governance and oversight. Several collaborations explicitly decided to invite persons who had often stood at odds with one another to participate; this was risky but seemed important for cutting through long-standing political conflicts that were not helping children and youth.

Two collaborations we studied quickly developed plans for how they would work together. Others took much longer to develop an operational plan, using formal or informal strategies for building consensus around vision,

goals, and strategies. This often required extensive discussions and explorations with many partners. While the collaborations sometimes took advice from external sources such as national networks, each fashioned a plan that took into account local history, conditions, and needs. The length of time it took for initial plans to be developed, coupled with equally lengthy stages of implementation, resulted in much slower start-up phases than many anticipated.

All but one of the collaborations in our case study sample adopted some version of a "cradle to career" orientation. This orientation represented an attempt to consolidate and align resources and services typically spread across multiple education systems (early childhood, K-12, and higher education) as well as multiple service sectors (health, education, and social services) and multiple funders (general purpose government at the city and county level, school systems, social service agencies, and philanthropies).

Many collaborations also used a "developmental pathways" framework, incorporating the idea that, in order to achieve an end goal such as college or career success, young people need to progress steadily from early childhood through their school years and beyond. If children and youth do not successfully achieve particular developmental milestones, they may have trouble at later stages of the pathway.

Even with these shared orientations, specific theories of action took on a much more local character, as collaborations adjusted to local context and capacity in identifying what was impeding students' progress and deciding on the tangible services and interventions they could put in place.

Implementing Interventions for Children, Youth, Schools, and Systems

The range of services and activities in place at the time of our fieldwork was generally narrower than the programs' aspirations. Often this reflected simply the realities of staging a comprehensive effort on a large scale; some things get implemented early on and others have to wait. Also, it reflected local capacity issues: despite the common mantras of cradle-to-career services and developmental pathways, collaborations had varying levels of interest and resources for tackling a full range of interventions.

Despite gaps in implementation, the collaborations have provided venues where this kind of comprehensive approach can be discussed, developed, and monitored. It could be argued the collaborations are providing an important service to their communities merely by introducing and offering support for the ideas of cradle-to-career orientations, wraparound support services, and student developmental pathways. By intervening where they can, they signal the urgency of these concerns.

Managing Collaboration

Most of the collaborations we studied assigned core governance leadership to local elites and used a variety of venues, such as a leadership council, for keeping community members informed and engaged. This approach may make it easier to build high-level consensus around goals and strategies and find the resources for implementing them. But it may be less effective at building grassroots support and less responsive to how community members being served by the collaboration perceive their needs.

Coordination, communication, and leadership. Collaborations generally created a specific organizational entity, which some refer to as a "backbone organization," to coordinate and manage the partnership. These appeared to be useful and uncontroversial, but the long-term sustainability of these entities will depend on having stable revenue sources. A backbone can give a collaboration a recognizable identity and help build legitimacy and support, but its public identity must be managed, requiring attention to how the backbone describes itself and its accomplishments while sharing credit with others, including collaborative partner organizations. Another

consideration over time may be whether backbones are able to sustain rich, multidimensional linkages among partners or devolve into a less collaborative, more formal "hub to spokes" model of coordination. Ironically, well-run backbone organizations might be especially susceptible to this kind of evolution.

The collaborations depended heavily on the contributions their executive directors made to the overall effort. In turn, leadership effectiveness depended on relationships of reciprocity and trust. Leaders were described as bringing optimism, ability to inspire confidence, and willingness to listen and downplay one's own role; they were seen as trustworthy, creative problem solvers, good at building relationships, well-organized, working effectively across divisions, knowing everybody, and perceiving opportunities more than barriers. How to anticipate and prepare for leadership transitions will be an ongoing challenge for collaborations over time. As collaborations mature, some of the connective tissue provided by robust leadership can be transferred to strong collaborative norms or routine operational processes as participants habituate to what it takes to collaborate. This is more likely to happen when a collaboration is perceived as successful; a vision that has been realized in practice can serve as a powerful magnet to keep collaboration going.

We observed a strong consistency in how cross-sector collaborations configured their operations to manage important functions. Most established moderately sized groups, with names such as the operations committee or board of directors, to make high-level strategic planning decisions and monitor program progress. In several cases, we observed a fairly loose distinction between governance and administration in these groups. That is, participants were involved in operational decisions as well as strategic planning and oversight.

At the programmatic level, the collaborations typically created work groups, task forces, or project teams for planning and coordinating their core service work. These working groups sometimes make heavy time demands on volunteers, so maintaining the steady involvement of many partners can be a challenge.

To provide for public awareness and engagement, some collaborations held large gatherings, open to the public, while others held meetings for smaller, more focused audiences. Most also used a variety of other means to reach out to their local constituents, such as scheduling informational sessions at school or neighborhood sites, sponsoring special events, maintaining a website, sending email newsletters, posting on social media, and publishing annual reports.

Funding

The collaborations relied on foundation or government grants or on special initiative funding from a public governmental source. For the most part, they were not burdened by financial stress during the time of our research, but they also were not assured of sustained resource availability. To try to get on firm financial footing, the initiatives have used three strategies. First, some have lobbied and worked with city, county, and school district public administrators to establish stable, local, line-item budget allocations for some of their work. Second, some have acknowledged "soft money" will probably always be needed, and they have developed their capacities for raising it from foundations, individuals, and governmental grant programs. Third, some have begun to advocate for state-level funding, often in concert with other collaborations in a region or state.

Funding was used in different ways across the collaborations. Supporting the backbone operation was a primary expense. For the collaborations that raised monies for other purposes as well, they did not serve as general grantmakers, dispersing funds for the ongoing work of collaborative partners, for example to support a community agency's regular after-school programming. Rather, the collaborations used fiscal resources to support major efforts agreed upon by the partnership.

Each of the cross-sector collaborations we studied existed, at least to some degree, because the local school system has not met basic educational goals. This may be partly because the school system is not adequately funded and resourced. In this case, the additional supports, initiatives, and wraparound services the collaborations provide, while helpful, may never be sufficient to ensure the school system meets its goals.

Data Use

Using data to drive program effectiveness is touted as one of the essential design features of the collective impact model of collaboration. Despite its appeal, effective use of data is not simple to achieve in collaborations. Several collaborations had trouble obtaining data from nonresponsive or inefficient sources, such as state offices that maintained databases of health status and educational performance information. There were also challenges with setting up effective data management systems, overcoming concerns about privacy, and training end users to trust and use these systems. Finally, some collaboration partners were unclear how to use data in sophisticated ways to understand complex challenges and develop solutions; they could not easily decide on the best indicators and metrics to use or how to employ them to understand causal relationships among the interventions and outcomes they were monitoring.

Despite problems, we found data were being used across the case study sites for continuous learning and feedback, coordination of services, and public reporting and accountability. Data were sometimes disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, income level, disability, or language status, and they were sometimes reported to show changes over time.

Collaborations made efforts to monitor program implementation and take-up of services. In fledgling ways, some collaborations tried to link programmatic interventions and service participation with outcomes, for example by tracking attendance improvement or growth on math and language arts assessments for students receiving support services.

As new collaborations got started, especially those inspired by the collective impact model, they were encouraged to identify key outcome indicators, set targets and timeframes, and regularly report results to community constituents and stakeholders. We expected these very public measurement systems to be constant reference points for the collaborations and to be sources of concern if progress wasn't happening on schedule. What we observed was somewhat different. The collaborations seem to have become more concerned with making steady progress than with hitting specific performance targets and dates. Overall, the cross-sector collaborations seem to be helped, not hindered, by their efforts to obtain and use data.

Strategic Relationships

Two kinds of relationships were especially salient to the local collaborations we studied—relationships with local school governance systems and relationships with national support networks.

Cross-sector collaborations of the type we studied often originate because of local educational underperformance, and they are intended to help stimulate and support change. A key concern for some collaborations is how to involve elementary/secondary systems as partners without undercutting their autonomy and their need to become, and be seen as, successful in their own right. Another concern is how to avoid getting caught in political battles among unions, boards, system administrators, and the public, even when those battles have been destructive for children and need to be resolved so the progress the collaborations seek can be made. A third concern is how to achieve stability and continuity when school leadership turnovers have been disruptive and could threaten the viability of the cross-sector collaborations.

Several collaborations sought to work closely with their local school systems. They explicitly wanted to support educators' improvement ideas and help them try to do even more, but they steered clear of overstepping boundaries. Sometimes the school district openly welcomed and acknowledged these forms of assistance; other times relationships were more tentative, especially if the district felt a lack of trust in the collaboration and/or felt a need to prove something on its own.

While all of the locales we studied had at least some charter and private schools, the acrimony that has sometimes surrounded the issue of privatization and school choice was not a major issue or focus for most collaborations during the period of our study, with the exception of Milwaukee, where relationships among the private/voucher, charter, and traditional public school sectors have been contentious for decades. In several cities, including Milwaukee, the cross-sector initiatives offered some assistance to charter and private schools and their students.

National connections. In the past, local collaborative initiatives for social reform sometimes had opportunities to make connections and share strategies with other collaborations through foundations or funding agencies, technical assistance organizations, conferences, research associations, and other formal and informal means. Currently a growing number of organizations are emerging that are specifically designed to promote and support expanding networks of collaborations. These include StriveTogether, Alignment USA, Say Yes to Education, the Coalition for Community Schools, and the Collective Impact Forum. The outreach efforts and reputations of these national network organizations have both created greater interest in the collective impact concept and have provided substantial organizational support that goes beyond what most foundations or other umbrella organizations have done in the past. It is difficult to measure precisely the impact these national networks and connections have on local initiatives, but, in our study, they appear to have made a significant difference. Overall, for our cases, the national affiliations they maintained gave them access to strategic ideas and specific programmatic guidelines about collaboration, and they served as venues for professional networking, ongoing technical support and learning, and some funding support. Somewhat ironically, the one collaboration in our study that eschewed linkages with a national network has formed one of its own.

A Look at Early Outcomes

Our research was explicitly framed as a study of the initiation and development of cross-sector collaborations for education, not an evaluation of their outcomes and effectiveness. However, we were interested in knowing how the collaborations seemed to be doing with the goals they had set for themselves and often promoted very publicly. For example, in Buffalo, the evidence suggests that as wraparound services are made available to more students, during their K-12 years and in the transition to college, their use is steadily increasing. This initiative appears to be the most successful in implementing a full menu of intended support services, perhaps because they secured many important commitments for support before the partnership was launched. High school graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates have risen fairly steadily and many students are taking advantage of the college scholarship benefit. There is some evidence participation in Say Yes interventions has a positive effect on student persistence and success in college. Like many other initiatives, however, Say Yes has found it difficult to effect change on some fundamental indicators of K-12 educational performance. This seems unsurprising when one considers that the initiative's theory of action does not focus on core instructional improvement. It leaves open the question of whether support services, which may be necessary in readying students for learning, can be sufficient for helping them improve their academic performance.

In Wisconsin, the reporting of results for Milwaukee Succeeds has become more streamlined and focused over the years. While the collaboration has developed numerous interventions along the cradle-to-career pathway for students, most are limited in scope and will require time for scaling up and full impact, and educational indicators in Milwaukee continue to show persistent low levels of achievement and attainment and dramatic disparities by race/ethnicity and poverty status. But evaluations of the most substantial programmatic component of Milwaukee Succeeds, the early reading initiative which combines intensive professional development and coaching for early elementary grade teachers with high quality literacy tutoring for students and parent engagement and support, show that students in the program have better literacy outcomes than students who don't. Evidence suggests the reading initiative is effective, but it is not yet implemented at a scale to impact citywide early literacy achievement.

In Portland/Multnomah County, given the collaboration's central focus on racial equity, All Hands Raised presents much information and data specifically related to reducing racial disparities. The initiative identified three-year targets for each outcome goal that were intended to be sustained (showing steady growth), incremental (realistic and achievable), and equitable (showing accelerated improvement for students of color so that achievement gaps could be eliminated). Racial gaps persist on many indicators, but one exception is the rate of student disciplinary actions, which shows a dramatic reduction in discipline for African American students and a subsequent narrowing of the equity gap in this indicator.

These collaborations are young and rapidly evolving, and new reports about implementation and goal accomplishments are released regularly, so we caution against inferring that their patterns of progress and outcomes are static. Our case studies suggest that achieving impact has, for many good reasons, been a slow but often steady process. Measuring and reporting impact is much easier said than done, and the collaborations have adopted individualized ways of doing so. It will take time and effort to assess whether these collaborations are achieving outcomes that would not have happened otherwise, and whether they are doing so in a cost-effective way.

How Cross-Sector Collaborations Address Racial, Ethnic, and Class Inequities

All eight initiatives we studied openly acknowledged the inequities of educational opportunity and achievement by race, ethnicity, and social class in their contexts. But they addressed the problem in different ways. Many adopted "colorblind" strategies—efforts to unite diverse communities around policies and practices that can benefit everyone. This approach, framed in universal terms, directs services to students who need them but does not explicitly call out particular groups for special treatment, identify structural sources of privilege or inequality, or identify problems, strategies, or outcomes as explicitly racial in nature. Several initiatives have gradually moved toward more targeted attention to racial inequities, and one partnership was explicitly organized to address racial disparities from its beginning. In cities with deep and long-standing cleavages around race and social class, explicit attention appeared to be risky, with the potential of inflaming old wounds, and less direct approaches were adopted. In the cities with larger White populations and more overall affluence, the collaborations seemed to be able to be more forthright, perhaps because the situation was not as dire and the needs not as dramatic.

But over time, equity has become a more explicit focus across multiple collaborations. This appears to be driven locally and externally by more attention being placed on race and class disparities in the national networks, by

related local initiatives, and by more public awareness and attention via increased advocacy by people of color and an expansion of progressive politics.

There is clearly no easy formula for doing the work to achieve equity in education. The cross-sector collaborations we studied make, at the least, an important symbolic contribution to addressing equity by the very fact of their existence. Symbolic efforts can, of course, be for show only, deflecting criticism, tamping down conflict and resentment, and substituting for real action. We think something more is going on in these cases. The real application of dollars, the willingness to report disaggregated results, the uptick in targeted solutions rather than universal ones in some cities, all signal that these initiatives and their host locales are learning to admit to systemic problems and find ways to tackle them.

Taking Stock: Implications for Policy and Practice

The recent iterations of cross-sector collaboration for education are still relatively new. The collaborations we studied have tried to achieve coherence and alignment in their goals and activities. However, sometimes the goals are expansive compared with what they aspire to implement or are able to accomplish. Tangible activities are constrained by available resources, personnel, and interests. Overall, our findings suggest the collective impact idea retains appeal, but it appears to function more effectively as a broad framework than as an explicit formula or prescriptive model for how to achieve and make an impact through collaboration.

Nonetheless, we come away impressed by much of what we have encountered. The local collaborations we have studied are actively wrestling with ongoing challenges, trying to find the right balance between high expectations and realistic ones, adjusting initial decisions about collaboration, governance, measurement, funding, and service emphases as they learn from experience what works and what is problematic. As they have been implemented, current collaborations show promise for creating a new kind of venue to bring local partners together who often have not cooperated in the past and have even been in conflict. Importantly, most of the collaborations we studied seem to have helped calm often-contentious urban education politics and establish enough stability for partners to move forward.

For a number of reasons, we consider it wise to give the recent surge in cross-sector collaboration more time to mature. First, the collaborations we have studied are constantly evolving. This is true at the local level and at the national network level as well. Second, all of the collaborations and networks assume a long and multi-stepped journey before anticipated outcomes will become manifest. Third, both the motivating rhetoric of the collective impact movement and the national education reform movement's focus on standardized test scores may have created unrealistic expectations. Fourth, local collaborations are operating in contexts that experience unpredictable and powerful shocks, and it may be unrealistic to expect collaboration efforts to make sharp, near-term, and clearly defined impacts on the tough problems they are addressing. Finally, and most directly against the grain of conventional thinking about how to assess cross-sector collaborations, we speculate that the more certain pay-off for this type of collaboration may lie in moderating the downside and reversals that continually have haunted local efforts at school reform. This may not be the triumphant narrative that excites advocates of such collaboration, and it may not meet the expectations of national funders and reformers who feel urgency for dramatic upside gains. But it could be an important accomplishment.

While we have observed and reported some positive signs and while we have cautioned about the risk of premature conclusions, we have also seen reasons to worry that progress to date will prove fragile and local and funder patience run out. If they are to earn long-term credibility and leverage genuine change, existing

efforts will need to make progress on several formidable fronts: moving beyond supporting the school system to strengthening the school system; broadening outreach and inclusion of stakeholders beyond the elites; reducing the reliance on philanthropic support; and adjusting to the national political environment.

Final Reflection: Can Patience Be Fused with a Legitimate Sense of Urgency?

The United States has tended to rush from one education reform to another, motivated by a sense of urgency combined with an adamant faith a new approach exists somewhere that can generate rapid and dramatic gains. The excitement collective impact has sparked in many communities is reminiscent of that which has energized numerous past reform efforts. If held to the standard of quick, sharp, and systemic change, we suspect this latest enthusiasm will fizzle out, like many others. But we have been impressed by what we have seen, in our research, of seriousness of purpose and recognition of the challenges and stakes. While it is still early in the game, we think there are enough indicators of good things happening that the waning of the movement would represent a loss.

Among the core values highlighted by proponents of cross-sector collaboration are a balanced assessment of what schools can and cannot do on their own, a preference for having government agencies pulling together rather than protecting their own spheres of influence, a recognition that communities that work together to expand opportunity and investment will make more headway than those that expend their energies competing, and a commitment to evidence as a tool for improvement and measurement as a means to determine what is getting done. Translating these values into practices that yield results will not be easy, and there are no guarantees of success, but we conclude at this time that the effort should continue.

PART I
Introduction and Overview

CHAPTER 1.
Collective Impact and the Renewed Interest in Cross-Sector Collaboration for Education

In the fall of 2011, John Kania and Mark Kramer published an article in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* that caused a stir. The authors laid out a vision for what they referred to as "collective impact," a cross-sector approach for addressing a wide range of complex social problems in local contexts. Collective impact for education received special emphasis through the authors' use of StrivePartnership, an education-focused effort in the Cincinnati area, to illustrate some of their key ideas. This example demonstrated, they argued, that community-level education outcomes could be improved by establishing collaborations that spanned traditional divisions such as those separating K-12 education from both early childhood education and higher education; those separating school-focused reforms from initiatives oriented around social services and youth development; and those separating formal government—elected officials and public agencies—from civil society, including business, philanthropy, and community-based organizations. In a break with many of the contemporary approaches to improving education, collective impact purportedly would not need a massive new investment of resources or a new program strategy. Instead it would rest upon a reorganization of local decision-making to reduce fragmented and duplicated efforts and foster alignment and coordination (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Both the idea and the practice spread rapidly. Using the common internet search engine, Google, we searched for the term "collective impact" and found only sporadic, idiosyncratic, or ordinary-language uses of the term prior to 2011, while a July 2017 search generated 451,000 hits. In less than six years, the original Kania and Kramer article had been cited 931 times, according to Google Scholar.

The Collective Impact Forum, an online discussion platform and resource center established to "support the efforts of those who are practicing collective impact in the field," was launched in March 2014. Within six months, it had attracted over 7,000 members who registered on the website, and by the end of July 2018 it reported having over 25,000 members.[1] The StrivePartnership collaboration, begun in 2006 and serving Cincinnati and northern Kentucky, garnered such attention that other cities wanted to launch similar efforts. To assist them, the Strive leaders formed StriveTogether, a nonprofit network that has more than 70 member organizations working on collective impact for education in 32 states and the District of Columbia.

> Many past efforts burned brightly but briefly and left little evidence of permanent gains. Is there something different about the current round of efforts that offers greater stability and success?

Several other national networks supporting local education-focused initiatives have developed, and stand-alone efforts exist in additional locales. Many, though not all, have adopted the "collective impact" descriptor for their work, but they all share an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration. Say Yes to Education, which has school- or neighborhood-based chapters in four cities, extended its district-wide model in New York State from Syracuse to Buffalo in 2012 (Say Yes to Education, 2014), added a site in North Carolina in 2015, announced a fourth site (Cleveland, OH) in 2019, and is planning further expansion to affiliated cities that will receive technical

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[1] See https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org

support but no seed funding. Alignment USA, which emerged from a place-based collaboration in Nashville, has become another national network, with collaborations in more than a dozen cities signing on as members.

An Idea with a Past and Enduring Appeal

These developments are not completely new. Some forms of local cross-sector collaborations have been around for over a hundred years, harkening back to urban settlement houses at the turn of the 20th century. Other earlier iterations include the government efforts to create a system of supports for poor children and families that began during the Progressive Era and ballooned with the New Deal initiatives and the War on Poverty programs; subsequent efforts to confront the challenge of coordinating these new programs and funds, for example, via Model Cities and Empowerment Zones; and the bubble of interest in cross-sector collaboration that arose in the 1990s and first years of this century (Henig, Riehl, Rebell, & Wolff, 2015). At times, such efforts have cropped up in the sphere of education—for example, community- and school-based private collaborations at the beginning of the 20th century—but it has been more common for individuals and systems, like school districts, to work independently of other sectors on matters such as curriculum, pedagogy, and instruction that are seen as within the purview of education professionals. The episodic manifestation of cross-sector approaches to education is a result of phases when society and government have been willing to see educational challenges as intertwined with other issues like poverty, race, housing, health, and crime. While these gave rise to efforts to address education challenges in some kind of comprehensive way, they often were followed by phases favoring narrower approaches because stakeholders either had not come up with successful solutions or had lost the time, will, or other resources to keep trying.

At the most basic level, two core notions link cross-sector collaborations across time and place. First is the idea that, because the most vexing social problems are complex and multidimensional,

efforts to address those problems will need to be multidimensional as well. Second is the belief that, although individuals, neighborhoods, and government devote much time and many resources to solving social problems, even more could be accomplished by finding ways to avoid disjointed, inconsistent, duplicative, and competitive efforts.

The historical precedents of contemporary efforts to apply local cross-sector collaboration to challenges of education show the approach has enduring appeal. But the ebb and flow of enthusiasm for cross-sector collaboration also raises questions for contemporary collaborations. Many past efforts burned brightly but left little evidence of permanent gains. Is there something different about the current round of efforts that offers greater stability and success?
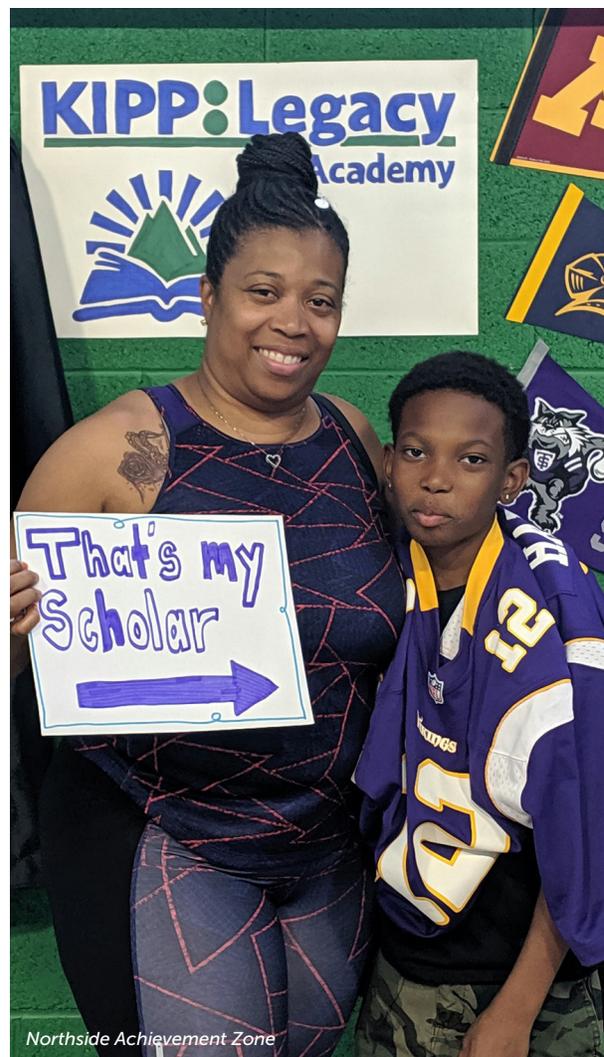
Northside Achievement Zone

New Context and New Approaches May Set Current Efforts Apart

Despite similarities to earlier iterations, some aspects of the contemporary context and current strategies may set the new wave of cross-sector collaborations apart from past efforts. Recent shifts in economics, politics, policy, demography, and understanding seem to make the idea of local cross-sector collaboration particularly primed for resurgence in the realm of education reform. The following contextual factors may be important:

- *Fiscal constraints brought on by the Great Recession.* The recession that ran from December 2007 to June 2009 was unusually long lasting and severe. It featured the largest decline in the gross domestic product since World War II and produced a doubling of the unemployment rate, from 5% in December 2007 to 10% in October 2009. Home prices fell approximately 30%, putting special pressures on school funding, which heavily relies on property taxes. Congress buffered some of the fiscal impact on states and localities with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which funneled about $98 billion toward education. Despite this, the fiscal impact was serious. In the six years from 2002-03 to 2007-08 total public spending on K-12 education had risen 12.5% in constant dollars; over the following six years it declined by 2.6% (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This happened, moreover, against the backdrop of a long-term trend of increasing demands on states and school districts to fund services to meet other fundamental needs of students, such as those associated with health care. State spending on elementary and secondary education, for example, fell from 26% of state and local general spending in 1977 to 22% in 2015.[2] Both the real and the anticipated squeeze on education funding created an environment in which communities were desperate for lower-cost strategies to improve education, and one selling point for cross-sector collaboration was the prospect of getting more "bang for the buck" by reducing duplicative efforts.

- *Declining confidence in top-down reform following NCLB.* Signed by President George W. Bush in January 2002, the No Child Left Behind legislation established a new and stronger federal role in education reform, one in which states and localities were subjected to top-down pressure to hold schools accountable for raising scores on standardized tests in reading and math. The bill passed in Congress with bipartisan support and was generally welcomed by a public worried that U.S. schools were too complacent with mediocre performance, that our schools were serving some subgroups of students better than others, and that the nation was at risk of falling behind international competitors. Over time, however, many grew disenchanted with both the top-down focus and the emphasis on test scores, the combination of which they believed was narrowing curriculum, placing undue stress on teachers and students, and stifling innovation and more creative approaches. Every year, the Gallup polling organization asks whether people think the federal government should be more or less involved in public education than it currently is. In August 2012, fewer said it should be more involved (39%) compared with April 2000 (46%). And more said it should be less involved (36%, up from 29% 12 years before). Of those familiar with NCLB, 33% said it had made the education received by public school students worse versus 19% who said better.[3] These shifts in public opinion appear to have continued; a 2017 national survey found public preference for a smaller role in education for the federal government and a larger role for local governments had increased over the previous two years (West, Henderson, Peterson, & Barrows, 2018). Declining confidence in centralized reform may have contributed to a sense that local communities can and should reassert themselves as the definers and drivers of educational improvement.

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[2] See https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/state-local-finance-initiative/projects/state-and-local-backgrounders/state-and-local-expenditures

[3] For details, see Satisfaction with K-12 Education in the U.S., http://news.gallup.com/poll/1612/education.aspx

■ *Embracing the role of both school and non-school factors in student success.* The discourse about education policy in the country has been characterized in recent years by a polarizing debate. It has pitted those who argue that focused changes in school organization, instructional content, pedagogy, and accountability can raise achievement and reduce education gaps against those who argue that schools cannot make much difference without addressing non-school factors such as concentrated poverty, public health disparities, inadequate social services and mental health services, and the like that create barriers to learning for students in poverty. By 2010, it was becoming clear that the high stakes, school-centered approach represented by NCLB was generating at best incremental progress where many believed rapid improvement was a moral and economic imperative. At the same time, a number of studies supported the view that using a broader range of policy targets and tools might make the jobs of teachers more manageable and schools more likely to succeed (Chetty & Hendren, 2015; Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Rothstein, 2004; Schwartz, 2010). This emerging recognition that non-school factors were important did not swing so far as to create the counterclaim that school-focused strategies were a waste of effort. Instead of an either/or answer, many seemed ready for a both/and approach combining the reform of instruction with efforts to reduce inequalities and increase supports for relatively disadvantaged families and communities. The growing interest in "full-service community schools" as an approach for coordinating the delivery of various social services to children and families is one manifestation of this "both/and" approach. Similarly, journalistic and philanthropic attention to on-the-ground examples like StrivePartnership in Cincinnati and the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City seemed to provide working proof points and the impetus for the federal government's Promise Neighborhoods initiative.

■ *Frustration with the vulnerability of reform efforts to changes in formal leadership.* The history of episodic, superficial, and evanescent reform efforts at the local level has been attributed in part to frequent turnover in school district leadership. Just about half of all large city superintendents have been in their position for three years or less, and by the time they leave they will typically have served only between five and six years (Broad Center, 2018; Council of Great City Schools, 2014). Because succeeding leaders typically bring their own ideas and favored practices and dismantle or leave hanging those identified with their predecessors, local efforts have a stop-and-go-and-stop-again pattern that has been characterized as "spinning wheels" (Hess, 1998). One strategy for addressing this problem has been to take control of schools out of the districts' hands; this has been done in some places by state takeovers and in others by putting mayors in charge, but these approaches have been controversial and have not been shown to be reliably effective. The contemporary movement for cross-sector collaboration, because it involves civil society as well as formal government, represents an alternative approach, which is to embed the reform impulse in a broader coalition of civic and community leaders and their organizations—ones that will stay in place even if elected leadership turns over or superintendents leave.[4]

■ *Availability of new data and data-analysis capacities.* The contemporary movement for cross-sector collaboration has included a call for using measured outcomes to orient collective action around specific and agreed-upon goals. While the idea of using performance measures is not new and has had a mixed history of success, the contemporary emphasis comes at an opportune time. Today there is substantially more, and more precise, data available to facilitate the tracking of education progress by individual students, schools, and districts. This is a function of better and cheaper data storage, access, and analytical technologies in the internet age, as well as the growing emphasis on performance measures by states and the federal government, an emphasis

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[4] On the ways leadership turnover can degrade reform efforts, see, e.g., Hess (1998); Payne, (2001); and Stone, Henig, Jones, and Pierannunzi (2001).

that has variously encouraged, supported, and mandated the establishment of new administrative databases and the public presentation of outcomes.[5] This richer data environment may make the aspirations of contemporary cross-sector collaborations to employ measurement strategically in service of their goals more realistic than in some earlier iterations.

In this context, contemporary approaches to cross-sector collaboration incorporate some new elements and strategies that could make a difference in terms of impact and sustainability. These include, first, the use of a dedicated organizational structure. As Kania and Kramer (2011) argued in their presentation of the collective impact model of collaboration, establishing a specific structural entity, which they termed a backbone organization, may ensure that the management of collaboration is not overlooked and that managers have adequate time, funding, and expertise to lead a complex operation. This aspect of collaboration was often neglected or underestimated in past efforts.

Second, Kania and Kramer also emphasized the use of data to keep collaborations on track and accountable, to help them decide where to apply resources, and to assess how their efforts were working. Using data to steer social interventions is a strategy once associated more with large-scale government and business entities than with local efforts. But foundations have recently become much more deliberate in their efforts to use performance indicators in evaluating themselves and the projects they fund. And the expanding array of education-related data available, along with easier and less expensive ways to access and analyze data, increase the prospects for data to be put to good use as an organizing and focusing tool.

A third feature in the current landscape we believe is important and new is the availability of national networks to support local efforts. Network relationships were not emphasized in the original formulation of the collective impact approach. However, the rapid growth of centralized organizations linking networks of local collaborations suggests this may be an additional key element and indeed perhaps could be the one that most distinguishes the contemporary cross-sector collaboration movement from its precursors. These networks provide potential advantages for contemporary cross-sector partnerships that include specific structural and organizational models and frameworks to follow, guidance to local efforts about how to address common challenges, and an infrastructure for ongoing communication and shared learning across sites in different locales and with national facilitators who are knowledgeable about many local iterations.

These factors suggest enough is new about the current wave of cross-sector collaboration to warrant a measure of optimism that the latest cycle of attention may have more staying power than prior ones.

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[5] For example, the Community Indicators Consortium, which seeks to advance and support the "development, availability and effective use of community indicators for making measurable and sustainable improvements in quality of community life," lists 318 community indicator projects worldwide, with just under 300 in the United States (see http://www.communityindicators.net/about). The Data Quality Commission (DQC), a nonprofit created to promote the expanded and more intelligent use of data for improving teaching and learning, identified what it called "10 Essential Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems." In 2005, when it began monitoring, DQC found that 30-40 states had adopted the three most common elements and that some of the less common elements had been adopted by as few as seven or eight states. By 2011, most states had adopted all ten elements (see https://dataqualitycampaign.org/why-education-data/state-progress/).

CHAPTER 2.
Study Rationale, Components, and Methods

This project came about because The Wallace Foundation had questions about whether and how communities can work together across sectors to generate large-scale social change. A national philanthropy that works to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and foster the vitality of the arts for everyone, Wallace developed its interest in part because of its work in the afterschool programming sector, where it had seen cities build effective cross-sector "systems" to raise the quality and availability of afterschool programs citywide, and because it was supporting the implementation of two recent and unusual educational collaborations sponsored by the national Say Yes to Education organization, in Syracuse and Buffalo, New York.

The Wallace Foundation saw an opportunity to capture key lessons for policy and practice from the multisector, collaborative approach developed by Say Yes. In addition, as interest in the new framework for "collective impact" grew and communities began turning to it as a solution for social and educational change, the foundation became curious about what this new model might offer. In spite of all the attention to cross-sector collaboration, there was little documentation of the different approaches communities were adopting and how the work was proceeding,

To help fill these knowledge gaps, in November 2013 Wallace issued a request for proposals to study collective impact efforts in three settings, one of which would be Say Yes Buffalo. These case studies would compare and contrast how the coalitions operate in the three locales, the challenges they encounter, and any resulting changes in services for children and youth. Among the issues to be explored were the role incentives play; whether and how financial resources are reallocated across organizations; the roles of community leaders and grassroots participants; and strategies for negotiating issues of race, politics, and past relationships.[6]

In February 2014, The Wallace Foundation commissioned our team of researchers at Teachers College, Columbia University, to carry out a three-pronged study. The research would include (1) a broad synthesis of the relevant literature on collaboration for education, (2) an effort to assess the nature and extent of collaborative initiatives across the United States, and (3) intense fieldwork in a small set of locations to understand how the idea of cross-sector collaboration for education takes shape and evolves as communities wrestle with day-to-day challenges on the ground.

In the first report from the study, we drew on historical accounts and summarized the development over time of cross-sector collaborations to improve education and address other social issues. We also synthesized the research literature, drawn largely from sociology, management studies, and politics and public policy, to highlight prior knowledge about the structural options, political dynamics, and implementation challenges of different kinds of collaborations and joint ventures (Henig et al., 2015). In the second report from the study, we presented findings about the nature of contemporary cross-sector collaborations for education across the United States (Henig, Riehl, Houston, Rebell, & Wolff, 2016). This was based on a nationwide scan we conducted of large-scale, place-based initiatives, including those that do and those that do not embrace the collective impact label. For this scan, we searched for publicly available websites of programs that were currently in operation and had a presence on the internet as of January 2015.[7] We restricted our search to collaborations that were anchored in goals related to education, involved the local K-12 school system and at

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[6] This description is distilled from the Request for Proposals, entitled "Comparative Study of Collective Impact Initiatives in Education Reform," released by The Wallace Foundation on November 14, 2013.

[7] Our earlier publication, *Collective Impact and the New Generation of Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education: A Nationwide Scan* (Henig et al., 2016), provides a detailed description of the scan methodology and the full range of our initial findings.

least one additional sector (for example, local government, business, charitable foundations, or nonprofits), and operated at the level of a city, school district, or region. We did not include collaborations affiliated with just one school. We identified 182 collaborations in total and analyzed information presented on their websites, including published reports and other sources like annual reports when those were included or hyperlinked on the website.

The third component of our initial charge from The Wallace Foundation was to conduct detailed comparative case studies of three collective impact initiatives. These were to include Say Yes Buffalo, an initiative to which Wallace had provided financial support, and two additional initiatives that we would identify as potentially offering useful complements to the Buffalo case. After considering about a dozen options, we selected two local initiatives that were part of the StriveTogether network, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Portland, Oregon.

As we began researching the three main cases, we quickly realized they would not provide enough variation on a number of dimensions that began to seem important, such as longevity, network affiliation, or geographic scale. The Wallace Foundation agreed to an expansion of the case study component of the research and we added five collaborations to study in somewhat less depth, located in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Oakland, California; Providence, Rhode Island; Savannah, Georgia; and Nashville, Tennessee. We call these our mini-cases.

To gather data, research teams visited each site, observed program meetings and other activities, and interviewed participants and stakeholders. For each of the three major case studies, this involved three- or four-person teams making at least one visit to the city in the fall of 2015 and one in the spring of 2016. For the five mini-case studies, two-person teams made one field visit to each site between September 2016 and March 2017. In all, we conducted over 290 interviews and observations and gathered extensive documentation on the initiatives. Since the time of the site visits, we have occasionally continued to communicate with and follow the progress in these cities, but it is important to note that this study focuses most intently on describing the programs as they presented themselves during the time period of our fieldwork. Our efforts to update information on more recent developments are meant to identify any major changes that have occurred, but we certainly have not fully captured everything that has happened since our last site visits and interviews.

The initiatives we studied varied in the scale of their target area, with one covering a specific neighborhood, six targeting an entire city, and one extending to the surrounding county. This distribution of geographic scale is different from that of the collaborations in our nationwide scan, with more city-based collaborations (75%) than in the national sample (22%). Nonetheless, our set of cases allowed us to observe the dynamics, benefits, and tradeoffs of smaller-scale versus larger-scale efforts.

Organization of this report. In this third report, we focus most intently on the case studies, though we also draw from the earlier components of the study. Following these first two introductory chapters, in Part II of this report we discuss the current landscape of local education-focused, cross-sector collaborations around the country. Summarizing key findings from our nationwide scan, this section highlights variation in the location, origin, governance, and emphasis among existing collaborations. Many existing collaborations predated the recent emphasis on collective impact; some of these have adopted the language of collective impact, but others have not. This section also introduces some new analyses on the relative emphasis collaborations place on promoting equity and promoting community development.

In Part III, we look under the hood of cross-sector collaborations, exploring the forms, challenges, and adaptations revealed by our field research, as well as analyzing local efforts to tackle educational inequity. Discussions of local reform efforts often present overly simplified and idealized characterizations that omit the particulars of local history, local leaders, relationships, and the ways in which ideas are tested and lessons

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Beth Conyers Photography

learned well or poorly. We think such details are important. They give a more realistic reference point for those in the field who might want to understand what is involved in translating broad ideas into practice and provide grounding for more distant funders and policymakers who sometimes have unrealistic expectations about what it takes to build alliances, coordinate across groups and agencies, and sustain efforts against a backdrop of change. Accordingly, and because this is also material we have not previously presented, this is by far the longest section of the report. Even so, we do not have room in this report to provide the full depth of what we found in our case studies. We use details and variations carefully to provide a window on these complexities while at the same time distilling some key findings that have broader generality.

Part IV, the final section of the report, proposes how one might best make sense of what we have found and what that might suggest to local communities, funders, and policymakers about the potential and pitfalls of pursuing cross-sector collaboration, whether via the collective impact model or in other forms. Our study was never intended as an evaluation of the outcomes or ultimate value of the collaborations under consideration, many of which are still in their early stages. Strong conclusions will require more time and future research. Moreover, as we discuss, the broader landscape of politics and policy appears to be changing in ways that could sharply alter the prospects for local collaboration around education, either for the better or the worse. So, our observations and suggestions should be considered provisional.

Overall, we are wary of some of the bolder claims and promises that seem to present local collaboration as a foolproof route to systemic and sustainable educational improvement. But we balance that wariness with the respect we have developed for the sincerity, competence, resourcefulness, and resilience of some of the efforts we see on the ground. We offer a more modest and, we think, more realistic assessment of the role such local collaborative efforts can play in establishing a foundation that may lead to substantial progress in the future. However, we caution that the progress is likely to be more incremental than the full grand vision for collective impact might imply, unless augmented by complementary changes in society and policy.

PART II
Collaborating Across the Country

CHAPTER 3.
Nationwide Scan

Education policy ideas that originate in Washington, DC, frequently prompt immediate and detailed discussion in many quarters, but local efforts often rise and fall or plug along without much attention. Occasionally, these local efforts do penetrate the national discourse, especially if they originate in places with local media that have national audiences or when organizations or individuals decide to promote them more widely. That was the case, for example, with the original Strive effort in Cincinnati, which attracted some national attention even before the 2011 Kania and Kramer article added its powerful accelerating force. This combination of low visibility punctuated by occasional bursts of attention can distort the lessons drawn from local efforts. Successful efforts can go unnoticed because they take place in small or mid-sized cities out of the spotlight; high-profile efforts can be championed as models to be emulated elsewhere even when their emergence or success is due to idiosyncratic local factors, including particular mixes of local resources. As a partial antidote to this distortion, our project began with a broad scan to identify and gather preliminary information about local education-focused collaborations, whether or not they had strong national profiles.

Our earlier publication, *Collective Impact and the New Generation of Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education: A Nationwide Scan* (Henig et al., 2016), provides a detailed description of the scan methodology and the full range of our initial findings. In this section, we briefly summarize what we have come to consider the most important of these findings, offer some additional analysis, and explain how the broad patterns we uncovered helped us focus our subsequent fieldwork.

Recap of Our Previous Findings

To generate the data for this study, we developed a snapshot of cross-sector educational collaborations in 2015 based on publicly available, online materials. To be included in our scan, collaborations needed to be place-based, with evidence of leadership at the city, school district, and/or county level. We did not include state-level initiatives (with the exception of Hawaii because it has a single, statewide school district), but we did include neighborhood-level ones, provided they also had evidence of city, district, and/or county leadership. Collaborations needed to be multisector, with the presence of at least two sectors (e.g., the school district, general-purpose government, the business community, nonprofits) at the top governing level of the initiative. Lastly, we restricted our sample to those initiatives that included school district officials or school board members at the leadership level or emphasized the school district as a primary partner. We also limited our sample to those collaborations whose self-descriptions included an emphasis on educational outcomes.

In order to identify collaborations that met these criteria, we initiated a multiphase search, beginning informally in 2014 (driven by conversations, interviews, and reading) and completed in 2015 with a more systematic approach. In addition to examples that had been cited by others, we added all instances of local collaborations then associated with the various national networks such as the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network, Promise Neighborhoods, Say Yes to Education, Elev8, the Coalition for Community Schools, and the Forum for Youth Investment's Ready by 21 initiative. Over the course of three weeks in January 2015, we conducted a web search of the 100 largest cities and 100 largest school districts in conjunction with a series of keywords (e.g., collective impact, collaboration, coalition, multisector, partnership). We then visited each site listed on the first five pages of results from each query that had the potential to meet our criteria. This process identified a total of 182 local cross-sector educational collaborations with functioning websites. Next, we downloaded the websites and substantive subpages including annual reports and other primary documents as text-searchable PDF files. In the following months, we coded each site's data for the presence of a broad set of information (origins,

partnerships, types of indicators tracked, and so on). To the extent possible, we adopted a low-inference coding design meant to increase coding reliability. For less clear-cut concepts, two researchers coded a subsample of websites separately and then conducted a norming exercise in order to standardize the process.

Our nationwide scan of initiatives provided an array of new insights into the broad pattern of cross-sector collaboration for education across the country. For example:

- *More than half (58) of the nation's 100 largest cities have cross-sector collaborations for education.* These collaborations are located throughout all regions of the nation, in numbers roughly proportional to the distribution of population.

- *Many predate the current wave of interest.* While the term "collective impact" has a reasonably well-defined date of first use stemming from the publication of the Kania and Kramer article in 2011,[8] many local collaborations for education began much earlier. Nearly 60% of the cross-sector collaborations we located were launched before 2011 and nearly 20% before 2000.

- *There is variation in the geographic scope.* Most collaborations (55%) identified their target jurisdiction at the county or metropolitan level. Fourteen percent appeared to focus on a sub-city level such as a particular neighborhood; these were included in our scan only if they had involvement from leaders at a broader level.

- *Collaborations vary in the breadth and depth of their membership and in their governance and operational structures.* Business leaders were most commonly represented, on high-level leadership boards or committees, with 91% of collaborations in the national scan having at least one business leader on their board. School superintendents sit on over half, with other district officials on two-thirds. If those categories are combined, school district representatives also are included on 91% of the boards. Higher education (87%) and social service agencies (79%) were the next most common organizations represented. Only 12% of collaborations have a member of a teachers union on their governing board.

- *While many initiatives had mounted efforts to collect and track shared measurements of need, services, and outcomes, most relied on readily available indicators and few offered sophisticated forms of analysis and presentation.* Seventy-two (40%) of the initiatives in our sample had a portion of their website dedicated to data, statistics, and outcomes. The most common indicators on initiatives' websites were student performance on standardized tests and high school graduation rates (43%); a quarter of the websites tracked data over time; 17% presented data disaggregated by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status, and 14% included data on comparison groups of students

- *Links to national networks are apparent.* Slightly fewer than half of the collaborations in 2015 had some national network association; either they were initiated with the support of a national network or sought such support at some point in their development. StriveTogether is the largest network; others include the Say Yes to Education national organization, Alignment USA, the federal Promise Neighborhood program, and the Coalition of Community Schools.

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[8] To add a bit of confusion about the date of publication, the article first appeared online on the Stanford Social Innovation Report website in 2010.

- *Many collaborations took a "cradle to career" orientation, and a significant portion of initiatives track indicators that precede or follow the K-12 years:* 23.8% track kindergarten readiness and 8.4% track pre-K enrollment; 20.4% track postsecondary enrollment and 18.2% track college completion. Other indicators of student experiences and well-being were more sparsely presented: 13.3% track parent engagement and 7.7% present data on safety or discipline; only 5% of the initiatives track some kind of indicator for social and emotional development.

- *We found numerous places where more than one education-focused collaboration was operating.* Although cross-sector collaboration is considered a strategy for reducing competitive and duplicative efforts within local communities, over half of the 182 collaborations in the national scan were operating in places with at least one other cross-sector education collaboration, and 12% were in places with four or more.

Additionally, we wanted to know whether places with cross-sector education collaboration differ from those without them. For this analysis we narrowed our focus to the 100 largest cities in the United States. Of these, over half (58) had at least one collaborative initiative identified by our January 2015 scan. We used federal census data on population characteristics and government finance to compare these cities with the 42 in which we had not found evidence of an existing collaboration.

- Compared with other large cities that lack them, cities with collaborations often have higher levels of poverty, greater income disparities between Blacks and Whites as well as between Hispanics[9] and non-Hispanic Whites, and more economic inequality overall.

- Cities with collaborations tend to have larger total populations and larger proportions of Black residents. They seem to have a more settled and stable demography and longer experience with racial and ethnic diversity.

- Cities without collaborations have been growing at a far greater pace than their counterparts with collaborations, posting a 67% versus a 23% increase in total population from 1990 to 2010. Furthermore, the Black population has, on average, nearly tripled in cities without collaborations. In cities with collaborations, recent racial change has occurred more slowly, with just under a 30% increase in the Black population over the same time period.

- Cities with at least one local cross-sector collaboration have greater relative fiscal capacity than those without. The 58 cities have higher locally generated revenues per capita as well as higher total revenues per capita (including state and federal dollars).

- On the other hand, cities with collaborations have been slowly losing fiscal ground to their counterparts without collaborations. The revenues—both total and local—of cities without collaborations have been increasing at a faster rate than cities with collaborations. Also, whereas the percentage of revenues from federal sources, on average, remained flat from 2000 to 2010 for cities with collaborations, cities without collaborations saw a relative increase in federal dollars over the same time period.

- Both the relative decline in local revenue and federal revenue are suggestive of a somewhat similar pattern of relative deprivation, with slowing revenue and slowing federal support rather than absolute low levels of either, possibly triggering local mobilization for collaboration.

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[9] As in our earlier reports, we use the term "Hispanic" to be consistent with its usage in U. S. Census data, the source of much of our demographic information. However, we recognize that it has been eclipsed in common usage by the descriptors Latina/o and Latinx, and we use those terms as well, especially when they accord with published documents or the usage of those with whom we spoke.

New Analyses of Collaborations' Missions, Pursuit of Equity, and Use of Data

The tension between the pursuit of equity and the pursuit of economic growth has been a central focus within the field of urban politics. One influential thesis is that the need to compete for tax revenues forces local governments to prioritize development and growth over equity and redistribution (Peterson, 1981). But the emergence of cross-sector collaboration and other forms of multi-issue coalitions may be changing the context in which the growth versus equity discussion is taking place. Some suggest that an increase in civic participation, particularly of historically underrepresented groups, may be introducing a "new era" of urban and neighborhood politics less focused on economic development and more open to the intersection of social and economic development issues (Stone & Stoker, 2015).

To understand the extent to which these collaborations are presenting their work in terms of equity, we searched the information presented on collaborations' websites and linked reports for terms that suggested a particular focus on supporting historically marginalized groups. Search terms included "equity," "social justice," "racial justice," "achievement gap," "opportunity gap," and variants of these. We employed a similar process for economic development language, searching for terms such as "economic development," "economic growth," "economic revitalization," "job growth," "21st century skills," and "housing prices."[10]

Among our findings are these (Lyon & Henig, 2017):

- *A substantial proportion of initiatives use equity language on their websites to describe their mission or day-to-day work.* Almost half of local collaborations use equity-oriented language.

- *A smaller but still substantial proportion use language emphasizing development and economic growth.* Roughly one in three use economic development language. Roughly one in five (37 collaborations) use both types of language.

- *An orientation toward equity is much more common in collaborations where a higher percentage of their top governing board represent unions or community organizations.* This is the case even when we control for potentially confounding factors like website size, age of the collaboration, national network affiliation, target population, and city demographic and fiscal characteristics.

- *Collaborations affiliated with national networks consistently have a greater probability of using equity language compared with unaffiliated collaborations.* This may reflect the high priority networks like StriveTogether and Say Yes place on closing educational achievement gaps tied to race and socioeconomic status. The relationship between network affiliation and emphasis on equity is strongest where collaborations lack union and community group representation, raising the possibility that network affiliation—and the pressures and support for an equity agenda that may come with it—might be compensating for a lack of strong internal representation of organized voices for equity.

We also conducted a closer analysis of a random sample of 37 initiatives to examine evidence from their websites about the linkages between missions and theories of action around equity, and their use of data to support their work.[11] We examined the publicly available information on their websites from January 2015 focusing on how they conveyed their vision and mission, whether they explained a theory of action guiding their work, and how they used data to identify challenges, develop their approach, monitor their progress, and report to their stakeholders and audiences.

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[10] A more detailed discussion of the method and results can be found in Appendix A and in Lyon and Henig (2017).

[11] This sub-study is reported in Riehl, Lyon, and Daruwala (2017).

Through this analysis, we observed that collaborations associated with a national network were more likely to display data prominently on their websites than others were (this was true in the full set of 182 collaborations as well). Older collaborations were also more likely to present data, possibly because they had data available. And collaborations organized at the city or county level were more likely to present data than those organized at the neighborhood level.

Collaborations displayed various types of data. The majority of collaborations in our sample presented data, in numerical or narrative form, to describe their mission and goals; this also was truer of collaborations affiliated with national networks, which often provide templates or models for such information use. Many used data to present analyses of local situations and needs, though these analyses were not always tightly coupled to mission statements. Almost half of the collaborations used some form of data to track and report progress in meeting goals. Many focused on equity as an aspect of their work; of those in our sample that featured equity on their websites, a third disaggregated data by race/ethnicity or income status.

Finally, about a third of the collaborations in our smaller sample presented data for what we interpreted to be a symbolic use rather than a technical or substantive use. That is, data were not presented to develop or articulate a theory of action, connect interventions to outcomes, or report a change in needs or outcomes, but instead seemed to help lend significance and legitimacy to the enterprise and to signal the importance of the collaboration, particularly, we surmise, to potential funders and other important stakeholders.

Say Yes Buffalo

The Need to Go Deeper

Our nationwide scan has provided new and valuable information about the scope, distribution, and variety of local education-focused collaborations, but it has two shortcomings that can only be remedied by deeper analysis of initiatives as they unfold on the ground and over time. First, our scan is based on how collaborations depict themselves on their websites. Using descriptive information from collaborations' websites has many advantages. Besides being easily accessible, websites typically are meant to provide meaningful information to a broad public audience. Thus, we can gain a degree of insight on the information they consider important enough to share. On the other hand, websites might present misleading versions of reality, for example, if organizations attempt to exaggerate their impact or obfuscate their failures. Moreover, some collaborations have access to more talent and fiscal resources than others do for creating sophisticated and informative websites. This may affect not only the look of their websites, but the content presented on them as well.

> It is critical to study local efforts in detail to understand their origins, how they adapt to their local history and context, how they manage internal challenges, and how they balance the demands of the moment against steps that might be needed to ensure sustainability.

Second, our scan presented a snapshot of cross-sector collaboration at one particular point in time. Our decision to capture all website information over the course of three weeks in January 2015 means the information does not capture variations over time, such as those that might be caused by changes in national politics, the national economy, or the temper of the times. Rather, the scan sets the stage so we, or others, can later update this information systematically in order to isolate such changes. Our scan data were valuable for highlighting the fact that many initiatives were launched prior to the contemporary resurgence in cross-sector collaboration, making it clear that resilience and adaptability can occur, but these data provide no direct information about how collaborations mature, adapt to changing environments, or fail to do so.

To learn more about the origins of cross-sector collaborations, how they evolve from and adapt to their local contexts, how they manage internal challenges, how they balance the demands of the moment against steps that might be needed to ensure sustainability, and to fill other knowledge gaps, we studied eight local efforts in detail. A synthesis of the findings from across the eight case studies comprises the bulk of this report.

PART III
Collaboration Up Close

CHAPTER 4.
Introducing the Cases

To understand cross-sector collaborations for education more fully, we took a close look at initiatives in eight metropolitan areas of the country. In this section of the report, we discuss significant aspects of these collaborative efforts, showing similarities and distinctions across the eight cases and explaining what they may illuminate about the broader phenomenon of cross-sector collaboration for education.

The Major Cases

Our initial charge from The Wallace Foundation was to conduct detailed comparative case studies of three collective impact initiatives, including Say Yes Buffalo and two additional initiatives that we determined could provide useful complements to the Buffalo case. We studied three collaborations in depth:

- *Say Yes Buffalo*, the second full-city implementation of the Say Yes to Education national organization's framework for supporting student success and civic economic development through wraparound social, health, and educational services, high school to college transition, and a college scholarship promise, in Buffalo, NY;

- *Milwaukee Succeeds*, a "cradle to career" initiative serving the city of Milwaukee, WI, affiliated with the StriveTogether network of collaborations and focused most closely on kindergarten readiness, reading improvement, postsecondary opportunity, and social-emotional well-being; and

- *All Hands Raised*, another Strive initiative, partnering with six school districts, including Portland Public Schools, in Multnomah County, OR, to advance racial educational equity, drive collaboration, and help school community sites improve student-support practices for better education and career outcomes countywide.

The Mini-Cases

We studied five additional collaborations in a more limited fashion. These include

- *Alignment Nashville*, a locally developed, business-supported cross-sector collaboration working closely with the metropolitan school district in Nashville, TN;

- *Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority* in Savannah, GA, a long-standing collaboration, originally funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative (it was dissolved by the state legislature as of July 1, 2017).

- *Northside Achievement Zone* in Minneapolis, MN, a neighborhood-based collaboration, initially funded through the federal government's Promise Neighborhoods program;

- *Oakland Full Service Community Schools* in Oakland, CA, a citywide community schools initiative based in the Oakland Unified School District; and

- *Providence Children and Youth Cabinet* in Providence, RI, an effort at cross-sector collaboration and community change that has gone through multiple shifts of identity, from briefly being affiliated with the Strive network to becoming the first demonstration site for a relatively new Annie E. Casey Foundation initiative, Evidence2Success.

Say Yes Buffalo

Teams of researchers made at least two extended visits to each of our three in-depth case sites, and one briefer visit each to the cities of the five mini-cases. We interviewed participants and stakeholders, observed program meetings and events, and collected relevant documentation. A total of 290 interviews and observations of program activities were conducted, distributed as follows: 66 in Buffalo, 72 in Milwaukee, 81 in Portland/ Multnomah County, 20 in Nashville, 11 in Savannah, 16 in Minneapolis, 17 in Oakland, 15, and in Providence. A more detailed description of our methodology is included in Appendix A. Brief structured summaries of the eight initiatives are included in Appendix B, and extended case studies will be made available as separate publications.

We caution that the eight cases we studied are not necessarily representative of all other cross-sector collaborations for education. For example, not all collaborations that are part of national networks are as developed as those we studied. Some collaborations may be more focused on a single activity, service, or population than our collaborations are; other collaborations may have different funding sources, stakeholders, and organizational configurations. However, we believe these cases are instructive for at least two reasons. First, they give us a view of on-the-ground dynamics that are often not apparent when observing collaboration from a distance. These closer views reveal details that are not always present within the broad strokes of descriptions found in other studies of collaboration, including those discussed in our earlier review of literature. And, second, our cases raise specific themes, issues, and observations that might potentially be found in other collaborations as well. These can be incorporated into conceptual models of cross-sector collaboration. Then, in time, the external validity of these conceptual models might be tested through further research with other cases.

Our presentation of findings from the case studies follows a roughly chronological sequence, exploring what happens as programs move from early initiation to implementation and beyond. We focus on the structures and mechanics of collaboration itself as well as the implementation of programmatic interventions. We also discuss a few broader themes that were especially salient in our cases, for example, how collaborations address educational inequity. While we do not make formal assessments of the impact of the initiatives we studied, we offer evidence about their outcomes and contributions and discuss their prospects for continuation.

CHAPTER 5.
Examining Local Contexts

Through our field visits and interviews, we quickly learned how deeply rooted each collaboration was in its local context. The size, history, population demographics, economic base, educational landscape, and political dynamics of each locality created a unique set of conditions for initiating collaboration, and these factors influenced how collaboration progressed. In this chapter, we describe these different local contexts. We first introduce the settings of our major case study collaborations in Buffalo, Milwaukee, and Portland/Multnomah County. Then we provide additional information comparing demographic, economic, and educational contexts of all eight of our cases.

Buffalo, New York

Buffalo, NY, was once the fifth largest city in the United States, economically robust thanks to a strong manufacturing base, and a transportation hub with Great Lakes shipping, the Erie Canal, and many railroad lines passing through town. Located close to Canada, it attracted fugitives from slavery who sought freedom across the border; many settled on the city's East Side, often because they were prevented from moving elsewhere in town. Like other Rust Belt locales, Buffalo declined in the second half of the 20th century as shipbuilding, steel, automotive, and other industries disappeared and residents moved to the suburbs or beyond.[12] This decline had an especially strong impact on Black men; their employment rate fell by over 20 points and in 2010 Buffalo had the second lowest rate in the country for this demographic group (Katz, 2012).

More recently, Buffalo's economy has seen an upswing. It recovered well from the Great Recession, and developments in health care and green energy industries have fueled new growth. But the economic revitalization threatens to pass by large swaths of the population.

The city population, at roughly 257,000, is about 48% White, 37% Black, 11% Latino, and 5% Asian. Buffalo is an official refugee resettlement location. A recent report noted that Buffalo is sixth nationwide in residential segregation. The unemployment rate for Blacks in 2010-14 was just over 17%, compared with about 14% for Latinos and 6% for Whites. Homeownership rates for persons of color in the Buffalo-Niagara area are half those for Whites, and rates of arrest are considerably higher.[13]

For many years the education system has been plagued by poor student performance, contentious politics, and what many in the state have considered serious fiscal mismanagement. When a federal court ordered the Buffalo schools to desegregate in 1976, the school system and community developed a highly regarded program of magnet schools (Winerip, 1985), but over time fiscal reductions cut into the program and a parental choice policy for school assignment led to a return to neighborhood-based school segregation. In addition, the city's selective "criteria-based" schools have tended to have greater proportions of White students than the system overall, leading parents (White and Black) and advocates to file a civil rights complaint against the district (Lankes & Pasciak, 2014; Orfield & Ayscue, 2018). School enrollments and performance declined for years, and, in 2015, 25 schools, representing nearly half the district, performed so poorly they were placed on a state watch list and threatened with closure if they didn't improve.

In 1995, Buffalo chose Byron Brown as its first Black mayor; six other Black candidates had tried but failed to be elected since the early 1960s. An experienced politician, Brown had previously been a state senator representing

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[12] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffalo,_New_York#Founding,_Erie_Canal,_and_railroads

[13] See https://ppgbuffalo.org/files/documents/equality_civil_rights/race/equalitycivilrights-_working_toward_equity.pdf

a mostly White legislative district. He campaigned for mayor in a colorblind frame, advocating universal, rather than racialized, economic initiatives for the city and seeking to be not just the first Black mayor but "the best mayor the city of Buffalo has ever seen" (Staba, 2005). In his fourth term, Brown has taken a lead in several initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion in the city.[14] He has been a key supporter of the Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable, established in 2015 by the Buffalo Community Foundation. This roundtable brings together several dozen community leaders to "advance racial equity and promote the change required to accelerate a shared regional prosperity."[15] The Roundtable also published a document, *The Racial Equity Dividend: Buffalo's Great Opportunity*, that presents stark statistics about local disparities, with a compelling account of the different lives experienced by a fictional young White child and a Black counterpart growing up in Buffalo. For example, the report states that disparity between Whites and Blacks in timely college completion grew between 2002 and 2013. The report frankly discusses the role of neighborhood segregation, low expectations and deficit thinking, and institutional quality in producing race-based gaps on many measures.

Some observers credit Mayor Brown with effectively creating a "dual agenda" that represents the interests of White residents and people of color simultaneously. In a volume about Black mayors, one researcher notes: "He was able to validate his political astuteness from the vantage point of coalition building by painting a colorblind and safe environment for all constituents in a city that has been plagued by racial tension through the course of its history" (Blair, 2013, p. 261).

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee, WI, is by many accounts the most segregated city in the United States. Blacks moved from the American South to Milwaukee in large numbers during the years after World War II, in what is sometimes called the "Late Great Migration" because it occurred after the migration to cities like Chicago and Detroit. For a brief time, they found stable employment in Milwaukee's manufacturing industries, bolstered by favorable labor union contracts. But restrictive covenants and the practices of realtors and lending institutions saw to it that African Americans' housing options were limited to an older area of the city that became known as the "Inner Core." It was—and still is—characterized by a concentration of low-income residents, lack of green space and other amenities, joblessness, and high rates of crime.

Today, Blacks make up about 40% of the city's population; Latinos comprise about 17% and Whites about 45%.[16] Both Blacks and Latinos have high rates of concentrated poverty—neighborhoods where more than 40% of households live below the poverty line. Segregation is so severe that while only about 9% of White households earning less than $10,000 live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty, some 15% of high-income Black households, earning over $100,000, do so. Blacks overwhelmingly live within the city limits; only 10% of the metropolitan area's Black households are in the suburbs, compared with 80% of White households. Seventy percent of all Black residents of Wisconsin live in Milwaukee County, creating a concentration that makes it very difficult to advance Black interests at the state level (Macgillis, 2014; Maternowski & Teich, 2017; Shafer, 2016; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2018).

The Latino population, which has more than tripled since 1990, is even more concentrated in predominantly low-income neighborhoods than the Black population. Those neighborhoods are located in closer proximity to the White south side of Milwaukee, however, giving Latinos there more access to social and educational resources than Blacks in the north-side neighborhoods of the Inner Core have (Reeves & Rodrigue, 2016).

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[14] See https://www.buffalony.gov/509/Diversity-Inclusion

[15] See https://racialequitybuffalo.org/our-work/about-us/p:1/

[16] Data from the 2010 Census. Retrieved from http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/milwaukee-population/

Milwaukee Succeeds

Milwaukee, like other Rust Belt cities, lost thousands of manufacturing jobs in the last third of the 20th century, hitting Blacks, who had just recently arrived to Milwaukee in large numbers and were concentrated in those industries, especially hard. After the Great Recession of 2007-09, the entire country has been adding jobs, but unemployment for Blacks and Latinos in Milwaukee still far exceeds that of White residents, and their average family income is much less. Criminal justice is also a major concern: the state of Wisconsin enacted several highly restrictive truth-in-sentencing laws for property- and drug-related crimes, and between 1990 and 2012, over half of Black men in their 30s and 40s in Milwaukee County had been incarcerated at some point (Joseph, 2016). These social inequities make the future look bleak for many persons of color in Milwaukee, even as gentrification and economic renewal seem to put a new shine on the city.

Educational disparities in the city are readily apparent. In the 2015-16 school year, the high school graduation rate for Black students in Wisconsin, most of whom are in Milwaukee, was 64%, compared with 93% for Whites (and nearly 80% for Latinos statewide), giving the state the largest graduation-rate disparities in the United States for the third straight year.[17] Recent evidence on student suspensions shows Black students, who comprise half of the students in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), experienced about 80% of in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions during the 2013-14 school year.[18] Data on the Milwaukee Succeeds website shows postsecondary enrollment (in the fall following high school graduation) in the 2015-16 school year was 53% for White students, but only 38% for Black students (and 46% for Latinos). Third-grade reading proficiency rates were 37% for White students, compared with 9% for Black students and 14% for Latino students.

In the 1990s, Milwaukee famously became the home of the country's first private school voucher plan. Initially supported by White conservatives who wanted tax dollars diverted to private institutions, but also by Black parent groups who were dissatisfied with the declining quality of schooling in Milwaukee and the lack of parental input, the voucher plan offered a modest alternative to public schooling until the state's supreme court

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[17] See https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_RE_and_characteristics_2015-16.asp

[18] See https://www.cbs58.com/news/mps-students-voice-concerns-about-racial-disparities-in-schools

expanded it to religious schools, when it grew rapidly. At about the same time, the Wisconsin state legislature passed its first charter school authorization law, and charters draw the support of both White residents and the communities of color in Milwaukee. Currently, about 31,000 students in Milwaukee are educated in private/voucher schools, 9,000 in charter schools, and 76,000 in the traditional public school system.[19] Although there are school-level differences, students in all three sectors are overwhelmingly Black and Latino, and most live in poverty.

Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon

The popular image of the Portland, OR, area as a homogenous, white, upper middle class, liberal enclave fails to capture the dynamic socioeconomic and social context that shapes collaboration here. Portland is still one of the whitest large cities in America; however, like many of its urban peers, the city and its environs have grown more diverse over the last few decades. Almost 78% of the nearly 650,000 residents of Portland are White; about 6% are Black and 10% Latino. More advantaged than nearly all of the other locales we studied, over 91% of the population attained high school graduation or higher levels of education; and about 17% of the population lives in poverty. Race- and class-based disparities are high, however. The median income for Black households is less than half that for Whites; among all communities of color 30% did not graduate high school, and the unemployment rate is over a third higher than the rate for Whites.

Nearly 60% of the state's population lives within the Portland metropolitan area. The population of Multnomah County, where Portland resides, is becoming increasingly diverse. Since 2000, the Black population has increased by 66%, compared with 30% for Whites (Bates, Curry-Stevens, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2014). The percentage of school-age students of color has risen from 32% to 47% over a recent ten-year period, the proportion of students who are from families in poverty has also risen from 41% to 55%, and young people of color are the majority of youth ages 25 and under in the county (All Hands Raised Partnership, 2013).

While Multnomah Country has experienced a growing economy and a wave of newcomers since 2000, these gains have not been equally distributed. The median household income increased from $41,278 in 2000 to $54,102 in 2015, but the poverty rate also increased from 12.7% to 18.1%. Even more alarming, the child poverty rate increased from 15.4% in 2000 to 23.6% in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). This growing inequality has challenged the county's existing public services, which must serve an increasingly disadvantaged and diverse population.

A recent influx of younger and more affluent residents into Portland has displaced many low-income, predominantly minority residents to the eastern edges of the city and areas east of the city itself (known locally as "East County"). The city's traditionally African American neighborhoods have been particularly affected. This displacement has resulted in a shift in the demographics of the six school districts that partner with All Hands Raised. PPS has become more affluent, while the five other districts have experienced a greater increase in racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Though some performance indicators have been trending in a positive direction, educational differences across race, class, and ethnicity are matters of open concern. For example, compared with White students in Multnomah County, students of color were 37% less likely to meet tenth-grade reading benchmarks, 36% less likely to meet tenth-grade math benchmarks, two to three times more likely to be suspended or expelled, and almost twice as likely to drop out of high school (Curry-Stevens et al., 2010).

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[19] The totals for public school enrollment include some charter schools operated by the district. Source for enrollment numbers in the three sectors: https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/MPS-English/CFO/Budget--Finance/2016-17AmendedAdoptedBudget.pdf

TABLE 1. City/County Demographics

CASE & LOCALE	POPULATION	RACE/ETHNICITY	PERSONS IN POVERTY	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR HIGHER	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	647,805 (City of Portland)	White: 77.7% Black: 5.7% Hispanic or Latino: 9.7% Asian: 7.6% Native American: 0.7% Two or More Races: 5.2%	16.9%	91.6%	47.0%
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	595,351	White: 46% Black: 39.2% Hispanic or Latino: 18.2% Asian: 3.8% Native American: 0.6% Two or More Races: 3.7%	28.4%	82.5%	23.5%
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	258,612	White: 48.1% Black: 37.3% Hispanic or Latino: 10.9% Asian: 4.9% Native American: 0.4% Two or More Races: 3.6%	31.2%	83.3%	25.3%
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	667,560	White: 62.3% Black: 28.0% Hispanic or Latino: 10.3% Asian: 3.5% Native American: 0.3% Two or More Races: 2.4%	18.0%	87.2%	37.6%
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	146,444 (City of Savannah)	White: 40.0% Black: 54.1%; Hispanic or Latino: 5.2% Asian: 2.2% Native American: 0.3% Two or More Races: 2.3%	25.4%	86.5%	27.7%
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	422,331 (City of Minneapolis)	White: 64.8% Black: 18.8% Hispanic or Latino: 9.6% Asian: 5.9% Native American: 1.2% Two or More Races: 4.9%	21.3%	89.0%	47.7%
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	425,195 (City of Oakland)	White: 38.2% Black: 24.7% Hispanic or Latino: 26.7% Asian: 16.0% Native American: 0.8% Two or More Races: 6.6%	20.0%	80.5%	39.7%
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	180,393	White: 51.1% Black : 15.9% Hispanic or Latino: 41.7% Asian: 6.5% Native American: 1.3% Two or More Races: 4.1%	28.2%	76.2%	29.4%

Source: Population Estimates, July 1, 2017. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/quickfacts

TABLE 2. Economic Context

CASE	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	BLACK MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	HISPANIC MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	WHITE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	GINI INDEX[a]
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	7.5% (City of Portland)	$58,423	$26,675	$40,982	$63,627	0.49
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	10.3%	$36,801	$26,749	$32,794	$51,340	0.47
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	9.9%	$33,119	$24,715	$20,520	$44,204	0.51
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	6.2%	$49,891	$36,067	$38,002	$59,240	0.47
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	12.2% (City of Savannah)	$37,108	$29,370	$31,744	$49,532	0.49
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	6.9% (City of Minneapolis)	$52,611	$20,871	$40,206	$65,438	0.51
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	9.3% (City of Oakland)	$57,778	$36,185	$49,385	$95,074	0.52
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	11.0%	$37,366	$31,347	$27,901	$52,549	0.55

Source, except as noted: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/

[a] "The Gini Index is a summary measure of income inequality. The Gini coefficient incorporates the detailed shares data into a single statistic, which summarizes the dispersion of income across the entire income distribution. The Gini coefficient ranges from 0, indicating perfect equality (where everyone receives an equal share), to 1, perfect inequality (where only one recipient or group of recipients receives all the income)." See www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income-inequality/about/metrics/gini-index.html

TABLE 3. Student Population by School Type

CASE	PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS (# OF SCHOOLS)	CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS (# OF SCHOOLS)	PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS (# OF SCHOOLS)
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	92,729 (156)[a]	3,848 (17) Multnomah County	13,440 (75) Multnomah County
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	76,207[b] (157[c])	8,839 (44[d])	30,444 (97[e])
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	33,345 (60)	2,316 (4)	5,862 (18)
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	85,453 (163[f])	7,404 (26)	14,958 (42)
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	35,730 (51)	1,609 (4)	7,171 (24)
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	36,793 (103)	10,979 (44)	5,793 (20)
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	49,098 (126)	25,191 (74)	7,086 (34)
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	23,867 (42)	2,493 (11) Providence County	4,715 (27)

Note: Data from 2016-17, except as noted.

[a] Totals include AHR's six partner school districts: Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose, Portland Public Schools, and Reynolds.

[b] The totals for public school enrollment include some charter schools operated by the district. Source for enrollment numbers in the three sectors: https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/MPS-English/CFO/Budget--Finance/2016-17AmendedAdoptedBudget.pdf

[c] Milwaukee public school numbers include 21 instrumentality and non-instrumentality charter schools that are also included in the charter school count. Source: https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/home

[d] Source: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sms/Charter-Schools/pdf/2016-17yearbook%20Web%20Version.pdf

[e] Source: https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedash/download-files/type?field_wisedash_upload_type_value=Enrollment-Private-School&field_wisedash_data_view_value=All

[f] Source: https://www.tn.gov/education/data/data-downloads.html

TABLE 4. Public School Demographics

CASE	STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY	STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY	STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	White: 49.7% Black: 8.6% Hispanic: 22.6% Asian: 7.9% Native American: 0.7% Two or More Races: 8.3%[a]	Free Lunch: 42.6% Reduced Lunch: 6.3%	14.9%[b]	15.3%
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	White: 11.6% Black: 52.8% Hispanic: 26.1% Asian/Pacific Islander: 6.9% Native American: 0.6% Two or More Races: 2.0%[c]	81.2%	10.3%	18.8%
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	White: 20% Black: 47% Hispanic: 19% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander: 9% American Indian/Alaska Native: 1% Two or More Races: 4%[d]	79%[e]	16%[f]	23%[g]
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	White: 29.3% Black: 42.9% Hispanic: 23.2% Asian: 4.3% Native American: 0.2%	Economically Disadvantaged: 49.1%[h]	19%	13.1%
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	White: 27% Black: 60.1% Hispanic: 9.8% Asian: 2.3% Native American: 0.3%	Free & Reduced Lunch: 64.41%	3%	12.1%[i]
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	White: 33.9% Black: 36.1% Hispanic: 17.8% Asian: 5.5% Native American: 3.3% Two or More Races: 2.7%	Free Lunch: 54.3% Reduced Lunch: 5.3%	22.2%	18.6%
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	White: 10.1% Black: 24.3% Hispanic: 45.6% Asian: 12.6% Native American: 0.2% Two or More Races: 3.7%[j]	Free & Reduced Lunch: 32%	25.5%	12.5%
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	White: 9.4% Black: 17% Hispanic: 64.1% Asian: 5% Native American: 1.1%	Free & Reduced Lunch: 86.8%	24.7%	15.1%

Note: Data from 2016-17, except as noted.

[a] Source: https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Student-Enrollment-Reports.aspx

[b] Source: District Comparisons Supplement to 2016-17 ELL Report. Retrieved from https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/Leg-Reports/Pages/default.aspx

[c] Source: https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/portal/Home.jsp?itemlinkid=3928

[d] Source: https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.p?year=2017&instid=800000052968

[e] Source: https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2017&instid=800000052968

[f] Source: https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2017&instid=800000052968

[g] Source: https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2017&instid=800000052968

[h] Source: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/data/data_definitions.pdf

[i] Source: https://oraapp.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_swd_enroll_pub.entry_form

[j] Source: https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=0161259&agglevel=district&year=2017-18

The education finance system in Oregon has long presented challenges to the county's school districts. In 1990, Oregon voters approved "Measure 5," a constitutional amendment that limited the property tax rate for education, formerly the main funding source for the public schools. Before Measure 5, about two-thirds of school funding came from local property taxes. Today, the state's general fund provides more than two-thirds of school funding.

In 2000, in an effort to ensure the state government provided the public schools sufficient funding, Oregon voters approved a constitutional amendment requiring the state legislature to provide adequate and equitable funding for schools. While Oregon's state education finance system produces more equal per-pupil expenditures across districts than previously, the actual dollar amount is relatively low. Most localities have minimal means through which they can supplement state school aid funds. Of the six school districts with which AHR partners, only PPS has access to significant other sources of school funding.

Basic information about the demographic, economic, and educational contexts of all eight of our collaborations is provided in Tables 1-4. These data indicate all eight locales have significant minoritized,[20] low-income populations, though Portland's is proportionately smaller than in the other locales. All have some level of educational underperformance, particularly with their marginalized populations. Several locales have had a strong and/or growing economic base, especially Nashville, Minneapolis, Portland, and to some degree Buffalo, and leaders and residents are concerned their education systems are not producing graduates qualified for newly available jobs. Other locales have experienced ongoing employment and economic challenges and are seeking improved educational outcomes as a strategy for driving other aspects of civic development.

In short, these localities have confronted a myriad of issues that defy easy solution. As we describe in the following chapters, cross-sector collaborations developed in unique ways in these different local contexts across the country. In this report we try to convey their specific stories. We also detail some shared features and patterns among the eight cases. Both can be instructive for others attempting collaboration.

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[20] In this report, we use the terms minoritized and marginalized interchangeably to refer to individuals and groups that, because of their race/ethnicity, income level, native language, and/or other characteristics, have been treated as subordinate groups even when they are in a numerical majority, and have had inequitable access to education, other social services, housing, employment, and other resources or opportunities.

CHAPTER 6.
Initiating Collaboration

Cross-sector collaborations do not emerge in a vacuum. How they get started and what their initial designs look like vary greatly and are consequential for later progress. In this chapter we describe what we learned about the origins and initial framings of the eight collaborations we studied.

As prior research on collaborative ventures suggests, cross-sector collaboration has many benefits, but also costs and risks. Therefore, potential partners need compelling reasons for collaborating. Some observers have suggested it is necessary to "fail into collaboration." After exhausting all other means to achieve a desired objective, stakeholders may be motivated to accept the costs of collaboration. Another rationale for collaboration arises when organizations determine they can obtain what they need to solve a problem—money, materials, expertise, information, or political support—only by working with others. This is sometimes termed "resource dependence," and it denotes both a vulnerability and also an opportunity for gain by seeking new sources of support (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

> Cross-sector collaborations do not emerge in a vacuum. How they get started and what their initial designs look like vary greatly and are consequential for later progress.

Since collaboration is not the default position for most organizations, it needs champions and advocates to initiate and then to shepherd the process over the long haul. Often, this is an individual or entity with ties to influence, money, or a compelling strategy. That said, the presence of one or more individuals or organizations willing to act as champions does not mean collaboration will take hold. Discordant missions, incompatible working styles, competition for scarce resources, and simple inertia can undermine collaboration even when the arguments in its favor are strong.

The initial conditions for collaboration in the eight cases we studied were consistent with these observations. Table 5 summarizes the motivations and early champions for the collaborations. In all but two of our cases, participants expressed a sense of community failure—a long-standing inability to solve pressing local problems—as a local motivating force for initiating collaboration. "Failure" may seem a strong word to use to describe the conditions under which some collaborations began. We use it deliberately, however, to signify the level of sentiment conveyed to us by many informants. In multiple cities, there was a tangible sense of defeat and frustration. Not surprisingly, the distress typically was over low and inequitable patterns of student achievement: students not ready to enter kindergarten, low graduation rates, not enough students making a successful transition to college, poor outcomes especially for children of color and those living in poverty. There was not a sense of hopelessness so much as a pervasive disappointment, frustration, and worry about educational outcomes for children and youth. These community concerns took on added urgency when they were paired with worries that a workforce was not being prepared to contribute to local economic development.

TABLE 5. Initial Conditions for Establishing Collaboration

CASE	LOCAL MOTIVATORS	EXTERNAL MOTIVATORS	EARLY CHAMPIONS
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	Persistent disparities by race and SES and overall low graduation rate Frustration about competing collaborative efforts	Inspired by Strive approach	Portland State University, Leaders Roundtable on Education; the Mayor and County Chair's Education Cabinet; and county officials
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	Turbulent education context and low performing public schools	Inspired by Strive approach	Greater Milwaukee Foundation; business and philanthropic leaders
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	Low graduation rate High rate of poverty New economic development without local workforce preparedness, especially among students of color	Inspired by national Say Yes to Education framework	Business leaders, Buffalo Community Foundation, Oishei Foundation
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	Low-performing school system in spite of city's improving economic base	No significant external motivators	Business leaders, especially education committee chairs of Chamber of Commerce
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	Civic leaders' analysis of disparities in access to civic benefits in Savannah	Resource opportunity from Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative	Mayor's office and city manager; later a local African American community leader
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	Desire to expand mission and better fulfill long-established commitment to neighborhood development in North Minneapolis	Inspired by Harlem Children's Zone Resource opportunity from Federal Promise Neighborhoods program	Neighborhood improvement organization; local philanthropic foundation
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	Long-standing child and youth poverty, and racial disparities	Nationwide community schools movement	School superintendent and influential foundation leader
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	Increasingly low-performing school system Desire for greater efficiency and coordination across sectors	Governor's urban education task force urged collaboration to improve student achievement and address need for a better-educated workforce	Mayor's office, with support from CBOs, other government agencies, foundations, school district

In Buffalo, this combination of concerns made local business leaders eager to try something new. Similarly, Nashville, as a participant described, was doing well on many fronts, but the school system was underperforming, and this made the city a less attractive destination for companies and individuals. The sentiment was, "If we don't fix education, our city's going to crumble." In other cases as well, these problems typically were long-standing, not just recent. Rather than become mired in failure, frustration, and blame, community leaders had come to a point where they believed a new approach was needed.

INITIATING COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT
Say Yes Buffalo

An informal group of business leaders in the Rust Belt city of Buffalo, NY, wanted to do something to help their hometown, which had been struggling for years but was beginning to see signs of progress. These leaders were excited by several large-scale economic development projects, such as the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus and a renewable energy initiative spearheaded by the University of Buffalo, but they were concerned about being able to employ local workers in the high-skill jobs they anticipated.

When the executive director of a local foundation raised the idea of a college scholarship program, they began to explore this possibility with the help from several other civic leaders. Once they learned of the cross-sector, collaborative Say Yes to Education approach, they saw it as a potential mechanism for bringing the city together, solving its persistent educational problems, and supporting economic growth. Key civic leaders reached out to potential stakeholders one by one, explaining the possibilities, laying out the principles that needed to be agreed upon, and explaining what would happen for children. The Say Yes framework was appealing, but it was the idea of making college affordable for all students in Buffalo's public and charter schools that really caught people's attention.

Attempting a truly cooperative effort was also appealing. Buffalo's school board and teachers union seemed to be in continual conflict; student performance was abysmal; and many observers locally and across the state decried the sorry state of education in Buffalo. To be able to pull the city together on behalf of its children and youth would be a major accomplishment, and many felt up to the challenge.

Say Yes Buffalo

Another vital impetus, however, was a sense of optimism that collaboration might provide a solution. Many partnership representatives we spoke with had heard of the Harlem Children's Zone and its impressive approach to collaborative neighborhood development and problem solving. Individuals and groups were also inspired by a new model of collaboration termed collective impact. Individuals associated with two initiatives had had some prior knowledge and experience with the Strive effort in Cincinnati and its nascent network of affiliated collaborations. Some had had prior positive experiences with collaborations in their locales on other issues.

Consider Milwaukee, where civic and foundation leaders were well acquainted with the power of collaboration. A cross-sector collaboration addressing the city's alarming teen pregnancy rate, led by the local United Way, had met its goals ahead of schedule. Moreover, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF) had hired a new executive director, Ellen Gilligan, who had had prior experience with StrivePartnership in Cincinnati and was a strong advocate of that approach. When GMF decided to shift its priorities to seek greater impact on education, Gilligan steered the organization to consider establishing a Strive-like program. In this, she had an ally in a former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Nancy Zimpher, who was also an enthusiastic Strive supporter.

Resource issues were also persuasive motivators for collaboration. Two of the collaborations we studied—YFA and NAZ—were created in response to funding opportunities. The impetus for collaboration in Savannah was an invitation from a national foundation to submit a proposal to participate in a new initiative. In Minneapolis, a local neighborhood organization, the PEACE Foundation, was already tapping into local assets to make its community stronger and safer. A local philanthropy convened a number of its grantees to consider the possibility of modeling a local program after the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ). They took several dozen local leaders to New York to visit HCZ. The PEACE Foundation then decided to reconstitute itself on the HCZ model. It renamed itself the Northside Achievement Zone and wrote a Promise Neighborhood proposal that expanded its mission while building on its well-established grassroots approach. The rationale they presented was so compelling that the proposal was one of the most highly rated by the sponsoring federal agency.

INITIATING COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority

In Savannah, the Annie E. Casey Foundation had invited the mayor's office and school district to apply for its New Futures initiative. This possibility resonated with the city manager, a social change advocate who felt that preventive attention to the city's youth might help change the dynamics that were emptying the schools and filling prisons. The New Futures guidelines required community participation and a cross-sector provision of comprehensive services to young people, along with a case management system to track needs and progress. When Savannah was awarded the grant, it embraced the citywide approach fully and hired a local African American activist to lead the effort.

Also consequential at the founding of YFA, however, was the minimal involvement of the school district. The local school superintendent was then a recent hire who had not yet gained the trust of the community. He, in turn, never seemed to trust the collaboration's partners who had not involved him in the initial grant application process, and this implicit standoff between the school system and the funded initiative had ramifications throughout the several-decade lifespan of YFA.

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority

The combination of an urgent sense of failure plus a new confidence that collaboration might be the solution was enough to mobilize these initiatives, and funding opportunities offered additional incentives. But getting them off the ground also required committed champions. In each of the eight cases we studied, respondents consistently named organizations and individuals that were instrumental in forming the partnership. Depending on the locale, these were specific business executives, philanthropic foundation leaders, institutions of higher education, the office of the mayor and/or another local elected official, existing education leadership groups, the school superintendent, or well-regarded neighborhood improvement organizations. The drive toward collaboration grew from a balance of frustration matched with optimism, and influential and trusted advocates in each locale were able to build momentum.

In Portland/Multnomah County, local leaders recognized expanding problems with educational achievement and racial equity, particularly after the release of a report that, for the first time, calculated cohort-based graduation rates and painted a much bleaker picture of local student performance than Portlanders were accustomed to seeing. One education leadership roundtable had existed for

a number of years but had effected little positive change. Then, a new mayor who was eager to see improvement joined with the county chair to establish a competing leadership council for education. Many individuals were involved in both groups, and, to them, this seemed to be a doubling of effort with little gain in effectiveness. It called for a new solution. Several members of the original leadership group had become familiar with the Strive approach. Eventually, both roundtables decided to join forces, dissolve as separate organizations, and join the Strive network. They chose a countywide scope to address student mobility and demographic changes in the region, partnering with six of the county's eight school districts and an important county agency that was providing social services in those six districts using a community schools model. Rather than start completely afresh, they repurposed another existing organization, the Portland Public Schools Foundation, to lead the effort.

Nashville provides an interesting contrast to the other cases we've discussed so far, since it established a more homegrown effort. The city seemed to be on an upward trajectory in every sector except public education, and business and civic leaders were concerned this put the city's future at risk. In 2002, leaders from the Nashville Area Chamber

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Brian Christopher Photography

of Commerce, concerned about the state of education and youth violence, commissioned a study on how to improve educational outcomes in the county. A consultant interviewed nearly 100 people in the city and recommended they initiate a citywide effort to coordinate and leverage existing efforts to help improve education. He counseled them not to start another organization but to work in a "more organic way" to coordinate efforts. The business leaders rejected this advice, taking the position that it would be important to "build a structure and organization to do this.... We build companies and [we know] you can't get things done unless there are people who get up every day and get it done." They found no examples from elsewhere of the kind of systemic approach they wanted to take, one that was closely linked to the school district. So they designed their own effort with a small "front-office" operation and an array of working teams, each of which was to be chaired by a relevant school district decision maker because, after all, the purpose of collaboration was to help improve education.

Sometimes the pathway to collaboration was less than smooth. In Oakland, CA, the school district had had, for some time, various partnerships with health centers and other agencies to offer community-based services to students. In 2009, the new Superintendent of Schools, Tony Smith, introduced a strategic planning process to engage the community. It sought to develop a broad initiative that could unite the various factions and groups of the city, known for its long-standing educational challenges and for political, racial, and class-based cleavages. The process involved over a dozen separate task forces that included school personnel, community-based organizations (CBOs), and community residents. One of those task forces, by deliberate design, centered on launching a district-wide community schools initiative. The superintendent believed community schools could be a boon for Oakland and was supported by the president of a local philanthropy who shared that belief. This approach was not unanimously supported. The teachers union, for example, still disappointed about the top-down imposition of a recent contract and a spate of recent school closings, was not on board. Among other reasons, union representatives seemed concerned that funding a community schools initiative would supplant classroom funding. Shortly after the strategic planning process concluded, the superintendent left the district. This transition might have ended the community schools effort, but a supportive and effective key staff member, Curtiss Sarikey, remained in place who continued to nurture the idea. It survived a budget crisis and another superintendent leadership transition and finally became a centerpiece initiative of the district.

Observations about Initiating Collaboration

In many ways, these collaborations reflect patterns of decision making codified in two models in the research literature on politics, policy, and organizations: the policy streams model (Kingdon, 1995) and the garbage can model (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). Both models describe how a somewhat serendipitous mix of problems, solutions, and opportunities swirl around each other and gradually flow together and gain momentum until they converge into a decision or policy. Certainly deliberate, rational planning was involved in starting the cross-sector collaborations we studied, but they also were the result of a confluence of circumstances, including the persistent problems of educational underperformance, the renewed prominence of collaborative solutions, and timely opportunities for funding. It mattered that local actors recognized the systemic failures (and opportunities) of local education, that they were scanning their environments and receptive to messaging about collaboration, and that resource opportunities presented themselves.

CHAPTER 7.
Building the Participant Network and Base

The cross-sector collaborations we studied actively courted the involvement of many local individuals and organizations as donors, supporters, and participants; several list dozens and even hundreds of partners on their websites. This is an impressive accomplishment, even if some of the participants are involved in name only.

Putting together a collaborative initiative involves decisions at three levels. The first, as we have discussed, is the initial decision to start the collaboration. In our cases, a few influential local leaders from business, government, philanthropy, and the school system typically made that decision. In several cases, additional stakeholders were consulted. For example, in Buffalo, the early decision to pursue the Say Yes partnership was made by a small group of civic leaders, but the initiative was not launched until many dozens of individuals and organizations were consulted, upwards of 100 community meetings were held, and key agencies like the school district and mayor's office officially signed off on the proposal. Similarly, the PEACE Foundation in Minneapolis decided to reconstitute as the Northside Achievement Zone after being encouraged by many other local philanthropies, agencies, and supporters to seek a Promise Neighborhoods grant from the federal government.

Next, a nascent collaboration must decide what participants to involve and how to invite them. Potential partners must decide whether or not to affiliate, to what degree, and in what capacity. Such decisions can be ongoing, repeatedly revisited as the initiative gets off the ground, begins to mature, and develops a specific identity and set of approaches. For all participants, these decisions carry potential risks and opportunities. For example, collaboration founders' desires to be inclusive may lead them to invite participation from individuals who, over time, feel obliged to represent the interests of their constituents even if they conflict with the good of the collaboration. Potential participants from local service agencies may need to consider the opportunity costs of devoting their often-limited capacity to the collaboration rather than to needs of their own organizations. They also have to weigh the benefits of investing time and effort to be part of a venture that may give them access to influential leaders (and resource providers) against the costs of also working with other agencies with which they may be competing for clients or funding, or that do not share their specific vision or agenda.

For example, in Buffalo, where the program framework was well formed and stipulated a particular strategy and general set of interventions, Say Yes invited a select group of stakeholders to its core leadership table, the "Operating Committee." It then sent somewhat more open invitations for participation in the community task forces that would advise the program and also asked broadly for partners who could provide support services to students and families. Over time, Say Yes Buffalo became more selective in choosing partners, to ensure a shared vision of the program's mission and a consistent level of quality with services. Because the model was fairly well fixed, the institutions, agencies, and individuals who got involved had a good sense of what they were getting into. But Say Yes Buffalo was also receptive to ideas for new ways to support the youth it served, and its partners helped make adjustments along the way.

In Wisconsin, Milwaukee Succeeds, with a less prescribed mission and strategy, first asked a small number of influential civic leaders to guide and support the collaboration. Once their participation was assured, Milwaukee Succeeds extended an open invitation to individuals and organizations to get involved. It cast a wide net, using public notices, word of mouth, and targeted invitations to seek participants. This represented an exciting opportunity to many. Some were attracted to the collaboration's ambitious mission and others perceived a chance to be funded to participate. But the new collaboration was so open-ended some participants were unsure of what they were joining.

Other cases illustrate different approaches to building the participant base. In the Portland area, a number of the initial participants in All Hands Raised (school districts, higher education, service organizations, the city, the county, business, and large community-based organizations) had already been part of a long-standing leaders' roundtable, a newer education cabinet, and/or the coordinating council of the county service system. The new collaboration carefully brought in all of these stakeholders. Though it was a challenge for some of the smaller school districts to participate, the countywide scope of the partnership created a big incentive.

At a later stage, All Hands Raised made explicit efforts to involve many community agencies and individuals who were willing to do the work to develop and implement new practices. The only stakeholders excluded from participation in the AHR partnership were sitting school board members. AHR explains this "is necessary for the executive leader of our most important partner organizations—our school districts—to be able to be fully empowered as the chief representative of their institutions across all aspects of our partnership. Having elected board members…hinders the superintendents' ability to be fully transparent, autonomous and empowered."[21]

However, for one core All Hands Raised initiative—the discussion of disproportionate discipline and racial educational equity in school systems—participation ultimately was honed deliberately to a small group that included the superintendents of the six partner school districts, AHR senior staff, and the leaders of organizations representing communities of color, known locally as "culturally specific organizations." It took this approach on the belief that the kind of trust it needed to cultivate could only develop in an intimate setting. Group members had to be given the opportunity to be frank and open with one another in their discussions about race and equity.

In Oakland, parents and community groups were involved in the strategic planning process that led to a stronger commitment to community schools. But individual schools made their own arrangements with local partners rather than having a central office function as a kind of clearinghouse, as in Buffalo. Sometimes as many as 20 different agencies were involved in a given school, including local groups that might offer a single-day enrichment program for students as well as more consistent social service partners.

In Nashville, the participant base also was built strategically to make sure key decision makers would be involved. Alignment Nashville began with the education committee of the Chamber of Commerce, an influential group of civic leaders whose board of directors is comprised entirely of community elites. The Operating Board includes 50 members, the majority of whom (as of 2017) are key school district representatives. Alignment Nashville's basic work structure incorporates an "Invitation to Participate" in specific "Alignment Teams (A-Teams)" that undertake the actual projects (this process is trademarked and part of a package of tools offered through Alignment USA). A broad network of people (the collaboration's mailing list numbers over 2800) are contacted and invited to participate when new A-Teams are formed. A CBO or business representative and the highest-level school-district administrator connected to the project lead the teams. Early on, however, Alignment Nashville's executive director seemed to have actively discouraged some other forms of community involvement, on the premise that unsolicited requests and offers of help from community or youth groups might distract from the collaboration's intended strategic directions.

In our eight cases, we learned of only a few agencies or individuals that explicitly decided not to participate when collaborations were first established. The small number of nonparticipants may have been an artifact of our research design; since we relied heavily (though not completely) on the collaborations' leaders for suggestions of whom to interview, we may not have been consistently steered to nonparticipants. In one case, however, we learned that a prominent local philanthropy had only a marginal relationship with the cross-sector

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21 Jeanie-Marie Price, personal communication, July 21, 2017.

collaboration after having experienced some early conflict with it. In another city, we heard from sources that some partners became disengaged after a short while, either because they were frustrated with the long process of settling on strategies or because the strategies were not well matched to their organization's own competencies or interests. A third city's collaboration also seems to have had some reduction in participation over a longer timeframe, followed by adjustments to the balance of effort of community agencies, the local school district, and other partners.

Observations about Forming a Participant Base

The collaborations we studied took different approaches to securing a participant base consistent with their overall missions and strategies. In general they weighed the potential risks for legitimacy, goodwill, and effectiveness of deliberately or practically excluding individuals or organizations from participating against the benefit of having partners who will make long-lasting and positive contributions. Some cast a wide net to accommodate, at least initially, a large number and variety of potential partners to support a broad mission and roughly outlined strategies. Other collaborations built a smaller core base of civic leaders and then expanded more slowly and strategically to other organizations and individuals. Some collaborations made it easier for potential partners to decide whether and how to get involved by being transparent about their needs and expectations of partners and by ensuring collaboration brought more benefits than costs.

CHAPTER 8.
Operational Planning for Collaboration

The collaborations we studied began with a fairly strong sense of their missions and the broad challenges they wanted to address. Table 6 presents a statement from each illustrating its sense of mission and purpose.

Along with a strong sense of mission, the collaborations also needed an understanding of how the initiative would operate and a specific plan of action. Several of the collaborations we studied—NAZ, YFA, and Say Yes Buffalo—quickly developed plans for how they would work. For NAZ and YFA, this was a condition of their funding agencies; the plans were advanced as part of the original competitive grant proposal.

TABLE 6. Mission Statements

CASE	MISSION STATEMENTS
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, OR	"Learning doesn't begin and end in the classroom. Transforming children into educated, independent adults is the job of the entire community. The All Hands Raised Partnership gathers Multnomah County's diverse efforts and aligns them in ways that strengthen supports for kids—from cradle to career."[a]
Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI	"Milwaukee Succeeds unites our community around a commitment to support strategies that will achieve our shared vision of success for every child, in every school, cradle to career."[b]
Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY	"The mission of the Say Yes Buffalo partnership is to strengthen the Western New York economy by investing in the education of Buffalo's future workforce. The primary goals of the partnership are to convene the school district, parents, teachers, administrators, state, city and county governments, higher education, community based organizations, businesses and foundations to increase high school and postsecondary completion rates. Our vision is that every student can graduate high school and college when given the proper supports, resources, and opportunities."[c]
Alignment Nashville, Nashville-Davidson County, TN	"Education is the key that opens the door to the future for our youth and our community as a whole. That's why Alignment Nashville exists—to find ways we can all work together to create innovative programs and game-changing initiatives that will build generations of thriving young Nashvillians. The collective work of our Alignment Teams seeks to do this by impacting these areas: youth literacy, chronic absenteeism, college and career readiness, school culture and climate."[d]
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA	"Every child will be born healthy, grow up healthy, be secure from abuse and neglect, and become a literate and productive, economically self-sustaining citizen."[e]
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN	"The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) exists to permanently close the achievement gap and end generational poverty in North Minneapolis. Together with our partner organizations, we are walking side by side with low-income families as they put their children on a path to college."[f]
Oakland Full Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA	"Community Schools leverage community partnerships and resources so our campuses become hubs of support and opportunity for students, families and community members. By working with the community in this way, schools become better equipped to tap into the unique talents and gifts of every student, teacher, and staff member in our district, and can better break down barriers to student achievement."[g]
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI	"To convene key partners, prioritize shared results and take collective action to improve the wellbeing of Providence's children and youth."[h]

[a] Source: https://allhandsraised.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/AHR_Ch02_FINAL-5.pdf

[b] Source: http://milwaukeesucceeds.org/who-we-are

[c] Source: http://sayyesbuffalo.org/about/story-mission/

[d] Source: http://www.alignmentnashville.org/

[e] Harper, 2005, p. 104.

[f] Source: https://northsideachievement.org/

[g] Source: https://www.ousd.org/CommunitySchools

[h] Source: http://www.cycprovidence.org/who-we-are/our-mission

In Buffalo, as the city worked with the Say Yes national organization to explore becoming a new site for its approach to collaboration, the initial planning process was somewhat different. The Say Yes framework and developmental sequence were prescriptive. This was just what Buffalo's civic leaders felt they needed, so they were eager to mobilize to implement the scholarship program, support services, data analytics, and community engagement strategies built into the framework. But they had to demonstrate their capacity to support the program over time. The city was asked to show it could develop a local funders group to raise money for the scholarship endowment, and to identify options for using local public and private fiscal sources to take over full funding of the wraparound support services that were essential to the model. The Say Yes national organization helped fund and conduct initial analytics to assess local capacity for the initiative. These included a strategic budget review of the school district that drilled down to details such as inefficiencies in the use of human resources and technology in the central district office and a suggestion for reduction in the number of color printers in the district (Schoolhouse Partners, 2012).

> A collaboration's plan of action can be well developed at the outset or be shaped as the initiative gets underway. Either way, capacity and flexibility are crucial.

Other collaborations were slower to develop an operational plan. They used formal or informal strategies for building consensus around vision, goals, and strategies. This often required extensive discussions and explorations with many partners. While the collaborations sometimes took advice from external sources, such as the national networks to which some belonged, each fashioned a plan that took into account local history, conditions, and needs. The time it took for initial plans to be developed, coupled with equally lengthy stages of initial implementation (as we describe below), have resulted in much longer start-up phases than many anticipated.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SPOTLIGHT
Milwaukee Succeeds

In Milwaukee, a small group of leaders launched the collaborative initiative with start-up funding of about $5 million. Next, Milwaukee Succeeds embarked on an extensive process of determining how to organize itself. The collaborative partners followed guidance from the Strive network and used the Six Sigma planning protocol, an approach often used by businesses, to identify needs, root causes, intervention strategies, and measurable goals. The process frustrated some participants who felt it was unwieldy and not well suited for civic enterprises with multiple partners, but others appreciated how it made members of working groups think systematically about their challenges.

Certain decisions about what All Hands Raised in Portland/Multnomah County would do, and how it would do it, were set in place when the collaboration was established. Civic, business, and school district leaders who had been involved in competing collaborative efforts to improve education embraced the Strive model as a way to start from a clean slate and build a new vehicle for constructive partnership. They also saw it as a roadmap for driving collective action and real change. One initial holdout was the new mayor who had been elected on an education platform and who worried the partnership's cradle-to-career approach would dilute his emphasis on improving high school graduation rates. When the partnership agreed to adopt a ninth-grade transition program as the first of its interventions, he agreed to participate.

The collaboration began with a broad mission to serve as a vehicle for building the county's collective efforts across sectors to strengthen supports for youth from cradle to career. The collaboration then adopted Strive's five goal areas, aiming for all students in the county to (1) be prepared for school; (2) be supported inside and outside school; (3) succeed academically; (4) enroll in postsecondary education or training; and (5) graduate and enter a career. A data team of researchers at Portland State University supplied potential indicators to use as measures of progress toward those goals. Following Strive's roadmap, All Hands Raised established five working groups tasked with designing initiatives and activities that would "move the needle" on these metrics. (A sixth working group was added later.) Finally, each working group developed its own charter and action plan.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SPOTLIGHT

Alignment Nashville

In the early days of Alignment Nashville, the initial planning group included over 100 community leaders. Developing a common vision of what the new citywide collaboration was going to do—and how—was challenging. Ultimately the group decided its major aim would be to help the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) realize its strategic plan. Alignment Nashville leaders stressed their first rule of thumb is never to question or work outside of that plan. Eventually, the group developed a structure for a set of work groups, each tackling a different issue; these groups determine how to accomplish the goals and priorities of the MNPS strategic plan. At the time of our fieldwork, the collaboration's central commitment to the school district's strategic plan remained in place.

Alignment Nashville

Observations about Operational Planning

In principle, a plan of action for collaboration can be well developed at the outset or be shaped as the initiative gets underway. Either way, capacity and flexibility are crucial, since these are largely voluntary assemblages of partners that cannot rely on traditional authority structures for determining broad goals, strategies, and structures. Several of the collaborations we studied quickly developed plans for how they would work together; this was common when the national organization or funding agency supporting the collaboration required a firm plan up front. But even then, some elements changed quite a bit over time. Other collaborations took much longer to develop an operational plan, using formal or informal strategies for building consensus around vision, goals, and strategies. This often necessitated extensive discussions and explorations with many partners.

Slower than expected start-up phases than many anticipated in some sites frustrated some participants, but others valued the opportunity to think methodically and collaborative about their challenges. This long start-up phase was so pervasive it seems reasonable to anticipate this will almost always be the case; therefore, creating appropriate expectations about the timeframe for initiating collaboration and developing an initial plan of action is vital.

CHAPTER 9.
Adopting Programmatic Theories of Action

The Cradle to Career Continuum and Developmental Pathways

We turn now to the question of what these cross-sector collaborations set out to accomplish programmatically. In collaborations' early years (and all of the collaborations we studied, with the exception of Savannah, were still quite new), their main task was to get established and lay the groundwork for their future efforts. These are rapidly evolving initiatives, an observation we make anew every time we consult a program website or make a check-in phone call. In this section we delve into the theories of action the collaborations developed and used as they pursued their missions through specific activities and interventions. In the next, we take a look at the tangible services and interventions they have put in place and the reasoning behind these choices. Later in the report we will discuss early evidence about outcomes and impact and will also discuss the ground they have laid for perhaps the greatest challenge facing cross-sector collaborations in education: dealing with the systemic nature of educational underperformance and its roots in privilege and inequity.

All of the collaborations sought to improve educational, social, and/or employment outcomes for local children and youth, especially outcomes that showed disparities by race and income level. Improving such outcomes was an end in itself, but it was also the means to other ends—for example, a reduction in neighborhood violence and generational poverty in Minneapolis, or economic development and a stronger workforce in Buffalo and Nashville, or racial equity in Portland/Multnomah County. The collaborations initiated a wide range of activities and services to advance their goals. Their ability to mobilize these efforts seemed related not only to their original missions and plans, but also to an ongoing negotiation of strategy and resources in the local context. This sometimes resulted in pragmatic choices that, while not always optimal, did reflect what the partners felt they could accomplish. In developing their theories of action, some collaborations relied heavily on national network frameworks and strategies, foregoing an exclusively local program design. But all developed in ways that had definite homegrown elements. (See Table 7.)

> In developing their theories of action, some collaborations relied heavily on national network frameworks and strategies, foregoing an exclusively local program design. But all developed in ways that had definite homegrown elements.

Some cross-sector collaborations, including several we identified in our nationwide scan, address only one aspect of youth development, such as productive use of out-of-school time or improvement of early childhood care and education, and their contribution is to align resources and services to provide improved access, coherence, and efficiency within a fairly restricted range of operations. In contrast, all but one of the collaborations in our case study sample adopted some version of a "cradle to career" orientation. That is, they espoused the value of providing coordinated supports for young people from their early childhood through early adulthood and entry into the workforce. This orientation provided a strong and persuasive rationale for the collaborations, because it represented an attempt to consolidate and align resources and services typically spread across multiple education systems (early childhood, K-12, and higher education) as well as multiple service sectors (health, education, and social services) and multiple funders (general purpose government at the city and county level, school systems, social service agencies, and philanthropies). Thus, it signaled to funders, potential participants, and other stakeholders that this indeed was an effort not undertaken previously.

TABLE 7. Descriptions of Scope, Vision, and Theory of Action

CASE	SCOPE & VISION	THEORY OF ACTION
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County	Countywide cradle-to-career partnership to ensure the success of every child and to improve racial equity	Innovative work at school community sites and countywide collaboration in selected work areas will build and even out capacities across multiple school districts, facilitate system learning, and help improve developmental pathway outcomes for students. Explicit focus on racial equity will help districts and service providers reduce outcome disparities.
Milwaukee Succeeds	Citywide partnership that seeks to serve every student, in every school, cradle to career	Improved individual and system-level outcomes along the developmental pathway will lead to better educational attainment. Support services for students and professional development and quality improvement efforts for schools will lead to improved outcomes. Social-emotional health is necessary for kindergarten readiness, school readiness, and career readiness.
Say Yes Buffalo	Citywide turnaround strategy intended to meet the needs of every student in Buffalo public schools	Improved education outcomes for students will prepare them for college and career and help drive local economic development. Wraparound support services will help students be ready to learn, and to be prepared for college. The college scholarship will be an individual incentive for students (and families) to graduate and pursue college. The scholarship is also a civic incentive, contingent on the city's provision of wraparound supports for students.
Alignment Nashville	Citywide educational improvement partnership to help sustain economic growth in Nashville	Business and community efforts to support the school district's strategic plan through collaboration will improve college and career readiness.
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority	Citywide partnership to generate system-level change in social and educational outcomes that later became neighborhood based	Providing a range of social, health, educational, and cultural services for students will improve educational outcomes and stem violence.
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis	Neighborhood-based, comprehensive approach to empowerment and service provision for a marginalized and disadvantaged population, meant also to be instructive for social and educational improvements in the city at large	Intensive, personalized support for students and families in a targeted neighborhood will improve educational outcomes for children and youth and improve neighborhood safety and quality. Support includes educational assistance as well as housing and job assistance and advocacy for families in need. Empowering and employing parents makes use of neighborhood and family capacity and ensures that neighborhood residents benefit most from the collaboration. Program provides a model for system change at the local level, but overall reform of the entire school system is not part of the theory of action.
Oakland Full Service Community Schools	All district-run public schools will eventually be community schools; full service community school will be implemented in most needy schools first	Provided with additional services tailored to meet their and their families' needs, students will be supported to learn, freeing teachers to focus on improving academic experiences. Semiautonomous community schools contract with community agencies to provide wraparound services for health, after-school programs, and to support family and community engagement in schools.
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet	Citywide partnership that now primarily focuses on two neighborhoods with high poverty rates	Initial theory of action saw improved cradle-to-career supports as key to improved outcomes for children and youth; more recently, it has focused on bringing new resources that will improve social-emotional learning and behavioral health, chronic absence, and school climate.

Consistent with this cradle-to-career orientation, many collaborations also used a "developmental pathways" framework. This framework incorporates the idea that, in order to achieve an end goal such as college or career success, young people need to progress steadily along the way from early childhood through their school years and beyond. These stages of education and development are punctuated by particular milestones; if children and youth do not successfully achieve a milestone, they may have trouble at later stages of the developmental pathway. Some milestones—like "kindergarten readiness"—may seem to make logical sense, while others— such as "eighth-grade math achievement"—might seem more arbitrary or dictated by data availability, but they typically are measures that have been found in empirical research to be associated with later achievement and attainment. Using these milestones as goal points, however, runs the risk of reifying a particular milestone and neglecting the full range of the developmental pathway.[22]

This approach is a central element of StriveTogether's collaborative approach. A cradle-to-career continuum of goals and outcomes that are important for educational success are codified in Strive's Student Roadmap to Success framework. These include kindergarten readiness, early-grade reading, middle-grade math, high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary degree completion.[23] This framework is supported by academic research showing, for example, the connection between third-grade reading and later performance.[24] Strive urges collaborations to monitor these developmental milestones at the community level and to take actions that respond to barriers for achieving them. StriveTogether collaborations can use local research to substantiate the importance of these outcomes and identify barriers and supports.

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[22] This quandary was evident in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative. Grantees like Savannah's Youth Futures Authority were expected to improve a range of social, educational, health, and community factors contributing to high school graduation, but the focus shifted over time to the measure itself, graduation rates.

[23] For details, see https://www.strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/StriveTogether-cradle-to-career-outcomes-research-publication.pdf.

[24] See, e.g., Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, and Gwynne (2010).

For example, All Hands Raised in Portland/Multnomah County selected what it called "community-wide indicators" that mirrored the Strive developmental markers. A data team was formed to identify areas for improvement in the six districts and determine what measures and indicators were available to assess progress toward the goals of each pilot project. Research, such as a 2010 report, *Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile* (Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2010) was important for documentation of local problems and needs.

FIGURE 1. All Hands Raised Community-Wide Indicators
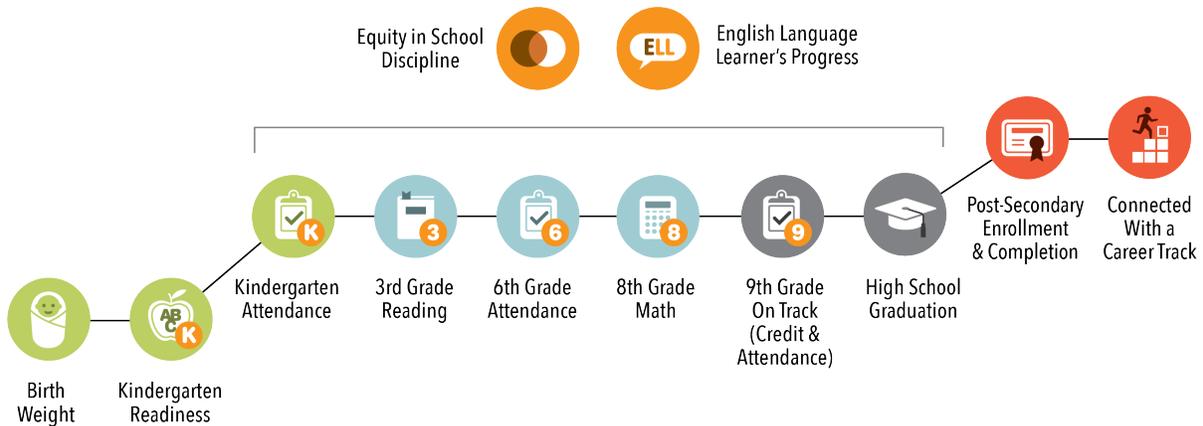
Source: http://allhandsraised.org/community-data/
Graphic credit: Martha Koenig

Say Yes to Education's national organization uses a similar approach, advocating specific support services that address barriers to student success along a research-based developmental pathway and asking their local implementers to analyze data to monitor progress. While the idea of support services has been central to their programmatic framework for a long time, the idea of a developmental pathway with specific milestones is more recent; like that of StriveTogether, it is based on research evidence.

Several of our collaborations that were not affiliated with Strive or Say Yes also organized their work in ways consistent with a developmental approach. For example, Alignment Nashville has a PreK-Elementary Alignment Team to focus on literacy and explains, "benchmarks in kindergarten readiness, third-grade literacy, and fifth-grade literacy will provide a roadmap to success."[25] At the other end of the continuum, Alignment Nashville also has a 16-24-Year-Old, Out of School, Out of Work Alignment Team for the age cohort sometimes referred to as "opportunity youth."[26] Their intervention model is to provide coaching and information to these young people. The Providence Children and Youth Cabinet adopted a vision statement that "All children and youth in Providence will be healthy and thrive from cradle to career."[27] And NAZ in Minneapolis states it will monitor student progress "toward kindergarten-readiness, grade-level achievement, and college readiness."[28]

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[25] For details, see http://www.alignmentnashville.org/prek-elementary/

[26] For more information, http://www.alignmentnashville.org/oosoow/

[27] See http://www.cycprovidence.org/who-we-are/our-theory-of-change

[28] See https://northsideachievement.org/who-we-are/mission-values/

Observations about Adopting Programmatic Theories of Action

The milestones along a developmental pathway are useful as goals to aim for and markers around which to collect data and monitor progress, either at the individual student level or, as StriveTogether suggests, as community-level indicators. But collaborations must still determine how they can and should "move the needle"—to use language that has become common among cross-sector collaborations[29] — on the indicators associated with the developmental milestones. This requires thinking through a theory of action at a deeper level. What factors, for example, support children's progress toward kindergarten readiness, and how can the collaboration help provide that support? What local conditions, resource gaps, or other factors get in the way? What factors create disparities across race, social class, or other group distinctions? The general orientation to the cradle-to-career continuum and developmental pathway milestones (and the language and graphics in which they were expressed) were common enough to seem like a shared characteristic. Nonetheless, how they were addressed took on a much more local character, as collaborations pondered questions like these and used their reasoning to decide on the tangible services and interventions they could put in place.

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[29] Thanks in part to an influential publication, Jolin, Schmitz, and Seldon (2012), *Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives: A Promising Approach to Addressing America's Biggest Challenges*.

CHAPTER 10.
Implementing Interventions for Children, Youth, Schools, and Systems

Each collaboration using a cradle-to-career continuum or developmental framework needed to understand what was impeding students' progress along their age-related trajectory and to introduce appropriate interventions. The StriveTogether network encourages collaborations to engage in "root cause analysis" to identify barriers to achieving developmental milestones and make plans to rectify them. All Hands Raised went through this process. Milwaukee Succeeds did so initially and has continued to revisit and revise their approach.

IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS SPOTLIGHT
Milwaukee Succeeds

Milwaukee Succeeds used a formal and extensive planning process to help the new initiative develop its operating structure, choose system-level measures as long-term goals to be met by 2020, and analyze the current context to determine the interventions that could help them reach those goals. This was a very open-ended approach; many persons from numerous sectors and agencies formulated a plan almost from scratch. After much consideration, it was decided to focus on three goals aligned with the StriveTogether developmental roadmap: kindergarten readiness, school readiness, and career readiness. After even more deliberation over a longer period of time, a fourth goal was eventually framed and then reframed as a social-emotional well-being goal.

Under the first goal of school readiness, the initiative developed plans to monitor and increase the number of children in the city receiving the immunizations required for kindergarten and children receiving early developmental screening. These efforts, which can be considered wraparound service interventions for children, have had some success, though they have been hampered by challenges in reaching parents, involving health care providers, and obtaining data from state registries.

Two other plans were school improvement interventions. The kindergarten readiness network has worked to improve the quality of early childhood programs and centers, providing access to supports that help programs meet quality criteria in the YoungStar early childhood education rating system. Planning for the second goal, school success, led to a focus on another school improvement strategy. The goal team decided to target K-3 reading performance and chose to develop and implement a program of professional development for early-grades teachers. Known as the Transformative Reading Initiative (and later as Reading Foundations), the intervention involves coaching and modeling for teachers, using a fine-grained model of high- quality reading instruction. Parent training and engagement are also incorporated into the program. This was begun in just two schools; the program has expanded and eventually will be scaled up to over 50 schools. Importantly, as the program grew, in keeping with the Milwaukee Succeeds commitment to serve students in traditional public, charter, and private schools, it was built out into those sectors as well. As more members of the Goal 2 network came to understand what the reading initiative was all about, they too began to align their own activities—such as museum-based enrichment programs and volunteer tutoring programs—to the reading initiative.

Several other collaborations, though not all of them, incorporated similar analyses into their strategic planning. These analyses and decisions generated a variety of theories of action and plans for interventions across the eight collaborations. The interventions selected span the cradle-to-career spectrum and incorporate, to varying degrees, two strategies for addressing educational performance disparities: interventions—often known as wraparound services—that provide students social and health supports that help remove barriers to success in school and beyond, and interventions that directly alter curriculum, instruction, and other aspects of schooling in order to increase students' achievement and attainment.

> The interventions selected span the cradle-to-career spectrum and combine two strategies for addressing educational performance disparities: wraparound services that provide students social and health supports, and interventions that directly alter curriculum, instruction, and other aspects of schooling to increase students' achievement and attainment.

To deliver on these ambitious theories of action was a challenge, however, especially for programs in their early years. The range of services and activities in place at the time of our fieldwork was generally narrower than the programs' aspirations. Often this reflected simply the realities of staging a comprehensive effort on a large scale; some things get implemented early and others have to wait. Also, it reflected local capacity issues: despite the common mantras of cradle-to-career services and developmental pathways, collaborations had varying levels of interest and resources for tackling a full range of interventions. We now describe these interventions.

Early Childhood Well-Being and Education

Most of our cross-sector collaborations include population-level improvements in early childhood learning and preparation for kindergarten in their cradle-to-career visions. Fewer established services for this developmental stage. The early childhood sector is more fragmented and less systematized than elementary and secondary schooling, with many centers and programs operating independently. On the one hand, this appears to have made it more challenging to plan comprehensive interventions across multiple independent early childhood sites. On the other hand, to help manage the challenges of this fragmentation, some early childhood education partners already had experience working together in voluntary partnerships. In Milwaukee, for example, those prior relationships helped participants focus fairly quickly on how Milwaukee Succeeds could contribute in this area. In Portland/Multnomah County, however, the existing relationships led many in the early childhood sector to question why All Hands Raised should start a new initiative. Ultimately, another agency became the backbone of the county's main collaborative early childhood efforts, and AHR's early childhood work largely shifted to other coordinating entities. AHR continues to run kindergarten transition programs at two schools in partnership with local Head Start programs.

Only two other case study initiatives were incorporating early childhood services at the time of our research. In Minneapolis, the Northside Achievement Zone had relationships with several early childhood centers, and their family achievement coaches helped families to access services at these centers. The Providence Children and Youth Cabinet's social emotional learning work included a coaching program that engaged parents of preschool-aged children. Looking ahead to next steps, Say Yes Buffalo deferred taking action on early childhood services, but since our fieldwork ended, it revived its early childhood task force and now coordinates

school readiness screening for pre-K and kindergarten students. Alignment Nashville also established a PreK-Elementary Alignment Team to focus on early literacy, but this work had not yet begun.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Addressing students' ability to reach the milestones occurring within the K-12 portion of a cradle-to-career developmental framework was, not surprisingly, a common focal point for our collaborations, but the actual interventions put in place to help them do so diverged across locales. One might expect the collaborations to target the instructional core of schools in order to improve indicators for third-grade reading or eighth-grade math achievement, following a line of thinking that, in the end, a student's performance in school is dependent on their access to strong instruction. But this was not widely the case. Only Nashville and Milwaukee had strong school-improvement components to their initiatives. The Alignment Nashville initiative was first conceived as a way to help the local school system succeed, and its working groups known as Alignment Teams or A-Teams were meant to align program components to the school district priorities. Of the different interventions that these teams rolled out, the effort to strengthen high school programs by developing academies formed from innovative partnerships among schools, businesses, and industries has had the most staying power.

In Milwaukee, the collaboration addressed early literacy by developing a comprehensive approach that combined teacher professional development and coaching, student support, and parent engagement. The initiative, now known as Reading Foundations, was first focused on the Milwaukee Public Schools and was implemented in a small set of schools. As the program expanded and the number of schools increased, several private and charter schools began to participate. This posed some logistical and political challenges around supporting and financing the intervention across the separate charter, private/religious, and traditional public school sectors, but the effort also demonstrates it is possible to disseminate improvement strategies across sector boundaries.

During the timeframe of our study, no other collaborations had interventions that were specifically designed around curriculum, instructional practices, teacher quality, or other aspects of instructional programs that directly influence learning. Leaders in several collaborations, such as Buffalo, Portland/Multnomah County, and Providence, felt strongly that school improvement was the purview of the school district; their stance was to help but not usurp the district's role. Even the efforts by Say Yes Buffalo to provide extended learning opportunities through summer school and afterschool programming deferred to the school district oversight of instructional components.

But many collaborations were eager to provide supports that make students more able to learn and teachers more free to teach. In Portland/Multnomah County, All Hands Raised works with schools on attendance improvement efforts, on reducing exclusionary discipline in schools and eliminating racial disparities in its use, and on expanding college advisement to include financial aid planning. In Minneapolis, the NAZ approach to student and family case management is meant to support student success in school; it presents opportunities for schools to learn more about student needs and perhaps to adjust their own programs in response. Oakland's community schools initiative makes it possible for individual school communities to learn more about student needs and potentially adjust their instructional and support programs accordingly. And the Providence CYC has chosen to work in the area of school-climate improvement.

The collaborations we studied wanted to see system-level change in interventions and services to support K-12 learning and outcomes. But during the time frame of our study, only Say Yes Buffalo had sought saturated coverage of its support services, seeking to make them available for all students in the city who need them.

IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Say Yes Buffalo

Say Yes Buffalo adheres closely to the framework of support services developed by the national organization. This includes afterschool programming, summer school, mental health services, legal aid for students and families, and college transition services. It also includes a last-dollar college scholarship. While the scholarship seems like the proverbial golden ring (and it was just that for the original cohort of Say Yes beneficiaries in Philadelphia), the national organization itself frames the scholarship promise as the carrot that keeps cities committed to providing the wraparound services.

Say Yes Buffalo has implemented a menu of comprehensive support services (plus the college scholarship) steadily over time, patiently and persistently finding opportunities, identifying partners, and overcoming obstacles. For the most part, Say Yes Buffalo does not provide the wraparound services directly, but brokers and works with existing service providers to expand services to more schools and students and to ensure only high-quality providers are utilized.
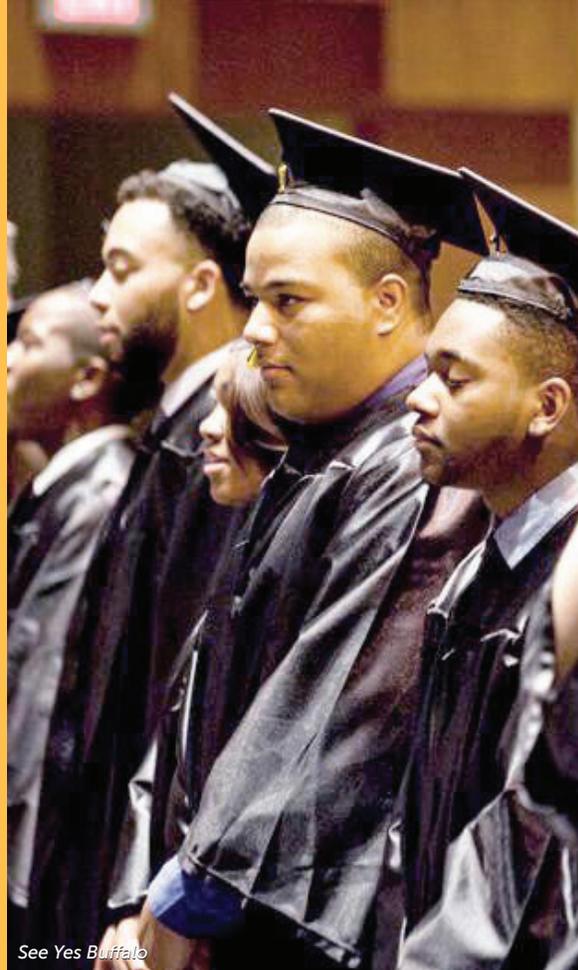
See Yes Buffalo

Other collaborations were focused, during their early years, on smaller-scale projects. Full coverage of a comprehensive range of services, or even a single intervention like early elementary teacher development, is a large and expensive undertaking that cannot be accomplished quickly. The small wins these collaborations have been able to achieve will not be enough for driving system-wide improvement, but they reflect the early steps toward the more ambitious goals the collaborations have and their expansive understandings of the scope of needed improvements.

Access to Postsecondary Education and Careers

The collaborations were fairly unified in emphasizing the need for helping students in their communities move toward college and career and eliminating race and class disparities in postsecondary educational attainment. They diverged much more in the extent to which they were able to implement services and other interventions for this developmental stage.

Say Yes Buffalo has had the most ambitious approach. The mission of the national Say Yes to Education organization is anchored in the goal of increasing college attendance rates in a community. Comprehensive support services are intended to enable students to graduate high school, and the Say Yes college scholarship program is intended to remove financial barriers to college attendance. Additional supports ease students' transition to college life.

The Say Yes scholarship is a last-dollar scholarship; it is meant to close the gap between the cost of college tuition and the money students have access to through scholarships and grants. The scholarships are funded in a variety of ways. Say Yes has agreements, known as the Say Yes Compact, with many colleges, both locally in Buffalo and across many states, to offer tuition discounts to close the gap for Say Yes scholars. Each Say Yes city is also expected to create a scholarship endowment fund to close the tuition gap for students attending other schools not part of the Say Yes Compact.

These scholarships are not without controversy. Some say last-dollar scholarships are of only marginal value to certain students in poverty who can find ample scholarship and grant support. Also, the Say Yes scholarship cannot be used to cover college fees, books, or other expenses that can be a hardship for students in poverty. Some colleges in the Compact may find it a strain to add more tuition discounts, especially if they are not offset by increased enrollment. Nonetheless, higher education institutions are active partners with Say Yes Buffalo, the Scholarship Committee has raised many millions toward its full scholarship endowment goal, and many students are receiving college scholarships.

Say Yes Buffalo has gone beyond its original framework for supporting postsecondary attainment mainly via the scholarship program. Local leaders asked for and helped develop other strategies for providing students with supports to encourage them to move into college and prepare for jobs. These strategies include mentoring relationships, internships, and paid employment, as well as college bridge programs and, more recently, grant-funded efforts to improve matriculation, retention, and degree completion for post-secondary students.

Growing awareness of the crucial role of access to financial aid in getting students to college led several collaborations to implement projects to help increase the number of students and families who complete federal financial aid forms. In Buffalo, this effort has been extensive, led by a local college professor. Milwaukee Succeeds and All Hands Raised started similar projects in selected high schools. All Hands Raised designed an interactive tool that provides access to real-time FAFSA completion data and also publishes up-to-date and comparative data from the six districts' high schools. In Milwaukee, local college deans and presidents have been members of the Milwaukee Succeeds Leadership Council; Mike Lovell, the president of Marquette University, is one of the co-chairs of the entire collaboration. This has not yet translated into a specific initiative coordinated through Milwaukee Succeeds for increasing college access for local youth, though many ideas have been discussed. However, the local colleges participate in other groups with similar objectives.

Several collaborations have begun to pay attention to young adults not necessarily bound for college, including young people between ages 16 and 23, who are out of school and not working. Milwaukee Succeeds was inspired to focus on this demographic group after attending a StriveTogether convening and then coming home and learning how many local youth fell into this group (over 16,000 at one count). After our fieldwork ended it established a network of partners, developed an action plan, and formed a youth council. At All Hands Raised, a newer collaborative action team has focused on improving pathways for youth into construction and manufacturing careers, a growth area in Multnomah County. This is an example of a collaboration mounting an effort because there is local demand for it, not necessarily because it is the outcome of a deliberate strategic planning process.

IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis

The NAZ programmatic services model takes a two-generation approach to ending poverty. For families, the collaboration offers assistance with a range of social needs, from housing to job placements to health referrals, through their family achievement coaches. Some adults who have been assisted by NAZ in the past serve as coaches to other families. Each coach works with about 30 families.

Most of these coaches are based in schools and can assist in advocating for families within the school and liaison with school personnel. Parents are also encouraged to be engaged in the governance of NAZ. This model is reportedly capturing the attention of Minneapolis school district officials, who plan to adapt it to other district schools.

Tables 8 and 9 detail the interventions implemented by each of our eight collaborations. They reflect information available at the time of our fieldwork. Some more recent developments are noted in parentheses, but they likely do not include every new intervention that has been introduced.

Observations about Implementing Interventions

The cradle-to-career, developmental pathways orientation of many collaborations signals an intention to provide interventions across three stages of education. This is an ambitious effort, and no collaboration has yet instituted programmatic services across the full spectrum for all children and youth in their target populations. Some collaborations adopted a relatively focused approach to what they wanted to accomplish. Nashville, for example, has not ventured much beyond K-12 education and the local school district's core objectives. Others had broader visions but have needed time to develop specific interventions. And one, Say Yes Buffalo, has had notable success implementing a broad and specific strategy but even so has needed extra time to develop particular components.

Despite gaps in implementation, the collaborations have provided opportunities for this kind of comprehensive approach to be discussed, developed, and monitored. It could be argued that the collaborations are providing an important service to their communities merely by introducing and offering support for the ideas of cradle-to-career orientations, wraparound support services, and student developmental pathways. By intervening where they can, they signal the urgency of these concerns.

TABLE 8. Early Childhood & K-12 Interventions Implemented

CASE	EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES & SUPPORTS	K-12 SERVICES & SUPPORTS
All Hands Raised Portland/Multnomah County	Kindergarten transition work aligning Head Start programs and local elementary schools at two sites	Initiative to support school-based teams in improving attendance, with new staffing by social workers, in selected schools in each partner district Initiative to support district staff and school-based teams in all six districts in reducing exclusionary discipline
Milwaukee Succeeds	Developmental screenings and immunizations Efforts to improve quality of early childhood centers and programs	Early literacy: pilot program in growing number of schools, provides teacher PD and coaching for improved classroom instruction, supportive experiential and out-of-school supports, parent tutoring
Say Yes Buffalo	(School readiness screening for pre-K and kindergarten students)	Legal clinics in selected schools Mobile health clinics around city – health screening, sexual health and contraception assistance Mental health services in all schools Family support specialist (social worker/case management) in every school Summer school "camps" available to all students (After-school programming in all schools, and Saturday academies in conjunction with 21 community schools)
Alignment Nashville	New A-Team preparing to work on early literacy	High school academies for integrated academic and career education A-Teams working on school nutrition, social-emotional learning, (Newer teams have begun work on adolescent health, learning technology, immigrant/ international students)
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority	N/A	Initially, student case management and support with issues of pregnancy prevention, health, school dropout. Later, a family resource center in a neighborhood with high poverty provided Head Start, afterschool programs, health clinic, computer lab, student case management, family assistance obtaining social services, cultural programming; specific offerings were based on community surveys of needs.
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis	Family achievement coaches work with parents and children in selected early childhood centers Some scholarships for early childhood programs	Family achievement coaches (often, parents and former NAZ clients) work with parents and children in neighborhood "anchor" schools (public, charter, Catholic) Core staff includes housing, career, and behavioral health specialists who can make referrals
Oakland Full Service Community Schools	Many of the full service community elementary schools have early childhood centers that serve 3 and 4 year olds.	Expanded social supports and wraparound services for families and youth in certain schools include • Restorative justice circles • Afterschool programs • Counseling • School based health centers • Attendance teams
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet	Program engaging parents of preschool age children in positive parenting coaching	Emphases on school climate, attendance improvement, social-emotional health Pilot program to create high-functioning attendance teams at a cohort of schools. Culturally specific program designed for first generation Latino immigrant parents of adolescents School-based program that promotes a positive school culture and encourages elementary and middle school children to make positive behavioral choices School-based intervention program designed to reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in adolescents

TABLE 9. College/Career & Systemic Interventions Implemented

CASE	COLLEGE/CAREER SERVICES & SUPPORTS	SYSTEMIC CHANGES
All Hands Raised Portland/Multnomah County	Initiative to improve FAFSA completion in selected high schools Initiative to improve pathways for students interested in construction and manufacturing careers	Racial equity policies adopted by all six school districts. Commitments from all six superintendents to share disaggregated discipline data and participated in regular racial equity improvement discussions with leaders from communities of color.
Milwaukee Succeeds	FAFSA completion assistance and high school capacity building (Action plan and youth council underway to begin to address needs of opportunity youth in Milwaukee)[29]	Alignment of school and non-school partners to support literacy development Governance process seeks to involve charter, private, and traditional public school sectors in common focus on education improvement
Say Yes Buffalo	College scholarship School-based assistance in completing FAFSA forms and applying for college financial aid Mentoring, internships and summer jobs (in partnership with chamber of commerce) Summer bridge program for college transitions in partnership with three local institutions Support during first years of college in several local colleges	More services located in schools or closer to students Efforts of after-school and summer providers more aligned Efforts to foster citywide college-going culture Greater collaboration between K-12 system and higher education institutions in serving students "Honest broker" transparency in negotiating budgets and services (Student information management system being developed for targeting individual students for intervention and monitoring program effectiveness, but not yet operational)
Alignment Nashville	New A-Team supports out of school, out of work "opportunity youth"	Support for Metro Nashville School District strategic plan A-Teams created and disbanded on a continuing basis to reflect priorities in school district's strategic plan
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority	N/A	Initially, sought system-wide policy change and programmatic interventions to address health and educational outcomes for youth Low participation from school system and diminished results led to termination of school-based programs Later move toward a community strategy; then diffusion of approach throughout the state, with state policy and funding support.
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis	N/A	Two-generation approach to combat poverty, violence, poor educational outcomes Parent involvement in program governance; use of neighborhood residents as family achievement coaches in central office Educational programming for families in Family Academy Work with other groups and civic leaders to raise awareness and develop strategies for system improvement
Oakland Full Service Community Schools	Supports at certain schools include • Family and College Resource Center • College partnerships • Internships and service learning opportunities • Partnerships for travel opportunities	All full service community schools have Community School Managers who coordinate services for students and families and ensure coordination between academic staff and support staff School district provides administrative and financial support
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet	N/A	Initiative that focuses on improving outcomes of maternal and child health particularly for families with children birth to eight years of age in two neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty.

[29] We note some more recent developments in parentheses but do not include every new intervention that has been introduced.

CHAPTER 11.
Managing Collaboration

We now turn to the matter of how cross-sector collaborations are organized and managed. Once participants are on board and programmatic plans are laid down, the collaborations have to establish structures and processes that will help them get the work done. Tough as it may be to get collaborations started, it can be even more difficult to manage them so they can weather challenges, learn, adapt, grow, and last over time. Getting started can sometimes rely on bursts of enthusiasm, immediate circumstances, or an external catalyst like a new funding opportunity. Sustaining collaborations requires structures and processes for managing relationships, recruiting new members, replenishing leadership, recognizing and reacting to changing threats and opportunities, negotiating disagreements among participants, collecting and processing new information, building capacity, overseeing implementation, and taking small successes to scale. This managing stage may be less dramatic and get less attention than the "creation" stage, but it may be critical to sustainability—which is often emphasized as an Achilles heel for collaborative efforts. Failure to realize the importance of managing collaboration—and failure to adapt to this phase of the work—may account for the fact that collective efforts to improve education are often short-lived.

> Productive collaborations seem to benefit from "just enough togetherness," with structures and processes that facilitate relationships of trust and that are flexible enough to accommodate the needs of different participants while ensuring progress toward shared goals.

As the research literature on collaboration suggests, organizational partnerships can take many forms, adaptable for varying situations and purposes. For example, collaborations for education could be based on loose connections among agencies that provide services to students, with only the most minimal structure that is sufficient to facilitate communication and ensure consistency in service coverage. Such an arrangement could give agencies wide latitude in their work, but might not be active enough to generate shared responsibility for outcomes. In contrast, tighter relationships among collaborating partners might facilitate fruitful exchanges of expertise and ideas for improvement but could also create tensions if fundamental differences of perspective or values emerge. Productive collaborations seem to benefit from "just enough togetherness," with structures and processes that facilitate relationships of trust and that are flexible enough to accommodate the needs of different participants while ensuring progress toward shared goals.

Earlier collaborations tended to be small-scale efforts between individual schools and other institutional partners. They were structured in many different ways, but they risked being undercut by common threats to collaboration, including communication breakdowns, bureaucratic rigidity, insufficient agreement on core principles, shifts in external funding, imbalances between cooperation and competition, and leadership turnover or burnout.[30] The current expansion of cross-sector collaboration for education includes many efforts that seek to operate at a scale well beyond that of an individual school and its partners, but the challenges of coordination are not dissimilar. Across our eight cases, we observed a number of configurations for managing collaboration. In this discussion, we focus on five key elements: the strategic collaborative core, the coordinating entity or backbone, leadership, collaborative structures and processes, and financing. Then, we turn to three dimensions

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[30] For a discussion of these issues in the context of the full-service schools initiatives of the 1990s, see Crowson and Boyd (1993, 1996).

of collaboration that are especially salient in contemporary iterations: using data, managing relationships with local school systems, and affiliating with national network organizations.

Strategic Collaborative Core

Cross-sector collaborations are comprised of individual and organizational actors who are positioned differently within the local community structure. This includes public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders in government, philanthropy, and business who are often referred to as civic elites. It also includes residents and leaders embedded more intimately in their local neighborhoods, who know the people and institutions of their communities well and see their challenges and opportunities from the ground up; these individuals are often thought of as grassroots leaders. And it includes heads of organizations and agencies situated in between, sometimes known as grasstops leaders; their work reaches into local communities and neighborhoods, but they also function comfortably in civic leadership circles and can be part of top-down strategic initiatives. In principle, cross-sector collaborations could begin at any of these three levels and eventually expand to include the participation of all three types of partners. But in our cases, it appeared that collaborations sometimes had difficulty expanding beyond their initial strategic core. For example, while cross-sector collaborations generally appeared to welcome grassroots community input and involvement, that involvement was harder to secure if the collaboration was initially conceived as "top down."

Among our cases, we observed three fairly distinct patterns in how the cross-sector collaborations developed a strategic collaborative core level of leadership for their efforts. The first is an elite-centered approach. Here, collaborations assign core leadership to those with access to resources and influence at elite leadership levels in the city, county, or region. They pursue reform of local comprehensive delivery systems and infrastructure, often with the help of grasstops community agency heads, and with community consultation but with relatively less emphasis on deep community involvement. This

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elite-based approach, the most common pattern we observed, may make it easier to build high-level consensus around goals and strategies and find the resources for implementing them. But it may be less responsive to perceived needs at the points where individuals interact with the system, and there is a risk that such efforts might eventually prove vulnerable to resentment and counter-mobilization from grassroots advocates at some future time. Five of the eight collaborations we studied were headed and guided primarily by prominent civic leaders who provided the impetus and key involvement. Typically, this was deliberate, with the specific goal to encourage elite decision makers to work together to effect change at the highest levels of structure, relationships, and resources in a locale.

For example, the Say Yes Buffalo collaboration began at an elite level, with the heads of major community philanthropies convening the first planning groups and, consistent with the national organization's approach, key civic leaders like the mayor and education leaders coming on board to provide strategic governance for the program, manage resources, and monitor performance. Over time it has progressively reached farther into the local community. Say Yes found broader involvement to be crucial for raising funds for and overseeing the scholarship endowment that provides a significant portion of the funding for college scholarships to city students and for planning and delivering the support services to children, youth, and college students. The Say Yes initiative works to build broad public awareness of and enthusiasm for the

program because its success depends on more students (with family help) making a commitment to aim for college and then taking the steps to receive a Say Yes scholarship. For this, the initiative uses public advertising, public meetings and events, and other communication strategies. A task force of religious leaders has been a useful boundary-spanning group, communicating with their local constituencies about the initiative. Several representatives of official parent organizations affiliated with the school district also participate in program governance. But other than this, the initiative lacks grassroots involvement in its strategic collaborative core.

Milwaukee Succeeds also was conceived and constituted at the level of civic elites, in part because education politics at that level had become so fractured and needed repairing, and also because elites could provide crucial fiscal and thought leadership. This strategy has given the initiative the opportunity to alter the city's educational landscape by fostering productive high-level relationships among the public, private/voucher, and charter school sectors. Grasstops agency heads have also participated, often in the hopes of garnering funding in exchange for participating at the service level. But tapping into the full array of the community's ideas and capacity as well as building broad community support through more grassroots involvement has not been a feature of this initiative.

The Providence Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC) has gone through several iterations of collaborative structure. It was established at a citywide leadership level and expanded to include many grasstops community organizations. The CYC has engaged grasstops agency representatives and grassroots community members through strategies such as listening tours and focus groups. It has focused its Evidence2Success (E2S) work on two neighborhoods with high poverty rates and used E2S tools to involve the broader community in establishing priorities and strategies. It has administered youth experience surveys, held community conversations, and established a community partnership table that meets about once a month. Though participants at the time of our site visit did not represent the city's diverse demographics fully, the community partnership table is a step toward broader community involvement.[31] Nevertheless, some people we spoke with distinguished between these engagement efforts, planned as an afterthought, and true partnership with community members. Building a genuine partnership has been hampered by many factors, including, according to both civic and grasstops leaders, low levels of civic capacity and adult grassroots activism among the less advantaged sectors of the population, tensions of race and social class, and institutional structures that create barriers around privilege.

In sharp contrast to this pattern, a second approach we observed, in only one case, was grassroots led. That collaboration, Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), pursued bottom-up capacity building within a neighborhood, while also aiming to speak to the larger system, to stimulate a more responsive infrastructure that can support and empower locally embedded efforts. In Minneapolis, the core locus of leadership for NAZ is in the neighborhood and includes parents as well as professionals. Though NAZ draws civic leaders (including funders) from throughout the city to support the initiative, NAZ personnel live and work in their community. They know the local residents and institutions well, and the initiative employs many local residents who have benefited from its services. This has been the approach of the organization since its early days when it was known as the PEACE Foundation, but it also was the strategy its main funder, the federal Promise Neighborhoods program, wanted.

The third pattern we observed reflects a hybrid approach, with centralized leadership and involvement but also with a clear grassroots base of operations as well as the involvement of grasstops agency leaders. In Oakland, the school system had a fledgling community schools effort in selected schools. This grassroots effort got a boost at the leadership level when a new school superintendent endorsed the idea, and it moved outward through a strategic planning process that expanded the number of community schools and brought in wider

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[31] The membership of the community partnership table is now more reflective of the populations of the neighborhoods it represents, in part because of staff turnover at community-based organizations.

community involvement. It took time (and several leadership transitions), but eventually community schools became a central element in the district's identity and long-term plan, and the number of community schools in the city has substantially expanded. And yet, each community school remains neighborhood-based and enjoys much autonomy in soliciting institutional partners and involving the local community.

Similarly, the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA) collaboration, over the course of its lifetime, involved elite, grassroots, and grasstops leaders in its reform strategy. As part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative, YFA was designed initially to catalyze large-scale, systemic reform. But after running into roadblocks, YFA changed its approach and worked to empower and serve a single high-needs neighborhood, known as Area C. Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone, YFA helped to provide an array of community-based supports, including a family resource center that was a neighborhood hub of health and social services as well as social and cultural programming. YFA's role was not in direct service intervention, but in helping to build the capacity of local agencies and individuals to do so.

The long-time executive director for YFA, Otis Johnson, explained in a reflective report published by the Casey Foundation that the initial top-down strategy was both politically prudent and operationally expedient in a city with long-ingrained and sharply defined cleavages between a White elite and Black working class. YFA wanted to shift the distribution of resources citywide, and elite decision makers had to be involved. Johnson noted:

> We really laid out our dirty laundry in the proposal. And we consciously said, we wanted movers and shakers for this project…. Savannah really required a top-down strategy in the beginning. There was no effort to say, "Well, we're going to get Mary Jane and Joe out of the neighborhood," because we wanted people who could control resources. Now we are building bottom-up to meet the top, working with our residents, to bring them into the process. And we're working with the mid-level agency managers, so we will have that complete continuum of involvement. But in Savannah, had you started talking about a grassroots movement at the outset, well, we wouldn't be here today, having this conversation. It would have been as simple as that. (Walsh, 1999, p. 3)

After a few years with its New Futures initiative, the Casey Foundation reported on some lessons learned. One was that it was difficult to achieve consensus on how to do large-scale systemic reform. Another was that systemic reform by itself did not guarantee better outcomes for vulnerable children and families; interventions were also necessary at the neighborhood level. Crucial, it learned, were efforts to "increase the access of poor families to incomes, opportunity, and work" (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, p. 26). It asserted that "radical decentralization and reorganization of existing human service resources down to the neighborhood level could be an enormously powerful engine for community development and community transformation" (p. 26). This approach, which, among other things, amounts to enabling local people to share in the employment opportunities the reform initiatives create, is exactly what NAZ in Minneapolis does.

We believe it is likely these options for situating the core level of leadership will ultimately have consequences for what can be accomplished by a collaboration, how permanent the changes will be, how responsive it is to community needs, and how much it affects the overall civic infrastructure.

Coordinating Entity or Backbone

Many contemporary models of collaboration stress the importance of establishing a specific entity to coordinate the work of a cross-sector initiative. In 2011, Kania and Kramer used the term "backbone organization" to name this essential feature of the collective impact approach. The coordinating function is also discussed in the broader literature on collaboration, where other researchers describe more options than Kania and Kramer's backbone version. For example, management could be shared equally among all parties involved in collaboration, or it could be assigned to one partner organization without creating a new entity. The coordinating entity could manage limited aspects of the partnership, such as public communication or financial accounting, or it could take on a broad menu of coordinating responsibilities. It could be granted responsibility for holding member organizations accountable on various measures, or share that responsibility with the group as a whole.

The collaborations we studied generally adopted the backbone model, either creating a new entity to manage the partnership or, in several cases, repurposing an existing one. Most of these backbones were stand-alone operations. For example, as we have described, in Nashville a consultant brought in to examine the local education landscape suggested that while the separate organizations already working on education reform could benefit from coordination, there were already too many of them and one more organization would not be helpful. But the initiative's leaders disagreed, and Alignment Nashville was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. An executive director was hired; that position was since renamed president and CEO. Similarly, in Savannah the Youth Futures Authority was an independent agency established with Annie E. Casey Foundation funding and later supported through government funding.

In Minneapolis, the PEACE Foundation, which was founded by Don Samuels, a local political leader, and later headed by his wife, Sondra Samuels, transformed under her leadership into a new organization, modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, in order to compete for a major federal Promise Neighborhoods Grant. Its staff infrastructure was maintained and expanded once the grant was obtained.

Say Yes Buffalo established a central office in downtown Buffalo that is essentially a branch of the Say Yes national organization. This provides a physical and operational hub for the program; in its storefront location, it is visible and accessible to the community. A full-time executive director leads the office and there are staff directors for specific operational functions, such as communications, data and assessment, or extended learning time. As the initiative has grown and evolved, additional staff positions have been added, particularly to enhance the interface with the school district's community schools program and to lead a new component of Say Yes Buffalo, the Boys and Men of Color Initiative.

The coordination for the Oakland Full Service Community Schools has a nested nature. Because this initiative is housed within the Oakland Unified School District, an office at the district level—the Department of Community Schools and Student Services—officially manages the initiative. But each community school has considerable autonomy and is led by its own Coordination of Service Team (COST), headed by a community school manager. These managers oversee individualized student support and coordination of services, and they also coordinate the partnerships with as many as several dozen community-based agencies that work with each school.

In Portland, the Portland Schools Foundation was established in the 1990s to help provide funding and advocacy for Portland Public Schools (PPS). The organization worked closely with the school district, supported parent fundraising, and engaged in advocacy for school-funding initiatives. In 2004, it began to expand its mission, collaborating with a consortium of organizations and commissioning an influential cohort-based analysis of PPS's graduation rate and dropout patterns. In 2010, the foundation won a locally issued RFP to become

the backbone of the region's new cradle-to-career initiative. In 2011, it adopted the name All Hands Raised and converted its primary identity to being the convener of the cradle-to-career partnership in the Portland/Multnomah County area.[32]

Among our cases, Milwaukee Succeeds and the Providence CYC were not stand-alone organizations. Milwaukee Succeeds continues to be an autonomous initiative within the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF). Its offices are located within the foundation's headquarters. The executive director of Milwaukee Succeeds and all staff are employees of GMF, and the parent foundation provides assistance with back office services related to financial management, fundraising, and communications. Milwaukee Succeeds is accountable to GMF but also to its other primary funders and governance partners.

Providence illustrates another arrangement. A state task force report had urged more attention to the problems of educational attainment in Rhode Island's cities. Among other recommendations, the report noted the potential value of cross-sector collaborations. Sometime thereafter, the mayor of Providence established the Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC). Unlike other governmental "cabinets," which tend to be comprised of administrators of public government departments and offices dealing with cross-cutting policies and functions, the CYC also included representatives of community based organizations, local foundations, and the school district. The CYC has had staying power in Providence, but as an administrative structure it has had challenges in finding a permanent home. Although being located within the mayor's office seemed reasonable, especially since Providence is a city with mayoral control of the school system, the CYC's work was hindered by conflicts between the mayor's office and other education stakeholders on a number of matters. Seeking greater independence and hoping to become distanced from these negative political complications, the CYC moved out of the mayor's office. At the time of our fieldwork, it was housed at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and serving as a backbone agency for implementing the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Evidence2Success framework. The CYC has since become a quasi-independent organization with a fiscal agent (TSNE MissionWorks) and autonomy with respect to governance and project focus.

To date, the backbone organizations appear to be seen as necessary, valuable, and mostly uncontroversial within their local settings. The executives and staff members of these backbone organizations have provided leadership and administration for their respective collaborations and play important roles in building relationships and connecting partners. In several cases, backbone leaders have taken a proactive role in seeking a niche for their collaborations as they developed a better sense of where and how the collaborations added value to the educational ecosystem of their cities. The Providence CYC, for example, narrowed its focus to students' social and emotional well-being and took on the role as fundraisers for collective action. All Hands Raised found its strength in convening, facilitating meaningful working relationships and productive meetings, and in coaching partners in continuous improvement strategies.

As examples and lessons for other collaborations, the backbone organizations raise several issues that are worth noting. First, these coordinating operations have substantial budgets, as much as $1 million annually in several cases. The return on investment for them seems to be appropriate, as they provide essential functions for sustaining the collaborations' activities and are important in helping collaborations attract funding for services and leverage available funds more efficiently. But the long-term sustainability of these entities—and indeed of the collaborations themselves—will depend on having stable revenue sources. In several cases, the foundations

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[32] The PPS Foundation established a redistribution mechanism known as the PPS Parents' Equity Fund. While most donations were directed to donors' local schools, a third of the funds raised were distributed via a formula to high-needs schools that were less able to fundraise from their local communities. All Hands Raised managed the parent and community fundraising of the local school foundations until July 2019 when the Fund for Portland Public Schools, the fundraising division of the school district, took over the responsibility. The district will continue to use the redistribution formula.

that provided initial funding for the backbone operations have pledged additional support beyond their first commitments, but this cannot be expected to continue indefinitely.

A second consideration is that backbones serve as the public face of collaboration. This can be useful in giving a recognizable identity to and for building legitimacy and support for the initiative, but it also means the public identity must be managed as one of many, including the partner organizations, in need of visibility. Some of the accomplishments of cross-sector partnerships are indeed the product of the joint work enabled by the collaboration, but others may be due more to the work of partner organizations than to the collaboration itself. How a collaboration describes itself and its accomplishments while sharing credit with others warrants further attention. One collaboration, for example, has maintained a high profile on social media, seemingly intended to maximize its own visibility. Another collaboration, in contrast, devotes much of its public communications effort to showcasing the work of its partner organizations. These two approaches reflect differing strategies; the former risks taking too much credit while the latter risks taking too little. It is an open question how best to maintain and safeguard a collaboration's public identity.

Third, the independence of the coordinating entity is a matter to be considered. The broad literature on organizations suggests freestanding organizations tend to be vulnerable to goal displacement over time, substituting concerns about their own survival for their original organizational missions. The backbone organizations of cross-sector collaborations should last as long as the collaborations are viable and productive, but not longer. In Savannah, there was some evidence that the Youth Futures Authority, as a freestanding coordinating entity, was sustained even after it ceased playing that role. On the other hand, backbones that are arms of larger organizations may be vulnerable to shifts in the priorities of their sponsors. This was the source of some of the problems experienced by the Children and Youth Cabinet in Providence.

A fourth issue to watch is the degree to which these entities are able to sustain rich, multidirectional linkages among partners or devolve into a less collaborative, more formal "hub to spokes" model of coordination, where partners scale back their voluntary involvement and cede responsibility for communication and coordination to the backbone, and the enterprise begins to resemble a traditional bureaucratic form. Because collaboration can be costly, especially in terms of participants' time, it can be tempting to let someone else, like the backbone operation, carry the burden of collaboration. Ironically, well-run backbone organizations might be especially sensitive to this kind of subtle cooptation.

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Executive Leadership

Collaborative initiatives are established around the voluntary participation of individuals and organizations. The terms of engagement for participants are not usually encoded in formal norms, expectations, or contractual agreements, and partners can withdraw at any time. Moreover, collaborative enterprises are typically fluid and evolving. They change over time as they encounter new demands or opportunities and develop their responses. Research on collaborative ventures suggests skilled leadership is essential in starting and maintaining these unusual joint efforts. Leaders exert influence by fostering trusting and productive networks of relationships instead of employing control tactics, and these relationships provide a kind of glue that holds the collaboration together as much as a shared mission or formalized set of operational arrangements might. This kind of

leadership is more entrepreneurial than bureaucratic, more interpersonal than structural (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, McGivern, Dopson, & Bennett, 2011). What might look like a soft leadership skill of providing visionary, charismatic inspiration is really the hard skill of managing relationships and efforts that are not bound by rules, rewards, or accountability.

Our case study evidence is consistent with prior research on collaborative leadership. The collaborations we studied depended heavily on the contributions of their leaders to the overall effort, but the leadership that was exercised depended on relationships built on reciprocity and trust. Many persons we spoke with expressed strong praise for their collaboration's chief executive. While people often recounted what they thought of as the unique histories, personalities, and qualifications of these leaders, we were most struck by the commonalities of their descriptions—optimism, ability to inspire confidence, willingness to listen and downplay one's own role, trustworthiness, creative problem solver, good at building relationships, well-organized, works effectively across divisions, knows everybody, sees opportunities. What sometimes was reported as charisma or another personal quality that made a leader irreplaceable was often implicit acknowledgment that the person brought exactly the right skills for steering a complicated but delicate effort.

For example, one might wonder whether anyone other than Otis Johnson—a Black man and native to the city who understood and had credibility within the two largely separate Black and White communities—would have been able to mobilize a neighborhood development effort in Savannah during the time he led the Youth Futures Authority. His subsequent election as mayor was signal of his special abilities, and the YFA's decline after he left might confirm that his involvement was necessary for it to thrive. But it would not diminish Johnson's reputation to assert that what was important about his leadership was his astute understandings of racial politics in the South and his ability to use that knowledge to build trust and familiarity with both the city elites and grassroots community.

Similarly, in Minneapolis, the Northside Achievement Zone seems intricately interwoven with Don Samuels and Sondra Samuels, the founders and leaders of the precursor PEACE Foundation, but what has mattered most about those particular persons has been their deep attachment to and solidarity with the residents of the neighborhood they serve, their commitment to highly participatory decision making, and their knowledge of how to influence elites. These are dispositions, forms of knowledge, and skills that conceivably others can hold as well.

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In Buffalo, the executive director, David Rust, is appreciated as a person with no guile and no hidden agenda, merely an explicit one to advance the goals of the Say Yes initiative. Beneath his gentle personality is the skill of showing to others the respect, regard, competence, and integrity that build trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). He is a careful listener who is able to discern how to help people and organizations find a role they will want to play in the Say Yes framework. Although he came to Say Yes from a fairly obscure position in the county government, he used his initial contacts to promote and expand the program and his network has steadily grown. He consistently credits the contributions of others above his own, and while avoiding the limelight may seem natural given his unassuming personality, it is also a strategic approach that benefits the collaboration. Even those who have not affiliated with Say Yes acknowledge Rust's capacities to develop the partnership.

Danae Davis, the second executive director of Milwaukee Succeeds, came to her position with unusually extensive experience and contacts in private business, government, and the nonprofit sector in the city and state, including volunteer experience with the collaboration in its first years. In particular, she has relationships across the charter, private/voucher, and public school communities. This has helped her understand their often contentious disagreements and has enabled parties who might not normally interact with one another to come together. A few individuals implied their regard for Davis exceeded their commitment to Milwaukee Succeeds and it was the personal relationship that kept them involved. This is not a recipe for the long-term health of the initiative. But Davis's interactional style is warm, transparent, and not defensive. This seems to assure others they can speak their minds to her and gain a fair hearing, and the open and honest discourse this invites is a boon to the collaboration. Davis draws on these frank exchanges to maintain a culture of improvement within Milwaukee Succeeds and to help her grow as a reflective leader. And when conflicts arise, Davis is not shy about contacting individuals directly to work through the issues.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County

"Dan Ryan is key to the success of All Hands Raised." This refrain about the executive director was echoed in various ways numerous times in our interviews with individuals in the Portland area. Ryan's networking acumen, extensive connections to local philanthropy through prior fundraising work, consistent investment of time in cultivating relationships for and within AHR, strategic thinking, and engaging personality made some wonder whether he was indispensable and irreplaceable.

But stakeholders agreed one of Ryan's most important contributions has been to build an organization that does not rely on a single leader. His facilitative skills, in meetings and overall, have ensured many members of the partnership continue to be actively involved, understand the workings of the collaboration, and have taken on leadership responsibilities. For Ryan, relationships provided the foundation of the collaboration, but they would amount to little without efficient and effective structures and routines that enabled partners to talk and work together productively. Clarity about the priority of structure and process lent confidence that an ample number of potential successors were prepared to serve when a leadership transition occurred.[33]

Leadership is often characterized by "equifinality"; as the term implies, many different leadership styles and strategies can produce successful organizational outcomes (Riehl, 2007). But leadership is also contingent. Not all leadership approaches are effective in all contexts at all times, and the precise mix of competencies can matter a great deal. Several initiatives experienced a leadership transition during or prior to the timeframe of our study. At Alignment Nashville, the first executive director, Sydney Rogers, a competent and respected leader, departed. Her place was filled by her deputy, Melissa Jaggers, an equally qualified successor who maintained continuity but also made useful changes. In Oakland, the school superintendent who had been the first advocate for community schools left and the Deputy Chief of Community Schools kept steady attention trained on the initial vision, and eventually convinced the new superintendent, who had not included community schools among his initial priorities, of the importance of the initiative. In Milwaukee, the original

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[33] In fact, just before publication of this report, Ryan announced that he would leave his position with All Hands Raised in mid-2019. AHR named Lavert Robertson, a PPS principal and AHR partner, its new CEO.

executive director, Mike Soika, had been successful in launching the collaboration but concentrated so heavily on developing the partnership's structure that relationships were neglected. This increasingly was perceived to be out of step with what was needed, and the next director brought relationship skills back into the mix, while also improving core operations.

> Not all leadership approaches are effective in all contexts at all times, and the precise mix of competencies can matter a great deal.

In two other collaborations, leadership continuity has been more problematic. In Providence, early leaders of the CYC in the mayor's office were knowledgeable, outspoken, and effective with civic leaders, but they did not have deep connections to educators or the grassroots community and did not engage these groups as partners. Its new leadership has contended with this legacy, as well as with change and uncertainty as the partnership moved from one institutional home to another. The leadership's recent decisions to concentrate on fewer priorities and focus on two neighborhoods may provide a better foundation for building productive relationships. In Savannah, when the YFA's first executive director left his position, the YFA governing board passed over an experienced White candidate within the organization in favor of a nonlocal Black individual who reflected the neighborhood's demographics. The transition was not successful.

How to anticipate and prepare for leadership transitions will be an ongoing challenge for collaborations over time. To this end, it may be useful to have transparency in performance reviews of current leaders, to watch carefully for any leadership issues that begin to emerge, and to articulate what is valuable in a current leader's approach and skill set, as well as what new skills might be needed in the future, so partners know what to look for in a successor. Initiatives can help safeguard their future by ensuring they are identifying potential leaders, providing developmental opportunities, reflecting openly on leadership challenges, and having an active succession plan in place. Because collaborations depend so much on voluntary participation and personal relationships, there is a risk of losing some of that glue when a current leader departs, and new leaders should be given time and assistance to renew existing relationships and begin to forge new ones. Finally, as collaborations mature, some of the connective tissue provided by robust leadership can be transferred to strong collaborative norms or routine operational processes as participants learn what it takes to collaborate.

Collaborative Structures and Processes

In our research, we observed that cross-sector collaborations configured their operations to manage several important functions: communicating with and engaging the broad public, governing the collaboration itself, and organizing and supporting the individuals and partner organizations who do the work undertaken by the collaboration. We found fairly strong consistency among the eight collaborations in how they established structures and process for these functions. Table 10 presents these overall findings.

TABLE 10. Governance & Operating Structures

CASE	PUBLIC INFORMATION & ENGAGEMENT	STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING & OVERSIGHT	OPERATIONAL PLANNING & SUPPORT	OTHER
All Hands Raised, Portland/ Multnomah County	Leadership Council • *Body of civic and business leaders that "engages in action-oriented cross-sector dialogue and champions the work of the Partnership throughout our community"*	Board of Directors • *Decision-making body is "responsible for clearly and concisely defining the mission, direction, goals and objectives of All Hands Raised"*	Collaborative Action Teams • *Co-convened by partners, service providers, district personnel, CBOs, etc.* • *Planned and coordinated launch of specific initiatives* Strategic Leadership Groups • *Co-chaired by a board member to support the work of site teams in each work area and facilitate communication with leadership tables*	Data Committee • *Developed and monitored goals and indicators for the first several years of the collaboration* • *Formally dissolved in 2016*
Milwaukee Succeeds	Leadership Council • *Members advocate for the "vision and mission of Milwaukee Succeeds by sharing initiative messages within their circle of influence and supporting strategic action to achieve [its] goals."*	Executive Committee • *Co-chairs represent key segments of community (philanthropy, education, business); members are "top-level decision makers key to all sectors of the education ecosystem"*	Operations Team • *Provides logistical planning and support* Networks and Goal Managers • *Organized around initiative's four core goals*	Data Council • *Provides technical and strategic guidance for obtaining, analyzing, and reporting data pertaining to needs, goals, and outcomes*
Say Yes Buffalo	Community Leadership Council • *"Monitors and facilitates the progress of Say Yes Buffalo"* • *Co-chaired by mayor, representatives from County, Board of Education, NYS Regents, NYS legislature, SYB Scholarship Committee* • *60-person body of civic and business leaders, parents, school district officials; meetings open to public*	Operations Committee • *Reviews progress, challenges, and opportunities*	Task Forces • *Mostly linked to the framework of services* • *Religious leaders task force serves a community liaison function*	Scholarship Board • *Raises funds for the scholarship endowment*
Alignment Nashville	Operating Board	Governing Board • *20-person body of civic, business, and community leaders that approves the budget and works to secure long-term funding*	Alignment Teams (A-Teams) • *Organized around strategic projects for the initiative, co-chaired by a school district leader and a business or CBO leader*	
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis	Strategic Leadership Team • *Fosters relationships with partner agencies*	Board of Directors • *Provides operational oversight* Parent Advisory Council • *Offers input to leadership*	NAZ Leadership Staff	Coaches/Specialists • *NAZ staff work with anchor school and organization partners to coordinate services around family and student acheivment plans*
Oakland Full Service Community Schools	Department of Community Schools and Student Services • *Responsible for fundraising and regular monitoring of local community schools*	Subject to policy decisions of school board and superintendent	Community School Managers and Coordination of Services Team (COST) • *Oversees community partners in the school, reviews cases of students who need assistance*	
Providence Children and Youth Cabinet	Full Coalition—open to all supporters • *Supporters stay aware of CYC activities via annual events, newsletters, etc.*	Board of Directors • *Advises and supports leadership team*	Priority and Policy Work Group; Continuous Improvement Committee; Membership and Strategy Committee; Community Partnership Table	Implementation and Action Teams

Note: Savannah's Youth Futures Authority is omitted from this table because we were not able to gather enough information to characterize how its operating structures changed over time. Phrases in quotations are taken directly from the collaborations' own websites or printed materials.

Structures for Public Information and Engagement

Several collaborations had a regular forum where community members could learn about the collaboration's progress and offer input. Some hold large meetings that are open to the public, such as the Community Leadership Council of Say Yes Buffalo, and aim to inform a broad and diverse group of community members.

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES SPOTLIGHT
Say Yes Buffalo

In Buffalo, the Say Yes Community Leadership Council meets several times a year. Many community members receive invitations, and the meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend. Typically about 100 people attend, and attendance has been as high as several hundred. At one meeting we observed, about 80 persons were present. The session began with informal conversation around breakfast tables with many opportunities for networking with city leaders. A key community leader of the Say Yes project chaired the formal part of the program, and there were short presentations from a member of the Say Yes to Education national staff, a New York State Board of Regents representative, and a local assemblywoman. A college student who received a Say Yes scholarship described his experiences. The Say Yes Buffalo executive director used PowerPoint slides to present developments in service provision and program impact, with information about high school graduation rates, scholarships received, and college persistence. The forum was then open for questions from the community and a number of issues were raised, including several about college scholarships and others about opportunities for schools to remain open after the school day for student activities. The program hosts answered these questions and the event ended cordially.

Other collaborations hold meetings for smaller, more focused audiences. All Hands Raised in Portland/Multnomah County, for example, convenes its Leadership Council, a "CEO-level" group of about 40 community leaders, three times a year. The meetings are used to engage, inform, and seek feedback from the group, members of which are expected to serve as ambassadors for All Hands Raised to a larger community.

Most collaborations also use a variety of other means to reach out to their local constituents. These include holding information sessions at school or neighborhood sites, sponsoring special events, maintaining a website, sending email newsletters, posting on social media, and publishing annual reports.

Structures for Strategic Decision Making and Oversight

The collaborations were even more consistent in forming governance structures. Most established moderately sized groups that met periodically, with names such as the operations committee or board of directors. These bodies worked with executive directors of the backbone organization to execute fiscal responsibilities for the collaborations, make high-level strategic planning decisions, and monitor program progress. In several cases, we observed a fairly loose distinction between governance and administration. That is, participants were involved in operational decisions as well as strategic planning and oversight.

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES SPOTLIGHT

Milwaukee Succeeds

Milwaukee Succeeds partners decided to pursue four major goal areas: kindergarten readiness, school success, college and career readiness, and social-emotional learning. Agencies and organizations participating in the collaboration are affiliated in networks associated with each goal area. Goal managers coordinate their work. This structure was established in the initiative's first years, was subsequently refined, and continues to be adjusted. An Operations Team was formed to set the collaboration in motion; it was meant to be a temporary structure until the networks got underway. But participants felt there was an ongoing need to coordinate action across the separate goal networks, so the Operations Team was not disbanded. It continued to provide a venue for both strategic and operational planning and review, although it too has been periodically adjusted.

For the Leadership Council of Milwaukee Succeeds, invitations are extended to particular community representatives; the participant list has changed somewhat as individual commitments to the initiative have waxed or waned. Meetings are usually held at lunchtime and include time for presentation and discussion. Milwaukee Succeeds has shifted its approach with its Leadership Council over the years, seeking to find ways to make the sessions more interactive and to help build more genuine engagement between the community and the collaboration. One challenge has been how to welcome and incorporate new attendees, making sure they are well oriented to what the collaboration is doing, without alienating long-time attendees with too much repetition of what they already know.

Structures for Operational Planning and Support

At the programmatic level, the collaborations typically constituted work groups, task forces, or project teams for planning and coordinating their core activities. Again, while there was variation in how these groups were named and formed, they were easily identifiable across collaborations as the bodies that advise, plan, undertake, and monitor the programmatic interventions of the collaboration. These groups are sometimes organized around the broad mission-based goals of the collaboration and in other instances are aligned more functionally to specific initiatives. In many collaborations, paid staff members from the backbone organization facilitate these volunteer teams. Some groups have more active roles, while others are primarily advisory bodies. These working groups sometimes make heavy time demands on volunteers, so maintaining the steady involvement of many partners can be a challenge.

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES SPOTLIGHT
All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County

All Hands Raised manages its work via several leadership tables and a number of working groups. The organizational structure has evolved to adapt to the different stages of the partnership's work. The names of the various councils, committees, and work groups—and their roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy—changed over time to fit the needs of the collaboration. AHR's executive director, staff, and board put much effort into adjusting the organization's design to make to use staff capacity and partners' time effectively. AHR's archives include numerous illustrations of its evolving organizational structure that have been used to help participants and the public understand how parts of the endeavor relate to one another, and to convey the organization's values and priorities.

For example, to plan and launch its school-community-level initiatives, All Hands Raised used "collaborative action teams" corresponding with its goal areas, generally co-convened with a partner organization and facilitated by an AHR staff member. As this work got underway at school community sites around the county,

AHR adapted the planning teams into "strategic leadership groups" that support the site-based teams in each work area. Each of the strategic leadership groups launched to date includes a board member, a tactic that promotes communication, investment, and alignment between the work on the ground and the leadership levels of the partnership.

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Beth Conyers Photography

The Oakland Full Service Community Schools and Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in Minneapolis each presented somewhat different organizational structures. Though some large-scale community-school initiatives have cross-sector oversight councils, Oakland's collaborative initiative is part of the school district's core operations. Public engagement and governance oversight are subsumed within the district's administrative and school board structure. Operational planning and administration take place within the school district office housing the initiative as well as at each school site. For NAZ, on the other hand, which serves a smaller area and constituency, operations are more compressed, so that community engagement, governance, administration, and service delivery blend into one another more fluidly.

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES SPOTLIGHT
Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis

The Northside Achievement Zone, a Promise Neighborhoods initiative, does not convene large public forums for its immediate neighborhood or larger host city. Instead, NAZ places families and community members at the center of all its work. Parents provide "infrastructure support" by serving as staff persons for NAZ and in service roles as parent achievement coaches working with other families and students. Its Parent Advisory Board regularly offers input to NAZ leaders. For operational oversight, NAZ relies on its executive board comprised of leaders of the agencies participating in the initiative, and on the NAZ board of directors. Because the board of directors includes many prominent local and national leaders, it serves as a conduit for NAZ to have public policy influence beyond its local reach and to make connections with other sources of support.

With these layered operational designs, the collaborations—including the backbone entities and partner organizations—appear to have learned much about how to communicate across organizational and community boundaries, how to make participative decisions, how to report progress, and how to navigate complex political dynamics and disagreements among participants. One commonality has been learning how to "move at the speed of trust" (borrowing a phrase from the business guru Stephen Covey that we heard more than once from informants), to ensure that the collaboration does not get too far ahead of the understandings and preferences of its members or assume that consensus exists before it is verified.

Over time, it will be important to track how the collaborations' organizational designs evolve, what functions they serve, and what actions they facilitate. Some collaborations made a big push to invite large numbers of individuals and organizations to sign on and show their support, but these numbers might eventually come to include persons or groups who are only tangentially involved or are partners in name only, not contributing materially to the collaboration. Rules and norms about who participates and how may need to be renegotiated as the collaborations evolve—both by the partners themselves and by the core backbone organizations, and this will take time, effort, and candor.

Similarly, participation on leadership-level governance bodies may also need to be managed carefully to ensure appropriate individuals are involved and productive norms of interaction are in place. Governance groups that had important roles in early strategic planning may find themselves relegated to simply endorsing or just learning about initiatives undertaken by backbone staff or the working teams. Also, since many of these collaborations have been organized at the level of civic elites, diligent efforts to draw in grassroots participation in one form or another will likely enhance the relevance and reach of the initiatives.

Managing these collaborative structures typically falls to the backbone organization's staff, especially the executive director, so this is a competency that needs to be well covered. One strategy we observed for maintaining an effective collaborative structure was to build in a degree of intentional overlap across the various leadership and operational groups, so that, for example, governance leaders have a clear sense of the work of task forces because they have participated in them.

Financing Collaboration

The viability of a cross-sector collaboration depends on sufficient resources for the work the initiative sets out to do, including sustaining the collaboration's coordinating functions and operations. The collaborations we studied reflect both the potential of the substantial investments currently being made in this reform approach and the challenges of maintaining fiscal momentum and security.

Funding Sources

The eight collaborations received funding from a variety of sources. Most depended heavily on foundation or government grants or on special initiative funding from a public governmental source. The collaborations we studied were, for the most part, not burdened by financial stress during the time of our research. This may have been an artifact of timing: we began our research during a period of high enthusiasm for cross-sector approaches among foundations and government grant makers. But while the collaborations had resources, they also were not assured of sustained resource availability.

To try to get on firm financial footing, the initiatives have used three strategies. First, collaborations have lobbied and worked with city, county, and school district public administrators to establish stable, line-item budget allocations for some of their work. In this way, for example, Say Yes Buffalo was able to secure funding for school-based social workers. Alignment Nashville obtained about 35% of its annual budget from the city and school district. Success with this strategy seems connected to collaborations' centrality within civic governmental priorities, how challenged those mayor's offices, school districts, or county administrations were to fund their own services, and to the skills of collaborative leaders in helping to identify pockets of resources and persuade others to share them.

Second, collaborations acknowledged that "soft money" will probably always be needed, and they have developed their capacities for raising it from foundations, individuals, and governmental grant programs. In Portland, Minneapolis, and Nashville, for example, collaboration leaders have developed

> The collaborations we studied reflect both the potential of the substantial investments currently being made in this reform approach and the challenges of maintaining fiscal momentum and security.

routine strategies for soliciting donations and grant dollars for annual budgets. Part of the Say Yes strategy is building a local scholarship endowment, and Say Yes Buffalo has made steady progress in that direction. Milwaukee Succeeds has been able to garner large allocations from major corporate and philanthropic donors and also, to some degree, has helped to align those organizations' other giving with the collaboration's priorities.

Third, collaborations have begun to advocate for state-level funding. In Wisconsin, several StriveTogether initiatives have banded together to lobby for state support for literacy projects; similarly, NAZ in Minneapolis has nurtured political alliances that helped them be included in the state legislative budget. Say Yes Buffalo recently has been able to secure New York State funding for postsecondary supports, along with a large grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

We did not perceive that fundraising consumed excessive amounts of the time and attention of most collaborative leaders. Nonetheless, this may become more crucial over time, and adopting strategies like state-level advocacy may require even more from them in the future.

The funding question illustrates several tensions inherent in cross-sector collaborations to improve education. First, as public-private partnerships, they stand both inside and outside of participatory democratic government. Many observers have commented on the strengths and liabilities of

this, noting that these partnerships run the gamut from creating a worrisome "hollowing out" of the state[34] as it transfers work to nongovernmental agents, to a promising way to inject innovation and flexibility into moribund governmental structures and functions in order to solve problems no single institution can address on their own. When these partnerships are funded through combinations of public and private dollars, the proper role of participatory governance versus private actors in making fiscal and programmatic decisions comes into question. It is reasonable to ask, for example, whether foundations should be the primary funders of social services they help to select and prioritize, when the services are meant to address challenges for which governments are accountable.

Operational and Programmatic Expenses

Funding was used in different ways across the eight collaborations we explored. In all locales, funding supported the backbone operation. This operational support can be a large expense, running over $1 million annually for some collaborations. A few constituents expressed concern that backbone funding sapped resources from programmatic services, but most defended support for core operations, in part because these operations are key to leveraging other funds and gaining efficiencies in service delivery.

In Minneapolis, the Northside Achievement Zone directly hires and manages many of the staff who provide its services to families and schools, so the backbone operation is also a programmatic service provider. In two other cities, the cross-sector collaboration functions as a contractor for services provided by others. In Oakland, each community school establishes partnerships and payment arrangements with the organizations and social service agencies with which it wants to work. In Buffalo, Say Yes advocates for and then helps to manage an array of wraparound services for students, families, and schools across the city. The Say Yes leaders have been instrumental in arranging funding for these services. Not all monies flow through the Say Yes backbone; some go directly from government or philanthropic sources to the service providers (for example, school district or city funds for youth agencies participating in the summer school program). In some cases, the service providers (for example, the family support specialists) are direct employees of the entities who fund them.

The other collaborations we studied generally have not functioned as local brokers of funding for service providers. It has not typically been their role to raise and then disperse grant monies or other funds for the ongoing work of collaborative partners, for example, to support an agency's regular afterschool programming. In this sense, partners who aligned with their local cross-sector collaborations in the hopes of finding a new source of funding for their own operations may have been disappointed.

Rather, the collaborations used the funds they raised to support major strategic initiatives agreed upon by the collaborative partners. Some of these initiatives were specifically designed as pilot projects, with the expectation that funding would be obtained in other ways when the projects go to scale. For example, in Portland/Multnomah Country, All Hands Raised considers itself to be an incubator for ideas and practices; partner organizations, whether school districts or community-based organizations, are expected to fund, or find funding for, the ideas they adopt.

Milwaukee Succeeds has raised and dispersed extensive funds from government and private sources for its signature instructional improvement initiative, Reading Foundations. Its leaders knew the collaboration would likely not be able to support the expansion of the pilot project to all schools in the city. It appears the school district and private and charter schools are gradually finding ways to pay for and implement the program in more schools. Milwaukee Succeeds also funded a few smaller activities early on. It then took more time to

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34 See, for example, Milward and Provan (2000).

gather a large pool of resources through its "Funders Collaborative" and to make strategic decisions about how those funds would be used to support the initiative's four goal areas. The collaboration does not see itself as simply a funding flow-through to its network partners. Instead, one of its core objectives is to influence other local grant-making activity, especially the grants made by the collaboration partners through other funding streams that are not directly part of the initiative, in the direction of the collaboration's agreed-upon priorities.

The existence of a cross-sector collaboration in a locale does have an impact on the flow of resources locally. Recognizing this, Alignment Nashville avoided competing with other local nonprofits for funding. Generally it applied for resources from a single local philanthropy to support its initiatives, and most of the funding then would go to the nonprofit partners that were participating in the initiatives. Using another approach, the Providence CYC determined that among the ways it could be most helpful to its coalition partners was by taking on the responsibility of raising funds for their collective priorities and initiatives.

It should be noted that all of the cross-sector collaborations we studied exist, at least to some degree, because local school systems have not met basic educational goals in their communities. This may be partly because the systems themselves are not adequately funded and resourced. Given this, the additional supports, initiatives, and wraparound services the collaborations provide may never be sufficient to ensure school systems meet their goals and all children in all schools are adequately educated. An ongoing challenge then is not just to fund the ancillary enterprises of the cross-sector collaborations sufficiently, but also to ensure adequate funding for education overall.

Observations about Managing Collaboration

These cross-sector collaborations are for the most part new organizational entities in their localities; they are sometimes but not always able to capitalize on precedents or models from other local efforts. The partnerships take on several challenges at once: aligning the discrete missions and activities of many different partners; creating an approach that weaves together many separate actors and programs; and implementing a new way of thinking about and providing for the educational and related needs of an entire population of children and young adults. Managing this requires a mix of professional expertise, public engagement, and elite power. It needs new ideas about and flexible methods for how work gets done across a large range of volunteers for whom this is often a "second job." And it needs ways to obtain financial support and mobilize resources across many entities. We have already seen adaptation and change in the infrastructures of some of the collaborations that have only been operating for a few years. Many seem to be laying firmer footings of structure, leadership, working patterns, and finance, but permanence is not guaranteed because the grounds on which they rest—the willingness of partners to continue, the availability of funding, the public support and awareness—may continue to shift. Fostering engagement—both fiscal and participatory—may be a constant responsibility, one that will change from building initial awareness and support to permanent recognition and support. To manage this successfully may require roles played by the backbone organization to shift, skills prized in executive leadership to change, and structures and processes that define relationships and responsibilities within and among various parts of the collaboration to evolve.

CHAPTER 12.
Using Data

Using data to drive program effectiveness is touted as one of the essential design features of the collective impact model of collaboration, and many foundations and national organizations supporting collaborative ventures also stress the value of monitoring and analyzing information.[35] Most recommend data be used in one or more of three ways:

- For continuous learning and feedback for the collaboration;

- For the identification of challenges and needs and the management and coordination of service delivery at the level of individual clients (children and youth); and

- For public communication and accountability by tracking an agreed upon set of core measurement indicators for the initiative.

Data use is ubiquitous in the broader contemporary culture, on display and extolled as a transformative aspect of modern governance and management. By this point in time, both the upsides and downsides of data use are well known. Data can focus attention and provide evidence that can be wrapped into iterative cycles of planning, assessing, and improvement, but data can also serve a mostly symbolic purpose to confirm expectations and procure legitimacy (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2011; Feldman & March, 1981). Performance measurements are often thought to be useful for the dual objectives of organizational learning and accountability, but high-stakes accountability can also interfere with thoughtful deliberation about how to improve. Data tell only part of the story of any enterprise and often do not measure what really matters about intervening contextual conditions, the needs being addressed, or the implementation of interventions. Data can be difficult and expensive to gather and can quickly become outdated or unavailable in time to facilitate action responses.

> Challenges arise from differences in how information is structured and interpreted by different users, from the costs and risks incurred in planning, obtaining, and analyzing data, and from the potential for information, which is easily converted to power, to harm some and benefit others.

As we learned from our review of literature, collaborative networks, because they involve many partners with their own data sources, potentially could be prime vehicles for sharing information among individuals and organizations. But effective use of data is not simple to achieve in collaborations. Collaborative data use requires trust, sharing, and mutual responsibility (Baker, Kan, & Teo, 2011; Huxham, 2003). Challenges arise from differences in how information is structured and interpreted by different users, from the costs and risks incurred in planning, obtaining, and analyzing data, and from the potential for information, which is easily converted to power, to harm some and benefit others.

In our case studies, the collaborations were not immune from these typical challenges of obtaining and using data, and they may have been even more susceptible because of political and logistical barriers across

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[35] For the StriveTogether perspective on the value of data, see their strategic plan at https://www.strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/StriveTogether_StrategicPlan_Oct2017.pdf

institutional boundaries. Several collaborations had trouble securing data from nonresponsive or inefficient sources, such as state offices managing databases of health status and educational performance information. This affected the completeness and timeliness of data for program planning and for reporting outcomes. There were also problems setting up effective data processing systems, overcoming concerns about privacy, and training end users to trust and use these systems; these especially impeded the direct coordination of services at the individual student level. Finally, some collaboration partners were unclear how to use data in sophisticated ways to understand complex challenges and develop solutions. They could not easily decide on the best indicators and metrics to use or how to employ them to understand causal relationships among the interventions and outcomes they were monitoring.

Despite these problems, we found data were being used across case study sites for the three purposes of continuous learning and feedback, coordination of services, and public reporting and accountability. Sometimes these purposes overlapped and data use served multiple functions.

For example, several collaborations made sporadic efforts to gather and report data on local conditions affecting children's development and performance. These data included health indicators, measures of family and neighborhood poverty, and educational performance. Data were sometimes disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, income level, disability, or language status, and they were sometimes reported to show changes over time.

Collaborations also made efforts to monitor program implementation and take-up of services. Mostly, this was an in-house effort, for example collecting information on how many families attended a parent seminar or how many students continued to attend a summer program for its full duration. Some collaborations tried to link programmatic interventions and service participation with outcomes, for example tracking attendance improvement or growth on math and language arts assessments for students receiving support services.

Several collaborations set up formal data committees, while at least one delegated data collection and analysis to project teams under a less formal but potentially useful continuous improvement approach. Milwaukee Succeeds established a "data council" with local individuals skilled in data analytics and program evaluation. This group worked to identify useful metrics and develop thoughtful approaches to reporting data, such as disaggregating it by race/ethnicity, income level, and disability status. All Hands Raised in Portland/Multnomah County mounted a cross-district effort to reduce racial disparities in student disciplinary suspensions and expulsions. It gave sustained attention to these indicators over time and was able to document significant reductions in disciplinary actions for Black students.
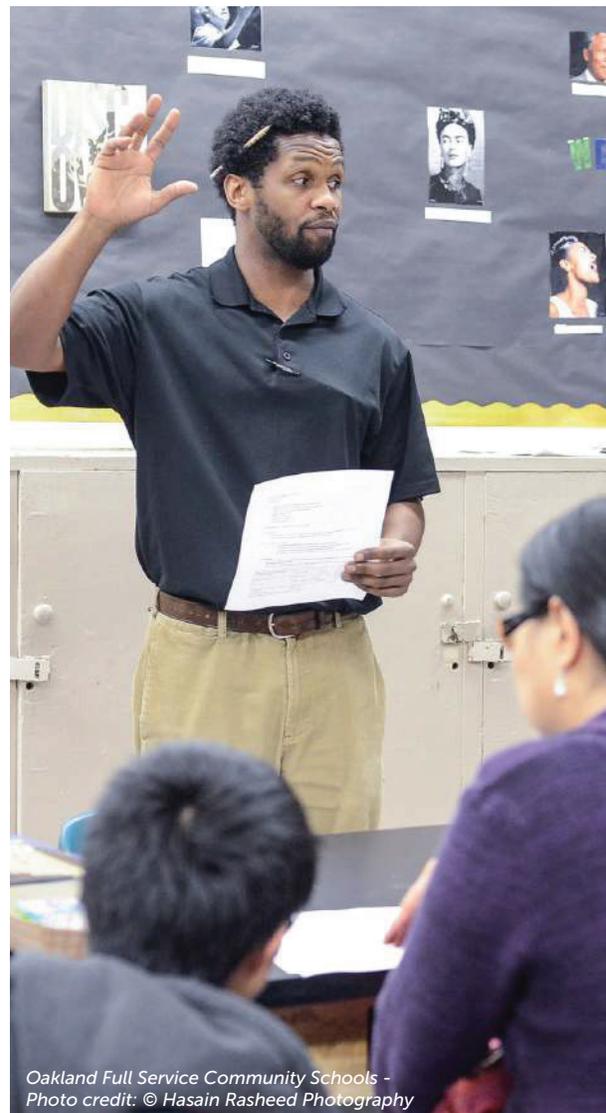
Oakland Full Service Community Schools -
Photo credit: © Hasain Rasheed Photography

DATA USE SPOTLIGHT

All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County

All Hands Raised adapted the partnership's use of data as its work evolved. Initially, it constituted a data committee that explored available data on conditions and needs in the county and helped the partnership select the community indicators it would monitor. Later, as the partnership's work began and its leadership retooled the organization to support that stage of the work, AHR dissolved the data committee and moved the responsibility for data use into the individual collaborative action teams. With coaching from AHR staff, certain teams used a continuous improvement approach and collected school-level data they found helpful for monitoring and fine-tuning their pilot projects, such as a school attendance improvement initiative and an effort to help students prepare to apply for college financial aid.

In addition, recognizing the importance of looking carefully at evidence, the racial educational equity team, comprised of school district superintendents and leaders of the county's culturally specific organizations, decided it was important to share their districts' student disciplinary data. This only became possible after extensive efforts to build trust within the group. The group disaggregated discipline rates by race, which enabled them to begin in earnest to discuss strategies to achieve more equity in student treatment and outcomes.

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Darlyn Chester Photography

Participants in Alignment Nashville reported a unique approach to using data and other information for project management, learning, and monitoring progress. Their locally developed information platform has garnered considerable attention from other locales.

DATA USE SPOTLIGHT
Alignment Nashville

At Alignment Nashville, the working groups known as A-Teams determine their goals, formulate tactical plans, and decide how they will measure their progress and success. These team-specific goals are expected to contribute to the collaboration's overall goals of increasing children's well-being, graduation rates, college and career readiness, and community prosperity in Nashville. Alignment Nashville communicates to the public the work of the collaboration and its A-Teams through its website, annual reports, and other means, though precise analyses of whether and how the A-Teams' work contributes to the initiative's overall goals are not made available.

The A-Teams use an information system designed especially for Alignment Nashville through collaboration with the Deloitte management consulting firm and a web developer. This system, known as ComCoefficient, is a tool for project collaboration and management, content management, and knowledge management. Alignment Nashville staff members contribute information on team meetings and accomplishments and add other relevant documents and items of information. Team partners, community members, and staff across other teams can then access these materials. The system is not linked to student data from Metro Nashville Public Schools, but other indicators are used to show implementation and outcomes.

In Buffalo, the Say Yes program leadership regularly collects data on service delivery and take up (for example, number of visits to the school-based legal clinics or number of students enrolled in afterschool programs). It reports these data to its stakeholders and senior leadership group to ensure it is pinpointing gaps in support services and making progress toward its goals of full coverage across the city. The program also reports data on outcomes (especially graduation rates, numbers of scholarship applications, and rates of college matriculation and retention). Say Yes is committed to doing so on a timely basis but sometimes has to delay its reports if it cannot obtain data quickly enough from external sources.

None of the collaborations we studied used highly sophisticated methods of connecting data on their efforts to evidence on outcomes, an effort that would be challenging even with the most robust data, given the complexities of the programs. Some did report fledgling efforts; for example, Buffalo has begun to report outcomes for students who accessed some services, such as attendance change for students receiving the school-based preventive services and college academic progress for students participating in the summer bridge programs. Despite the absence of sophisticated causal analyses, collaborations reflected on the outcome data available to them in light of the knowledge they could obtain from their on-the-ground involvement with students and schools.

Several collaborations have focused some of their data activities around student case management and coordination of student services, but with mixed success so far. In Providence, for example, the CYC negotiated a comprehensive service- and data-sharing agreement between the school district and community-based service organizations early in its history to facilitate a case management approach. To support student efforts

to graduate from high school and apply to and enroll in college, the data-sharing platform aims to track which students are getting particular services, what their outcomes are, and if they are on track for graduation. Through a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to implement its Evidence2Success initiative, the CYC is also using data it collected from local youth and analyzed with community members to determine local needs and priorities, develop a plan to address those priorities, choose and implement evidence-based programs and measure progress.

The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University has been helping the Oakland school district develop an integrated longitudinal database with student-level educational data, data on expanded learning and health service participation, and other information from students and families. It hopes to link this with student outcomes and parent behaviors as well. This database will be used program-wide. In the meantime, community school managers at each site conduct their own local needs assessments and use this data for planning purposes.

In Minneapolis, NAZ has its own student-based data system, known as NAZ Connect, that tracks progress for individual participants. Many data points about students' performance in school or their social needs that might be of interest to the program staff are not available online, often because of information privacy restrictions, and there are concerns that program staff are not regularly inputting information, but NAZ Connect appears to be a tool that allows program staff (especially school-based Achievement Coaches) and families to work together to develop an Achievement Plan for each student. This plan is then documented on NAZ Connect and all service providers—including those working in partner organizations—can see it and align their work around goals and accomplishments. NAZ Connect is thus used to support individual families, but it is also used to evaluate the effectiveness of the services NAZ delivers.[36] This has impressed civic leaders in Minneapolis, who appreciate the "hard evidence" of measurable results, and in turn they have responded by mobilizing political and financial capital to support NAZ.

In Buffalo, Say Yes has worked hard to develop a student management system that could inform the collaboration of system-wide patterns of service use and outcomes as well as be a platform for individual student case management. It has encountered technical challenges of building the platform, political challenges of obtaining sensitive data from multiple sources on a timely basis, human resources challenges of training personnel and freeing their time to use the system, and trust challenges of getting partners on board with transparency about data. Say Yes experienced similar issues in attempting to implement this system in Syracuse. None of this has diminished its belief that a customized data system will be invaluable for individual case management and population-level analysis and monitoring.

As new collaborations got started, especially those associated with Strive and inspired by the collective impact model, enthusiasm ran high for the "shared measurement systems" that supposedly would galvanize community attention and effort. As Kania and Kramer wrote in 2011:

> Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures. (p. 40)

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[36] For NAZ's description of this tool, see http://northsideachievement.org/what-we-do/solutions/#nazconnect

Under this approach, collaborations were encouraged to identify key outcome indicators, set targets and timeframes, and regularly report results to community constituents and stakeholders. These practices were evident in the annual reports and on the websites of several collaborations we studied. Simple graphics such as up or down arrows, and red, yellow, and green dots, made it easy to see how a program was doing. This type of data use is meant to inform stakeholders, signal system alignment, motivate participants, and reflect the collaborations' responsibility to be accountable for results.

We expected these public measurement systems to be constant reference points for the collaborations and to be sources of concern if progress wasn't happening on schedule. What we observed was not so straightforward. Not all collaborations report system-wide measurements, and those that do report these data do not seem overly preoccupied by them.

FIGURE 2. The Milwaukee Succeeds Road Map

Source: https://milwaukeesucceeds.org/data/road-map
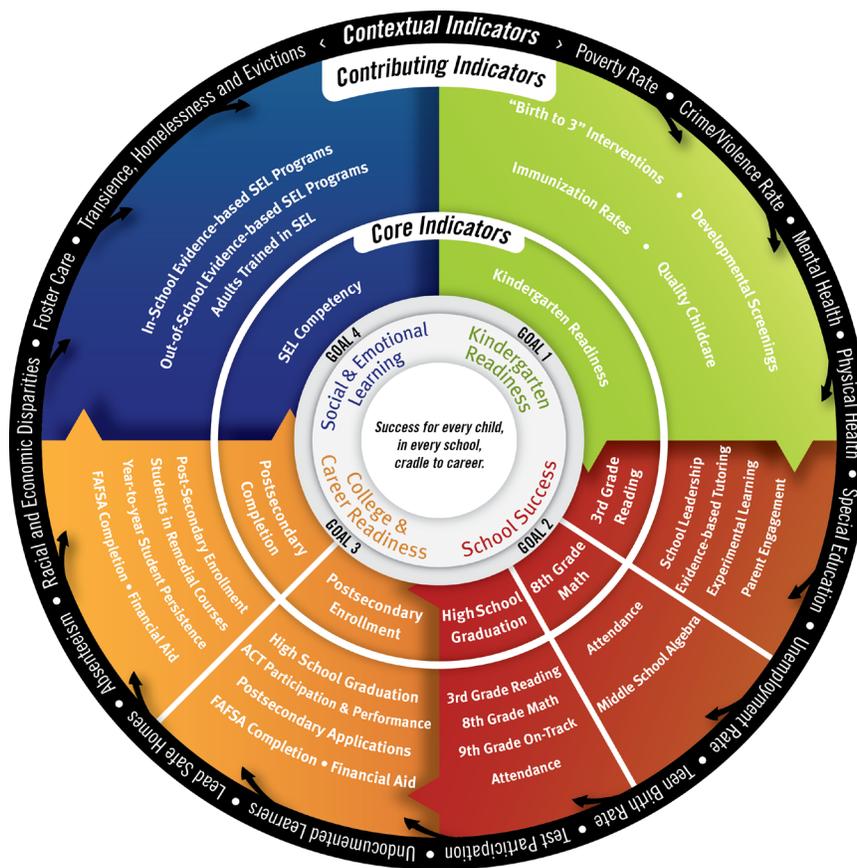
Some collaborations do still track the measurement indicators they initially selected, and they are aware of the progress they are making. For example, Say Yes Buffalo keeps close tabs on graduation rates and student progress through college, and Milwaukee Succeeds has noted it met a goal for early childhood education quality ahead of schedule. But the collaborations seem to have become more concerned with making steady progress than with hitting specific performance targets and dates. This may reflect sober appraisals of the time needed to develop interventions and take them to scale, or of the collaboration's fundamental inability to change some persistent social realities.

In Milwaukee, for example, a year or so after the Milwaukee Succeeds collaboration began, it became clear its theories of action and its actual interventions were not sufficient to move the outcome indicators it had identified. The collaboration did not scale back its efforts or expectations, but it did revise the presentation of data to be more realistic and actionable. The collaboration's framework now specifies four "core indicators"—broad goals such as ensuring children are reading by third grade. These represent the comprehensive vision of the collaboration and the changes that need to happen for Milwaukee. Then, there are a set of "contributing indicators"—measures of factors over which the collaboration seeks to have direct influence. Finally, there are "contextual indicators," factors such as levels of poverty that directly affect the core outcomes but are not the focus of interventions by Milwaukee Succeeds. This clarified framework has helped Milwaukee Succeeds and its partners focus their attention where they can make a difference and has also helped them recognize, for themselves and others, the magnitude of the challenge they are facing. Over time, the collaboration has also begun to provide results and disaggregate data by race/ethnicity and income, to make progress toward equity goals more transparent, and it has created interactive data tools on the collaboration website so stakeholders can search the data for themselves.

Milwaukee Succeeds

DATA USE SPOTLIGHT

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority

Early on, the Youth Futures Authority paid careful attention to the data it had access to, leading some to consider YFA a pioneer in data-driven decision making. The collaboration disaggregated data by race and attempted to use transparent indicators to track where the city and the school system were failing to serve children adequately. For example, it analyzed whether ninth graders were completing high school within four years; this is now a common metric but was not so back in the early 1980s. YFA also disaggregated discipline data, reporting out-of-school suspensions by race and age. The collaboration produced an annual "Children's Profile," which detailed the status of children and youth in Savannah-Chatham County. Eventually, using its accumulated data on indicators of child well-being and school performance, YFA created a scatter map showing areas of high distress, and this led to its decision to shift to a neighborhood-based strategy, focusing no longer on citywide reform but on areas where children and youth were most in need of attention.

These data helped YFA to plan, but they also signaled to the broader community that Savannah had problems that could not be ignored. One participant explained that this use of data compelled many people to cease being defensive and pointing fingers and to take collective ownership over the problems. It also, however, may have contributed to the school system's difficult relationship with YFA, although the objective was to solve problems and not "beat up on" the district.

This use of data was productive, but some in Savannah observed that by pinpointing particular desired outcomes like higher graduation rates or lower dropout rates, those outcomes could become all-absorbing and obscure the many other factors that were related to them.

Observations about Data Use

Overall, the cross-sector collaborations seem to be helped, not hindered, by their efforts to obtain and use data. Technical challenges were not insignificant. Whether due to limitations in data availability or analytic techniques, data analyses were not always comprehensive enough to measure accurately how well the programs were being implemented, the connection between inputs, interventions, and outcomes, or change over time. But the efforts to use data to facilitate continuous feedback and improvement were meaningful and instructive for many stakeholders. The selection and presentation of metrics for tracking ambitious, system-level outcomes did seem to have useful signaling effects for initiatives; they kept the participants focused and likely informed broader audiences as well. As accountability tools, they gave the collaborations opportunities to celebrate when things went well and did not seem to have negative repercussions, at least not yet, when targets were not met.

Although we occasionally heard that a funder seemed to be restless about results, for the most part funders appeared to be giving the collaborations more leeway in meeting targets than originally planned. This might not last, and eventually stakeholders and funders may either withdraw their support or reset their expectations.

CHAPTER 13.
Partnering with Local School Systems

Cross-sector collaborations of the type we studied often originate because of local educational underperformance, and they are intended to help stimulate and support change. By educational underperformance, we refer here to lags and disparities in student performance in traditional public school districts, private schools, and charter schools, issues with access to high-quality early childhood education, and access to and success in postsecondary education. In this chapter, we discuss how our initiatives partner with local school districts and the ways in which they are involved with local K-12 education systems; the services provided through such partnerships are discussed elsewhere in the report.

One might imagine school districts would be natural central participants in cross-sector collaborations for education, but the reality is not so clear cut. A key concern for some collaborations is how to involve elementary and secondary school systems as partners without undercutting their autonomy and their need to become, and be seen as, successful in their own right. This may be especially true for traditional school districts, who may be concerned about their market share of students, legitimacy, resources, and political power. Participating in a cross-sector collaboration could be advantageous for regaining losses, but it also risks weakening or further weakening their standing by implying they cannot succeed on their own. In such cases, how do school systems and collaborations share credit for both problems and accomplishments?

Another concern is how to avoid getting caught in political battles among unions, boards, system administrators, and the public, even when those battles have been destructive for children and need to be resolved so the progress the collaborations seek can be made. A third concern is how to achieve stability and continuity in contexts when school leadership turnovers have been disruptive and could threaten the viability of the cross-sector collaborations.

Our cases show that relationships with local education systems were influenced by local circumstances, histories, and personalities. All collaborations had at least some relationship with the local public school district or, in one instance, multiple districts. No collaboration appeared to be trying to blame or shame its local educators. At least one explicitly tried to follow the local school district's lead and be supportive of the district's strategic agenda, and one was enmeshed within the district as its community schools effort. For most of the others, there was a delicate effort to be supportive while also nudging systems toward improvement. Collaborations explicitly wanted to support educators' ideas and help them try to do even more, and they steered clear of overstepping bounds and taking control from the school district. This approach led to efforts where the cross-sector collaboration partnered with the district to develop high school academies, summer camps, afterschool activities, attendance-monitoring programs, college advising services, and other initiatives consistent with local district priorities and strategic plans. It also led to initiatives in which collaborations provided wraparound social, health, and educational services, often on school premises, that could help students be motivated and ready to learn.

How ambitious and how well-ingrained these initiatives have become varies dramatically across the eight cases. Sometimes the school district openly welcomed and acknowledged these forms of assistance; other times relationships were more tentative, especially if the district felt a lack of trust in the collaboration and/or felt a need to prove something on its own. In several cases, collaborative leaders made exceptional efforts to nurture interpersonal relationships and provide material assistance to district leaders, to promote more trust and cooperation. Similar efforts in the other direction, from the district to the cross-sector collaboration, were less common. However, in Portland/Multnomah County, the assurances of the superintendent of Portland Public

Schools were instrumental in securing the trust and cooperation of the neighboring school districts in the early days of All Hands Raised.

Alignment Nashville was established through the business community but was tightly coupled to Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) from the beginning. The collaboration explicitly states its goal is to help implement the school district's strategic plan, and A-Team priorities are redirected when the strategic plan is revised. Initially each of the A-Teams designated as its chair a school system official who was able to make high-level decisions. Currently, school district officials and business or CBO officials serve as co-chairs. The high school academy concept has been the A-Teams' biggest success. The Nashville Academies have become nationally recognized models for integrating core academic subjects with career and technical education (CTE) in high schools. Over time, other A-Teams seem to have become more involved with other community agencies than with MNPS. Nonetheless, the school system continues to be appreciative of Alignment Nashville,

acknowledging that it needs the external resources and support, particularly for helping leadership think in nontraditional ways. In turn, Alignment Nashville remains flexible in revising and reorganizing its work to create more alignment with MNPS.

In Providence, a city with mayoral control of education, the Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC) began as a bridge to help the mayor's office become more involved in education policy. Its goals are framed around student access and success in school, and at times the school district has adopted some of the language of the CYC goals for its own planning. District personnel were involved in CYC committees, though there was some concern about time commitments. Providence public school officials have shared data with the CYC and its community-based organization partners. The superintendent welcomed as complementary the CYC's newer focus on expanding resources for student social and emotional well-being. This work is addressing a challenge the school system lacks the resources and expertise to tackle.

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Fred Joe

In Oakland, the community schools effort is a direct initiative of the district, and the vision of all schools being community schools has come to be a signature identity for the Oakland Unified School District. The community school initiative was at the heart of a former superintendent's strategic plan for the district, and later superintendents bought into it because of its potential for aiding in meeting the district's instructional goals and possibly because the community schools might help reduce the exodus of students to the growing charter sector. But, as with other collaborations, the community schools program still struggled to obtain adequate resources. Even though it is housed within the district, the program must compete for funding for the wraparound services provided at the schools and the school- and district-level infrastructure to coordinate services and support the community schools.

PARTNERING WITH SCHOOL SYSTEMS SPOTLIGHT
Say Yes Buffalo

Say Yes Buffalo is a close partner with Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). Many of its services and activities are implemented in schools, so it seeks to coordinate with the district and expects eventually school-district funds will cover many of the costs.

Prior to formalizing a city initiative, the national Say Yes organization requires affirmation of support from the local school board and administration. It also requires an agreement to conduct analyses (funded by Say Yes) to identify resources to support the services Say Yes helps to provide. These commitments were received in Buffalo, and, in 2012, consultants reviewed school system budgets, operations, and outcomes.

The partnership's first years coincided with a period of multiple superintendent transitions. In general, Say Yes has tried to distance itself from school district politics, but the organization took an advocacy position at one point, supporting a superintendent candidate who ultimately did not succeed and quickly left BPS. This was a temporary setback and an important learning experience for Say Yes. When the next superintendent was selected, the executive director of Say Yes Buffalo offered support but asked little in return. A strong relationship developed, and, when the superintendent announced his framework of plans for the district, Say Yes had a direct or implied role in every component.

With the collaboration's help, the district has moved past its pattern of hastily organized and poorly managed summer-school and afterschool programming. Summer school aligns with a county-supported summer camp to offer children a more cohesive learning program. A seven-year funding plan gradually transfers summer school costs from Say Yes to the city and school district budgets. Afterschool programs are available in all schools, funded by the school district. Saturday Academies are also offered by the district in 21 community schools.

The relationship between the school system and Say Yes has become mutually beneficial in other unanticipated ways; one example is that the school district has asked Say Yes to help coordinate the district's new community schools effort. Say Yes also handles the applications of agencies that want to provide summer programming.

The Say Yes collaboration seeks to be a partner with BPS but leaves instructional improvement, neighborhood school choice, and other reform issues to the district. Say Yes contributes by offering wraparound support services so students are motivated and ready to learn, thus freeing the school system to focus on improving its own core activities.

Leaders from the school board, teachers union, and superintendent's office are active members of the Say Yes Operating Committee. Say Yes and BPS work together to lobby the state for support. It would be a stretch to suggest the presence of Say Yes has caused school board politics in Buffalo to become less toxic, but Say Yes has given opposing factions a number of things they can agree have improved, no matter who gets credit. Higher graduation rates and many scholarships for college-going graduates are two examples.

In Minneapolis, a city with a reputation for well-run services, the school system has been a frustration for civic and business leaders. This disenchantment has led many to endorse the efforts of the Northside Achievement Zone. NAZ directly supports its neighborhood parents and students as they navigate through the school system. The program staff work directly in and with particular "anchor schools" serving their community, and they sometimes make specific demands of these schools on their clients' behalf. This bottom-up push is unusual for our collaborations. Over the years, NAZ has declined to partner with schools it sees as unresponsive or as places where students cannot succeed. School-system officials seem to take this critique in stride. Because they are appreciative of NAZ's efforts, they try to cooperate with NAZ in the anchor schools. These relationships between school staff and NAZ staff are crucial to the success of the initiative.

In one collaboration, the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA), relationships with the local school system were never particularly positive or productive. Some of this appeared to be the result of initial competition over control of the grant project under which YFA was established: both the mayor's office and the school system wanted the upper hand, and the mayor won out. But another factor may have been in play: YFA aimed to improve services and outcomes for youth through system-wide change, and it focused on problems such as teen pregnancy, youth unemployment, health, and dropouts from school. In these efforts, the collaboration paid attention to the condition of education, especially regarding disparities that were affecting some youth inequitably. But improving school quality and boosting academic achievement were not part of the YFA agenda, particularly when the collaboration developed a neighborhood improvement strategy. To the collaboration, the district was a problem at worst and tangential at best, and as time went on, the school district similarly viewed the YFA as not centrally connected to its own mission and priorities.

One informant told us that when a superintendent was asked why he didn't attend YFA meetings, the response was "We really don't need you." In 2004, a local commentator expressed regret that no school board officials had taken part in a recent Youth Futures summit, stating, "That's disappointing. Education is the key to defeating poverty. If school officials won't be part of the solution, they're part of the problem."

Two other collaborations—All Hands Raised in Portland and Milwaukee Succeeds—worked in unique ways in their equally unique local contexts, offering lessons about relationship with multiple school systems.

In Portland/Multnomah County, superintendents and staff from Portland Public Schools (PPS) and five smaller neighboring school districts within Multnomah County work with All Hands Raised. District and school staff help coordinate and implement a number of initiatives in partner schools representing the set of districts. Through these initiatives, school-based teams test, refine, and disseminate practices that can help schools and students meet community-wide goals for school readiness and student achievement. With this work underway, AHR has adapted the "collaborative action teams" that planned and launched the activities into "strategic leadership groups" that ensure the initiatives have the necessary support at all administrative levels of the system. Portland Public Schools is a much larger district with more sources of support than the other five systems. As a countywide partnership, AHR helps the five smaller school districts by enhancing their capacity to meet challenges they share with PPS but tend to have fewer resources to address. By learning alongside PPS through All Hands Raised, and by implementing initiatives together, the smaller districts have access to ideas and model practices that might not be available to them otherwise.

For example, in the AHR partnership, all six superintendents joined and continue to participate in the Racial Educational Equity Leadership Group. This group, which also includes representatives from the culturally specific community organizations that make up the Coalition of Communities of Color, monitors and discusses racial equity issues related to instruction and student discipline. It aims to deepen school district commitments to equity and gives district leaders a venue where they can discuss challenges and learn from one another. The

group has focused its efforts on reducing behavior referrals and exclusionary discipline practices that have a disproportionate impact on students of color, particularly boys. The membership of this group is limited in order to avoid having the group become tainted by or enmeshed in community or school district politics, and to ensure that superintendents and other partners can be open and honest.

As we have described, All Hands Raised evolved from predecessor groups that focused on convening leaders to discuss local education challenges—primarily those of PPS. School districts did not initiate or lead those earlier groups, though they felt compelled for political reasons to participate in them. As the participants in those enterprises turned their attention to countywide collective action, the AHR cross-sector collaboration was formed. Having been partners in All Hands Raised since its inception, the superintendents tended to see it as genuinely constructive.[37] Over time, the collaboration is slowly but steadily adding school community sites in all six districts, recognizing it must select sites where staff, principal, and superintendent all support the new work.

In Milwaukee, K-12 schooling is dispersed across three sectors: the traditional district, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), which enrolls over half of the city's student population, the vast majority of whom are children in poverty and children of color; private schools, many of which are religious schools, that have had access to state education funding through a voucher program that began in the 1970s; and a growing charter school sector, also serving a predominantly low-income population of Black and Latino students. Deep and long-standing political and cultural conflicts fracture the relationships among these sectors. Moreover, within the traditional public system itself, conflicts have been frequent and bitter among the teachers union, school board, and district administration. City, county, and state government leaders and the public often enter the fray as well. These contentious relationships have distracted nearly everyone, at one time or another, from attending to the needs of children and youth.

Milwaukee Succeeds made a decision early on not to align exclusively with the traditional public school district, but to focus its attention on "every child, in every school, cradle to career" in Milwaukee. The collaboration had no aspirations to resolve the many conflicts that divided the three sectors and instead sought to provide a venue where common issues could be addressed. Building interpersonal trust has often been a challenge, and securing policy decisions that seem fair to all parties has been equally difficult. But in a few short years, Milwaukee Succeeds has managed some key accomplishments. Representatives from the three school sectors stood together, albeit warily, when the public school system faced some extraordinary threats from the state and county government. The collaboration's signature early literacy initiative, now known as Reading Foundations, which was developed through a close partnership with MPS curriculum leaders and teachers, has started to be shared with private and voucher schools. Overcoming barriers related to how the public system would be compensated for its design work on the literacy program, Milwaukee Succeeds is expanding the network of schools using the program and showing that school improvement in the city can be a cooperative, not competitive, endeavor.

Nonetheless, because Milwaukee Public Schools looms so large in the local education landscape, Milwaukee Succeeds tends to relate more closely to MPS than to the other sectors. This is also understandable because there are no core organizations representing either the full private/voucher sector or the charter sector that correspond to the MPS central district office and school board. Over the years, representatives from the MPS central office, school board, and teachers union have participated in the governance structures of Milwaukee Succeeds. Staff members from the central administration have been key members of the network teams aligned with the collaboration's four major goals, in addition to playing key roles in the design and implementation of

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[37] Teacher leadership and expertise was less well incorporated. The Portland Public Schools' teachers union president had a seat on the AHR Leadership Council, but the unions of the other five districts were not represented.

the signature early literacy initiative. The executive director of Milwaukee Succeeds regularly meets individually with the superintendent and school board president, to ensure open communication and build trust.

At several points in time, during several different superintendents' tenures, relationships among individuals from the charter, private, and traditional public system at the Milwaukee Succeeds table became strained and even contentious. The MPS superintendents in particular lost a sense of trust, feeling that other collaborative partners were making a show of cooperation but subverting their interests under the table and behind their backs, such as in their lobbying with state legislators. Given these dynamics, it is perhaps no surprise that the district does not identify exclusively with the initiative, but views it as one of many partnerships and collaborations with which it is involved. MPS officials have sometimes been reluctant to show appreciation or give credit to Milwaukee Succeeds for their work on behalf of students and schools across the city.

We have noted that the charter and private/voucher sectors in Milwaukee are not represented by centralized organizations like the MPS school administration and board. Several organizations, however, do work closely with these other sectors. One example is Schools That Can Milwaukee, an organization dedicated to developing leaders for K-12 education in all types of schools in the city. Another is Seton Catholic Schools, an initiative of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee created to support the consolidation and transformation of the nearly 100 Catholic elementary schools in Milwaukee. Both of these organizations affiliate with Milwaukee Succeeds, and, as these relationships have developed, schools and leaders from the charter and private/voucher sectors are adopting improvement ideas and participating in Milwaukee Succeeds initiatives.

While all of the locales we studied had at least some charter and private schools, the acrimony that has sometimes arisen around the issue of privatization and school choice was not a major issue or focus for most other collaborations during the period of our study. In several cities, the cross-sector initiatives offered some services to charter and private schools and their students. Charter and private school leaders were invited to participate in the various forums that were part of the collaborations' governance and operational structures in several cities, but their participation was minimal. The most commonly offered explanation was that schools that are independent of the traditional school district and not part of any other multischool structure simply do not have the administrative time and resources for this kind of commitment. Even in Milwaukee, where private and charter schools were significant parts of the local educational landscape and persons ostensibly representing those sectors' interests were involved in Milwaukee Succeeds at top leadership levels, representatives from individual schools were not very involved.

Observations about Relationships with School Districts

In sum, relationships between cross-sector collaborations to improve education and their local school systems can be close and mutually beneficial, but they are also complicated. Collaborations must be aware of the risks, real or imagined, traditional school districts perceive in the partnerships, even when there are clear and tangible benefits. As with all other relationships in a collaboration, trust and communication are paramount. In some ways, formal or symbolic expressions of partnership were not always matched by grand, system-level change, but smaller scale, cooperative projects were sometimes both more pragmatic and more successful.

CHAPTER 14.
Working with National Networks

We have noted that local cross-sector collaborations for education may come to share common features or strategies with those in different settings in part because they are linked in formal or informal ways with other collaborations and with other sources of ideas and support. This is not a new aspect of collaboration. In the past, local collaborative initiatives for social reform sometimes have had opportunities to make connections with others through foundations or funding agencies, technical assistance organizations, conferences, research associations, and other formal and informal means.[38] In the report on its New Futures initiative, the Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995) offered one perspective on the role of such relationships:

> The assistance of a national foundation…can contribute to the systemic change effort in a community when it is clear that its support is for reforms that are fundamental, enduring, and comprehensive. Moreover, it helps local participants to have someone in the discussion who is unwavering on the fundamentals; as an "outsider" this is a lot easier for the foundation to do. (p. 28)

But these kinds of connections often were sporadic and ad hoc and have not been well documented or analyzed. Currently a growing number of organizations are emerging that are specifically designed to promote and support expanding networks of collaborations. The outreach efforts and reputations of these national network organizations have both created greater interest in the collective impact concept and have provided substantial organizational support that goes beyond what most foundations or other umbrella organizations have done in the past.

It is difficult to measure precisely the impact these national networks and connections have on local initiatives, but, in our study, they appear to have made a significant difference. Table 11 summarizes the primary connections maintained by the collaborations we studied, as well as some other forms of support from some have benefited. (These are not the only connections the programs have beyond their own boundaries, but they are the primary ones and provide a glimpse of the value of connectivity.) Overall, for our cases, the national affiliations they maintained gave them access to strategic ideas and specific programmatic guidelines about collaboration, and they served as venues for professional networking, ongoing technical support and learning, and some funding support.

Our three in-depth case study collaborations—Say Yes Buffalo, Milwaukee Succeeds, and All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County—were formal affiliates of national networks. Milwaukee Succeeds and All Hands Raised are members of the StriveTogether network. Both were part of the first group of about ten cities to join the network around 2011, and the national StriveTogether office most likely gained a great deal from working with these early implementers. The network is designed so that learning will flow from the national office to the local initiatives. Affiliates enter into a process through which they come to understand and adopt Strive principles, theory of action, and strategies, passing through a sequence of stages of development of collaboration (labeled Exploring, Emerging, Sustaining, Systems Change, and Proof Point).[39] The StriveTogether organization offers on-site consultation with local initiatives to assist them, along with an online web portal and numerous workshops and conferences.

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[38] See Berner and colleagues (1967).

[39] The Providence Children and Youth Cabinet was also affiliated with StriveTogether for a period of time. When Strive determined that the CYC did not meet certain initial benchmarks required to become a network member, they parted ways, though the CYC continued to use some elements of the Strive model. For details on the civic infrastructure development Strive expects at each stage, see https://www.strivetogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/StriveTogether-Theory-of-Action-2017.pdf

TABLE 11. National Networks & Other National Support Entities

SUPPORT ORGANIZATION/NETWORK	TYPE & FOCUS	CASES (Parentheses indicate some contact but no ongoing relationship)
Alignment USA (www.alignmentusa.org)	Network that began as an outgrowth of Alignment Nashville. Provides data management systems, organizational models and technical assistance to local collaborations; convenes annual conferences for members.	• Alignment Nashville • (Oakland Full Service Community Schools)
Annie E. Casey Foundation (www.aecf.org/)	Philanthropy dedicated to improving services and outcomes for children and youth; has initiated successive waves of competitive funding initiatives centered on community-based intervention models, including its New Futures initiative in the 1980s and Evidence2Success, a current project of the foundation, which "provides a framework for engaging communities and public systems in improving child well being."	• Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority • Providence Children and Youth Cabinet
Collective Impact Forum (FSG) (http://collectiveimpactforum.org)	An initiative of FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions that provides online community, networking, training, and tools to aid in implementing the collective impact approach.	• (Alignment Nashville)
National Coalition of Community Schools (www.communityschools.org)	Housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC, its membership includes community schools networks, educational organizations, and governmental entities. It promotes the development and expansion of community schools throughout the country; fosters collaboration and technical support among members; convenes biannual conferences.	• Oakland Full Service Community Schools • (Milwaukee Succeeds) • (Say Yes Buffalo) • (Alignment Nashville)
Promise Neighborhoods	Federal legislative initiative patterned after Harlem Children's Zone; established under President Obama, to provide "a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center," and to develop "the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood." The Promise Neighborhood Institute at PolicyLink provides leadership and management coaching, communications strategy, and other technical support to funded sites.	• Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis
Say Yes to Education (http://sayyestoeducation.org)	National organization that implements a comprehensive model of support services and last-dollar college scholarships to students intended to help improve education outcomes and also to support local economic development; provides initial seed funding and start-up assistance for new chapters; a national network of colleges and universities that have agreed to provide scholarship aid to Say Yes scholars.[a]	• Say Yes Buffalo
StriveTogether (www.strivetogether.org)	National support organization linking 68 local affiliates (as of 2017); encourages adherence to structural and programmatic principles along a continuum of collaboration; provides technical assistance, networking, and support, and ideas and models for collaborative structure and process; has some capacity to provide funding to select local initiatives.	• Milwaukee Succeeds • All Hands Raised • (Providence Children and Youth Cabinet) • (Alignment Nashville) • (Oakland Full Service Community Schools) • (Northside Achievement Zone, through Generation Next, a Minneapolis Strive affiliate)

[a]   The Weiss Institute (http://weissinstitute.org), an extension the Say Yes to Education national organization provide technical assistance to cities wishing to implement the Say Yes framework and model without core Say Yes funding.

Both All Hands Raised and Milwaukee Succeeds benefited from the early inspiration and support of StriveTogether. For example, StriveTogether staff visited Milwaukee Succeeds many times as the project got underway, and the new initiative adopted many of Strive's template ideas and strategies. They embraced the cradle-to-career orientation, used the student developmental pathway, called the Student Roadmap to Success, as a guide to setting their major goals, and borrowed the Six Sigma planning process (with the help of Strive consultants) to establish their organizational structure.

Not all of these supports worked perfectly. Many local volunteers in Milwaukee became frustrated with the Six Sigma process (and StriveTogether must have heard that message because it subsequently reduced its emphasis on it). Milwaukee Succeeds struggled to establish a data-reporting format that was consistent with Strive advice and eventually modified its data use to suit its own situation and needs. And while it tried to use the developmental pathway framework in their planning, it realized after a time that it was not prepared to understand or intervene in all of the stages of the pathway (for example, middle-grade mathematics performance), at least not right away.

Nonetheless, Milwaukee Succeeds continues to be inspired and motivated by the national network and often quickly makes use of ideas it encounters through conferences and consultations. The Milwaukee Succeeds executive director now sits on the national board of StriveTogether. Even more, the local collaboration has linked with several other Strive initiatives in Wisconsin, and these relationships have been as fruitful as the relationships with the network's central office.

Say Yes Buffalo is the second citywide implementation of the Say Yes to Education framework. This framework was developed by the national Say Yes foundation based on decades of work with students, first in small school- or neighborhood-based cohorts and eventually with an entire city in Syracuse, NY. The framework aims to improve population level education outcomes and economic development in a city by providing college scholarships that remove financial barriers to college for all students, and by providing a comprehensive array of wraparound support services to help students progress through school, graduate, and make successful transitions to college and beyond.

The national office works closely with cities that are selected to participate in the network (the selection process itself is arduous). Preparation includes extensive efforts to analyze local capacity to support the initiative, both programmatically and financially. Consultations are held with large numbers of local leaders and residents to cement commitment. The national Say Yes coordinates these efforts and also provides seed funding for the local operational office, executive director, and staff.

Many elements of the Say Yes framework are prescribed by the national organization. Local adaptation is seen as necessary and desirable, but local implementers are expected to pursue all of the model's nonnegotiable structural and programmatic elements. These include the wraparound student supports for health and well-being, extended learning after school and during the summer, and the last-dollar college scholarship; other essential program elements include the student case management approach, community involvement in program direction and governance, and cultivation of local funding to sustain the initiative. Once the local chapter is underway, the national Say Yes office reduces its involvement, though it does monitor the initiative and provide assistance when needed.

When they were starting to develop a comprehensive initiative around education, Buffalo civic leaders were attracted to what they saw as a well-conceived model and to the sustained, concrete assistance they would receive from the Say Yes national staff. They worked hard to be considered a possible site for the program, and once selected they worked closely with the national organization's staff to launch the program. National staff

members had extensive, visible involvement in Buffalo during the program's first years, and the Buffalo executive director and staff continue to interact with the national sponsors. In turn, the Say Yes national organization acknowledges that it learned a great deal from its first citywide implementation in Syracuse, NY, and these lessons informed its initial work in Buffalo. Similarly, developments in Buffalo have influenced the third implementation, in Guilford County, NC (a fourth implementation, in Cleveland, OH, was announced in early 2019).

Other relationships with networks that we observed among our case study collaborations are more informal and advisory, less focused on adopting prescriptive templates for action than on sharing ideas and garnering support. The Oakland Full Service Community Schools, for example, is a member of the National Coalition of Community Schools. Oakland representatives regularly attend the Coalition's conferences and have obtained technical assistance from Coalition members like the Children's Aid's National Center for Community Schools and Multnomah County's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools. Support from the national coalition was key to sustaining the program through the uncertain times of changes in district leadership.

Both NAZ in Minneapolis and Savannah's Youth Futures Authority, in its last decade, were inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone in New York. Their funders—the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the federal Promise Neighborhoods program, respectively—offered them the opportunity to develop a local initiative that was informed by the HCZ model but tailored to local context.

Somewhat ironically, Alignment Nashville, the one collaboration in our study that eschewed linkages with a national network, formed one of its own.

Oakland Full Service Community Schools - Photo credit: © Hasain Rasheed Photography

WORKING WITH NATIONAL NETWORKS SPOTLIGHT

Alignment Nashville/Alignment USA

A few years after Alignment Nashville was founded, some other communities began to look to it as a possible model and source of support. Rockford, IL, formed Alignment Rockford in 2009, and when other places also showed interest, Alignment Nashville made the decision to form its own network: Alignment USA (AUSA). The group claims that this effort "grew organically without any active marketing." As of 2018, there were 14 members in addition to Nashville. These communities are a diverse and widely dispersed group: they are spread over eight states ranging as far north as Detroit, MI, as far south as Polk County, FL, and as far west as the Wai'anae Coast of Hawaii.

Network members pay dues and in return are promised information about emerging practices and results from other communities; technical assistance; access to software developed specifically to support the Alignment approach; and the opportunity to attend the annual gathering of Alignment adopters from across the country. AUSA offers what it labels a "toolset," comprising specific principles, structures, processes, and technology that Alignment Nashville developed "to align community organizations and resources so that their coordinated support of the community's youth has a positive impact on public school success, children's health, and the success of our community as a whole."[40] The main appeal of AUSA appears to be its software and data systems, as well as its A-Team structure. Alignment Nashville's roots in the business community and its special emphasis on putting itself in a supportive role to priorities set by the local school system may also explain part of its appeal. The decision to develop a national network was not without internal controversy; some members of Alignment Nashville's board, while supportive of the general idea, were concerned that the demands of maintaining AUSA could detract from local work.

Observations about Network Affiliation

Overall, the advice and support offered by national networks, and the opportunities they afford for consolidating experience and expertise across many different locations, have mostly been a boon for the local cross-sector collaborations we studied. All of the affiliations permitted, even encouraged, substantial local adaptations of centralized models and advice, so the collaborations did not risk becoming merely a franchise operation of a national operation. It seemed clear that the relationships within national networks—both to the central offices and to other local collaborations—sped the diffusion of good ideas and the adjustment of problematic ones. Last but not least, the networks gave the local collaborations a degree of legitimacy and visibility beyond their local contexts, which may be useful as they pursue long-term sustainability.

Nevertheless, in this context, it is important to note that the question of fit is always salient. Several cities explored relationships with different network partners but decided against doing so; what seemed to be working well in one place was not necessarily right for another. And even when a national affiliation is going well, some expectations or requirements may prove to be a poor fit to the local context. We heard evidence that, when this was the case, local initiatives sought to ignore or gently resist a proffered recommendation. For example, one collaboration we studied found the data management tools offered by its national network to be cumbersome. So it simply stopped using them.

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[40] For details, see http://www.alignmentusa.org/alignment-toolset/
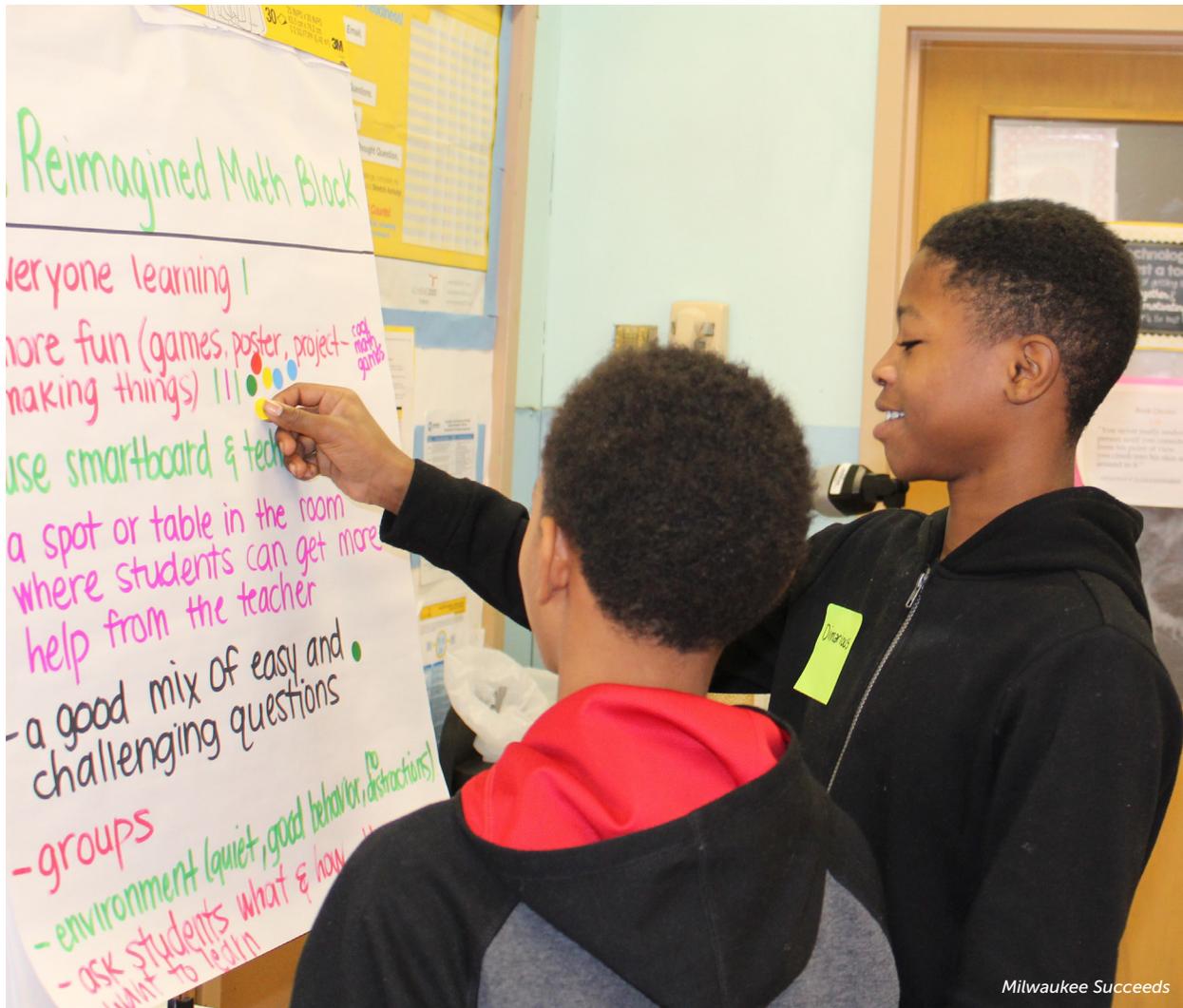
Milwaukee Succeeds

We also note that, based on our national scan, not all cross-sector collaborations for education choose to affiliate with a national network. Since our research was focused on local initiatives not national networks, we cannot offer much insight as to why this might be the case. But we suspect that, just as some local initiatives find inspiration, advice, tools, and even financial resources through network affiliations, other local collaborations might discover that the networks do not provide the kinds of support they need to succeed in their local contexts. Here again, it is a matter of fit.

CHAPTER 15.
Examining Early Outcomes

Our research was explicitly framed as a study of the initiation and development of cross-sector collaborations for education, not an evaluation of their outcomes and effectiveness. However, we, like many others, were interested in knowing how the collaborations seemed to be doing with the goals they had set for themselves and often promoted publicly. In the chapter on data use above, we discussed how the initiatives gathered and reported data on their implementation of service and progress toward their goals. In this chapter, we take look at what these data showed as evidence of implementation, outcomes, and impact. Many of the collaborations collected such information themselves, although not always in rigorous ways that would support strong conclusions. Several have also commissioned external evaluations to help them obtain a more objective look. Here we highlight the examples of four of our eight cases—Say Yes Buffalo, Milwaukee Succeeds, All Hands Raised, and Northside Achievement Zone. These collaborations are young and rapidly evolving, and new reports about implementation and goal accomplishments are released regularly, so we caution against inferring that their patterns of progress and outcomes are static. We make no judgments here about whether the collaborations are making sufficient or consequential progress, but instead want to convey a general sense of how things are going for them.

In Buffalo, Say Yes is committed to transparency in reporting its activities and outcomes, using what it calls an "Impact Dashboard" in written reports and public presentations (Figures 3 and 4). The collaboration presents data about implementation progress and service uptake gleaned from its own records, and it regularly tracks key outcome indicators, though data on some outcomes, such as graduation rates or college acceptances, must be obtained from disparate sources and there are often delays in doing so. The national Say Yes organization has also commissioned external evaluations of the initiative.

These information sources suggest that as wraparound services are made available to more students and schools in Buffalo, their use is steadily increasing. High school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates have risen fairly steadily, and many students are taking advantage of the college scholarship benefit. There is some evidence participation in Say Yes interventions, for example, summer transition programs, has a positive effect on student persistence and success in college. Like many other initiatives, however, Say Yes has found it difficult to effect change on some fundamental indicators of K-12 educational performance. This seems unsurprising when one considers that the initiative's theory of action does not focus on core instructional improvement. It leaves open the question of whether support services, which may be necessary in readying students for learning, can be sufficient for helping them improve their academic performance.

Say Yes created a multiyear staged process of placing family support specialists and other supports in schools and reported this to the public so parents would know when to expect services in their children's schools. (Some services were implemented well ahead of schedule; others—like the summer academic camps and the student management system—ran into different kinds of delays.) In its annual reports to the public, the program tracks the number of students and families who have received services—for example, 219 students made use of school-based mental health clinics in 2014-15; 1227 students enrolled in summer school, with a 69% four-week retention rate and 190 students attending 100% of the program; and 96 family cases were initiated at the legal clinics, with an impact on 338 family members that same year. Two years later, summer camp enrollment was 1747 and 360 attended every day; 136 legal cases served 503 family members; and 4500 students were served in mental health clinics (information on mental health services prior to 2016-17 was preliminary and not appropriate for comparison). During the 2017-18 school year, 18% of students received assistance from the

school-based family support specialists, and 175 students accessed health care services through the mobile health units that visited school sites.

The most-watched outcomes for the Say Yes program are high school graduation rates and postsecondary matriculation. The high school graduation rate was 49% in 2012, 61% in 2015, and 64% in 2017; postsecondary enrollment increased from 57% to 67% in the same time period.[41]

Say Yes Buffalo has also occasionally presented a "Program Dashboard" reporting outcomes for students receiving various services and supports, as a way of determining program efficacy. Although Say Yes does not yet have data to establish a strong causal link between support services, the college scholarship, and graduation rates and college retention, the intention is that the student management system will help them do so. Nonetheless, some tentative connections have been reported. In 2015, for example, Say Yes reported that students who received school-based preventive services had an average 4% attendance increase over prior years; and students in the summer bridge programs at Erie Community College and Buffalo State College also saw academic improvements (see Figure 4).[42]

FIGURE 3. Say Yes Buffalo Impact Dashboard

INDICATOR	TIME UNTIL IMPROVEMENT
Postsecondary matriculation rates	2014-15
Attendance rates	2015-16
Enrollment	2015-16
Disciplinary Suspensions	2015-16
High school graduation rates	2015-16
Academic Markers (English-Language Arts and Math for grades 3-8 and Regents courses for grades 9-12)	2017-18
Postsecondary graduation rates	2018-19

Source: Data presented to the Community Leadership Council, July 29, 2015.

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[41] From *A Community Rising: 2016-2017 Report to the Community*, available at http://sayyesbuffalo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2018/01/WEB-_-FINAL-2016-2017-Report-to-the-Community.pdf, and from Say Yes Forever: 2017-2018 Report to the Community, available at https://sayyesbuffalo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2018/10/2017-2018-Report-to-the-Community.pdf.

[42] Data are from *Our Future Is Bright: 2015 Report to the Community*, available at http://sayyesbuffalo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2017/11/R2TC-16-for-web-copy.pdf.

FIGURE 4. Say Yes Impact Dashboard and Program Dashboard, December 2015

1. Impact Dashboard (big-picture indicators)

INDICATOR	TRENDS
K-12 Enrollment	2,000 student increase 2012-2015
K-12 Attendance	3 percentage point improvement 2012-2013
K-12 Disciplinary Suspensions	1 percentage point improvement 2012-2013
K-12 Academic Markers - ELA, Math, Regents	not yet available
SAT and ACT Scores	not yet available
FAFSA Completion Rates	not yet available
High School Graduation Rates (public and charter)	7 percentage point increase for public and 6 percentage point increase for charter students 2012-2014
Postsecondary Matriculation Rates	9 percentage point improvment 2012-2014
Postsecondary Persistance Rates	not yet available
Postsecondary Completion Rates	not yet available

2. Program Dashboard (measuring program efficacy)

INDICATOR	TRENDS
Attendance for students receiving supports (e.g. preventative, mental health, health, legal, etc.)	4 percentage point increase 2014-15 school year (preventative program only)
Disciplanary suspension for students receiving supports (e.g. preventative, mental health, health, legal, etc.)	not yet available
Academic scores for students receiving supports and/or whol participate in after/summer school	not yet available
Matriculation and persistence for students receiving FAFSA and other college guidance	not yet available
Persistence and college completion for students participating in mentoring program	not yet available

Source: Document distributed at the December 9, 2015, meeting of the Community Leadership Council, Buffalo.

The national Say Yes organization also has commissioned external research on the Buffalo program. A consulting firm, Schoolhouse Partners, reported on the financial progress of the collaboration, and Steven Ross at Johns Hopkins University has followed program implementation. After the 2013-14 school year, Ross reported that local leadership of the collaboration was at an "advanced" level, while communication to teachers and administrators was "emerging." Another academic researcher, Robert Bifulco, has begun reporting program outcomes for the first two citywide Say Yes chapters, Syracuse and Buffalo. In one report (Bifulco, Rubenstein, Sohn, & Murchie, 2017), four questions were addressed. Two tracked outcomes that could suggest economic revitalization in the city (see also Sohn, Rubenstein, Murchie, & Bifulco, 2017):

- How did Say Yes affect school enrollments in Buffalo and Syracuse?
- How did Say Yes affect housing prices in Buffalo and Syracuse?

A third question addressed "academic markers" on the developmental pathway to college and career success, and a fourth question measured the ultimate educational goals of the initiative:

- How did Say Yes affect elementary and middle-grade standardized test scores in Buffalo?
- How did Say Yes affect high school graduation, college matriculation, and college persistence in Buffalo?

Bifulco and colleagues found that after the first few years of implementation in Buffalo, public school enrollment increased (probably drawing students from private schools rather than outlying public school districts), but housing prices had not yet changed much. Math achievement increased though language arts performance did not, but test score gaps by race widened in both math and language arts following Say Yes implementation. Although these researchers hesitate to make strong causal claims in light of limitations in the available data, they do note that observed increases in college matriculation were deemed "statistically significant and economically meaningful," especially increases in four-year college enrollment for White students and in high school graduation, college matriculation, and retention for Black students. These effects were seen prominently with scholarship-eligible students, suggesting that "information and financial resources are the primary factors related to improvements in post-secondary outcomes" (Bifulco et al., 2017, p. 75).

In Wisconsin, Milwaukee Succeeds published detailed annual reports in its first few years. These *Milestone Reports* highlighted the initiative's Strive-inspired framework of "shared measurements," showing the percentage of children and youth meeting each developmental goal, change over the prior year, and comparisons to statewide rates and the target goal for the year 2020. These data were also shown on the initiative's website. Like Say Yes in Buffalo, Milwaukee Succeeds experienced difficulty obtaining data from external sources, and this made it harder to assess some program outcomes and effects. For example, a pilot effort to improve ACT test scores faltered when test results from a statewide source were not made available, as intended, on the student level; a similar problem occurred with the more recent FAFSA completion initiative. Another problem has been that the state metrics for academic achievement tests, especially eighth-grade math, have changed year to year and are not comparable.

Over the years, the reporting of results for Milwaukee Succeeds has become more streamlined and focused, in written reports and on the initiative's website. Fewer indicators are discussed, and they are contextualized through narratives that explain the interventions being developed to address them and that explicitly draw attention to equity concerns. While the collaboration has developed numerous interventions along the cradle-to-career pathway for students, most are limited in scope and will require time for scaling up and full impact. The collaboration has reported that one of its goals, having the percentage of children enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs meet the state average, was reached for Latinx and White children several years

before the target timeline of 2020. Graduation rates are increasing, but for the most part, educational indicators in Milwaukee show persistently low levels of achievement and attainment and dramatic disparities by race/ethnicity and poverty status.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee annually evaluate the most substantial programmatic component of Milwaukee Succeeds, the early reading initiative that combines intensive professional development and coaching for early elementary teachers with high-quality literacy tutoring for students and parent engagement and support (Lander, Klingbeil, Lynch, & Westrum, n.d.). The evaluation from 2016-17 reported that students who had participated in the initiative had greater growth on literacy assessments from fall to spring than comparison students, and those who had been exposed to a significant dosage of the intervention did considerably better than comparison students. Most subgroups of students exceeded their growth expectations. The reading initiative is effective, but it is not yet implemented at a scale to have an impact on citywide early literacy achievement.

Portland/Multnomah County's cross-sector collaboration for education, All Hands Raised, takes a slightly different approach to measuring and reporting progress. Its annual reports have been titled *Chapter 01, Chapter 02*, and so on, suggesting that the collaboration can be best understood as a narrative that is unfolding over time. These reports are made available on the initiative's website and are accompanied by brief graphic summaries of key indicators (All Hands Raised Partnership, 2013, 2015, 2017). *Chapter 01* included an extensive discussion of the local context, highlighting evidence of racial inequity on numerous dimensions. It offered considerable detail about the structure and strategies of the collaborative work groups that are the core of All Hands Raised. It also presented baseline data on ten indicators along the cradle-to-career developmental pathway, distinguished as either academic outcomes or social support measures (see Figure 5). Given the collaboration's central focus on racial equity, these indicators were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, purposefully counting students with two or more racial/ethnic identities as members of each group. The initiative identified three-year targets for each indicator that were intended to be sustained (showing steady growth), incremental (realistic and achievable), and equitable (showing accelerated improvement for students of color so that achievement gaps could be eliminated).

In the *Chapter 02* and *Chapter 03* reports, the partnership showed current levels of each indicator and presented a graphical representation of the change from each indicator's baseline level. Although there was little mention of the three-year targets in these later reports, most indicators showed positive change from their baseline. The reports include narrative descriptions of the pilot projects implemented at demonstration schools, making the case that progress on the indicators is connected not only to the initiatives being implemented in partner schools but also to the diffusion of effective practices identified through these pilot efforts.

One element of the All Hands Raised collaboration, the Ninth Grade Counts initiative, has been evaluated periodically by external researchers. This intervention supports students making the transition from middle to high school. The most recent report shows positive impact on on-time graduation for program participants compared with nonparticipants (Multnomah County Partnership for Education Research, University of Portland, & Northwest Evaluation Association, 2015).

Data on the rate of referral for disciplinary actions shows a dramatic reduction for African American students and a subsequent narrowing of the equity gap in this indicator. This has been a central focus of All Hands Raised. Racial gaps persist on many indicators, however. The collaboration's sustained attention to these indicators and to the use of data for feedback and improvement, combined with a partly positive record of progress, have earned All Hands Raised recognition by the StriveTogether network as having achieved "Proof Point" status, the fourth stage in Strive's program development sequence.

FIGURE 5. Program Indicators for All Hands Raised
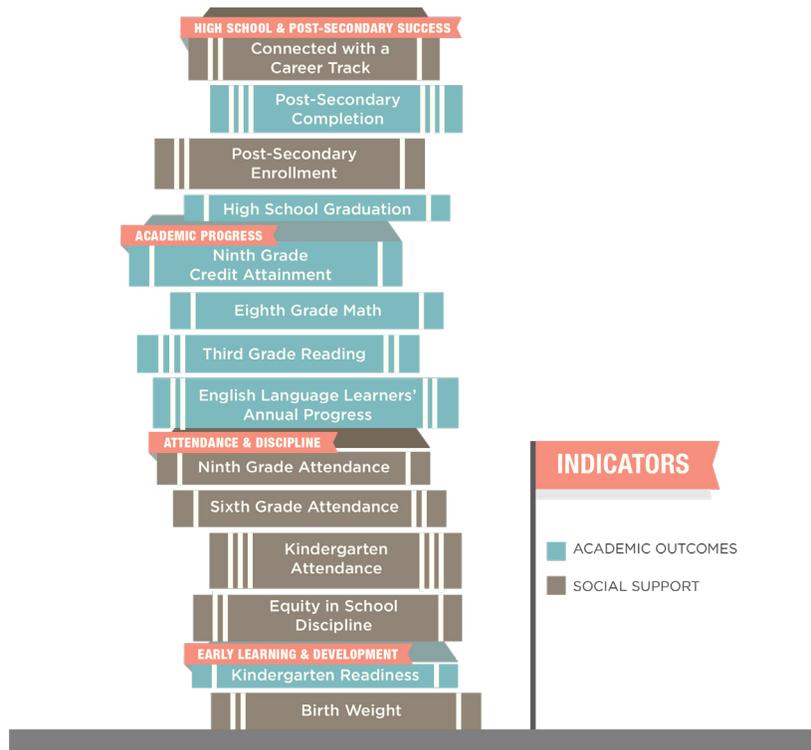
Indicator graphic as of June 2013. Please visit www.allhandsraised.org for more current information.

Finally, the Northside Achievement Zone in Minneapolis tracks and reports its progress in several ways. Annual reports show the numbers of children and families who participate in their two-generation improvement strategies. They also summarize information on outcomes derived from studies conducted by Wilder Research, an external evaluation firm, for example, on kindergarten readiness and third- to eighth-grade math and reading proficiency, comparing NAZ and non-NAZ scholars.[43] In addition, NAZ has held a steady series of community discussions, known as Results NAZ, on various aspects of program progress and impact. Topics for Results NAZ discussions have included early childhood, K-8 academic achievement, high school to college success, family engagement and parent education, housing, anchor school development, and career and finance support. These discussions are framed in a continuous improvement format, offering the opportunity for stakeholders to examine data and suggest strategy adjustments (see Figure 6).

The most recent reports, drawing from administrative data and the collaboration's own information system, indicate NAZ students are beginning to outperform other students in the neighborhood on math and language arts assessments, with particular gains for Black students. All components of the NAZ approach appear to be making a positive difference. Not all of the collaboration's original outcome goals are yet within reach, including population-level goals. Nonetheless, many signs point in positive directions for this collaboration. NAZ is unique in also monitoring the progress and health of the collaboration itself. A study based on surveys of collaborative partners found that participants had largely positive perceptions of their experience with the collaboration and identified continuing challenges in implementing collaboration, including the implementation and use of the student-level data system—a challenge for other initiatives as well.

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[43] See, e.g., https://northsideachievement.org/how-were-doing/results/

FIGURE 6. NAZ Continuous Improvement Process

NAZ CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

Northside Influence, Policy & Systems Change

RESULTS PLAN

Define best-practice collaborative strategies for Action Areas:
· Family Engagement and Education
· Early Childhood
· K-8 Success
· High School to College
· Family Support

RESULTS NAZ
Roundtable Dialogue for Each Action Area
· Key leaders spotlight data
· Find solutions for gaps
· Highlight successes

STRATEGY ADJUSTMENT MAPPED OUT FOR:
1) program work, and
2) public policy/system change efforts.

NAZ BOARD (oversight of effort)

ACTION TEAMS (learning community)

PARTNER PROGRAMS & NAZ TEAMS (operational changes)

KEY LEARNINGS   are used to adjust plans for direct impact with participating families.

NORTHSIDE ACHIEVEMENT ZONE

Source: http://northsideachievement.org/wp-content/uploads/continuous-improvement-model_9.15.17.pdf

Observations about Early Outcomes

Impact is, of course, a central component of the collective impact approach, reflected both in program rhetoric and the way collaborations have been organized and managed. As our case studies illustrate, achieving impact has, for many good reasons, been a slow but often steady process. Measuring and reporting impact is much easier said than done, and the collaborations have adopted individualized ways of doing so. It will take time and effort to assess whether these collaborations are achieving outcomes that would not have happened otherwise, and whether they are doing so in a cost-effective way. In addition to tracking education outcomes, it may also become important for more initiatives to monitor indicators of their own vitality and progress as new collaborative enterprises.

Nonetheless, to varying degrees our collaborations were attempting to fulfill their promises of transparency in reporting outcomes. Many were also forthright in publicly discussing challenges of stalled implementation and outcomes that show little change, though it is likely that the most sensitive disclosures are reserved for internal audiences. Much of the information they present is aggregated across multiple schools (and even school districts) and service providers, and it covers a range of indicators along students' developmental trajectories from birth to adulthood. For this reason, it seems fair to conclude the collaborations perform an important community service in combining this information and making it available for public consideration. Moreover, when the information is disaggregated to show results for demographic groups who often experience inequitable access to opportunities and success, it also has the potential to be useful in efforts to reduce those inequities. We turn next to the matter of equity.

CHAPTER 16.
Addressing Educational Inequities

In the cities we have studied, the disparities in education and economic outcomes by race, ethnicity, and social class are glaring. As in many other localities in the United States, these disturbing patterns are arguably related to systematic structural inequalities and long-standing patterns of discrimination and exclusion in housing, employment, criminal justice, social services, and governance, as well as education. Joined to these forces are the effects of other social cleavages over time—regional job losses in manufacturing and industry, postwar suburbanization, declines in union protections, national movements in educational privatization and accountability, immigration policies, and others. Many of these social trends were associated with the migration of White families to suburbs in past decades. Now cities and their school systems are being strained by the mixed blessing of gentrification; as White and affluent populations flow back into cities, they bring economic benefits but often displace less advantaged residents and demand services and resources for themselves.

The policies and practices that have sustained inequality were obscured from broad civic awareness for a long time, but in recent years they have been documented with growing urgency in academic research, policy analyses, investigative journalism, and in radio, film, and social media (see, e.g., Alexander, 2012; Coates, 2014; Desmond, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2006). What is emerging is a fuller and more accurate account of how and why so many schools and students are struggling. Accounts of resistance and resilience among those most negatively affected by these trends are also part of the emerging picture, though less prominent (see, e.g., Evans-Winters, 2011; Fergus, Noguera, & Martin, 2014; O'Connor, 1997).

Indeed, it is these circumstances and the enduring inequities they have produced that have led many local leaders and residents to initiate cross-sector collaborations, in the hope of reversing these seemingly intractable patterns and ensuring that urban revitalization improves the fortunes of all. The question for them then becomes how to identify, scrutinize, and resolve inequity—not just its most obvious manifestations but the underlying structural patterns as well.

In earlier eras, calling explicit attention to the racial dimensions[44] of social and educational problems was a deliberate strategy for empowering minoritized groups and fighting for rights. More recently, and especially in education, the approach known as "colorblindness" has been more prevalent. Colorblind policies and practices are meant to be universally applicable, not calling attention to racism or singling out any particular group for special treatment, even when they are designed to be offered selectively to individuals who most need them. Some analysts have observed that colorblindness has been useful in diminishing polarization and racialized rhetoric, and when tied to accountability frames such as the requirement under the federal education law known as *No Child Left Behind* that student achievement results be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and income, may lead to more, not less, attention to disparities. But others argue that racism is not on the wane and colorblindness has prevented policymakers from recognizing and challenging the root causes of systemic privilege and discrimination. W. E. B. Du Bois asserted that the problem of the 20th century was "the problem of the color-line" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 19), but more recently others have suggested "the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of colorblindness, the refusal to acknowledge the causes and consequences of enduring racial stratification" (Murakawa, 2014, p. 19).

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[44] In this discussion, when we refer to racial dynamics and inequities, we mean this to include ethnic and social class dynamics and inequities as well. While analysts have argued over the relative salience of race, ethnicity, and social class, as well as other demographic markers, in patterns of disadvantage and inequality, we are more concerned here with how to address any basis for inequality.

All eight initiatives we studied openly acknowledged the presence of inequities of educational opportunity and achievement in their contexts. To what extent have they sought directly to address, or at least recognize, these inequities and their underlying structural foundations? Are they using colorblind strategies to try to unite diverse communities around new policies and practices that can benefit everyone? Or do they perhaps serve a middle function: helping to prepare the ground and plant the seeds of a deeper analysis without tackling it head-on just yet?

In this section, we report and interpret what we learned from our informants in each city. We caution that, especially with the five mini-cases, we did not interview all stakeholders who might have had useful perspectives on these matters. As researchers, our questions and our own positioning (all but two of our research team members are White, and the others are frequently perceived to be so as well) may have discouraged some people from talking forthrightly about these sensitive issues, while perhaps emboldening others to do so. We also want to caution that this issue is salient not just at a civic or institutional level, but it is also a deeply personal one. Some leaders of the cross-sector initiatives we studied are prominent, successful persons of color who no doubt have had to navigate these issues in their own personal and professional lives, and all of the leaders have likely adopted prior stances on the causes of and responses to inequity that reflect prevailing constraints and opportunities in their local social and political contexts. How these cross-sector collaborations address long-standing inequities is therefore both a very private and very public matter.

In Buffalo, Say Yes to Education offers a resonant strategy for dealing with inequality. The Say Yes approach is founded on the goal of reducing the barriers to educational success that are experienced by some students. Race, ethnicity, or other demographic qualifiers are rarely mentioned in Say Yes documents; the reform strategy is framed in general terms as making available a wide range of services to help "disadvantaged urban youth" or "inner-city youth"—those students who do not enjoy benefits and resources available to children of the middle class. The wraparound services and college scholarship that are central in the Say Yes approach are explicit efforts to offer tangible support to students (and their families) and to help create a widespread change in orientation toward a "college-going culture" where all students can confidently expect to attend college and be prepared to succeed. This approach, framed in universal terms, targets services to students who need them but does not explicitly call out structural sources of privilege or inequality and does not racialize problems, strategies, or outcomes.

Among the city leaders who brought Say Yes to Buffalo, the issues are described somewhat more specifically in terms of race and social class. In our interviews, key stakeholders referred to racial tensions in the city, and to race- and class-based educational disparities, especially around high school graduation rates. Some of the descriptions we heard tended to have a deficit-thinking tinge and to emphasize the disadvantages experienced by many students. The ravages of intergenerational poverty were noted. But people also spoke about the promise and positive qualities of the city's minoritized populations and the need to make sure that all young people have the chance to benefit from an improved economic situation.

Say Yes Buffalo has steered clear of some of the more direct conflicts over racial equity in the local school system, such as the battles over neighborhood schooling and the parental choice plan that seems to limit access to high-quality schools for students of color. Say Yes adopts an inclusive approach to governance and participation and has consistently invited members and representatives of the local communities of color to participate on an equal footing in decision making, although it does not seem that highly vocal grassroots activists who might have divergent perspectives about equity in Buffalo have a strong presence in the initiative.

Nonetheless, the initiative has gradually moved toward more targeted and explicit attention to racial inequities. Say Yes is an active participant in the city's Racial Equity Roundtable, which brings together community leaders

to address equity explicitly. The Roundtable helped Say Yes convene a group of civic leaders to discuss the specific experiences of male students of color.[45] This led to Say Yes hiring two new full-time staff members for a Boys and Men of Color Initiative. One element of this initiative is a youth leadership council, charged to "address the practices and systems that hold back males of color."[46]

Say Yes Buffalo tracks its program outcomes, like graduate rates and college persistence, disaggregated by race and social class. Recently, for example, it was reported that high school graduation rates have increased at different rates for Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian and Native American students, but all in a positive direction. The scholarship committee also monitors who is benefiting from the college promise scholarship; as one member noted, the committee has no intention of supporting an exclusively middle-class scholarship. Overall, the Say Yes strategy can be summarized with a comment from one staff member, "the current revitalization and rebirth is not yet for everyone, and I think we're trying to pave a path so that it can be."

In Portland/Multnomah County, racial equity is deliberately at the top of the agenda for All Hands Raised. The state of Oregon had racism in its bones from its earliest days: the first state constitution in 1859 stated that "No free negro or mulatto not residing in this state at the time of the adoption of this constitution, shall come, reside or be within this state or hold any real estate, or make any contracts, or maintain any suit therein" (Hare, 2018). While Portland is often described as socially liberal and economically progressive, some suggest it is an example of "neoliberal racism" where White privilege is maintained despite a veneer of inclusivity (Semuels, 2016).

There are various efforts to promote racial equity in the city overall. The city government established an Office of Equity and Human Rights that developed a set of strategies for using a racial equity lens to examine long-standing roots of exclusion in government and develop policies and practices to redress inequities.[47] In 2012, the City of Portland and several dozen other agencies and organizations produced a document, *The Portland Plan*, that laid out a long-term vision for equity in education, health, and employment.[48] Other organizations such as Prosper Portland[49] also have equity agendas.

But some of our informants cautioned that in a city with a reputation for social progressivism, many residents may be less inclined to work against racism because they simply don't see themselves or their city in that way. As one observer said, "If you ask anyone Latino or Black, 'Is there racism in Portland?' They say it's worse here than anywhere else that they've ever lived…. And they say it's because everyone here thinks they're so progressive, they're sorta like post-racist and so you have an extraordinary level of insensitivity." Another talked about working in the face of this resistance, "a so-called liberal city, such as Portland, chooses to believe that it's cured its issues of race—they get to the point where they don't want to talk about race. … Well, yeah, but we're gonna talk about race because we're still a city [where] only 20% of African American males are achieving literacy by third grade. So we have to have that conversation. … We do not let it become another issue. It is about race."

In 2010, the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) was formed in Portland with a mission "to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities." With assistance from Portland State University, CCC is documenting the lived experiences of minoritized individuals and groups in Portland and Multnomah County in a series of reports. The statistics are dramatic and the language is stark; the first report, for example, calls the information in it "sour and bruised"

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[45] See https://racialequitybuffalo.org/our-work/initiatives/initiative:greater-buffalo-racial-equity-roundtable-boys-and-young-men-of-color-coalition/

[46] See https://www.breakingbarriersbuffalo.org/

[47] See https://www.breakingbarriersbuffalo.org/

[48] See https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/349103; http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/

[49] See https://prosperportland.us/

All Hands Raised - Photo credit: Fred Joe Photography

and reminds the reader that "official measures to enumerate our community members are plagued by legacies of distrust and cynicism. They are also plagued by the Whiteness that pervades all forms of data collection and interpretation" (Curry-Stevens et al., 2010, p. 7). CCC explicitly emphasizes the need for social services to be provided by "culturally specific organizations," arguing,

> Whether it is through omission or commission, by intention or by neglect, the relationship between mainstream service providers and the communities of color who rely on their services is riddled with complexity, ambiguity and racism. And whether or not workers are able to unlearn their racial and cultural biases is an unanswered question—but we know this is not necessary when services are received in culturally specific organizations. (p. 17)[50]

The efforts to address equity citywide and the pointed assertions from the communities of color form a backdrop for the work of All Hands Raised. In such a context, calls for social justice and equity in education could be mere rhetoric or genuine and intentional—or somewhere in between. All Hands Raised has been persistent with its focus on racial equity and shows no sign of retreating from it. One possible reason is that members of the Coalition of Communities of Color have had a prominent role in much of the collaboration's work.

Before AHR was founded, the precursor education leadership roundtable members had equity in their line of vision, but little actual progress was made. When AHR began, this emphasis was reflected in the new collaboration's mission statement, printed materials, data analytics, board composition, and ongoing agenda. A working group, named the *Eliminating Disparities in Child and Youth Success Collaborative,* was formed to continue the dialogue. The original members included executive level leaders of two governmental entities, a number of culturally specific organizations, including CCC members, three foundations, the superintendents of the six participating school districts, two nonprofit technical-education organizations, and All Hands Raised.

When progress slowed, the leaders from the communities of color pressed the group to reconstitute itself as an even smaller group, with only the superintendents, AHR staff, and representatives from the different communities of color, to foster the kind of trust and openness necessary for confronting equity. This group,

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[50] See also Curry-Stevens and Muthanna (2016).

which is now known as the Racial Educational Equity Strategic Leadership Group, tackled the challenge of sharing and exploring data so it could understand educational disparities more fully. This seemingly small and obvious step was difficult, in part because some of the smaller districts had as glaring inequities on some measures as the largest district, Portland Public Schools, but less political will and professional capacity to deal with them. Acknowledging that all districts were not going to be able to move at the same pace, eventually the group was able to share data and committed themselves to developing explicit racial equity policies for their districts.

A few years later, the districts are seeing significant reductions in racial disparities in school disciplinary action. All six AHR partner school districts have adopted racial equity policies that focus on matters such as equitable student outcomes, equitable hiring practices, and culturally responsive teacher professional development. The collaboration has established relationships with seven schools in the area as "racial educational equity school community sites" to pursue analysis and improvement strategies together. Although it is difficult to attribute changes in policies, practices, and student outcomes directly to the work of AHR, some of our informants stressed that this work would not have proceeded without All Hands Raised, and having superintendents participate with representatives from culturally specific community groups and agencies in conversations about equity has been salutary. For example, one of the members of the Coalition of Communities of Color said, "without All Hands Raised even the diverse community may not be able to come together for the purpose of how we address the common cause of our public education for students of color."

The work AHR is doing in other areas, like school attendance, high school transition, and kindergarten readiness seeks, to improve services and outcomes across the board by piloting reform strategies that can then be scaled up in other schools and districts. The initiative presents all of this work as relevant to racial equity, "From early childhood work to our focus on college and careers, we are committed to improving outdated systems that have perpetuated inequities for decades" (All Hands Raised, 2017, p. 5).

In Milwaukee, the resentments of the White population, which by some accounts was not particularly welcoming to Blacks in the first place, increased as Blacks came to be associated with job loss, neighborhood decline, and eventually with school integration. After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, Milwaukee experimented with a convoluted plan known as "intact busing." Whole busloads of Black children from overcrowded schools in their own neighborhoods would be taken to White schools after the school day had begun, sent to separate classrooms in those schools, bused back to their neighborhood schools for lunch, and then returned to the White schools for afternoon sessions (Miner, 2013).

Hardly a bona fide desegregation plan, intact busing persisted until the early 1970s, and some consider it a marker of the strength of White resistance to the Black influx to the city. By the end of the 1970s, Milwaukee was using a different busing plan and an array of magnet schools to respond to a federal court order for desegregation. In short order (and for some reasons other than school desegregation), many thousands of White residents decamped for the suburbs and Milwaukee's schools began to enroll increasing numbers of Black, and later Latino and Asian, students.

Despite hopes that charters and publicly supported private schooling, both of which were established in the 1990s, would be an improvement over the public schools, student achievement in all three types of schools is fairly similar and no sector has shown overall high levels of performance. The economic ramifications of the choice plans are contested; and many see charters and vouchers as drawing unconscionable amounts of public funding away from the traditional system, which still educates the majority of students in Milwaukee. Not surprisingly, the political conflicts around vouchers, charters, and the traditional public school system have been

long in duration, high in emotion, and not clearly configured along any racial/ethnic fault lines. These conflicts play out in the city itself and at the county and state level as well. Since 2010, political gerrymandering has led to a decrease in Milwaukee's representation in the state legislature, which makes it easier for the state to turn its back on a city that, some argue, generates more tax revenue for the state than it receives in benefits.[51] State and county officials sometimes justify their attempts to withhold public support—fiscal and otherwise—from the Milwaukee schools as a response to what they perceive as intractable problems that are entirely of the city's creation. And obtaining representation at the city level for communities of color has also been a challenge: Milwaukee has gone 172 years with only White men in the mayor's seat (except for one very brief period when a Black man served as acting mayor). In short, there are numerous deep and long-standing roots and manifestations of inequality in Milwaukee.

In Milwaukee's highly charged and complex racial and educational context, Milwaukee Succeeds has tried to chart a straightforward course for its work, to help resolve educational inequities but not get bogged down in the many possible entanglements around politically volatile and divisive issues. Rather than wading into arguments over whether charter and voucher schools are harmful or helpful, and rather than working exclusively on behalf of the public school system, whose challenges are internal as well as external, Milwaukee Succeeds has chosen to align with no single schooling sector but acknowledges that charters and vouchers are here to stay and strives to find ways to support all sectors. In the words of a key informant, Milwaukee Succeeds turned its focus away from the battles adults were having with each other and toward the children who were being ignored in the fray.

One manifestation of this approach was the agreement, early on, that the collaboration would publish no data on system performance or student achievement unless the data set included information from multiple sectors, to minimize any impulses toward finger pointing and shaming of one sector or another. Another example is the signature Reading Foundations initiative that Milwaukee Succeeds has organized and sponsors, which has had some success in reducing early literacy disparities. Most of the schools in the pilot program are traditional public schools, but Milwaukee Succeeds has also ensured that some voucher and charter schools take part as well. This cooperative approach seems to have encouraged Seton Catholic Schools, a network of parochial elementary schools, to work more closely with the public school system on mutually beneficial instructional improvement strategies. It also may be giving MPS room to experiment on its own and take bolder steps in reform, now that its existence is not so threatened.

The initiative's slogan is "every child, in every school, cradle to career." This declaration is inclusive, but vague about inequity. Nonetheless, over the years Milwaukee Succeeds has become more explicit in pointing to disparities along the dimensions of race and ethnicity, social class, and disability and language status. For example, the interventions around kindergarten readiness that are part of the Milwaukee Succeeds portfolio are an attempt to ameliorate the conditions of living in poverty, by helping ensure that all children receive immunizations and developmental screenings and working to broaden access to high-quality early childcare. To some degree, these interventions target the structural inequities in social services that families encounter, though in implementing them the collaboration has also run headlong into the same structural obstacles that plague families in the city's Inner Core, such as nonexistent or nonresponsive health care facilities. At the other end of the age spectrum, Milwaukee Succeeds has begun to identify the needs of "opportunity youth" who are out of school and out of work during the young adult years. This may provide the collaboration another opportunity to address the intertwined social, economic, and educational conditions holding back the city's

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[51] See https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/burdens-gerrymandering-are-borne-communities-color-ncna817446 and https://www.wiscontext.org/why-wisconsin-became-pivotal-front-nationwide-redistricting-fight.

least advantaged youth, though it is also possible that interventions will overlook the most entrenched systemic and structural factors at play.

Milwaukee Succeeds maintains on its website an interactive tool where data on various educational measures can be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income level, and other demographic categories. This appears to invite considerations of the needs of students from different backgrounds, which might be entirely appropriate in this context where the communities of color have had very different histories and lead markedly segregated lives. It may seem somewhat paradoxical, then, that the collaboration mainly operates in a universal, colorblind frame with its emphasis on success for every child in every school. One way to interpret this is that the collaboration is setting the stage for more specific attention to different groups, but is reluctant to adopt that stance too quickly or forcefully in a city where cultural and political divisions are sharp and racialized discourse and interventions might fuel even more conflict and dissatisfaction.

Perhaps the most important way Milwaukee Succeeds acknowledges structural inequities is in its theory of action known as the Road Map, with its presentation of the contextual and contributing indicators that affect students' ability to meet the developmental milestones that help them succeed. By including factors such as unemployment rates, homelessness and transiency, teen pregnancy, and community mental health as "large-scale factors that impact the educational ecosystem," the collaboration directs attention to those factors and also acknowledges they do not fall within the collaboration's current sphere of influence. They are, however, part of the ongoing discussions about equity the collaboration hosts. Milwaukee Succeeds has received assistance in structuring these conversations from an associate who consults regularly with many collective impact initiatives around the country on matters of equity, and from the StriveTogether network, which has recently adopted a stronger emphasis on equity.

Participants in Milwaukee Succeeds, including the core funders and the initiative's executives, readily acknowledge these issues. As one leader explained, "If racial equity is not addressed... [you may see] a lack of an authentic community engagement...and the likelihood of your collective impact initiative having any longevity [is at risk]." Their perspectives on the root causes and potential solutions for inequity mirror other local and national conversations. It could be that the partnership might have more traction on issues of racial equity if there were more involvement from grassroots organizations anchored in the communities affected by poverty and segregation, because such organizations are often more effective in identifying authentic and actionable solutions. Overall, attention to equity within Milwaukee Succeeds is a delicate matter, simultaneously central and muted in the work being undertaken.

The five additional cities we studied offer different perspectives for challenging local disparities from those we saw in Buffalo, Portland/Multnomah County, and Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Succeeds

Minneapolis, like Portland, is a relatively advantaged and overwhelmingly White metropolitan area, yet the racial disparities in the city and state are among the highest in the country. In its application for a Promise Neighborhoods grant, the community activists from the Northside Achievement Zone argued clearly that the origins of low educational outcomes for children of color are in the structural conditions of poverty, violence, unemployment, and failing schools in the neighborhood. They proposed a program that would target these root causes through a two-generation intervention, with housing and employment assistance for parents, wraparound services for children to ensure their readiness to learn, support for parents and children in organizing their educational lives, and partnerships with schools working to teach the students. The project was designed to be "high-touch," having a direct impact on a critical mass of students and their families in a single neighborhood with the goal of tipping the entire neighborhood in a positive direction. The program would also serve as a model that could inform larger policy decisions in the city and state and be replicated in other locales.

Though not leveling accusations of racism, NAZ has had no hesitation in calling out the social, economic, and health disparities that have restricted educational outcomes for the Northside students. Moreover, instead of seeing the Northside families as deficient and in need of saving, NAZ considers them community assets and engages parents as leaders and coaches in uplifting one another. Some positive outcomes are beginning to emerge from the NAZ effort, and while the collaboration acknowledges that it does not yet see neighborhood- or system-level change, there is continued enthusiasm and support for its approach from many quarters.

In Savannah, the Youth Futures Authority, in its most robust phase, adopted a neighborhood-based intervention strategy similar to NAZ, offering case management and direct social services to support children and families. But this approach followed a period in which YFA worked, mostly unsuccessfully, to achieve system-level change in policies and practices for children and youth across Savannah. Then YFA executive director Otis Johnson understood the value of data and doggedly disaggregated data by race to generate transparent indicators showing where the school system and the city were failing students under their care. He also understood that communities of color could respond to messaging and interventions directly meant to assist them, while the White community in Savannah needed a different kind of messaging. For this, he worked closely with the city manager who was White:

> I describe our partnership as a salt and pepper partnership because he could go into the White community and talk about issues and get a positive response. I could go to that same community and because I was Black and because I had a reputation of being "a militant," I would get a different reaction. So, we knew who our constituencies were, and we worked it.
>
> There are things that he would get push back if it came to the Black community. For example, when White people come to the Black community to talk about crime, it's not the same reaction as if I come into the Black community and talk about crime.

Johnson shared his ideas and strategies about community advocacy with his program's funder, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and they were disseminated in a report titled *Eye of the Storm* that the foundation released to share what it had learned through its New Futures initiative. Through this publication, Johnson acquired a broader platform for sharing his insightful reflections. He was not afraid to name injustices or to pressure systems to provide what poor communities needed when the communities lacked the resources or resolve to demand them for themselves. But he did it strategically and in ways the political elite could accept. He also recognized that just as community beneficiaries of systemic change should not be objectified or treated as persons to be acted upon, powerful system actors also had to be engaged and not manipulated. He felt that persons in power would not continue to support and fund systemic change unless they felt a part of the process and saw it as in their best interests.

After ten years, Johnson stepped away from YFA to mount a successful run for the mayor's office. He also had been a professor and administrator at a local college and had a substantial base of support, though he later lacked the financial backing necessary to stave off an election challenge from another prominent Black leader (Dowe & Walton, 2013). In any case, Johnson's tenure with YFA, and the authority's subsequent decline, demonstrated that bold, explicit assaults on endemic inequities could get results, but the effort had to be flexible and adaptable, leveraging resources effectively and finding the right people and points in the system that could yield to pressure.

Outcome disparities and structural inequities by race/ethnicity and social class are no less evident in Nashville, Oakland, and Providence, our three additional mini-case sites, and they were at least part of the impetus for the cross-sector collaborations in those locales. But they do not figure so prominently in the collaborations' stories or records of effort.

In Nashville, following a series of racially charged events around the country in 2016, the mayor sponsored a convening to draw community members together to discuss race, equity, and what the city was doing in areas such as health, housing, criminal justice, immigration, and public education.[52] This event was a response to President Obama's call that year for communities to converse together about race in the face of a number of killings of unarmed Black men and boys by police, the murder of nine Black persons in a church in Charleston, SC, and the killings of five White police officers in Dallas, TX. The report that resulted from Nashville's effort, titled *Nashville's Dialogue on Race, Equity, and Leadership*, included a section about public education and youth, which noted two initiatives from Alignment Nashville—the PreK-8th Grade Literacy Team to be launched the following year (2017), and an existing A-Team on teacher recruitment and retention. But nothing on the Alignment Nashville website about either team would suggest that their focus is racial equity. That is typical of the Alignment Nashville approach overall: if the collaboration intends to tackle race or social class disparities, it does so with little or no fanfare or even acknowledgment.

The content and tone of most Alignment Nashville materials, echoed in our field visits and interviews, suggest that the overarching goal of the collaboration is to improve the quality of the education system by helping to support the school system's strategic objectives. Equity and quality certainly go hand in hand, but they are not interchangeable objectives. Quality often works in the service of equity; for example, one of Metro Nashville Public Schools' current strategic priorities is a commitment to "increase rigor and access for all students," and a corresponding strategy is to provide additional student-based funding for students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English language learners. A second commitment is "to give our students the greatest civil right, the ability to read."[53] But there is no mention of disparities by race or social class, or of culturally sensitive instruction and other supports that might help students from groups that have experienced entrenched patterns of failure succeed in school.

In Providence, the Children and Youth Cabinet has explicitly articulated the need to address the educational challenges of Latino students, the largest minoritized group in the city, and the majority of the school district's students. The CYC's most important early support came from a mayor and senior education policy advisor who were both persons of color. But its descriptions of current efforts, most of which focus on social and emotional health, make little mention of race, ethnicity, or social class; they seem pitched toward universal goals for all students. Over its early rocky history, the CYC made many efforts to reach out to local communities of color to engage them in needs assessments and intervention work. But these efforts were uneven. One respondent told

us that the coalition didn't sufficiently engage grassroots parents and described residents "who are frustrated and angry and full of power and potential that needs to be tapped," saying that even the well-educated, upper middle class people of color of the community table want to be more meaningfully engaged. (This may be shifting somewhat. In part because of staff turnover at community-based organizations, the community partnership table has recently attained a more balanced representation of participants who are people of color.)

More widely, observers have noted the persistent problem for community-based organizations that are headed mostly by White persons, often who are prominent local leaders, in being perceived as out of touch. This is a concern in Providence, where even the leaders who are persons of color have admitted that there isn't enough genuine community engagement to overcome such perceptions. Organizations, such as the Urban League, that traditionally represented the Black community have declined or disappeared, in part because of changing demographics and the growth of the Latino community. But the rise in the numbers and the power of the Latino community is fairly recent, and, according to one Black civic leader who was a longtime resident, "they haven't grown the kind of community-based organizations the Black community once had available to it."

As one observer said, "One of the things that is Providence-specific … is that we don't have strong adult organizing entities in the city. It is a real challenge, I think, for a lot of work around education equity." The CYC has not always been sufficiently responsive to these issues; staff members are not always equipped with the experience, knowledge, and sensibilities to work with community partners, and sometimes this reinforces community perceptions of White privilege in the CYC. "[And] there's no counterbalance to the CYC to push more action around engaging residents."

Finally, Oakland is a city famous as a seat of Black power in the 1960s and the site of a prominent battle over students' use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE, or "ebonics") in the 1970s. Long a city with a substantial proportion of African Americans, the Latino population has pulled even and begun to overtake the Black population citywide, and the Latino student population is 45% of the total district enrollment, compared with 27% for Black students and 10% for White students. Low academic performance and race-based disparities have been present for years, but now the identities of the target groups have shifted. The community schools program in Oakland is an acknowledgment that many students, especially those living in poverty, need extra supports in order to thrive in school. Those supports can help disrupt long-standing disparities in access to resources and opportunities, disparities that feed the pipeline of poor performance.

Parents are asked to be involved in program planning and oversight at each school and the district provides training to help them participate effectively. But racial tensions can undermine this. Some believe that, although most students are Latino, parent power is still concentrated in the Black community. These tensions are exacerbated by race-based conflicts over the growing number of charter schools; many Latino families find them more welcoming than the traditional schools, but other residents believe they sap resources from Oakland's long-standing system. A way to address this tension might be, on a school-by-school basis, to hire community-based providers and mount services in ways that are culturally specific and sensitive.

Observations about Addressing Educational Inequities

Although all eight collaborations we studied named equity as a prime component of their strategic missions, they have taken different approaches to acknowledging and targeting racial, ethnic, and social class inequities in education and the underlying structural forces that sustain them. Exactly why these patterns exist is hard to discern. In Savannah and Minneapolis, collaboration leaders have been more bold and specific in naming and addressing disparities, but have done so in a context where they were mostly focused on person-to-person change and hoped, but were not always confident, their message would get through to higher levels.

The collaborations in Portland/Multnomah County and Minneapolis are explicit in focusing on racial inequity. In these two locations, communities of color and neighborhood activists are well organized, engaged, and able to press their agendas effectively. Populations of color are relatively small in both cities. So it may also be true that those in power (who are mostly White) are willing to address racial inequities not just out of a genuine desire to promote equal opportunity and improve race relations but also because they perceive that doing so is unlikely to threaten existing balances of power or privilege.

In Milwaukee and Buffalo, colorblind language about equity and a focus on universal solutions might seem a safer and more palatable approach in contexts where populations are more evenly distributed among racial groups and racial tensions are often evident; however, both partnerships have gradually inched closer to race-specific language and interventions. Oakland seems to mirror Milwaukee and Buffalo, but that may be only our perception; the most active race-based conversations could be happening at the school level, and we did not have much contact with school sites. Providence and Nashville display the least explicit attention to racial equity. This is not because disparities don't exist in those cities—they do. Possible explanations might be that collaborative leaders and partners feel a universal approach that downplays disparities is politically and culturally more appropriate for them to use in their settings. Quality improvements and universal solutions are good stand-ins for equity-focused strategies when the latter seem beyond reach.

There is clearly no one formula for doing the work to achieve racial equity, and it will take some time before it becomes clear to what extent these locally tailored approaches are sufficient and effective. Without exception, the cross-sector collaborations we studied make at the least a big symbolic contribution to addressing equity, by the fact of their existence. Virtually all were established to improve educational and economic outcomes for residents of their locales, which implicitly meant minoritized, low-income communities. Symbolic efforts can, of course, be for show only, deflecting criticism and tamping down conflict and resentment. We think something more is going on in these cases. The real application of dollars, the willingness to report disaggregated results, the uptick in targeted solutions rather than universal ones in some cities, all signal these initiatives and their host locales are learning to admit to systemic problems and tackle them.

In *The Path of Most Resistance*, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 1995 report on its New Futures initiative, the foundation conveyed several lessons it had learned about comprehensive community improvement. It was acknowledged that system-level institutional change alone would not necessarily trickle down and lead to tangible outcomes for individuals. Person-to-person strategies were essential, hence the foundation's willingness to let Savannah's Youth Futures Authority transition to a neighborhood-based intervention. But, it was also acknowledged that systems did have to change. For a community to benefit from a comprehensive change, the report claimed, it had to have a "conviction that the existing systems are badly flawed and require fundamental change so that they create better opportunities for at-risk youth. Without a profound loyalty to this proposition, it is difficult to prevent a difficult reform initiative from eroding into just another service 'project'" (p. 12). This lesson seems also to apply to current cross-sector collaborations for education: too much focus on an overlay of support services for children and youth, without attention to the entire structural system of privilege and power, might in the end do little to erase inequities.

PART IV
Taking Stock: Implications for Policy and Practice

CHAPTER 17.
Early Conclusions about Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Education

Cross-sector collaborations for education are not new and have experienced periodic spurts of attention and investment. They arise from and sometimes resemble other types of initiatives for revitalizing and providing services to neighborhoods, families, and students. The current cyclical resurgence has been spurred in part by social impact advocates' embrace of the collective impact concept, and also by other political and social conditions. This resurgence has brought new elements into play that make this cycle different and potentially fruitful. None is a silver bullet, but the mix of new data, national networks, structural innovations, and increasing awareness of students' need for a quality education *and* a comprehensive model of services seems to be providing forward momentum that goes beyond prior efforts.

The recent iterations of cross-sector collaboration for education are still relatively young and "in development." Rather than a summative evaluation, our research represents an attempt to lay the groundwork for a broad enterprise of additional research still to come. In this final section, we take stock of what we have learned overall and offer some early conclusions and implications for those engaged in the work themselves or in position to support—or choose not to support—efforts like these in the future. Our general message combines cautious optimism, a call for patience, and one or two pinches of skeptical realism.

Lessons Learned about the Collective Impact Model

As we have explained, the Kania and Kramer model of collective impact did not completely initiate or overtake the domain of cross-sector collaborations for education. Some collaborations began before this model was conceived, and many collaborations still downplay any connection to the collective impact model. However, there was some drift toward the model by collaborations that predated it, especially during years when philanthropies were focused on it. And a growing number of collaborations, notably those associated with the StriveTogether network, use it explicitly. Given its prominence, here we take a moment to assess what our case study findings suggest about the collective impact model. Recall that the model has five core elements:

- Common agenda
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous communication
- Backbone support organization
- Shared measurement systems

The collaborations we studied have tried to achieve coherence and alignment in their goals and activities. However, sometimes the goals are expansive compared with what they aspire to implement or are able to accomplish. Tangible activities are constrained by available resources, personnel, and interests. Some collaborations—notably Say Yes Buffalo, Oakland Full Service Community Schools, and NAZ—have sought to implement a fairly comprehensive approach, while others articulated that vision but have been more circumspect in their actual operations.

All of the collaborations found some way to structure operational support, although the "backbones" did not all look the same. Similarly, they all set up structures of large and small groups for governance, operations, and

outreach. Again, variation in the specifics for form and function was substantial. In addition, some collaborations seemed to prioritize public communication while others were content to work behind the scenes a bit more.

Most of the collaborations collected and reported data, though this was a more challenging and less crucial aspect of their work than might have been expected given the early emphasis on measurement and data use. Demonstrating dramatic impact on a full range of outcome measures remains an elusive aspiration.

Overall, the collective impact idea retains appeal, but it appears to function more effectively as a broad framework than as an explicit formula or prescriptive model for how to achieve and make an impact through collaboration. Finally, an implicit idea within the collective impact literature is that a single initiative will gather and align all of the relevant agendas, resources, and people in a locale and coalesce them into a comprehensive enterprise. This has clearly not happened; each of our collaborations exists in a city or region where other collaborations with similar goals are also operating.

What Is Impressive about What We Have Seen

Some of the elevated language about collective impact conjures images of broad systemic advances beyond those ever seen before. Characterizing past attempts to reform education, Kania and Kramer drew sharp distinctions between isolated impacts and systemic ones and between energy expended and results achieved: "The heroic efforts of countless teachers, administrators, and nonprofits, together with billions of dollars in charitable contributions, may have led to important improvements in individual schools and classrooms, yet system-wide progress has seemed virtually unobtainable." After laying out the key elements of collective impact as manifested in Cincinnati's StrivePartnership, they concluded, "If successful, it presages the spread of a new approach that will enable us to solve today's most serious social problems with the resources we already have at our disposal" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, pp. 36, 41).

The contemporary resurgence of interest in local cross-sector collaboration for education has introduced some innovative elements like an emphasis on backbone organizations, effective governance and operational models, exploitation of newly available data to provide a data-informed orientation, and the construction of national networks to facilitate shared learning. Are these enough to warrant optimism, especially when viewed against the backdrop of decades of past efforts at local collaboration, efforts that left some social problems less intense or pervasive but did not leave them solved? Although it is too early to close the books, our field research has not convinced us we are on the verge of a dramatic new order of systemic change. Nonetheless, we come away impressed by much of what we have encountered.

> Our research suggests some reasons that state and national actors might be wise to support such local efforts at least for enough time to allow them to show what they can and cannot do.

The local collaborations we studied are actively wrestling with ongoing challenges, trying to find the right balance between high expectations and realistic ones, adjusting initial decisions about collaboration, governance, measurement, funding, and service emphases as they learn from experience what works and what is problematic. Although the initiatives tend to focus on near-term and quickly achievable targets of opportunity, the movement overall retains its orientation to the long run, and, in the world of cradle-to-career education reform, cycles of improvement may need to be measured in decades, not years.

While it is too soon to judge how well cross-sector collaboration "works" when assessed by defined measures of educational achievement and evidence of eliminating disparities in opportunity among subgroups of students, our research suggests some reasons that state and national actors might be wise to support such local efforts at least for enough time to allow them to show what they can and cannot do.

- *As they have been implemented, current collaborations show some promise for creating a new kind of venue to bring local partners together who often have not cooperated in the past and have even been in conflict.* All three of our major case studies provide illustrations of collaborative efforts that go beyond talking together to achieve actual working together. In Portland/Multnomah County, this can be seen in the agreement by six superintendents to share data and work in partnership with one another and leaders from communities of color on All Hands Raised initiatives focused on racial equity. In Milwaukee, it is manifested in the ability of Milwaukee Succeeds to keep three disparate and often warring sectors—vouchers, charters, and traditional public schools—in the fold and working together in the area of reading literacy. Effective coordination can be seen, as well, in the way community-based, out-of-school providers have worked with the collaboration, and the ways in which diverse members of the Data Council found common ground on indicators. In Buffalo, Say Yes has helped to bridge the gap between the city school district and the county government, and at the school level between the district and afterschool providers. While our interviews there variously focused on specific initiatives like the college scholarships or wraparound services, we often heard unsolicited testimonials to what many persons reported to us as a renewed sense of hope in the city. We heard the word "hope" over and over again. The Academies of Nashville, which Alignment Nashville helped initiate and continues to support, have become national models for integrating core academic subjects with career and technical education. Minneapolis's Northside Achievement Zone claims, based on a local study, that for every dollar invested in NAZ brings a six-fold return to families and public and, based on its promise, in July 2017, the Ballmer Group awarded NAZ a $10 million grant.

- *Collaborations have had to overcome difficulties to accomplish their work and for the most part have not been dissuaded.* Charter and voucher school supporters' lack of trust in the public school superintendent threatened the viability of collaboration in Milwaukee during the early days of Milwaukee Succeeds, and political maneuvers at the state level have put things at risk as well. In Providence, a number of factors caused the Children and Youth Cabinet to lose some of its partners over time. In Savannah, when its funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation ran its course, the Youth Futures Authority lost the ability to fund some of the service programs that had been important for building community support; gradually, as its leadership transitioned into less experienced hands, it could not compete with other local groups for available funding, and, despite the indications that some of its ideas and traditions have found expression in the Georgia Partnership, YFA itself was dissolved by the state legislature as of July 1, 2017. These examples illustrate the range of challenges that arise even when collaboration is a shared goal.

- *Most of the collaborations we studied seem to have helped calm urban education politics and establish enough stability for partners to move forward.* This is no small accomplishment. Urban education is often shaken and sometimes paralyzed by arguments over controversial ideas, battles for resources, clashes among strong personalities, and tensions regarding racial and social change. In at least some of our cities some long-time local leaders initially feared the new collaborations would draw attention, energy, and resources away from what they considered more important efforts to improve schools. Ironically, one factor alleviating these concerns was that the collaborations did not prove as large and dominating as the early rhetoric about collective impact led some stakeholders to expect, but the collaborations also worked to anticipate and avoid some potential resentments.

Oakland Full Service Community Schools - Photo credit: © Hasain Rasheed Photography

For example, in Buffalo, the political, racial, and personal divisions on the school board regularly were aggravated by combative members. In Milwaukee, tensions among voucher, charter, and district supporters and divisions between the predominantly Democratic city and the Republican state legislature and governor represent fault lines seemingly always on the verge of eruption. Oakland's long-standing tensions over race are now overlaid with new ones over gentrification and housing costs, issues that are also surfacing in Portland. Our cases reveal different ways the collaborations have dealt with such challenges, but most seem to share an agreement not to tackle them head on and a preference, instead, for quiet outreach, keeping a low profile when hot battles have raged around them.

Positive contributions like these from cross-sector education collaborations may seem like baby steps when measured against the broad and systemic strides needed if the goals of improved education achievement and equity are to be realized. Calming the political waters may not guarantee policy successes, but may be an important facilitator. Small steps can be valuable when they are in the right direction. These groups' efforts to promote quality schooling and the delivery of comprehensive services as a tool for addressing opportunity gaps, and their focus on expanding these from school-specific efforts to a larger scale, represent a substantive advance from many previous efforts.

Managing Expectations at the Local Level and Beyond

Managing expectations is an ongoing challenge for all of the collaborations we have studied. High expectations often are necessary to get stakeholders sufficiently enthused to take the steps incur the costs collaboration requires. They also galvanize media enthusiasm, political support, funding, acceptance by the general public, and an anticipation of forward movement that at times can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But high expectations have a downside too. When expectations are high, failure to make clear and demonstrable progress can puncture enthusiasm. Even worse, it can fuel a fatalism that infects other efforts to mobilize civic capacity in order to pursue shared goals. In an 11-city study, one group of political scientists identified the trade-off between raising expectations in order to get reform moving versus sustaining efforts long enough to achieve results as one of the persistent problems plaguing urban school reform. Successful action, they concluded, "calls for a marathon, not a sprint" (Stone et al., 2001, p. 178).

Many of the local cross-sector collaborations demonstrated capacity to manage this tricky balancing act: developing a pragmatic, incremental, and selectively focused strategy while sustaining enough sense of purpose and long-term hopefulness to keep most people on board. Our deeper analysis in Buffalo, Milwaukee, and Portland/Multnomah County has highlighted the important role of relationships that are established in face-to-face interaction and then well nourished. Our cases also point to the importance of carefully adapted organizational structures for sustaining those relationships.

> The more certain pay-off for this type of collaboration may lie less in leveraging upside dramatic change and more in moderating the downside and reversals that continually have haunted local efforts at school reform.

Why Patience and Support Are in Order

As difficult as it is to manage expectations at the local level, it is even more difficult to do so at the level of state or national commitment and strategy. The power and reliability of local efforts can be hard to grapple with for those looking for policy levers that can operate from a distance and at larger scale. Yet, for a number of reasons, we consider it wise to give the recent surge in cross-sector collaboration more time to mature before deciding it is time to move on to the next reform idea.

First, the collaborations we have studied are constantly evolving. This is true at the local level and at the national network level as well. As people have tried to put models into effect, there have been adaptations, reinterpretations, and course corrections, including a feedback loop between these and the national networks. This degree of learning and adjustment may be especially understandable for cross-sector collaborations because, by design, they disrupt the organizational norms and habits that have been hard-wired into local institutions and sector silos.

Secondly, all of the collaborations or networks assume a long and stepped journey before anticipated outcomes will become manifest. Our fieldwork suggests building relationships and unraveling mutual suspicion and mistrust are major pieces of the work that's being done thus far. It may be more important to assess and credit these outcomes at this early stage than to demand measurable outcomes in learning and achievement

Third, the motivating rhetoric of the collective impact movement may have created unrealistic expectations. Whether by explicit plan or improvised adjustment, local collaborations are finding ways to balance initial broad aspirations against limited capacity. The pressure to focus on measurable outcomes has been something of a double-edged sword. The immediately available outcome indicators, because of federal and state accountability policies, tend to center on standardized math and reading scores along with graduation rates. These are difficult indicators to move, especially when collaborations, for various reasons, are not working intensely with local school districts to reform the instructional core of schooling. We see signs, though, that local communities are prioritizing establishing relationships, measuring and valuing efforts and activities even when these may not yet have produced anticipated outcomes, and exploring the possibility for adopting more locally meaningful indicators of progress.

Fourth, local collaborations are operating in contexts that experience unpredictable and powerful shocks. This includes unexpected turnover in positions of local leadership, sharp reductions in state revenues to support families and schools, and sharp shifts in federal funding and philosophy. It is not making excuses for local collaboration efforts to observe that such forces are both beyond their control and have great potential to affect long-term student and family outcomes, whether for better or worse.

Finally, and most directly against the grain of conventional thinking about how to assess cross-sector collaborations, we speculate that the more certain pay-off for this type of collaboration may lie less in leveraging upside dramatic change and more in moderating the downside and reversals that continually have haunted local efforts at school reform. Local efforts, no matter how sincere and even heroic, are subject to a wide array of destabilizing threats, as discussed above. Some—for example, superintendent turnover, shortages of high-quality teachers, weak and fragmented social services—may be within their capacity to ameliorate but others are almost certainly beyond their power to control. Such externally generated sources of disruption include regional or national economic downturns, sharp changes in state or federal education funding or regulations, sharp changes in non-education-policy areas (e.g., Medicaid, immigration) that affect students and their families. By embedding the commitment to reform in a broader array of stakeholders, these initiatives may make reform less vulnerable to leadership changes. By nurturing relationships and establishing channels of communication among previously fragmented and often competitive stakeholders, they may decrease the likelihood that externally induced stresses will set off internal squabbling and internecine battles. This may not be the triumphant narrative that excites advocates of such collaboration, and it may not meet the expectations of national funders and reformers who feel urgency for dramatic upside gains. But considered in the context of a history in which localized reform efforts have expended tremendous energy on short-term enthusiasms and internal skirmishes, it could be an important accomplishment.

CHAPTER 18.
Looking Ahead

None of this is to say cross-sector collaboration should be immune from skeptical assessment. While we have observed and reported some positive signs and while we have cautioned about the risk of premature conclusions, we have also seen reasons to worry that progress to date will prove fragile and localized and funder patience run out. Our sense is that if they are to earn long-term credibility and leverage genuine change, existing efforts will need to address four challenges: (a) moving beyond supporting the school system to strengthening the school system; (b) broadening outreach and inclusion of stakeholders beyond the elites; (c) reducing the reliance on philanthropic support by shifting at least some major funding burdens to local, state, and national government and expanding stable support for quality services and quality instruction; and (d) adjusting to the new national political environment.

Moving Beyond Supporting School Systems to Strengthening Them

The contemporary resurgence of interest in cross-sector collaboration in part reflects a desire to move away from the polarized either/or debate between schools versus non-school approaches to a "both/and" formulation that gets schools and broader community resources working together. The cases we explored have begun to do this in important ways. They bring school system leaders into regular conversations and strategizing with nonprofits, civic leaders, and agencies that provide services that can help children thrive and learn. And many have adopted outcome goals that go beyond the narrow math and reading scores that have dominated the K-12 scene. But this does not leave behind the need to improve academic performance. And improving academic performance is a high hurdle unless strategies also include changing schools. Others who have written about the difficult work required to change schools have emphasized the need for both professional expertise and a supportive environment.[54]

School systems undertaking instructional reform are already stretched and stressed, and it can be tempting for them to see collaboration as another distraction from their core goals. The collaborations we studied have put special emphasis on providing support services at the school level, but they have so far tackled direct instructional improvement within the K-12 sector in a very limited way. The efforts of Milwaukee Succeeds around reading instruction, All Hands Raised's work with schools to improve school attendance, and Alignment Nashville's career academies are encouraging examples of what can be done, but, in their pragmatic efforts to find projects that are low conflict and doable, collaborations may leave unaddressed some tough challenges of leveraging change inside districts, schools, and classrooms.

Broadening Outreach and Inclusion of Diverse Stakeholders

The second area that warrants continued observation has to do with the breadth and diversity of community stakeholders engaged in priority setting and ongoing decision making. Our nationwide scan found business, school districts, higher education, and social services were most likely to be represented on formal governing boards with representation of organizations of communities of color, teacher unions, charter schools, private schools, and neighborhood or community organizations less frequent and less consistent across sites. Some critics have expressed frustration with what they consider the dominance of business leaders who attempt to impose business models or practices that are not responsive to the educational context and educational needs, while others are concerned about the superficial efforts to involve more marginalized groups in ways that do not translate into real power. Our own fieldwork showed that, in most locales, collaboration leaders are

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[54] See, e.g., Cohen, Peurach, Glazer, and Gates (2014) and Glazer (2009).

simultaneously aware of the challenge and aware they have not yet met that challenge. To its credit, the national leadership of the collective impact movement also has acknowledged that diversity and breath of participation have been weak spots in its early efforts.[55] Broader engagement of diverse stakeholders requires working through what can be difficult discussions about race, ethnicity, culture, and privilege. Collaborations must begin this process, but even well-intentioned efforts may face skepticism or resistance from both elites and others based on their distinct interpretations of why such efforts frequently fail.

Reducing the Reliance on Philanthropic Support

Third, the extent and sustainability of long-term funding remains uncertain. Philanthropic support has been important for all of our cases, but the Savannah story is a reminder that the spigots of foundation dollars can close, without substantial alternative sources of funding being developed to take their place. During the time of our research, Milwaukee Succeeds relied heavily on philanthropic dollars; while the original funders remain committed to the initiative, long-term plans for fiscal support are uncertain. NAZ, in Minneapolis, had success in obtaining solid funding after its initial federal grant ran out, but in the process it has increased its reliance on philanthropy, although it has also made progress in obtaining ongoing state support. Among the cases we studied, Say Yes is perhaps the most explicitly attentive to the need to transition at some point to sustainable funding, by tapping into expenditure lines in school district, city, or county budgets and insisting on the building of local endowment funds. One source it is looking to is Medicaid, but recent national battles over tax reform, Medicaid work requirements, and the extension of the Affordable Care Act raise the possibility that even this historically reliable source of federal and state support may shrink in the future.

Adjusting to the New National Political Environment

Finally, there is the question of how sharp changes in the political and policy environment at the national level will trickle down to the local level, and how collaborations will adjust. In late 2015, Congress approved the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), ending No Child Left Behind and signaling a shift to less assertive national government involvement, more deference to states, and some de-emphasis on strict accountability based on standardized tests in reading and math. In 2017, Donald Trump succeeded Barack Obama as president and appointed Betsy DeVos, a proponent of vouchers and school choice, as Secretary of Education. While the national landscape is still shifting as we write, we conclude with some speculations about looming challenges and perhaps some opportunities.

The Trump administration initially signaled its wish for sharp cuts in education expenditures; specifically targeting for elimination a number of programs that provide support for health and mental health services, before- and afterschool learning opportunities, and full-service community schools. Proposed cuts and regulatory changes in other areas, such as Medicaid, also have the potential to affect school systems and school-aged youth directly.

In addition to reducing federal spending, the Trump administration would like to reorient federal involvement in ways that may run counter to the vision of cross-sector collaboration. "If we really want to help students," DeVos has said, "then we need to focus everything about education on individual students—funding, supporting and investing in them. Not in buildings; not in systems" (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The contemporary movement toward collective impact and cross-sector collaboration, in contrast, has focused on changing systems in order to leverage systemic change in outcomes. The Trump administration's emphasis on expanding charter schools and voucher and tuition assistance programs for private education risks promoting

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[55] See, e.g., https://www.livingcities.org/blog/704-four-insights-on-how-collective-impact-community-engagement-and-racial-equity-intersect

disinvestment in the traditional urban school districts with which the collective impact movement has partnered, and federal disdain for investing in systems does not bode well for building bridges between K-12 and higher education or between school and non-school institutions.

To date Congress has served as a counterweight to the White House; for 2019, for example, Congress appropriated over 20% more for the U.S. Department of Education than proposed in the president's budget.[56] It kept radical initiatives to shift efforts to charters and vouchers in check. But the rapidly growing federal deficit combined with partisan stand-offs in Congress make it unlikely the national government substantially will ramp up education, health, and social service spending at least in the near-term. And while we have suggested that previous cuts in state and federal support may have helped motivate local communities to pursue cross-sector collaboration as a strategy for doing more with less, our field research also found numerous cases in which local collaborations depended on federal funding streams to augment their initiatives.

Not all scenarios for the future are threatening to local cross-sector efforts, however. The passage of the ESSA marked a shift away from an era of top-down accountability linked almost exclusively to standardized test scores. While not giving up on the idea that communities should monitor school outcomes, ESSA created new room for states and local districts to experiment with other ways to define and measure outcomes, including those relating to social and emotional learning. We found that many collaborations included conventional test scores in their own data systems, in part because these were readily available, but we also found evidence that they are trying to be thoughtful and creative and to move beyond off-the-shelf standardized measures. This suggests a possible complementarity between local efforts and the new ESSA environment, which could be conducive to the expansion of cross-sector collaboration.

Final Reflection: Can Patience Be Fused with a Legitimate Sense of Urgency?

The United States has tended to rush from one education reform to another, motivated by a sense of urgency combined with an adamant faith a new approach exists somewhere that can generate rapid and dramatic gains. The excitement collective impact has sparked in many communities is reminiscent of that which has energized numerous past reform efforts. If held to the standard of quick, sharp, and systemic change, we suspect this latest enthusiasm will fizzle out, like many others. But we have been impressed by what we have seen, in our research, of seriousness of purpose and recognition of the challenges and stakes. While it is still early in the game, we think there are enough indicators of good things happening that the waning of the movement would represent a loss.

Among the core values highlighted by proponents of cross-sector collaboration are a balanced assessment of what schools can and cannot do on their own, a preference for having government agencies pulling together rather than protecting their own spheres of influence, a recognition that communities that work together to expand opportunity and investment will make more headway than those that expend their energies competing, and a commitment to evidence as a tool for improvement and measurement as a means to determine what is getting done. Translating these values into practices that yield results will not be easy, and there are no guarantees of success, but we conclude at this time that the effort should continue.

One thing is almost certain, however: the strategies, actors, and resources that have contributed to the initiation and early implementation of the cross-sector collaborations we studied may not necessarily be present or sufficient for maintaining them over a long period of time. One of our eight collaborations, the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, ceased operations after almost 30 years. A number of factors specific to

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[56] https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/history/index.html

that collaborative and its context contributed to both its long survival and its eventual decline, but the case is instructive in a more general way. As one informant from Savannah told us, "Nothing lasts forever. Healthy organizations must re-examine where they are. YFA did not do it early enough." This terse explanation implies many reasons it may be difficult to sustain the dynamism of cross-sector collaborations over an extended period of time: the original leadership of a dynamic organization is likely to be gone, the original funding support may be reduced, the enthusiasm of partners wanes, political and social environments change, and the methods for meeting current challenges may need to be reconsidered. In short, the energy, flexibility, and commitment it takes to form cross-sector collaborations may need to be refreshed in order to continue to meet new conditions and challenges.

Milwaukee Succeeds

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APPENDIX A.
Research Methods

Original Call for Research

In November 2013, The Wallace Foundation (hereafter Wallace) issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a comparative study of collective impact initiatives in education reform, focused on "whether and how communities can work together across sectors to generate large-scale social change." The RFP stipulated that the research would include a comprehensive synthesis of relevant literature, a national scan of existing initiatives using the collective impact approach, and case studies of collective impact in three mid-size cities. Researchers at Teachers College, Columbia University, were invited to submit a proposal; we did so in December 2013, and we were commissioned to conduct the study, to begin in February 2014.

Synthesis of Literature

Several draft versions of the literature review were prepared and submitted to Wallace for review and feedback. The final version, *Putting Collective Impact in Context: A Review of the Literature on Local Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Education* (Henig et al., 2015) was released as a working paper in October 2015, available in print form and on Wallace's website (https://www.wallacefoundation.org).

The literature review sought to place the emerging collective impact efforts into context by synthesizing research on four broad themes: historical precursors and examples of cross-sector collaborations for education and other social programs; more recent collaborations in education, including those adopting the new collective impact model and those that did not; conceptualizations and empirical evidence from organizational research on the governance and management of networks and other forms of multiorganizational partnerships and collaborations; and research on the politics of cross-sector collaboration. In the paper, we developed a conceptual framing that could guide our subsequent national scan and case study research, and we offered some preliminary reflections on the opportunities and challenges facing current collaborative efforts.

Nationwide Scan

The nationwide scan, discussed in this report, and elaborated upon much more fully in our March 2016 publication *Collective Impact and the New Generation of Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education: A Nationwide Scan* (Henig et al., 2016), is a snapshot of cross-sector educational collaborations in 2015 based on publicly available, online materials. The landscape of these collaborations is dynamic, the result of the creation and dissolution of initiatives and the absence of rigid definitions of collective impact. In order to place some boundaries on our object of study—so we may confidently describe the kinds of initiatives that are and are not in our scan—we adopted a broad but clear set of criteria for inclusion. We then conducted an extensive search of cross-sector educational collaborations and downloaded searchable copies of the websites and accompanying online content of the collaborations that met our specifications.

Because many cross-sector educational collaborations predate the emergence of collective impact as an organizing framework and tend to assume a wide array of institutional forms, we decided to cast a larger net in order to capture more than just those initiatives that self-identify as collective impact. To be included in our scan, collaborations needed to be place-based, with evidence of leadership at the city, school district, and/ or county level. We did not include state-level initiatives (with the exception of Hawaii, which has a single, statewide school district), but we did include neighborhood-level ones, provided they also had evidence of city, district, and/or county leadership. Collaborations needed to be multisector, with the presence of two or more sectors at the top governing level (e.g., the school district, general-purpose government, the business

community, nonprofits). Lastly, because cross-sector collaboration is not unique to the field of education, we restricted our set to those initiatives that included school district officials or school board members at the leadership level or initiatives that emphasized the school district as a primary partner. We also restricted our set to those collaborations whose self-descriptions included an emphasis on educational outcomes.

In order to identify collaborations that met these criteria, we initiated a two-phase search, beginning informally in 2014 (driven by conversations, interviews, and reading) and completed in 2015 with a more systematic approach. Over the course of three weeks in January 2015, we conducted a web search of the 100 largest cities and 100 largest school districts in conjunction with a series of keywords (e.g., collective impact, collaboration, coalition, multisector, partnership). We then visited each site listed on the first five pages of results from each query that had the potential to meet our criteria. This process identified a total of 182 cross-sector educational collaborations with functioning websites. Next, we downloaded the websites and substantive subpages including annual reports and other primary documents as text-searchable PDF files. In the following months, we coded each site's data for the presence of a broad set of information (origins, partnerships, types of indicators tracked, etc.). To the extent possible, we adopted a coding design meant to increase accuracy and reliability across multiple coders by using very specific definitions and low-inference strategies for assigning codes. For less clear-cut concepts, two researchers coded a subset of websites separately and then conducted a norming exercise in order to standardize the process.

For the analytical comparison of places with and without initiatives, we restricted ourselves to the 100 largest cities. Of these cities, 58 had identified programs. The remaining 42 cities serve as our comparison group in our attempt to understand the characteristics of cities most likely to produce cross-sector education collaborations. For our measures of city and metropolitan level demographics, we relied on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2013, five-year estimates. We gathered a range of indicators relating to the total population, age, race, ethnicity, income, and education levels of the population in both the central city and the metropolitan area. For fiscal indicators, we used 2000 and 2010 files from the State and Local Government Finance division of the Census. We focused on total revenues, revenues from own sources, and intergovernmental transfers from the state or federal government. Using two-tailed t-tests, chi-square analyses, and one-way analyses of variance, we examined the differences between large cities with and without education collaborations across a number of demographic and fiscal characteristics. Lastly, we employed a series of multivariate models in order to provide an exploratory test of a set of hypotheses regarding the formation of cross-sector education collaborations. These tests took the form of logistic regressions with the presence of a cross-sector education collaboration as the dependent variable. A fuller report of our analyses can be found in Henig, Houston, and Clark (2015).

To examine the use of equity and economic development language, we coded the downloaded website contents. First, to construct a measure of equity language, we searched the information presented on collaborations' websites and linked reports for the terms: "equity," "redistribution," "inequity," "social justice," "racial justice," "achievement gap," "narrowing the gap," "reparations," "racial disparities," "opportunity gap," "underrepresented students," "equitable," "closing the gap," "economically disadvantaged" and variants of these (i.e. "redistributive") using Nvivo software. We read the surrounding text for every instance of these words and coded any collaboration that makes use of those phrases to promote the collaboration or its work as 1 with all other collaborations coded as 0. This includes collaborations that promote equity as a central and explicit portion of their goals, mission, or work. Simply mentioning equity or using it to describe offhand deliberations, the stakeholders involved, or other similar work was not enough. This detailed approach, focusing not only on the use of equity language but also on the context of that language, prevented us from incorrectly coding a collaboration that used equity language for other reasons (for example, if that initiative had used equity language to express its skepticism about redistribution).

Similarly, for the indicator of economic development language, we constructed a dummy variable (1=economic language, 0=no economic language) using the search terms: "economic development," "economic growth," "economic revitalization," "renewal," "urban revitalization," "urban development," "job growth," "business climate," "economic change," "local economy," "prosperity," "economic upswing," "economic upturn," "redevelopment," "new jobs," "21st century skills," and "housing prices." Again, to be coded as using economic development language, collaborations needed to do so in a way that was explicitly linked to their mission, purpose, or work; simply mentioning economic development or using it to describe the experiences of stakeholders involved was not enough.

Major Case Studies

The Wallace Foundation RFP outlined a scope of work that would include field-based, qualitative case studies of three collective impact initiatives. The Say Yes program in Buffalo, NY, would be one case. Wallace was providing support for this initiative, as well as the first citywide implementation of Say Yes in Syracuse, NY, through its Expanded Learning programmatic funding stream, and the foundation staff thought the initiative warranted more comprehensive study. (Our research was not an evaluation and had no formal connection to the other Wallace-funded effort.) By adding two additional cases, it would be possible to compare and contrast how Buffalo and two other sites implemented comprehensive, cross-sector education reform. The RFP laid out a broad set of research questions under seven themes:

- Who is involved and how broad is the effort?

- How are the five elements of the collective impact model demonstrated?

- How do collective impact initiatives actually operate?

- What are the values, mindsets, and interests of organizations participating in cross-sector collaboration?

- How are financial resources, including philanthropy, obtained and deployed?

- How do collaborations engage community leaders and grassroots citizens?

- How do cross-sector collaborations influence the experiences of children and youth?

In our proposal, we described a framework for addressing these questions by examining the "timings, transitions, and tradeoffs" in factors such as goals, participants, resources, services, governance and operations, communication and engagement, and accountability, across phases of initiation, implementation, and possible institutionalization within particular community contexts.

Case Selection

We used the set of 182 cross-sector collaborations identified in our nationwide scan as the population from which to select two cases, in addition to Say Yes Buffalo. Consistent with the guidelines of the Wallace RFP, we sought cross-sector collaborations that were comprehensive in scope, located in mid-size cities, had been in operation long enough to show some stability in organization and implementation, and that offered both similarities and contrasts to the Say Yes initiative. Some of the factors we considered included:

- Ability to generate powerful and salient comparisons across Buffalo and two other sites

- Starting conditions and phase of development

- Coalition scope; role of the school system

- Connection to a broader network vs. stand-alone

- Structure and organization (leadership, grassroots involvement)

- Services; program focus

- Data systems

- Geographic spread; demographics

- Social/political complications

With consultation from Wallace, we eventually settled on two additional cases: All Hands Raised in Portland, OR, and Milwaukee Succeeds in Milwaukee, WI.

We then reached out to the executive directors of all three initiatives to secure their agreement to participate in the study. This involved an initial contact and then several rounds of discussion to clarify the nature of the study, the scope of involvement, and likely uses of the research. All three initiatives agreed to participate and a memorandum of understanding was jointly signed with each initiative. As part of these arrangements, The Wallace Foundation provided funding to All Hands Raised and Milwaukee Succeeds to help cover costs that might be incurred by assigning staff to assist with the research, for example, by helping us arrange interview schedules and locations and by reproducing documents for our use.

We sought and obtained permission to conduct this research from the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College and from the school districts that would be involved in the study.

Once our site selections were finalized, our team of primary researchers and graduate research assistants prepared initial documents describing the history, demographics, educational context, and other information about each city, based on academic research, public journalism, governmental databases, and other sources. We also conducted a small number of telephone interviews with individuals in these locations and around the country who had general knowledge about collective impact and cross-sector collaborations for education.

Participant Selection

A lead researcher was assigned to each major case study, along with two or three research assistants. These teams worked with the staff of each collaboration to develop a schedule for field visits and a plan for observing program activities, such as public governance meetings, task force or working group meetings, and other events. We also worked together to develop a list of potential individuals for interviews, with the possibility of focus-group discussions if scheduling became difficult. In the end, we had only a few focus groups, though we did sometimes interview several people together.

Because we wanted to interview key stakeholders who had deep familiarity with the initiative in their location, it was useful to have assistance from the collaborations' staff in identifying individuals. Through this process, we generated extensive lists of possible informants—over 170 in Milwaukee, over 200 in Buffalo, and nearly 100 in Multnomah County. From these lists, we selected individuals to contact and sent each a formal invitation to participate. The staff of the collaborations assisted by sharing general information about the study to their leadership groups and key individuals, and in a few cases had individual conversations to encourage people to participate. All but a few individuals we contacted agreed to be interviewed.

We also wanted to identify local community residents on our own who might know of their city's collaboration but not be closely connected to it. We wanted to make sure we were tapping into a full range of local perceptions of the collaborations—supportive, critical, indifferent, or uninformed. This proved a challenge. The three collaborations maintain extensive networks of connections in their locales, and finding individuals

who were not known to or suggested by the collaboration staff, but who could still be informative, was often difficult. At one site at least, staff were so concerned about their collaboration's brand identity and reputation they wanted to know everyone we contacted, in case any negative information was shared that they would want to address directly. Nonetheless, we did manage independently to locate additional informants in each city.

We explained the purposes of the research to all individuals we selected and obtained their consent to participate. We asked them to identify whether they were willing to have their comments quoted with attribution, to be quoted with attribution only after giving specific permission for each quote, or to remain anonymous. We did not share the final lists of interview participants with the collaborations, though the lists were not entirely confidential because many interviews were held at the collaborations' office locations. Overall, we interviewed about 65 persons in Buffalo, 60 in Milwaukee, and 80 in Multnomah County. Most participants were interviewed once, though we talked with some key informants more than once. The majority of persons were willing to be quoted with attribution. Largely for the sake of readability, names are omitted in this comprehensive report, but in the individual case reports we have prepared, we do identify many speakers by name.

Data Collection

We explained to research participants that we would be asking questions to investigate a set of core research themes, including:

- How cross-sector collaborations are *initiated* (who are the key agents; what role does financing play; what are the reasons for attempting collaboration; what initial goals are set; how is the collaboration initially organized?);

- The *theories of action* behind cross-sector collaborations (how participants see existing problems, needs, and opportunities; how the collaboration is expected to make a contribution; how consensus is built around a shared set of understandings driving collaboration and change);

- The *operational details and dynamics* of cross-sector collaborations (successful organizational, leadership, and management structures and processes; roles and responsibilities of leaders, partners, and the public; communication strategies; the use of data for tracking processes and outcomes; financial arrangements and how resources are allocated);

- The *relationships* among key participants (how are the interests of participating organizations and individuals addressed; what kinds of conflicts may arise and how are they dealt with?);

- *Service provision and outcomes* (how do services for children and youth change as a result of the collaboration; what are the implementation successes and challenges; what impact do they seem to be having?); and

- Long-term *prospects* for impact (what operational and/or policy changes seem to emerge from the collaboration; is the collaboration achieving stability; what new challenges must be met?).

As our work progressed and we started to get to know the collaborations we were studying, the number of questions we wanted to investigate grew. We worked to limit our data collection framework to 12 themes:

A. Purpose, goals, founding conditions, and initial local context
B. Local education system
C. Leadership
D. Financing, costs, and resources
E. Organization, management, and sustainability
F. Coalitions, interests, and politics
G. Community engagement
H. Implementation and service provision
I. Use of data
J. Evaluation issues
K. Outcomes and effects
L. Change over time – from initiation to implementation to legitimacy

We developed an item bank of interview questions that included over 100 questions linked to these 12 themes. Using a spreadsheet, we created a matrix to plan and organize the questions we would ask different types of informants. For example, we had a customized interview protocol for major funders, a different protocol for government officials serving on leadership councils, and a still different one for social service agency representatives working on task forces. Our master list of questions is included at the end of this appendix.

We did not have a specific data collection instrument for observations of meetings and other events. Researchers took detailed field notes during these observations and these were archived in electronic formats in folders for each collaboration. We also collected paper and electronic copies of various forms of program documentation and added them to the dataset.

A team of two to four researchers visited each case study site at least twice between fall 2016 and spring 2017. Each visit lasted four to seven days. Researchers made additional visits to Buffalo and Milwaukee to attend specific events that could not be scheduled otherwise, or to conduct follow-up interviews.

Interviews typically lasted 60-90 minutes. One researcher led each interview; we tried to schedule interviews so two researchers participated, but this was not always possible. Almost all of the interviews were face to face, though a few were conducted over the telephone. All interviews were audiorecorded unless the participant declined to be taped; the recordings were transcribed by a professional transcribing firm. The transcripts are maintained securely so they remain confidential; no transcripts were shared with collaboration staff.

While the research teams were in the field, they kept a shared running field memo with their on-the-spot observations and initial analytic reflections. These were discussed in research meetings after the field visits and informed the later formal analysis of data.

Mini-Cases

Even before we visited our field sites, we felt strongly that three cases were not going to be sufficient for comparing and contrasting different aspects of cross-sector collaboration, as the Wallace RFP had intended. There were simply too many factors in play, and we needed more cases. For example, the two cases we chose— All Hands Raised and Milwaukee Succeeds—are both part of the StriveTogether network. The collaborations in this network differ in important ways from the citywide chapters of the Say Yes national organization, but we felt it would also be helpful to study one or more initiatives that were not closely affiliated with a national network. Also, all three of our collaborations were recently founded, well shy of ten years old, and we thought it would be important to examine one of the many collaborations we knew from our scan to be of an earlier vintage. We wanted also to explore at least one collaboration that was on a smaller scale and had more of a grassroots

orientation than our three main cases did, and we also thought it important to examine a collaboration involving community schools, which have been generating increasing interest throughout the country in recent years.

We approached The Wallace Foundation with this idea and rationale, and its leadership readily agreed to extend the timeframe and funding of the study to allow us to add five mini-cases. We proposed a set of about ten possible choices, discussed them with Wallace, and settled on the five cases included in this report.

The research approach for the mini-cases was a truncated version of what we did for the major cases. We worked with staff from the initiatives as well as other stakeholders identify a set of key informants. Two researchers for each case made a brief field visit of two to three days and conducted interviews and observations between September 2016 and March 2017. This generated about 16 transcripts for Minneapolis, 20 for Nashville, 17 for Oakland, 15 for Providence, and 11 for Savannah.

Data Analysis

For the three major cases, all interview transcriptions and some observation notes were uploaded to Dedoose, a cloud-based qualitative data management/analysis application that can be used simultaneously by multiple researchers. Dedoose, like other qualitative analysis software, enables a large body of material, such as our dataset of many individual transcripts of interviews, to be broken into small units of meaningful text, each labeled with terms commonly referred to as "codes." Textual passages can then be sorted and aggregated according to these codes so overarching themes and patterns can be discerned.

We developed a list of codes to correspond to the broad topics of the interview protocol, which mapped onto our overarching research questions. Team members independently coded a small set of transcripts and then compared their work, to develop common approaches to coding and increase accuracy and reliability. Then, each team member read and coded a portion of the full set of transcripts. Using our original research questions and the set of codes we derived, we developed a structured outline for case reports. Team members then worked on within-case analyses, compiling all of the coded excerpts related to one or more specific themes from the structured outline and writing a preliminary analysis of those themes. These analyses were then combined and edited by a senior researcher to produce an extended case description and analysis of each collaboration. Program documents, original interview transcripts, observation notes, and other materials were also utilized in preparing the case studies. These case studies will be published at a later date. These documents were used as the basis for the case summaries that are presented in this report in Appendix B.

Because the data sets for the mini-cases were more limited in size, we did not use Dedoose to code and analyze them. Instead, shortly after conducting the field visits, the interview tapes were transcribed and each research team reviewed them and wrote a case summary. The summaries were then used for the cross-case analysis.

We then began to build the cross-case analysis. First, we created a spreadsheet matrix of cases by themes we anticipated covering in the final report, and researchers entered brief notes so we could begin to discern patterns. This data reduction technique was helpful in the initial stages of the analysis. The extended case reports were then uploaded to Dedoose and were themselves coded thematically. Coded excerpts were compiled and exported from Dedoose. Information was cross-checked with documents we had in hand, and in many instances we checked to see if updated information was available, mostly from program websites or reports that were released after our fieldwork ended. We recognized that some details would change between the end of our field research and the production of this report, but wherever possible we have attempted to stay up to date with verifiable information about current program status.

The mini-cases were intended to extend our cross-case analysis by letting us examine a bit more variation on specific dimensions that seemed significant in the three major cases. For example, we chose Savannah so we could understand better what happens over time, and how racial politics in a demographically diverse city influence collaboration. In this report, we have tried to be faithful to this original intent and to use the mini-cases as extensions of our core analyses. But when we felt we had thorough information to work with, the mini-cases had equal footing with our three main cases as we sought to understand various dimensions of cross-sector collaboration.

Once the cross-case analysis had begun to take shape, we presented a preliminary outline of findings to The Wallace Foundation and received feedback on the themes it found most interesting and significant. We continued to develop the analysis and got several more rounds of feedback from Wallace as we wrote subsequent drafts. We also shared the individual case reports with the collaborations for fact checking and to obtain permissions for using quotations.

With nearly 300 interview transcripts and many documents in hand, we have only begun to plumb the depths of the information we have obtained about these cross-sector collaborations. Although we have tried to convey fine-grained details that are often passed over in other accounts, time and space limitations prevent us from exploring many divergent perceptions, curious interactions, or fascinating twists and turns of events that comprise the day-to-day realities of collaboration. Nonetheless, we believe we have described these initiatives accurately, focusing on observations that can be instructive to the initiatives themselves and to outside audiences as well. Taken together, eight collaborations hardly constitute a representative sample of a phenomenon with nearly 200 implementations around the country, and our eight cases have clearly taught us that, while there are some common features shared by many cross-sector collaborations, each one is unique and deserves to be understood on its own terms. Our hope is that instead of providing a prescriptive formula for success, this study will help others learn what to look for as they explore cross-sector collaborations for themselves.

Finally, we note once more that this report conveys the best information about local conditions, structures, activities, people, and outcomes we were able to obtain during the timeframe of our fieldwork. Some of these undoubtedly have changed since our fieldwork was completed. We have tried to be as accurate as possible in describing what we observed and learned, and to caution that all of our findings should be considered in the context of the time period of the research. Errors of fact or interpretation are our responsibility.

Interview Protocol—Item Bank of Questions

A. PURPOSE, GOALS, FOUNDING CONDITIONS, AND INITIAL LOCAL CONTEXT

Initiation

1. Can you describe how the effort first got started?
    a. What were the local, state, and/or federal social, economic or political conditions that gave rise to this effort?
    b. Did the performance of the school system have any influence in the decision to start the initiative?
    c. To what extent have post-recession fiscal constraints influenced the formation of the initiative and its functioning?

2. Can you share why and how your organization decided to become involved in the initiative? [Alternate: Can you share why and how your organization decided not to become involved in the initiative?]
    a. Has your role in your organization changed since deciding to partner with the initiative?

3. Is the model connected to a larger organized effort (i.e., Strive)?
    a. [If yes] How has that influenced the local effort?

4. Were there any "champions" of the initiative?
    a. [If yes] What were their roles/responsibilities?
    b. How did they interact with others in the collaboration?

5. What were the challenges of getting the initiative off the ground?

Mission and Theory of Action

6. What is the official mission of the initiative and where did it originate?
    a. How would you describe the mission or vision in your own words?

7. Is there a theory of action behind the effort?
    a. [If yes] Can you please describe the reasoning behind the theory of action, how it was constructed and the players involved in creating it?

Initial Structure and Development of Collaboration

8. During the beginning of the initiative, what processes and strategies were used to bring people together to collaborate?

9. How and when was the decision made to have a "backbone" organization?

10. Are there other similar collaborations in this area that you relate to, model or build upon?

11. Did the publicity surrounding the idea of "collective impact," particularly the 2011 articles from FSG, influence the start of the initiative?

B. LOCAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

12. Tell us a little more about the education system here before the initiative started.
    a. What are its strengths and challenges?
    b. Do you feel that the public schools are receiving adequate public funding to provide core educational services that meet students' needs?

13. How did the collaborative initiative affect the local education structure? Was it what you expected? What have been the results?
    a. How does the initiative respond to the school choice options/policies within the community? Is it more aligned with one school sector than another?

14. In the last several years, what do you think the major changes, or educational improvement or reform initiatives, have been?
    a. How effective have they been?
    b. Would you say the community has been receptive to these changes? Why do you think that is?

15. What kind of relationship does the initiative have with the public schools?
    a. Aside from the district public schools, what other schooling options are available to students in the community? Does the initiative work with these schools? If so, what is that relationship like (who approached whom, etc.)?

16. Does this initiative change the way that schools "do business"? If so, can you explain how?
    [Probe for possible changes in school district policy; in staffing at the district or schools; in roles and relationships in the district or in schools; in professional development or classroom practice]

17. What is your relationship with the community's educational leadership?

18. Has anyone in the initiative experienced any conflicts with the educational leadership?

19. Have the schools or the city implemented any new programs or policies as a result of the collaborative initiative?

20. Who would you say the major players or advocates for improvements in education have been and why?

C. LEADERSHIP

21. Who are the major leaders of the initiative and what are their roles and responsibilities?
    a. How did XX come to lead the initiative?

22. Has there been any turnover in leadership positions within the collaboration? If so, how were the transitions handled?
    a. How has the turnover affected the initiative?

23. What are the challenges surrounding leadership of the initiative?

D. FINANCING, COSTS, AND RESOURCES

24. What is the overall budget of the initiative?
    a. Has the budget changed since the initiative first started?

25. How did your organization decide to contribute a certain amount over a particular period of time?

26. What sources of funding does the initiative draw on (i.e. governmental, foundations, business, or fundraising)?

27. Does the initiative have multiyear grants or long-term funding from any source?
    a. [If yes] How important are the grants to the initiative?
    b. Who is responsible for fundraising for the initiative and what is his/her role?

28. Can you describe whether the initiative has considered the cost-effectiveness of its work and, if so, how it is measured?
    a. How important is cost-effectiveness as a goal of the initiative?
    b. Have any cost-effectiveness strategies been successful so far?

E. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Organization and Management

29. Can you describe the roles and responsibilities of the people in your organization who are directly involved in the collaboration, including yourself?

30. Is the collaborative initiative structured into committees, work groups, etc., and are there clear roles and hierarchies?
    a. What is the hierarchical structure of decision-making?
    b. Is it ever the case that decisions are made behind closed doors?

31. Let's talk about the "backbone organization"—if there is one, can you describe the process of choosing the backbone organization and its role and expectations as part of the collaboration?
    a. Have there been any tensions between partner organizations and the backbone organization?

32. How does this initiative change the relationship of organizations and institutions in the community, as well as the way people think about those relationships?

33. What are the strategic goals and specific tasks undertaken by the initiative?
    a. How are the tasks and work divided among organizations?
    b. Where and how would we be able to see this initiative in action? [Probe for specific tasks and outcomes]
    c. How are resources allocated to perform the work?

34. When it gets to service provision, who is making decisions?
    a. Who decides what needs will be addressed; what resources, services, or supports will be provided to meet those needs; how will they be provided and to whom?
    b. How has the initiative introduced new work or services?
    c. Was some of the work of the initiative already taking place? If so, how has the initiative "taken over" that work?

Collaboration and Sustainability

35. How would you characterize the amount of collaboration that is expected and the amount of collaboration that actually occurs?

36. How do the partner organizations, including your own, interact with the initiative?
    a. Do they send representatives? Do they offer work support or resources? Do they participate in decision-making?
    b. How do members of the collaboration communicate with each other to share information, both formally and informally?

37. How much, or in what ways, do the partner organizations agree with the mission (official or unofficial version) of the initiative?
    a. Are there any areas of disagreement?

38. What would you say are the costs and benefits for organizations, agencies, and institutions participating in this initiative? Do they differ for different organizations or agencies?

39. What is the relationship between the local government and the initiative? What is your organization's relationship with the local government?
   a. Would you like to see the government more involved?

40. On an organizational or institutional level, how much would you say participants trust each other? What are some examples of high trust or mistrust?

41. Would you say that people get along or are there interpersonal conflicts?
   a. What are the points of tension, disagreement, and conflict in this initiative?
   b. What happens when tensions or conflicts arise? Can you describe a few examples?

42. Would you say that this effort is a safe space where you're allowed to experiment and fail?

43. Is the program operating at an appropriate scale, and/or is it able to get to scale effectively?

44. Do you think this effort is likely to continue indefinitely? Why or why not?
   a. In terms of sustainability, do you think there is adequate financing for this to continue indefinitely?
   b. Has the backbone organization set a deadline, or timeline of how long it intends to be involved? Do you get the feeling it will wrap up when a certain goal is accomplished, or do you think it is "here to stay?"
   c. How does the initiative set up sustainable financing for the resources, services, and supports necessary for meeting children's comprehensive educational and other needs?

F. COALITIONS, INTERESTS, AND POLITICS

45. How, if at all, is the initiative affected by conflicts in the broader environment, for example, racial/ethnic tensions, or powerful political actors?
   a. How would you characterize the level of racial tension in this city? Can you provide some examples?

46. If any individuals or organizations have decided to leave the initiative, could you share what happened and why?
   a. If you have ever had to make the decision to remove an organization from the collaboration, can you explain what happened and why?

47. Who are the most active players in the K–12 system and how actively are they involved in the initiative? Was it difficult or easy to recruit their support?

48. Do educators see this effort as impinging on their professionalism and autonomy?

49. In some of these initiatives, there is at least an implicit critique that the school system has not done what it should do. Is that an issue here?
   a. What was the school system's initial reaction to the initiative? Has that changed over time?

50. Do you think there are ways the governments could or should be involved differently?

51. For county or metro collaborative initiatives: Do city and suburban members have different priorities or levels of involvement?
   a. Who from the county/metro area are the most active players?
   b. Do you sense tension between suburban and city members of the collaborative?

52. Is there anything unique about this effort because it revolves around education?

G. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

53. Did grassroots groups or community members play a role in the founding of this initiative?
    a. [If yes] Which individuals or groups were involved and what were their interests and goals?
    b. Are these groups or individuals representative of those in the community who are most affected by educational inequities/inadequacies/persistently low academic outcomes?
    c. How have community voices played a role in shaping the work of the initiative and how have they affected the provision of services and/or outcomes?

54. How much are the grassroots/community members now involved in this initiative?
[Probe for who counts as a community member and whether there are ongoing efforts to seek input from or otherwise engage the community]
    a. How diverse are the community members most involved?
    b. How well do you think the initiative engages community members, specifically those who are most affected by persistently low academic outcomes/have the most at stake? How can you tell?
    c. To what extent do community members have leadership roles?

55. What strategies or mechanisms are used to engage the community? Why do you engage the community [or if you are a community member, why do you think the initiative engages community members]?
    a. Can you provide some examples of the most successful and ineffective ways that the initiative involves community members or seeks input from the community?

56. Does the level of community engagement affect the initiative in other ways that we haven't discussed?

57. How do does the initiative communicate with the community about its programs, services and outcomes?
    a. How well do you think this initiative communicates with the public about these things? What are the most effective methods?

H. IMPLEMENTATION AND SERVICE PROVISION

58. We'd like to understand how this initiative improves or increases the availability or delivery of resources, services, and supports for children and youth. What resources, supports, or services are provided through the initiative and by whom?
    a. Is the initiative doing a good job in this regard? How can you tell? [Probe about whether and which services have increased and/or improved]
    b. Do services actually get to children/youth? How can you tell? If not, why not?

59. Does the initiative have a focus on any of the following areas?
    a. Early childhood education, K-12 core education adequacy/quality, or both? What does it do in these areas?
    b. Health and mental health? What does it do in these areas?
    c. Expanded learning opportunities? What does it do in this area?
    d. Family engagement? What does it do in this area?

60. Does the initiative have service provision targets/goals? Is it meeting them? How many children/youth does it serve?
    a. What's different about the delivery or availability of services/supports to children and families since the initiative started? Are more services available? Different services? Better services? Better quality? Better take up?]

      b. How has the initiative contributed to these changes? [Has it increased funding, improved delivery systems, improved coordination, improved efficiency?]

      c. Has the initiative contributed to improved/increased services in other ways?

61. Does the initiative track specific indicators of service provision and/or outcomes? If so, how were these selected, and how are they tracked and leveraged?

      a. Does your organization track indicators of service provision and/or outcomes? Do they differ from those tracked by the initiative?

62. Let's talk about the connection between the collaborative initiative and education in this city. Is there a specific set of resources, services, and supports or other types of improvement to educational opportunity the initiative set out to provide to improve school success? [Probe for partners solicited, programs initiated, funding provided, and other efforts]

63. How many children/youth are served overall by the initiative? What portion of the target population are you able to serve compared with whom you want to serve?

64. How has membership in the initiative improved your ability to serve children and families?

65. Are there services available that are not utilized or taken up by the community?

66. Does this initiative change the way that schools operate? If so, how and by what means?

I.   THE USE OF DATA

67. Let's talk about "data" and how it is used in this initiative.

      a. What kinds of input data are tracked—resources, capabilities, needs—and how is that information leveraged? [E.g., for accountability, feedback, etc.]

      b. What kinds of implementation data—or data about processes—are tracked and how is that information leveraged?

      c. What kinds of outcome data are tracked and how it that information leveraged?

68. How were outcome priorities and indicators selected? Who was included in the group making these decisions? Was it difficult to determine what criteria/measures would be used?

69. How are data communicated to the public?

      a. Do you ever feel that the wrong data are being reported, or that it's being reported in inappropriate ways?

      b. What role do you think public communication of data plays in this initiative? [Probe for whether it helps serve as a catalyst, for holding people accountable, for legitimacy, for simple provision of information and services?]

70. Who is running the data analytics, managing the reporting tools and website, etc.?

71. Have you kept track of test scores measuring the Black-White achievement gap; Latino-White achievement gap; or class achievement gaps? What measure(s) do you use (e.g., NAEP, TUDA, state test)?

J.   EVALUATION ISSUES

72. Has the initiative commissioned formal evaluations or been the subject of formal evaluations (such as the Strive national evaluation)?

      a. [If yes] Have you been a part of a formal evaluation of the initiative?

    b. [If yes] How has the initiative reacted to the findings and recommendations?

    c. [If yes] Have the reports and/or their recommendations been widely disseminated?

    d. [If yes] Do you agree with the methodology used and the competence of the evaluators?

73. Has the initiative consciously avoided formal evaluations?

74. Do you think a formal evaluation is necessary? Who should conduct the evaluation? Who should see the results?

75. How would you ideally structure and implement an evaluation?

K. OUTCOMES AND EFFECTS

Goals

76. Let's review the expected goals of the initiative. What are the formal, stated, public goals?

    a. Are these what the initiative really intended to do, or are they more aspirational, symbolic, meant to galvanize attention and focus, or to secure public support and/or the support of partner agencies, funders, and so on?

77. Would you say that the initiative has or has not met some or all of its goals?

    a. [If no] If it has not yet met its goals, are you optimistic that it will? Why?

78. How does the initiative track progress toward goals and actual goal accomplishment? What do you think of these approaches?'

Information Shared with Public

79. What kinds of information and outcomes are reported to the public? How is it presented and how has the public responded?

    a. Do you track some things for internal purposes that are not reported to the public? Why is this important or helpful?

Outcomes

80. Have there been any unintended effects of the initiative, either positive or negative? If so, what are they?

81. Does the initiative consider any comparison cases or counterfactuals, in determining its outcomes and effects?

82. How do you think member organizations, outside organizations, and the public perceive the initiative's success or failure?

83. How have children and schools in the area benefited from this effort? Can you provide an example?

    a. Have organizations benefited from this effort? Can you provide an example?

84. Let's talk about accountability. In what ways, if at all, is the initiative held accountable for meeting goals?

    a. In what ways, if at all, are individual organizations or agencies held accountable?

    b. Do these mechanisms of accountability strike you as appropriate? Why or why not?

Overall Feedback

85. Are there things you think the initiative could or should be successful at, apart from what it is already doing?

86. What are the "lessons learned" from this initiative that you think are worth remembering and sharing?

    a. Do you feel this effort is worth continuing?

L. CHANGE OVER TIME—FROM INITIATION TO IMPLEMENTATION TO LEGITIMACY

87. Do you think this initiative has become a permanent part of the local landscape, or is moving toward that? If so, can you describe how and why?
     a. Is this something the initiative is explicitly paying attention to?
     b. Is the effort moving toward more integrative strategies involving more levels of players?

88. Has the initiative added something new or different to reform efforts, or is it just a repackaging of what people were doing beforehand? [Probe for issues of credit-claiming]

89. How has the involvement of elites, grasstops, and grassroots organizations changed over time?

90. Is the initiative trying to build sustainability by helping the public sector take more responsibility for the coordination of services?

91. What is the school system's and public's perception of the initiative? How do you know?

92. How does the local context affect the effort? [Probe for reform efforts and how they were perceived before the collaborative and whether they will continue if the collaborative leaves]
     a. Has the collaboration had an impact on other sectors or the way work gets done in the local context?

93. Do you think there is adequate interest among the partner organizations in continuing this effort?
     a. Do you think there is adequate political will to keep this going?
     b. Do you think there is enough public awareness and interest to keep it going?

94. Is there anything else we should know about this collaboration/initiative?

M. SUPPLEMENTAL BROAD PERSPECTIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLECTIVE IMPACT

95. Do you recall when you first heard about the term and concept "collective impact?" What's your recollection about how you thought about it at the time? What're your thoughts about it today?

96. The general idea that cross-sector collaboration can be a good thing is not especially new. What in your mind is distinct or different about collective impact as it has been developing over the last several years?

97. Do you have any thoughts about why there has been this apparent increase in attention to local cross-sector collaboration, and to collective impact in particular? [Is this a case of: New opportunities for success? Compensation for failures or inaction at the state/federal level or compensation for failures of school-centered reforms? Funding opportunities because of philanthropic interest in the idea?

98. At least within certain circles, it seems like the model of collective impact associated with FSG (Kania and Kramer) and Strive has dominated the discussion. What's your take on this? What if anything sets the FSG/Strive model apart?

99. What other organizations or support networks come to mind when you think about local cross-sector collaboration? Are there important distinctions among them? To what extent do these various organizations see themselves as part of the same team? As competitors?

100.   Are you optimistic about the prospect that local cross-sector collaborations around education will make a substantial difference?
     a. What would you consider important benchmarks or longer term indicators that would suggest that this is having a positive effect?

APPENDIX B.
Case Study Summaries

All Hands Raised, Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon

All Hands Raised (AHR) is a regional "cradle-to-career" collaboration based in Portland, OR. During the timeframe of our study, it partnered with six of the eight school districts in Multnomah County, including Portland Public Schools (PPS), Oregon's largest school district. An early member of the StriveTogether network, AHR officially launched in November 2010 and is considered by Strive to be one of its most developed partnerships.

Notable Features

Initiated by local civic leaders.

Explicit and central focus on racial equity.

Countywide partnership, involving one large urban and five smaller suburban districts.

Relies on array of smaller donors rather than a small number of large funders.

Meets StriveTogether's "proof point" benchmarks, its highest designation.

Background. Portland and its environs have grown more diverse over the last few decades, and the region's public schools enjoy even greater diversity than the population as a whole. The percentage of White students enrolled in pre-K-12 schools in Multnomah County fell from 67.6% in 2000 to 56.3% in 2015. The growing numbers of students of color come from varied cultural backgrounds, including the sizable immigrant communities from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. However, income inequality and childhood poverty are also on the rise: while the county's median household income grew between 2000 and 2015 from $41,278 to $54,102, its poverty rate also increased from 12.7% to 18.1% and its child poverty rate went up from 15.4% to 23.6%. The recent influx of more affluent residents into Portland displaced many predominantly low-income, Black and Brown residents to the eastern edges of the city and areas east of the city itself; Portland's traditionally African American neighborhoods have been particularly affected. These changes have resulted in a shift in the demographics of the six school districts that partner with All Hands Raised. PPS has become more affluent, while the five other districts have experienced an increase in racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Oregon's education finance system has been constrained since the 1990s when voters approved two measures that limit the property tax rates, formerly the main funding source for the public schools. In subsequent years, Oregon dropped from among best funded and highest performing states in the country to among worst funded and lowest performing. To address this slide, in 2000, Oregon voters approved a constitutional amendment requiring the state legislature to provide all schools with adequate and equitable funding. In 2009 the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the legislature had failed to fund the public school system at the constitutionally required level but did not order the state to take action to remedy the problem. Today, Oregon's state education finance system produces more equal per-pupil expenditures across districts than many states, but the actual dollar amount is relatively low. (Education Week's 2017 Quality Counts state report card gives Oregon a B+ in "equity" and an F for overall spending.) Most localities have minimal means through which they can supplement state school aid funds. Of the six school districts with which AHR partners, only PPS has access to significant additional sources of school funding.

Community, city, and county leaders long recognized the region's low academic achievement and attainment levels and the persistent disparities between different racial and socioeconomic subgroups of students in the Portland area.[57] Oregon has among lowest graduation rates of all states, and the six partner districts have among the lowest achievement levels in the state. Baseline data compiled for All Hands Raised showed the average four-year graduation rate among the six districts was only 58%.[58]

Initiation. The impetus for AHR came from local civic, education, and business leaders seeking a more effective way to collaborate to address ongoing concerns about the academic outcomes and future opportunities of the county's children and youth. They were motivated a number of long-standing factors: changing city and county demographics and a shifting public education landscape; high child poverty rates; a history and legacy of racism including persistent racial and socioeconomic disparities in schooling outcomes; and constrained school funding. There were also important immediate catalysts, including new cohort data showing much lower than recognized graduation rates; a new mayor who had promised to halve the city's dropout rate and was frustrated by existing collaborative efforts to improve education; and growing enthusiasm about the StrivePartnership effort in Cincinnati among leaders from several sectors. The region had some good foundations for effective cross-sector collaboration—a history of collaboration among civic leaders focused on improving education; the presence of a popular, county-supported, collaboratively run, large, and still growing system of community schools that extended into six school districts; and an effective coalition of the major organizations representing communities of color.

Following much research, including a visit to Strive Cincinnati, and some negotiation, in 2009 Portland and Multnomah County civic leaders decided to sunset two existing groups and come together to launch a countywide cradle-to-career partnership, modeled on Strive. The group selected a backbone organization, the Portland Schools Foundation (PSF), by means of an RFP process, to guide this fledgling effort in 2010. PSF was chosen for its independence from the two preexisting leadership councils, its relevant experience and capacity for the new endeavor, and the openness of its leadership to the new role it would need to play. Dan Ryan, a former PPS school board member and Portland native, had been hired as PSF CEO in 2008; he embraced the new mission and countywide scope. Carole Smith, who became PPS superintendent in 2007, was a strong early champion of the shift in PSF's mission to embrace the cradle-to-career partnership. She endorsed the expansion of focus to include five neighboring districts and helped build trust in the endeavor among the other superintendents.

By April 2011, a leadership advisory council had been convened on which sat the Portland mayor, Sam Adams, the Multnomah county chair, Ted Wheeler, and executive-level leaders from nonprofits, higher education, businesses, the PPS teachers union, culturally specific organizations, local utilities, and the six school districts. Living Cities, a national collaborative of foundations and financial institutions, was an important earlier funder. It awarded PSF a two-year matching grant to adapt Strive's approach to cross-sector collaboration for education "along the educational continuum, ... to develop a lasting local civic infrastructure" (Portland Schools Foundation, 2010).

While still known as the Portland Schools Foundation Cradle to Career Partnership, the collaboration adopted Strive's five key goal areas, aiming for all students in the county to (1) be prepared for school; (2) be supported inside and outside school; (3) succeed academically; (4) enroll in postsecondary education or training; and (5) graduate and enter a career. Part of the work was to "build a better system of collaboration," which involved

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[57] See, e.g., https://www.portlandoregon.gov/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=270744; http://allhandsraised.org/content/uploads/2012/07/C25_Stumptown_FiNAL_Web.pdf; http://allhandsraised.org/content/uploads/2012/07/C25_Short_ReportFinalWeb.pdf

[58] See http://allhandsraised.org/content/uploads/2012/09/community-report-nov-4.pdf

establishing a set of community-wide indicators that were meant to "facilitate thoughtful and measurable action"[59] and, more recently, "keep [partners] focused on the big picture and accountable to one another." The indicators selected were birth weight, kindergarten readiness, kindergarten attendance, third-grade reading, ELL annual progress, equity in school discipline, sixth-grade attendance, eighth-grade math, ninth-grade credit attainment and attendance, high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment and completion, and connection to a career track. All of these indicators were to be disaggregated by school district, race, ethnicity, and other demographic factors.

The Portland Schools Foundation formally changed its name to All Hands Raised in October 2011 to rebrand the organization to reflect its new mission and countywide partnership. AHR aims to create change by (1) building "a shared community vision of long-term impact," (2) putting actionable data into the hands of schools and community partners, (3) "aligning resources to the practices that get results," and (4) focusing on equitable outcomes and eliminating disparities (All Hands Raised, 2017, p. 6).

Operations. The All Hands Raised organization operates as the backbone of Multnomah County's cradle-to-career partnership. Its staff manages the work of the partnership through several leadership tables and a number of implementation groups organized around the goals and indicators. (The names of these groups and the groups' roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy have evolved over time, as part of AHR's ongoing efforts to adapt to the needs of the collaboration during different stages of its work.)

A 24-person board of directors governs AHR; at the time of our fieldwork, more than half of the members were people of color. To share leadership opportunities and responsibilities, a new board chair is elected annually. An advisory leadership council that meets three times per year provides additional expertise, resources, networks, and guidance for the partnership. This "CEO-level" group of community leaders includes the six partnering district superintendents, the president of the PPS teachers union, a number of CEOs of local businesses, presidents of the city and state business councils, executive directors of nonprofits (including culturally specific organizations), the presidents of local colleges and universities, and elected officials such as the county chair and the mayor. The Leadership Council helps to champion the work of the AHR partnership broadly and within members' own organizations. More recently, AHR has begun to establish strategic leadership groups that include both board and leadership council members to support its various on-the-ground activities.

AHR relies on small grants and gifts from more than 700 local funders and individual donors.[60] Its expenses underscore its role as a "convener" rather than a direct funder of service provision. According to its financial statements, it spends the vast majority of its resources on staff salaries.

School district involvement. The superintendents of all six participating school districts have been actively and consistently, though not equally or uniformly, involved in AHR since its inception. Schools in each of the six districts serve as demonstration sites for initiatives launched by AHR. One of the superintendents described AHR as more of a genuine partnership than its predecessor collaborative efforts. Partners and funders alike emphasized that the ongoing involvement of all six superintendents is an indicator of the viability of AHR and its potential to effect change.

The six districts are dealing with many of the same challenges that flow from high rates of child poverty, high rates of student mobility, growing racial/ethnic diversity, increasing numbers of English language learners, and longtime education resource constraints. However, the challenges (and accomplishments) of the five smaller

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[59] This language appears to be borrowed from Strive. See http://www.strivepartnership.org/our-goals

[60] See http://allhandsraised.org/behind-the-scenes/donors/

partner districts—Centennial, David Douglas, Gresham-Barlow, Parkrose, and Reynolds—have historically received less attention than those of the Portland Public Schools. Compared with PPS, the five smaller districts also have less funding per pupil, less staff capacity, fewer available partnerships, and considerably less political clout. They have historically received fewer resources from private funders, who are largely based in "the Portland core," and fewer public resources to support students' broader needs, though these districts' needs for additional student supports have grown with the county's shifting demographics. There is optimism that AHR's countywide scope and partnerships will help change this imbalance and bring new capacity and resources to bear on these districts' challenges. Nevertheless, an early lesson for AHR was that the partnership was not going to be able to move each school district toward shared goals in the same way or at the same speed.

Implementation. All Hands Raised drew heavily on Strive's blueprint to create its initial structure for mobilizing collective action. When the partnership moved from the "architecture phase to the construction phase," as Ryan put it, the pioneering initiative did not have a clear Strive model on which to draw. As it built upon on the framework, determining what the partnership would tackle and how, AHR drew on the experience and expertise of its members and staff to forge ahead. Throughout, it shared its challenges and successes with and got support from StriveTogether and its growing network of members.

Setting an overarching priority of racial equity, All Hands Raised established working groups charged with designing initiatives in each of its five goal areas. Starting, in most cases, with large meetings of interested community-based organizations, researchers, advocates, educators, and practitioners, the groups selected priorities within the goal areas. Partner organizations then applied to be conveners of "collaborative action teams" that would choose strategies to address those priorities. Four were formed initially—*Ready for Kindergarten, Communities Supporting Youth, Eliminating Disparities*, and *Ninth Grade Counts*, and two others—*Partners Accessing College Together (PACT)* and *Pathways Construction and Manufacturing Careers*—were created later. In keeping with the Strive model, each developed its own charter and action plan.

Social Venture Partners Portland, the local chapter of a venture philanthropy organization, and Multnomah County, were initially co-conveners of AHR's early learning initiative, *Ready for Kindergarten*. A large, diverse group of early childhood partners decided on a dual focus: (1) prioritizing serving children of color, students in poverty, and dual language learners in partnership with community education workers, trained peers from their own communities, and (2) supporting the transition into kindergarten. In 2014, soon after the work of this collaborative commenced, Oregon's governor announced the creation of regional achievement compacts that included "early learning hubs" to receive state funds for early education. The United Way of Columbia-Willamette was selected to lead Early Learning Multnomah. During this time, AHR, Social Venture Partners, and the United Way worked through a rocky transition, in which credit sharing, roles, and responsibilities were negotiated. Ultimately, nearly all of the work of this collaborative was absorbed into Early Learning Multnomah. AHR maintains a *Kindergarten Transition* initiative through which it partners with two school community sites to improve alignment and transitions between the elementary schools and Head Start programs.

The *Communities Supporting Youth* collaborative was co-convened with the county's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Service System and Portland State University. Over 60 organizations came together to set a specific goal of keeping students "present and engaged" in school and a focus on supporting schools to improve K-12 attendance. Each of the six districts nominated one school in which to pilot the work; most of these were chosen because they had low attendance rates and were also SUN community schools. Through this initiative, the Multnomah County Department of Human Services (DHS) assigned a social worker to each of the original sites. The county also provided matching funds to help districts pay for attendance workers to

track and follow up on student absences. In the third year, all six districts had at least one attendance worker.[61] With coaching from AHR, these schools created attendance teams, which generally included the SUN site manager, principal, attendance worker, and DHS social worker. AHR staff members provide school-based attendance teams with on-site technical assistance to build their capacity to use data collection and continuous improvement strategies to develop a set of effective attendance-support practices. While this attendance-improvement work had already begun in certain districts, one superintendent said that other districts only undertook it when AHR identified the additional county resources and provided in-kind support. AHR continues to work on the ground with six school community sites in this work area, now called *K-12 Attendance*.

The *Eliminating Disparities in Child and Youth Success* collaborative, co-convened by the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), adopted the goal of closing the county's racial opportunity gaps. From the outset, membership in this group was selective for greater productivity. The original members included executive-level leaders of two governmental entities; a number of culturally specific organizations, including CCC members; three foundations; the six school districts; two nonprofit technical-education organizations; and All Hands Raised. The initiative's initial focus was to support the development of "organizational equity policies" and "equity action plans" in school districts and member organizations. Though each of the six school districts took steps toward addressing racial equity issues, differences among the six districts created challenges. Some districts had greater local recognition of or resistance to the importance of addressing race and racism. And some districts, particularly PPS, had greater resources and capacity for tackling the work.

Several years into the work, the *Eliminating Disparities* collaborative made changes to reduce some of the political and practical impediments to genuine conversations about race and inequality. To enhance trust, improve continuity from meeting to meeting, and help build real working relationships, members were pared to the six superintendents, leaders of the Coalition of Communities of Color and its culturally specific member organizations, and AHR leaders. After the collaborative was reconfigured, it focused on reducing exclusionary discipline (suspensions or expulsions that remove students from the learning environment) and eliminating of discipline disparities between students of color and their White peers. The collaborative worked out an agreement to share each individual district's discipline data within the group, review school and district trends, discuss trends across the six districts, and share solutions and best practices to eliminate racial disproportionalities in discipline rates.

At the time of our fieldwork, the group had taken initial steps to partner with individual schools to create learning communities to identify best practices for eliminating racial disparities in discipline and reducing behavior referrals. Since that time, AHR has begun working with implementation teams in seven school community sites in this work area, now called *Racial Educational Equity*.

The *Ninth Grade Counts* collaborative was the first convened by AHR (its beginnings predate the cradle-to-career initiative). Its purpose is to support community-based youth-development programs in meeting the common goal of keeping students on track through the transition into high school. This priority was identified based on local research indicating on-track ninth-grade completion was a good predictor for high school graduation. The eighth to ninth grade transition is a critical time to ensure students are prepared to succeed in high school. Collaborative partners (which now also include school districts) engage the students most likely to drop out (called "academic priority" students) and provide focused summer programs tied to the ninth-grade curriculum. AHR staff provides coaching and technical assistance to programs and connects them to "resource partners" that are interested in funding the work. Through sharing data on student outcomes, AHR and *Ninth Grade Counts* partners have collectively built a set of quality standards and strategies they have found effective.

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[61] Using its own resources, PPS employs numerous attendance workers.

In 2015, AHR added the *Partners Accessing College Together (PACT)* collaborative, co-convened with Portland Community College. Its goal is to increase college enrollment for underserved students countywide. The collaborative identified supporting the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)[62] as its priority project, since FAFSA completion is one of the strongest predictors of postsecondary enrollment and Portland had lower FAFSA completion rates than other cities of a comparable size. One of the initiative's first activities was providing high school counselors with updates on the FAFSA-completion process. The collaborative held fall meetings with the counseling teams at school districts to help them plan for the FAFSA rollout in each January. The collaborative put PACT members on counselors' radars leading for opportunities to hold FAFSA nights and other events.

PACT members used data and local insights to identify two schools, Franklin High School, which is part of PPS, and Gresham High School, in the Gresham-Barlow School District, with which to partner and test practices aimed at increasing FAFSA completion. The development of a "real-time dashboard" of FAFSA-completion rates raised awareness and increased competition among schools across the county. With facilitation, coaching and data support from AHR, the teams identified key practices that led to increased FAFSA completion. Six additional high schools began to partner with AHR to implement these core practices in 2016-17.

The newest collaborative, *Pathways to Construction and Manufacturing Careers*, was established to meet a need expressed by school superintendents and other stakeholders to improve pathways to careers in construction and manufacturing, which are both well-paying, growth industries in Multnomah County. To get the collaborative started, AHR convened a task force of higher education and corporate sector leaders. This group was charged with using data and insights to explore projects and activities to strengthen pathways from high school into construction and manufacturing careers. The result was consensus to move forward to build an action plan around two areas: (1) educating school and district leaders about construction and manufacturing career paths, and (2) leveraging successful industry partnerships that help students transition into construction and manufacturing careers. As a first foray into educating high school counselors about these career pathways, AHR partnered with manufacturing and construction partners to put on an event called "Industry for Almost a Day" that brings educators into construction and manufacturing facilities to get a first-hand experience of this work.[63] In this work area, AHR is building implementation teams in the high schools of two of the smaller partner school districts.

Community engagement. As PSF transitioned into All Hands Raised, its leadership conducted active outreach to a variety of sectors—meeting with representatives from school districts, higher education, community-based organizations, the business community, culturally specific organizations, and stakeholders from the city and county governments. This provided the opportunity for a diverse group of individual leaders to offer input and become engaged; however, there did not seem to be any systematic engagement in this early stage of public school parents or other grassroots community members with direct experience with the issues the partnership hoped to tackle.

A number of people also indicated that AHR's convening-based, volunteer partnership structure created an ongoing barrier to community engagement that privileged larger organizations and large CBOs over smaller grassroots organizations. AHR provides no funding to its partners. Grassroots and smaller organizations

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[62] Federal Student Aid, part of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest provider of student financial aid in the country. As authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, each year FSA awards more than $150 billion in grants, loans, and work-study funds for students attending college or other postsecondary education program.

[63] Since 2000, AHR has also run an annual event called "Principal for Almost a Day" aimed at building community and business leaders' understanding of school leaders' daily challenges. Participants often build relationships with schools that can lead to access to resources and opportunities for students.

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sometimes lacked the resources to allow personnel to attend All Hands Raised meetings, as did individual parents and activists. Smaller school districts stressed this was a burden for them as well. Similarly, the director of the Coalition of Communities of Color, the organization that co-convenes the *Eliminating Disparities/ Racial Educational Equity* collaborative, noted it was a greater challenge for the CCC, as a nonprofit that lacked uncommitted or fungible resources, to take on the responsibilities convening a collaborative action team than it was for other conveners such as the county and the universities.

In keeping with its increasingly strongly articulated racial educational equity mission, AHR has prioritized engaging community leaders from all backgrounds in leadership positions in the organization, including the board of directors and the leadership council. It has not pursued broad engagement of grassroots community members, parents,[64] teachers, or students.

Therefore, the extent to which AHR can be said to be inclusive of representatives of the communities most affected by the issues the partnership is tackling depends in part on who counts as sucg. Overall, most partners said AHR engaged these communities in decision making by actively building a diverse board of directors, with proportionate representation of leaders of communities of color, and by working closely with the culturally specific organizations. Some of the culturally specific organizations said working with AHR raised their profile and status within the county, allowing them advocate for their constituents more effectively. But others objected to the overreliance on certain well-established culturally specific groups, saying this strategy excluded the diverse voices and lived experiences of community members.

Many leaders from communities of color valued the opportunity AHR facilitates to work directly with school district superintendents. The *Eliminating Disparities/Racial Educational Equity* collaborative, in particular, has built stronger relationships and trust among school leaders and leaders from communities of color, provided access to new contacts and funding opportunities, and, in some instances, created opportunities that allowed previously marginalized community voices to be heard.

Use of data. Like many collective impact initiatives and consistent with Strive's approach, AHR places an emphasis on data in an effort to identify problems and track progress. AHR used its 12 community-wide indicators and other macro-level data to set goals for the collaboratives. It reports regularly on those indicators and employs the data it collects to shape the conversation and the priorities of its leadership groups.

AHR gathers more frequent and granular data while implementing its smaller-scale interventions. To systematize the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, AHR adopts two data management frameworks: the plan/do/study/adjust cycle (PDSA) and rapid cycle continuous improvement. PDSA is a structured approach provided by the StriveTogether network designed to guide the assignment of job responsibilities, the choice of outcome measures and metrics, the evaluation of the results, and the formulation of next steps. Whereas PDSA is a general approach to data collection and analysis that can operate over any timeline, rapid cycle is—as its name implies—designed to produce data-driven insights over a time period as short as a few weeks. "Rapid cycle" requires teams to pose specific questions, make predictions, put together a short-term work plan, and then revisit the data after about four weeks. Each cycle begins with a clearly defined question and a work plan designed to test that question. With implementation teams, AHR staff members initially played a sizable role orchestrating the process from generating hypotheses to collecting and analyzing data. As the teams became more experienced, staff members took more of a facilitation role, providing technical assistance and otherwise supporting teams from a greater distance.

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[64] Many of the individuals who represent AHR partner organizations have children in the public schools, but they have been engaged primarily in their professional capacities rather than as parents.

Suffusing these data-driven activities was a relatively high level of analytic sophistication. All Hands Raised regularly displays data longitudinally so trends are easily visible, it includes data points even if the trend lines are flat or negative, it disaggregates data by racial and ethnic groups, and in some instances it includes comparison groups to benchmark its outcomes. Perhaps most importantly, AHR staff members generally did not overstate their findings. The staff was quick to assert they had not identified the causal effect of their interventions; rather, they collect multiple rounds of data to update their beliefs and guide their decision-making with the best available information.

Relationship to the national network. AHR followed the StriveTogether roadmap for its basic theory of action and operations structure, and it continues to get ongoing support from network. Strive has also been influential in AHR's adoption of data-driven decision-making frameworks. Lastly, Strive also conducts annual evaluations of its network members, which consist of a set of interviews and a feedback session in order to determine continuing membership eligibility. All Hands Raised staff spoke positively about these engagements as opportunities to reflect and occasionally revise their organizational structure over time.

Yet for all of the ways in which AHR leans on Strive for ideas and support, it also considered itself to be an unusual Strive-affiliated program that often and intentionally broke from the mold. With respect to its funding apparatus—relying on a large array of small donors rather than a small number of large funders—AHR is notably different from most other members of the Strive network. Ryan suggests that this makes AHR accountable to a broader set of stakeholders than is typical for a Strive-affiliated program. Moreover, AHR staff have suggested that they are among Strive's bigger internal critics, willing to offer pushback on Strive's requests for frequent contact and network-wide activities, which are sometimes seen as time consuming and nonessential. This posture of constructive criticism and the willingness to deviate from the Strive model is characteristic of the AHR staff. For example, Strive emphasizes that one of the roles of the backbone organization is to ensure that once an effective practice has been identified, all applicable partners need to carry out that practice with fidelity. Staff at AHR expressed some resistance to this role, preferring to adopt a strategy of information dissemination and persuasion than a strategy of enforcing compliance.

There are ways AHR continues to benefit from and contribute to the Strive network. As a collaboration that has successfully brought the major stakeholders to the table, AHR is a source of advice for newer and less developed partnerships. StriveTogether also offers "expert convenings" on issues facing established partnerships that provide a venue for leaders in the field to work through challenges together, indicating that perhaps the network can continue to be of value even when there is no consensus on the best course of action.

Challenges and adjustments. All Hands Raised regularly convenes a diverse set of partners from across sectors within education (early education, K-12, and higher education), across public agencies (various agencies of the county government, the Portland city government, and the six school districts), across public and private sectors (including unions, private industry, nonprofits, CBOs, philanthropy, trade associations, public utilities, the media, as well as the general purpose government and the school systems), and across communities. The sustained engagement of diverse community leaders across stakeholder groups is considered critical to AHR's success and the most important value the backbone staff adds to the work of the partnership and the "collective impact" process.

AHR recognizes the importance and the challenge of engaging partners and keeping them engaged in its work, but this hasn't always been easy or successful. AHR has cultivated a core staff with strong skills in building relationships, creating new channels of communication among community partners and funders, and facilitating meetings in ways that encouraged meaningful and authentic collaboration and engagement. It frequently adapts its structures and adjusts staff roles to improve its efforts.

All Hands Raised

The work of All Hands Raised has developed a more constructive dialogue among school leaders and the business community—groups that had previously frustrated one another—and kept these groups engaged. By providing local business and corporate leaders with growing insight into the complexity of the work of the school districts, it has been able to engage these leaders in richer conversation about education-related issues. This has garnered more understanding and patience with the pace of change from the business community, and more enthusiasm for the value of partnership among the superintendents.

All Hands Raised has also broken barriers to collaboration among the school district leaders in Multnomah County. Prior to AHR, superintendents across the districts said they did not work together meaningfully. AHR has created new opportunities for sharing data and best practices among the six superintendents. The partnership's collection and analysis of countywide data to show year-to-year change also contributes to the sustained engagement of superintendents and other stakeholders.

At the same time, a number of community organizations that were originally involved in the work of All Hands Raised disengaged over time. Some groups in competition with AHR over funds and organizational turf were critical that no funding was offered for partners to participate in AHR's work, in addition to continuing the work of their own organizations. Others felt they had more experience and expertise in doing the work AHR collaboratives were initiating and chose to continue working separately. Still others withdrew when AHR failed to adopt the priority or strategy central to their own work.

Certain community leaders of color disengaged because they saw AHR as perpetuating a top-down, power dynamic in which people of color were involved in a token way. They saw AHR as part of a pattern of policymakers and leaders diagnosing problems and proposing solutions in communities whose struggles they had not experienced. Some said AHR would be more effective, empowering, and sustainable, if it supported successful existing community organizations, rather than seeking alternatives for addressing the same issues.

Finally, some groups' context for engagement was phased out. To adapt as AHR's work became more focused on the school community sites, AHR leadership dissolved some organizational structures that met regularly. For example, the data functions of the data committee were moved into the collaborative action teams and the data committee was disbanded. Some teams met less frequently and the number of partners involved was reduced.

Sustainability and effectiveness. All Hands Raised's simultaneous adaptability and steadiness throughout implementation to date is one of its greatest strengths. Partners characterized AHR as a valuable, anchored organization able to elevate the use of data to inform change across the districts. Its explicit commitment to racial equity, broad engagement of diverse leaders, and the attention to building a productive collaborative structure and culture have helped keep the partnership together while allowing for conversations about problems and solutions to evolve. Many attributed AHR's ability to hold together diverse partners to its decision to adopt a neutral or apolitical stance. Clearly, its careful cultivation and stewarding of individual relationships day to day are key practices.

Skillful meeting facilitation and the perception of fair, collective decision-making processes were also identified as strengths in the partnership. AHR's efforts to secure partner buy-in, ensure a broad range of participants at every meeting, follow up on partners' questions and promised contributions, and ground conversations in data were thought to create a firm foundation for collaboration, shared accountability, and continuous improvement. AHR's meeting facilitation was said to create a more participatory atmosphere than other collaborative environments that allows partners to express themselves openly and constructively.

The stronger relationships among stakeholders have resulted in new partnerships. Community leaders noted broader access to the superintendents than prior to AHR and a greater level of honesty and trust. AHR meetings allowed members to leverage their expertise and form coalitions for present and potential future work. Specifically, the collaborative teams created avenues for additional opportunities for partnerships, increased resource connectivity and supports, and provided a space for partners to share small victories. The collaboration also helped school community sites access new partnerships, networks, and other opportunities.

There is also some indication that, through the work of All Hands Raised, relationships between school district superintendents and city and county government officials have been strengthened. In a place where the school districts and the general-purpose government are not institutionally connected and have a history of tension, AHR has played a role in fostering new connections and improved understanding.

Finally, there is widespread appreciation of AHR's explicit focus on racial educational equity in its printed materials, its work at the school community sites, its data analytics, the composition of its board, and its ongoing effort to cultivate productive conversations on racial issues between partners. The group has made progress in improving partners' understanding of the structures and practices that perpetuate racial disparities.

All six AHR partner school districts have adopted racial equity policies that focus on equitable student outcomes, equitable hiring practices, and culturally responsive teacher professional development. While other groups and factors also played an important role in this work, particularly the Coalition of Communities of Color, many respondents suggested the increased focus on racial equity throughout the six districts would not have happened without AHR. AHR's persistent emphasis on racial equity arguably helped elevate the status of the issue, placing pressure on school districts to adopt new policies. Two factors were emphasized as particularly valuable in this regard: (1) AHR's early, explicit, and consistent focus on racial equity and (2) the strategic handling of the *Eliminating Disparities* (now *Racial Educational Equity*) collaborative. Competition between districts on questions of equity has generated healthy peer pressure. The *Eliminating Disparities* collaborative helped foster an ongoing conversation between school leaders and CSO leaders, reducing tensions and promoting shared understandings of each other's positions.

A few superintendents cited AHR as the motivation for district policy changes. For example, one superintendent said the district is focusing on creating equitable hiring practices, ending discriminatory classroom tracking practices, and eliminating obstacles to postsecondary opportunities for disadvantaged student subgroups as a result of conversations facilitated by AHR. In partnership with a CBO, the district began tracking where student subgroups were going to college. Additionally, it won a grant to identify which subgroups were not signing up for AP classes and why.

While equitable outcomes are still a long way off, All Hands Raised's 2019 *Chapter 04* report indicates progress. Again, though many district, county, and community initiatives likely contribute to that progress, AHR notes that since the partnership began there has been improvement on many of the cradle-to-career indicators it tracks. Some measures also show evidence of some progress toward racial equity. Exclusionary discipline, which disproportionately harms students of color, has been reduced: "Nineteen percent fewer students of color were suspended or expelled in 2017–18 than six years earlier."[65] In addition, AHR reports, "Countywide graduation rates have climbed 20 percentage points since 2009. Latino students have seen a 31-point increase, and African American students have gained 22 points."[66]

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[65] See http://allhandsraised.org/shared-work/top-priority/

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Milwaukee Succeeds, Milwaukee, WI

Milwaukee Succeeds (MKE-S) is a citywide collaboration in Milwaukee, WI, established in 2011 by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation with additional support from several other major local philanthropies. It is a member of the StriveTogether network and aims to improve the educational outcomes for every child in every school in Milwaukee, cradle to career.

Notable Features

Initiated by community foundation.

Works with Milwaukee Public Schools, charter schools, and independent private/voucher schools, including Catholic elementary schools.

Has implemented Reading Foundations, a comprehensive intervention for early literacy.

Partners with Strive collaborations in nearby cities for more regional impact.

Background. Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin with a current population of about 600,000, down from its peak of over 740,000 in 1960. Long a city of German, Polish, and other immigrants from Eastern Europe, African Americans came to Milwaukee in large numbers after World War II, late in the Great Migration. Though they initially found steady work in manufacturing, the economic decline of the city began soon thereafter, leading to rapid job losses. Restrictive covenants and real estate and lending practices confined Black residents to living in an area of the city known as the Inner Core, where substandard housing, joblessness, high crime, and lack of amenities are concentrated. The Latino population in Milwaukee tripled in size between 1990 and 2014, accounting for virtually all of the net population growth in the city. Today, Blacks make up about 40% of the city's population; Latinos comprise about 17% and Whites about 45%. Two-thirds of the area's Latino population lives in the city of Milwaukee, as do 90% of the area's Black households, while 80% of White households are in the suburbs.

Milwaukee is by many accounts the most segregated city in the United States. Both Blacks and Latinos have high rates of concentrated poverty—neighborhoods where more than 40% of households live below the poverty line. Unemployment for Black and Latino residents in Milwaukee far exceeds that of Whites, and their average family income is much less.

In the 2015-16 school year, the high school graduation rate for Black students in Wisconsin, most of whom are in Milwaukee, was 64%, compared with 93% for Whites (and nearly 80% for Latinos statewide), giving the state the largest Black-White graduation gap in the United States for the third straight year. Postsecondary enrollment that year was 53% for White students, 38% for Black students, and 46% for Latinos. Third-grade reading proficiency rates were 37% for White children, compared with 9% for Black students and 14% for Latinos.

Advocacy from White conservatives and Black parent groups in the 1990s led to Milwaukee instituting the country's first private school voucher plan, which allows public tax dollars to be used for tuition at private and religious schools. Charter school legislation was passed by the state at about the same time, and charters now draw the support of both White residents and the communities of color in Milwaukee. Currently, about 31,000 students in Milwaukee are educated in private/voucher schools, 7,000 in charter schools, and 76,000 in the traditional public school system. Although there are school-level differences, students in all three sectors are overwhelmingly Black and Latino, and most live in poverty. Student achievement in all three types of schools is fairly similar and no sector has shown overall high levels of performance, although there is some evidence

of higher graduation rates in charter schools. Political conflicts around vouchers, charters, and the traditional public school system have been long-standing and have created an unfavorable context for cooperation.

Initiation. Milwaukee Succeeds began as an initiative of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF), a community foundation that has served Milwaukee and three surrounding counties since 1915. Like many similar foundations in the early 2000s, GMF's board had begun to consider how to have a more strategic impact in its core city. It had long been involved with education, but the board chair, a strong local advocate for education, thought it could do more. The need was clearly present. The political environment around schooling was highly charged and racialized, and students and schools were performing poorly all across the city, in all three sectors.

At the same time, some collaborative enterprises in Milwaukee seemed to be having success, including a well-orchestrated, multiyear, multi-partner initiative sponsored by the United Way to reduce teen pregnancy, and this taught community leaders a great deal about the power of collaboration. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's new executive director, Ellen Gilligan, had been associated with StrivePartnership in Cincinnati, and she invited several people familiar with the Strive approach to come and speak with the GMF board. The board members were intrigued by the Strive approach; it was comprehensive, collaborative, and shared many of the elements that seemed to be working with United Way's teen pregnancy initiative. In 2011, GMF became a member of the StriveTogether network and established its own initiative, Milwaukee Succeeds.

Early in that process, a decision had to be made about which school sectors to include. The initial idea was to focus only on the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) system. But that quickly changed, because so many prominent residents and powerful leaders in the city were involved in the other parts of the educational ecosystem. Some informants thought the collaboration might knit the fractured school sectors together; others believed it was a waste of time and GMF should be directly and solely helping the Milwaukee Public Schools. The decision was made to work with all three sectors.

GMF chose three prominent local residents to lead the effort—the "big corporate citizen in town," John Schlifske, CEO of Northwestern Mutual; Mike Lovell, an engineer who was chancellor of the city's public university, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, at the time, but who became president of Marquette University shortly afterward; and Jacqueline Herd-Barber, a highly respected woman from the Black community, an engineer, member of the GMF board, and a big civic promoter and enthusiastic volunteer in many city initiatives.

The initiative was announced publicly in September 2011. Adopting the StriveTogether approach, GMF set about identifying people to serve on a large Leadership Council, representing multiple constituents and enterprises—business, government, all three education sectors, nonprofit agencies, and foundations. Again at this point, and continuing for some time, the new members had concerns over how much Milwaukee Succeeds would inherit the city's long-standing educational conflicts. This issue sat especially heavily on the MPS superintendent at the time, Gregory Thornton. During the initiative's first two years, he was not enthusiastic about working with charter and voucher supporters, especially the head of the local chamber of commerce, who was actively lobbying in the state capitol to move resources from the public school district to the charter and voucher schools. The decision to include all three sectors was not without conflict, but it was fully incorporated into the collaboration's motto and sense of itself.

In addition to the Leadership Council, a smaller group became the Executive Committee for the initiative. Included were the three co-chairs, the MPS superintendent and school board president, the mayor, the president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (representing the choice and charter school interests), heads of the local state university and technical college, and heads of several business groups and foundations supporting the initiative. This group provided broad, high-level advice and guidance. In the early

phase of the initiative, the Executive Committee met frequently, as often as once a month, and followed the basic plan outlined by the Strive network staff who advised the fledgling operation in Milwaukee. It established a formal vision, mission, and scope for the initiative. It developed four high-level goals, again with Strive input; these focused on early childhood, K-12 performance and college and career readiness, and college and career attainment—all of these were typical Strive goals—and a fourth goal to address basic student well-being, which eventually became the social-emotional learning goal. The goals were stated as aspirations and expectations:

> Goal 1—All children are prepared to enter school
>
> Goal 2—All children succeed academically and graduate high school
>
> Goal 3—All young people access postsecondary education or training to prepare for a successful career
>
> Goal 4—All children and young people are healthy, supported socially and emotionally and contribute responsibly to the success of the community

Since the use of data is integral to the Strive model, the Executive Committee also determined broad criteria for the kinds of measures it wanted to employ, particularly looking for measures it could report to the public regularly and in an annual Milestone Report. Its members then recommended other people, often their associates in more functional roles, who could provide more specific and technical leadership for finding and using various metrics. This led to the formation of subgroups for the high-level goals. One challenge for these subgroups was to find ways to aggregate data from the three school sectors into a shared metric. This approach was meant to ensure no sector would be singled out for praise, shame, or blame as the collaboration reported data on educational conditions and outcomes in the city.

The subgroups worked together as an "operations team" that could provide strategic leadership for pursuing the four goals and advising the networks that would soon be formed. It was originally expected the Operations Team would be short-lived as other structures such as the goal-related networks took off, but it continued to function as an essential part of the initiative.

In June 2012, an executive director was appointed, and the initiative began to recruit volunteers to work on the four goals. As more people became involved, action plans for each goal were developed using the Six Sigma planning approach often employed by businesses. Some people learned and benefited from the Six Sigma planning. Some were put off by the process and drifted away. Others were frustrated but kept attending. Finally, the four groups organized around the goals were each charged with developing a "charter" explaining its overall objective and the issues involved, what it was going to do about it, and what data it would use to guide its actions and monitor progress. A goal manager was named for each goal area, and one or more networks of community partners were formed to carry out the action plans.

Staff and structures for the goal areas evolved in different ways. For example, under Goal 1 , kindergarten readiness, early childhood had been a focus for the United Way of Greater Milwaukee for a long time, and it lent a staff person to GMF to work full-time with Milwaukee Succeeds as the goal manager for this domain. For Goal 2, school success, the StriveTogether Student Roadmap identifies several important markers or transition points along a child's developmental pathway through K-12 education: early-grade reading, middle-grade math, and high school graduation. Milwaukee Succeeds decided to monitor all three indicators of achievement but initially put most of their effort behind a literacy intervention. The work for Goals 3 and 4 developed more slowly, as the goal teams worked through a series of challenges in obtaining data, aligning partners and resources, developing interventions, and dealing with staff transitions.

Three years into the Milwaukee Succeeds collaboration, a new executive director, Danae Davis, was appointed. The original executive director's contributions had been appreciated, but his strengths had become limitations. He took a rational approach to the initial planning for Milwaukee Succeeds, stayed close to the Strive model, and diligently attended to the use of data. In contrast, Davis was a strong relationship builder. Trained as a lawyer, she had worked in private industry, had held civic and government positions, and had recently headed a local community agency serving teenage girls. A long-time Milwaukee resident and an African American, Davis had an extensive personal and professional network in the city and was able to capitalize on her relationships to draw people in to Milwaukee Succeeds. With all of her experience at multiple levels of government and civic life, Davis was politically astute, skilled in working across the aisle in a very divided city. With the assistance of a new deputy director and several advisors, Davis talked with over 100 individuals connected to Milwaukee Succeeds and planned an operational reboot that addressed needs people expressed for better communication; more community engagement; better alignment in how the work gets done, who's doing it, where the resources are; and more engaged leadership. The partnership's structure of goals and networks was adjusted, a new framework of indicators for the goals and theory of action was developed, and new plans for the Leadership Council and Operations Team were drawn up.

Financing the collaboration. Since its inception, Milwaukee Succeeds has been funded almost entirely through philanthropic dollars, with limited (but important) in-kind support from the Milwaukee Public Schools. Start-up funding came from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, which allocated $1 million for four years. It has been GMF's intention to support the core operations. This contribution is the largest dollar allocation GMF has made to a single initiative, though it reflects a fairly modest proportion of the foundation's total giving. The foundation has also committed other resources to Milwaukee Succeeds, including office and meeting space for MKE-S staff, as well as assistance from their fundraising and budget offices and from their policy liaison and other program officers working on education. Other local philanthropies were also early supporters of the collaboration, providing dollar contributions and, in some cases, personnel for the partnership.

Four years after the collaboration was established, in August 2015, Milwaukee Succeeds announced that a "Funders Collaborative" had committed $5 million over the next four years. The contributing philanthropies included four that had been part of the public leadership of the initiative all along and one new one; each contributed $1 million. The Funders Collaborative makes decisions for how it will disperse funds for programmatic efforts that rise up through the practitioner networks in the goal areas. In some cases, the foundations have diverted funding in ways that might disadvantage some groups, agencies, or schools that had previously received grants. For example, GMF had been providing support for some voucher and charter school programs, and that began to change somewhat once Milwaukee Succeeds was established.

The philanthropic partners have provided considerable funding for the Goal 2 reading initiative, and the Milwaukee Public Schools system has gradually increased its contribution of in-kind resources for the intervention. There also is a developmental evaluation of this pilot project, conducted by individuals from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and funded by the university. Persons affiliated with the reading initiative are aware that it appears to be a very expensive program; they sense it causes "sticker shock" when others learn the costs. But the team is adamant that it has carefully designed the pilot to provide all that is needed to accomplish the goal of literacy improvement and to demonstrate what can be accomplished with sufficient resources.

Implementation of services. The Goal 1 (kindergarten readiness) network has worked to increase the number of early childhood education centers and programs in the city that can qualify for a high rating on the YoungStar quality assessment scale. Efforts have also been made to improve immunization services for young children in Milwaukee and to increase the number of children who have timely developmental screenings.

When Milwaukee Succeeds was first established, many of the community partners working within Goal 2 (school success) quickly focused on the developmental marker of third-grade reading and argued that a key lever for improvement was teacher development. A third-grade reading network designed a comprehensive intervention, known first as the Transformative Reading Initiative and later as Reading Foundations, and piloted it first in one school for a year, and in two schools the next year. During this time, MPS leadership was not yet fully integrated into the collaboration, so the network partners could not approach the school system administration for resource support, but staff from MPS were involved programmatically. The network members expanded the pilot model by adding a component for evidence-based parent and community member tutoring to support children's reading development. Over time, the school district became more involved and added an evaluation component to the project. Staff from the MPS curriculum offices have conducted an extensive revision of the district literacy curriculum to accommodate what was being learned from the pilot. Another spinoff activity is that the project offers two parent workshops for all schools in MPS, one on children's brain development and one on helping parents learn specific literacy strategies.

Milwaukee Succeeds pursued an expansion from two schools to seven, then to ten, and then to over 20, working toward the goal of implementing Reading Foundations in 50 schools. Private (voucher) schools and charter schools are now involved in the initiative as well. The collaboration sought funding from the state to support its implementation of a tutoring component, which was patterned after the successful Minnesota Reads program that the state of Wisconsin was trying to replicate. This set off a vigorous debate within the Executive Committee; members who were charter advocates did not want to engage in state-level lobbying on behalf of MPS. Eventually the group reached a resolution and members signed a letter of support for the funding request.

Within the Goal 2 area, another network of community partners had formed around out-of-school learning. This included agencies and institutions who were already running tutoring programs and others that sponsored "experiential learning" opportunities for children such as arts programs. As the literacy project took off, this network began to consider how it could be part of the larger effort. Eventually, it developed a way to participate, by providing evidence-based tutoring aligned to the reading initiative.

Within Goal 3, college and career readiness, partners have worked to offer FAFSA completion support in high schools, so school counselors can be better equipped to help students apply for financial aid for college. A pilot project to help students prepare for the ACT test was stalled when data on student performance could not be obtained from the state. In 2018, Milwaukee Succeeds began to provide staff support for a new alliance of postsecondary institutions and other partners who are working toward increasing college completion rates in the region and linking graduates with employment opportunities. Milwaukee Succeeds has also considered how serve the large number of "opportunity youth" in the city—young adults who are out of school and out of work.

The MKE-S work around Goal 4, social-emotional learning, is just getting off the ground, after extensive deliberations about how best to conceptualize and organize this area. It was decided that the most productive approach would be to embed social-emotional learning as a component in each of the other three goal areas. Efforts in this area since our fieldwork ended have included professional development training for school-based staff and teachers in elementary schools.

Program outcomes. The collaboration has reported that one of its goals, having the percentage of children enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs meet the state average, was reached for Latino and White children several years before the target timeline of 2020. The most substantial programmatic component of Milwaukee Succeeds, the Reading Foundations initiative, has been evaluated annually by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The most recent evaluation from 2016-17 reported that, though citywide literacy indicators have not improved, students who had participated in the Reading Foundations had greater

Milwaukee Succeeds

growth on literacy assessments from fall to spring than comparison students, and those who had been exposed to a significant dosage of the intervention did considerably better than comparison students. Most subgroups of students exceeded their growth expectations.

Changes in the education landscape. Milwaukee Succeeds is directed toward improving experiences and outcomes for children and youth across all three education sectors—private/voucher schools, charter schools, and the traditional public school system. While the ultimate goal is improvements for individuals within the city's population of children and youth, the implied theory of action for the initiative is that individual outcomes will improve as a result of systemic change. So a natural question is to ask how the three sectors are involved in what Milwaukee Succeeds is doing, and how, if at all, this involvement has changed each sector, separately and in connection with one another.

Involvement and change for Milwaukee Public Schools. It is probably fair to say that Milwaukee Succeeds seeks to drive improvements for all children in the city by supporting and strengthening the public school system, which educates the majority of Milwaukee's children and youth, while also assisting the choice and charter schools and sectors, not systemically undercutting their right to exist but not advocating explicitly for them either. How, exactly, to accomplish this has been a challenge.

It is crucial to acknowledge the turbulent political environment surrounding Milwaukee Public Schools. These are just some of the developments during the time period of the initiation of Milwaukee Succeeds:

- In 2011, under Governor Scott Walker, passage of Act 10 by the state assembly, which has mixed effects, providing some relief for MPS in obligations for personnel benefits and other budget challenges, and also limiting union bargaining power and rights to collect dues unilaterally, thereby spurring decreases in union membership and a new wave of union activism.

- Also under Gov. Walker, passage of annual state budgets that reduces state aid to education for Milwaukee and many other localities.

- In 2015, two state legislators (Senator Alberta Darling, R-River Hills and Representative Dale Kooyenga, R-Brookfield) propose a plan for turning around low-performing schools in Milwaukee. The Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program (OSPP) is approved; the Milwaukee County Executive is charged with implementing it and appoints Demond Means, the superintendent of a nearby school district, Mequon-Thiensville, as commissioner of OSPP. As the law stipulates, OSPP would assume control of failing MPS schools and could manage them directly or solicit offers from private or charter schools to do so. However, the legislature allocates no funds for OSPP, and MPS strongly resists any attempts at partnership. Means abruptly resigns in July 2016. He explains, "I made a promise when I volunteered for this position that I would not impose anything on Milwaukee Public Schools. It is now clear to me that as implementation of the law moves forward, the environment is not conducive to collaborative partnerships—something essential for positive things to happen in Milwaukee."

- In 2017, expansion of the open enrollment plan across the state (established in 1998-99, with an income cap for Milwaukee families at 300% of the federal poverty level) to provide a voucher scholarship option for students with special needs, with no income cap, enabling such students to opt out of public schooling in Milwaukee and attend private, charter, or other district schools.

- The MPS school board has been linked closely to the local teachers union and is typically resistant to charters and choice; the union has been critical of the school board president for supporting Milwaukee Succeeds because of its lack of unequivocal support for MPS; superintendent

relationships with the board and union are often strained; ongoing battles erupt in Milwaukee as charter schools seek the use of district-owned facilities in under-subscribed schools and buildings that have been closed.

In the midst of roiling events like these, the initial Milwaukee Succeeds strategy for working with MPS was to stay focused on services and benefits for students and steer clear of political controversies. But as trust developed within the MKE-S Executive Committee, conditions improved on the political front. The Milwaukee Succeeds leadership urged the charter/choice advocates to reconsider their negative rhetoric about MPS; those advocates gradually became stronger supporters of the partnership, and new opportunities for calm and collaboration seemed to open up. Relationships between MPS and Milwaukee Succeeds also improved because of changes in the teachers union situation. Act 10 made the union somewhat less combative with the school board, which made it easier for the school board, including its president, to participate in and be supportive of Milwaukee Succeeds. (However, recently the board composition has shifted to a majority of union-supported members, increasing the possibility of renewed antagonism around charter and private schooling that could have an impact on Milwaukee Succeeds.)

Gradually over time, the collaboration started to be helpful to MPS on a programmatic as well as political level. Most importantly, there is tangible evidence that the work Milwaukee Succeeds is doing with the Reading Foundations project is producing a "proof of concept" about the extensive effort and resources that are needed to mount an effective literacy initiative that can positively affect student learning. MPS knows it cannot support an equally rich implementation in more schools, but as far as possible it has integrated the lessons learned into the ongoing policies and practices of the school district. It has inspired the district to find ways to offer instructional coaches in schools, to provide professional development and parental education, to make changes in curriculum, and to evaluate and support the change. In these ways, the Milwaukee Succeeds effort has been successful in penetrating the routine structure and operations of the school district, and it also gives MPS the opportunity to take pride in the reading initiative.

Involvement and change of the choice/voucher and charter sectors. When Milwaukee Succeeds was launched, the city's private schools in the choice/voucher sector included some religious schools, mostly Lutheran and Catholic, that were tied to larger church bodies. The superintendent of schools for the Catholic Archdiocese was a member of the Leadership Council but did not have a strong presence; a staff member for the archdiocese, however, actively participated in the early literacy initiative. A Lutheran high school director who also served as president of the Choice Schools' Association, an organization that promoted private schools, also attended at one point, but later withdrew. Apart from these, there was no organizational structure to which the city's religious schools related and no individuals who could represent all of the schools in the Milwaukee Succeeds collaboration. Many other private/voucher schools were completely independent entities and they too lacked a general representative for the collaboration.

Similarly, for charter schools, including both those affiliated with MPS and those who had been chartered by the other authorizing agencies, there were no overarching organizations that could represent them all. Few charter schools in Milwaukee are affiliated with national charter management organizations such as KIPP. Four K-8 schools are part of a local network called Milwaukee College Prep that does not send a representative to MKE-S. An organization named Milwaukee Charter School Advocates helps expand the charter school sector, and its president, who also heads a prominent charter school serving the Latino community, participates in the MKE-S Leadership Council. Schools That Can is a local organization helping to support school leadership across

Milwaukee Succeeds

all sectors, but with a particular focus on expanding charter schools. A member of this organization participated in MKE-S. Key local leaders of prominent charter schools were not affiliated with Milwaukee Succeeds, and no representative of these charter and choice schools or associations served on the Milwaukee Succeeds Executive Committee. Some observers shared with us the perception that independent private and charter school directors were too busy or disinterested to have time to participate in Milwaukee Succeeds.

Thus, representation of the charter and private/voucher sectors fell largely to civic leaders who were supportive of school choice and privatization. This included at least two members of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC), a local chamber of commerce that is openly supportive of these sectors.

The official position of Milwaukee Succeeds is to rise above the sectoral competition and conflict and serve all of Milwaukee's children, in any school. One enactment of this stance was the collaboration's efforts to gather and report only data that could be obtained from at least two of the three school sectors, to avoid placing any sector, especially the traditional public school district, vulnerable to criticism on its own. Another enactment was the collaboration's efforts to include charter and voucher schools in program interventions. For example, the Reading Foundations initiative began as a pilot program in two MPS schools, but when it expanded to more schools, there was a deliberate decision to include one charter and one voucher school in the initial expansion, and more as time went on.

Several years into the collaboration, in 2016, the Catholic Archdiocese established a separate organization, Seton Catholic Schools, to address chronic underperformance in their schools. This new entity initially worked with nine schools serving grades K-8. Each of these schools is considered a voucher school; all enroll mostly students who are Black or Latino and who live in poverty. The long-term strategy is for the organization to function as a local education agency, much like a charter management organization, and to expand to work with 26 schools within three or four years. In essence, this strategy creates a collaborative structure to support schools that were once isolated from each other, paired with a local church parish but operating as standalone educational settings. Ideally, performance will improve in these schools so that students will be well prepared to attend high-quality high schools, Catholic or otherwise. William Hughes, a former superintendent from a neighboring district, and more recently the representative to MKE-S from Schools That Can, was tapped to become its chief academic officer. His trust and regard for Danae Davis and his prior involvement with Milwaukee Succeeds created a bridge, and there is now a strong and positive relationship between MKE-S and Seton Catholic Schools.

Overall, in small but salutary ways, Milwaukee Succeeds has supported the private/voucher and charter school sectors by providing some respite from the political battles and competitions, by jointly implementing and sharing with them promising reforms such as Reading Foundations, by backing new partnerships such as the Seton Catholic Schools, and by tamping down the rhetoric and discord across sectors.

Communication and community outreach and engagement. Over the first few years of its existence, Milwaukee Succeeds has sought to communicate with broad audiences. They include the foundation representatives who provide crucial funding and thought leadership for the initiative, agency directors and service providers who joined the goal-focused networks to analyze needs and plan interventions, and the community members who stand to benefit from the cross-sector collaboration. Communication strategies have evolved over these years, but challenges remain.

Initial communication with potential participants appears to have been successful, as many organizations and individuals volunteered to become involved. And from the initiative's earliest days, a website and annual reports have been used as communication tools. But for the first several years, there was no formal staffing

for communications, and the GMF marketing staff did not work much with Milwaukee Succeeds. A particular challenge for communications is how much branding to engage in for MKE-S, and how much to promote the work of partner agencies and organizations. If anything, Milwaukee Succeeds has sometimes erred on the side of credit sharing, giving more visibility to the partner organizations than to itself. While this seems generous, it also may diminish public perceptions of the value of the initiative.

As broad as the participation in Milwaukee Succeeds is, it does not seem to include many grassroots community members, either as individuals or as representatives of smaller community associations. There seems to be more involvement at the "grasstops" or "astroturf" level—directors or staff members of agencies and organizations, including government or school district offices. Teachers and school administrators are also not well represented. In part, this seems to be because meetings are held during the day, and it would be difficult to release them from school duties to attend. The Milwaukee Teachers Association (MTA) did not participate when its president was someone exceptionally opposed to anything that seemed to legitimize charter and voucher schools. More recently, a new union president has been participating.

Relation to the national network. Milwaukee Succeeds is affiliated with the StriveTogether network and was part of the network's initial expansion beyond Cincinnati. In its early days, MKE-S took many cues from the Strive model. Strive consultants came to Milwaukee several times to provide guidance and assistance. They recommended the Six Sigma planning process, and the goals adopted by MKE-S were highly consistent with the general Strive framework. Contributions flowed in two directions. Since the StriveTogether network was new as well, it worked with the Milwaukee team on things like defining the Strive theory of action and learned from MKE-S some important lessons about how to offer consultations. As one person explained, Milwaukee Succeeds and StriveTogether "kind of built things together."

Some local participants reported that, after a point, the initial Strive framework ceased to be useful and they had to proceed more independently. The template from Strive for organizing data was perceived as especially cumbersome, and not everyone appreciated Strive's initial website portal. Also, Strive advised against pilot programs because they are not systemic, but that was what MKE-S wanted to do with its literacy initiative.

Nonetheless, the national network connection continues to be important for Milwaukee Succeeds. Regional and national convenings are sources for information and inspiration; MKE-S participants especially appreciate the opportunity to network with Strive partnerships from other cities. With encouragement from Strive, MKE-S has developed increasingly closer relationships with Strive collaborations in Kenosha and Racine (south of Milwaukee) and Brown County (Green Bay).

The current MKE-S executive director is a member of Strive's national board of directors (and in June 2019 became its chair); she interacts regularly with network members around the country. Other MKE-S partners, however, have less to do with the national network. This may reflect, in part, the local collaboration's growing confidence and competence. For example, one person noted that Strive offered useful suggestions about civic engagement practices at the outset, but an individual now responsible for developing a MKE-S communications strategy claimed he had received no guidance on this from the Strive group and did not see this as a problem.

Data, accountability, and continuous improvement. As with many other aspects of the collaboration, Milwaukee Succeeds has evolved its approach to the collection and use of data. The StriveTogether network's framework for local partnerships lays a heavy emphasis on data use, as does the Kania and Kramer model of collective impact that is closely related to it. MKE-S has tried to be consistent with these, though this has not always been easy or fruitful, and in the process it has made particular strides, and encountered some hurdles, on its own.

Following the StriveTogether roadmap, Milwaukee Succeeds engaged in an earnest effort to choose programmatic goals, identify indicators for tracking progress, and then locate appropriate data sources. Initially, it did this using the Six Sigma planning process, which also involved developing charter statements that presented logic models for how the goals could be achieved. This yielded a programmatic framework with four goals and 11 indicators. To staff the data component of the collaboration, a part-time data manager was hired, and when that individual left, a full-time manager came on board. The first individual had an initial team of volunteers, many from the corporate or foundation sectors, to work with, but that dissipated and it wasn't until the full-time manager had been about nine months into the position that a new "data council" was formed.

The collaborative partners quickly learned how complex this process could be. The goals themselves were challenging, and making an appreciable impact on them seemed daunting. This was not like the city's recent teenage pregnancy reduction initiative, which was focused on one data point: the rate of teen pregnancy. Some people had questions about the logic models associated with the measures on which MKE-S had chosen to focus. How, for example, could the partnership claim credit for raising third-grade reading scores when parents, schools, and other factors were also part of the mix? Choosing measurement indicators was sometimes more opportunistic than rational, depending on what data were available rather than any other considerations. It took a while for the collaboration to realize there needed to be more systematic attention to data issues. Gradually, people started asking questions about the data, mainly about why the metrics didn't seem to be changing. Was the collaboration not having any impact, they wondered, or was something wrong with the measures?

They realized it would be helpful to have some data experts help guide and advise them. When a data council was formed, it included academics from higher education and representatives from several policy think tanks. It began its work by trying to understand where the metrics came from, why they were selected, and what they meant. An early problem was that the collaboration decided to use only data generated by others, for others. Much of this was publicly available data and while this was useful and expedient in some ways, it was proving hard to document any kind of impact with those data. Comparability of data across the three school sectors— charter, choice/voucher, and MPS—was an important consideration. The collaboration's leaders had decided that no measurements would be reported for any single sector; all data would be aggregated to the city level. This, they thought, would reduce competition and finger-pointing across the sectors. But complications arose as the school district, probably because of changes at the state Department of Public Instruction, changed its metrics from one year to the next (for example, three times in three years for elementary literacy), so there was no ability to make longitudinal comparisons.

A collaboration such as Milwaukee Succeeds can track many possible data points, not only outcome metrics, but also indicators that reflect intermediary outcomes and process indicators that show how a collaboration is doing its work. These were discussed as well. Participants also recognized that if outcomes within the four goal areas were to begin to improve, attributing causality to MKE-S alone would be difficult, if not downright foolish, without information on other confounding or intervening factors.

Other data-related issues were also raised. Collaboration partners discussed the matter of longitudinal data and whether they wanted to track a cohort of students or use cross-sectional evidence. Some also expressed confusion about the differences between intermediate outputs (such as improved attendance) and desired outcomes (such as academic gains) and how those could be accounted for. And it was acknowledged that some smaller agencies participating in the collaboration might not have the staff capacity or other resources for gathering the kind of data Milwaukee Succeeds wanted.

Many issues surrounding data use for Milwaukee Succeeds emerged from, and are reflected in, the collaboration's production of annual reports, known as the Milestone Report. The first two Milestone Reports were prepared under the direction of the first executive director of MKE-S. One of the collaboration's initial

funders had volunteered to produce the first two annual reports. This offer to help was well-intentioned, but the result was that many people felt left out of the process. These reports present a rudimentary accounting of metrics without much context describing how those indicators came alive in the work of the collaboration. In addition, the data manager at the time had been expected to use an online data tool provided by the StriveTogether network to generate the data for the reports. The tool was intended to help the growing number of Strive partnerships around the country standardize their data and reporting. But it was "a nightmare of a system to work with," causing many problems for the data manager.

When Danae Davis began her tenure as the second executive director in late spring 2015 and was faced the task of producing the Milestone Report covering the year 2014, she saw that the metrics were confusing, the data tool was unwieldy, and collaboration partners had been insufficiently involved in developing and monitoring the data. Furthermore, the existing approach to data use was not proving helpful in conveying what the collaboration was doing and would jeopardize its ability to show progress by the target year of 2020. She wanted the Milestone Report to give more of a sense of the people and activities behind the metrics. This kind of information had not been systematically gathered, so it was a challenge to produce the report. With the assistance of a communications specialist, Davis decided to produce just an executive report that would convey information people would actually read and share. With this process in place, she asked program participants to think carefully about how and why various metrics had gone up or down (or not budged), and this led the collaboration to identify and focus on elements in its theory of action it could control to at least some degree.

The approach used to produce the third Milestone Report eventually led to a considerable refinement of the collaboration's overall theory of action and data framework. Inspired by an example from another Strive initiative (in Chicago), the MKE-S deputy director initiated a comprehensive and detailed examination of the original goals and data indicators, seeking to identify key focal points along pathways of action and outcomes. He sought wide involvement in this process from the Operations Team and goal managers. This resulted in a new framework of "core indicators" that the collaboration sought to influence in order to produce change in the primary goals, and "contextual indicators" that were beyond the collaboration's power to affect but that had pervasive impact and needed to be recognized. In this new framework, the four original goals were retained and the set of indicators being tracked was reduced from 11 to 7. With these changes, Milwaukee Succeeds acknowledged where it wanted to see results and where its responsibilities extended.

These adjustments reflected a form of continuous planning and improvement not unlike the original Six Sigma model, but seemingly more attuned to the realities of the people and organizations involved in MKE-S. Members of the data council acknowledged that benchmark goals set when MKE-S was launched were unrealistic, and that the data indicators were often not very indicative of the collaboration's work. They also recognized the difficulty in developing a theory of action that would realistically reflect the initiative's ability to move key indicators, with the high school graduation rate being a prime example. And once it was decided that Goal 4 (social-emotional learning) would be dispersed among the other three goals, new questions were raised about how to develop metrics for that complex work.

Milwaukee Succeeds has sought to use data in helpful ways beyond accountability reporting for funders and the public. For example, in the school success network, partners from museums, arts organizations, and other agencies worked to align their enrichment experiences and tutoring services to the Reading Foundations literacy initiative. They have learned over time to use literacy assessments of students in their own self-assessments, to measure the impact of their work.

The partnership has worked hard to rethink and reframe its overall approach and its use of data. MKE-S seems fortunate to have funders and stakeholders who appear patient in awaiting results and have not placed

debilitating pressures on the collaboration. This has allowed the collaboration to pause long enough to rethink its approach. This is not to say, however, that it is not being held accountable for outcomes. In our interviews, funder representatives described their interest in having Milwaukee Succeeds be able to track results longitudinally so that even if benchmark goals aren't met, there is evidence of progress. Even more importantly, they want evidence of what it takes to achieve progress and where the barriers are.

Sustainability. The MKE-S funders have committed resources until 2020. It is unclear what will happen to Milwaukee Succeeds if and when philanthropic support declines or disappears. In the meantime, Milwaukee Succeeds is tracking the goals it set for 2020. These goals are big and ambitious, and there is some concern that no one has a realistic estimate of what it will take to accomplish them. The true scope of the work of Milwaukee Succeeds is not yet fully understood, and funding it is far from certain.

We have noted that Milwaukee is a hypersegregated city, with dramatic and long-standing inequities in health, housing, crime and violence, education, and employment. There are definitive racial dynamics in city, state, and education politics. Students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds have very different educational experiences and outcomes in Milwaukee, ranging from access to quality early childhood care, access to and success in K-12 education, access to and persistence in college, and access to employment. Because Milwaukee Succeeds is committed to success for "all children," it must somehow address these issues of race and equity.

Battles over racial equity in education in Milwaukee have gone on for many years and across many different issue platforms. These include efforts to desegregate schools and to hire more Black teachers and administrators. The teachers union and the school board have often been at odds, with racial dynamics entangled among their many disagreements. The voucher program arose in part from frustration about Black communities with public schooling, as did the Chapter 220 interdistrict transfer program. Charter schools are supported by the White establishment but enroll many students of color. Blacks in the city tend to support school choice, but policies that weaken the public school system are often construed as an assault on the communities of color. Competition among the three school sectors often seems to be little more than a reshuffling of students of color. These disputes play out in ways that are often dizzying to understand.

Participants in Milwaukee Succeeds, including the core funders and leaders, are familiar with these issues. Attending to educational disparities and inequity is the reason the collaboration exists and is central to all of the work undertaken, but it evident perhaps more in general discussions than in any specific policies or practices. It may be that the steps being taken at the network levels to improve early childhood education or third-grade literacy instruction will, in a city whose students are mostly of color, promote racial parity. And the acknowledgment of racial disparities and dynamics in meetings and discussions may help civic leaders feel compelled to focus more on these issues. Milwaukee Succeeds has tended to tackle these issues obliquely, not head on. In the end, this may be an appropriate, pragmatic approach in a city where racial dynamics are complex. But it is essential, for the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of Milwaukee Succeeds, for equity to be a core concern. As Danae Davis explained, "If racial equity is not addressed [you may see] a lack of an authentic community engagement…and the likelihood of your collective impact initiative having any longevity [is at risk]."

Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

Say Yes Buffalo (SYB) is the second implementation of the Say Yes to Education organization's citywide turnaround framework and strategy. Established in late 2011, the program began operations in 2012 and serves all students who are enrolled in Buffalo (NY) Public Schools and the public charters in the city. Civic leaders are actively involved in program governance and oversight, and a local committee is raising a multimillion-dollar endowment for the college scholarship fund.

Notable Features

Aims to develop a culture of college going for all in Buffalo.

Provides a last-dollar college scholarship for eligible high school graduates.

Offers support services including school-based counseling, legal and mental health services, afterschool and summer programming, and college transition programs.

Case management information system leverages data for targeting services and monitoring program effectiveness.

Fiscal support gradually being transferred from start-up funding to stable public sources.

Background. Buffalo is the second largest city in the State of New York with a population of about 260,000. In the early 1900s, it was one of the most prosperous and populous towns in America. However, Buffalo's economic stability and population began to decline in the 1950s and 1960s despite a continuous and heavy influx of African Americans that began in the 1940s. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, 45% of the total population is White, 39% is Black, and 11% is Latino.

The percentage of people living in poverty for 2011-15 was 31.4%, compared with a national average of about 13%. Almost half of all the children in Buffalo live at or below the federal poverty level. Today, Buffalo has the sixth highest concentration of Black poverty and ninth highest concentration of Latino poverty among metropolitan areas in the United States. During the Great Migration, Black families primarily resided in certain areas of the older central city as a result of discriminatory housing practices, and much of this segregation remains today. The percentage of residents, particularly Black residents, living in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty in Buffalo has increased dramatically since 2000 and is now at about 46%.

Excluding Buffalo, the Erie County population is less diverse than the city, with 90% White residents. The mean household income in the county, excluding Buffalo, was estimated to be about $118,000 in 2015, compared with just under $47,000 for Buffalo households.

In recent years, Buffalo has seen signs of economic revitalization, and there are high hopes for employment prospects and for reversing the population decline. Concerned that not all community members will benefit from an economic upswing, some local residents feel that Say Yes can help by ensuring that more local young people are prepared for the new jobs, and by encouraging families to move to (or stay in) Buffalo.

The school system. Buffalo struggles with properly educating a large number of students of color, children living in poverty, and a growing number of immigrant and refugee children. In 2015, low achievement levels caused 25 schools, nearly half of the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS), to be designated as "struggling" or "persistently struggling" by the New York State Education Department. Frustration over high school graduation rates that had dipped below 50% for multiple years was a driving reason for the initiation of Say Yes Buffalo. The city responded

to court-ordered desegregation in the 1960s by establishing a pioneering magnet schools program. Despite this, today most public schools in the city are highly segregated by race and ethnicity.

BPS has faced challenges with a contentious school board, often divided along racial lines, and with frequent turnover of superintendents. The school system had seven superintendents in the six years after Say Yes Buffalo was initiated in the 2011-12 school year. Numerous stakeholders believe that conflict among board members has inhibited progress and fostered distrust at the school and community levels. The Buffalo Federation of Teachers (BFT) is a powerful political force shaping the local educational landscape in Buffalo. Charter schools also play a small but growing role in the city. While the overall population and school district enrollment in Buffalo have been declining, the charter school population has been increasing and charters currently enroll about 20% of the students in Buffalo. No charter schools are affiliated with national charter networks, although this may change in the future.

Initiation. Civic leaders in Buffalo were concerned about the mismatch between the city's impending employment growth and its low record of educational performance. A new medical campus was in the works, and city planners, with the help of consultants from Brookings and McKinsey, had identified advanced manufacturing as a growth opportunity for the city because those jobs require educational levels that seemed realistically achievable for Buffalo residents. But with the existing educational context in Buffalo, there was no guarantee that local students would qualify for those jobs. More specifically, leaders were concerned about equity and wanted to ensure that all of Buffalo's residents could take equal part in the city's revitalization.

Business and civic leaders met formally and informally to search for solutions. The executive director of a prominent foundation introduced them to the idea of a college promise scholarship program similar to the one begun recently in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The idea caught the group's attention and it began quietly raising money for what it referred to as the Buffalo Promise. Then, somewhat serendipitously, leaders from Buffalo made contact with the Say Yes to Education organization, which had established its first citywide program in nearby Syracuse, NY.

Say Yes appealed to the Buffalo civic leaders because it was a fully articulated intervention model, incorporated a well-conceived organizational structure, and the national Say Yes organization would provide generous seed funding of $15 million over five years. Say Yes had learned some lessons from its first citywide implementation, and before committing to Buffalo it worked with the city to determine if Buffalo had sufficient fiscal capacity and civic will to support the partnership. This vetting process was led by two local foundations, but many partners got involved, including the school district, the city and county governments, and the teachers union, and these partners eventually cosigned the formal proposal submitted to Say Yes. During this time, key representatives from Say Yes met with community members, holding over 100 community meetings with local leaders and others.

The establishment of the Buffalo chapter was announced by the national Say Yes organization in December 2011. The next month, a core planning team got to work, and an executive director was hired and began working in July 2012.

Mission and theory of action. Say Yes Buffalo follows the national Say Yes framework and strategy. The theory of action is that the promise of financial support through college scholarships will increase students' motivation and ability to graduate high school and pursue postsecondary education. Perhaps more importantly, wraparound support services are essential in order to provide students with the social, health, and academic assistance they need to succeed in school. In addition, a case management system, now known as the Postsecondary Planning System, enables service providers to access information on individual students and

Say Yes Buffalo

allows the program to analyze its overall services and outcomes. A strategy with an entire city as the unit of change is appropriate for ensuring commitment to full implementation of the program, including embedding financial support for the support services in stable city, county, and school district budgets, and for the scholarship through local fundraising.

The national Say Yes to Education organization and its Buffalo chapter are consistent in espousing the goal of increasing postsecondary access and completion. Because Buffalo and the other Say Yes chapter cities have large proportions of students of color and students living in poverty, who have not reached levels of educational attainment equal to those of their more advantaged peers, this can be considered an equity-oriented mission meant to reduce attainment disparities by race/ethnicity and social class. But as the founding story of Say Yes Buffalo suggests, civic economic development for Buffalo was also a concern. The different aspects of the partnership's mission and theory of action are communicated to, and received by, various audiences in Buffalo somewhat differently. Some constituents and stakeholders pay considerable attention to the support services, while others focus on the college scholarship (including its benefits for more affluent residents and those considering moving to Buffalo), and still others are attuned to the citywide economic development goals. This fluidity allows Say Yes to develop a broad base of support because different community members can find something they need.

Say Yes Buffalo intentionally focuses attention on issues outside the classroom, emphasizing the supports and structures that can affect students' readiness to learn. The partnership does not advocate a particular intervention model for school improvement. Instead, it works with Buffalo community to set a goal for increased post-high school completion and to deliver a range of social, health, and educational services that help students achieve success. By improving students' overall well-being, Say Yes expects teachers and schools will be able to be more successful, and this change itself may be a catalyst for school- or district-initiated reforms.

Operations. The Say Yes Buffalo organizational structure is simultaneously centralized and decentralized. The Say Yes executive director and staff make many operational decisions and perform core administrative and oversight functions, with consultation from the national Say Yes staff. Community involvement is centralized in the form of two key organizational entities, the Operating Committee and the Leadership Council, that advise and support the Say Yes administration, and it is decentralized in the form of a number of functional task forces charged with planning and supporting key programmatic areas, such as the afterschool programs, the legal clinics, and the scholarship program.

The initial organizational structure was consistent with the Say Yes template for citywide operations, which has been evolving with each successive chapter implementation. A core planning team, comprised of local leaders and Say Yes personnel, met biweekly for about 30 months to organize and plan. As a representative of Say Yes explained, "We led with the governance structure; the process is to guard local ownership." Successful local leadership was a condition for maintaining the scholarship promise offered by Say Yes, and it has proven to be a powerful incentive for people to be involved with the whole initiative, for no local leader wants to stand in the way of this potential boon for the city.

The Say Yes initiative is staffed by about 20 full-time professionals who bear responsibility for managing the various aspects of the local partnership. The executive director serves as the main liaison to the national office and to the wider Buffalo community and its key leaders and constituents.

Over time, the original Core Planning Team transitioned to become the Operating Committee. This group includes about 30 individuals who serve by virtue of their roles in government, social agencies, philanthropy, and civic leadership. Sending organizations include Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo Teachers Union, the Buffalo

Board of Education, several local higher education institutions, the Erie County Department of Social Services, several foundations, and the District Parent Coordinating Council. The Operating Committee has met regularly, every two to three weeks, since its inception, to make key governance decisions and reflect on programmatic information as reported by the Say Yes staff who are invited to present. The executive director of Say Yes looks to the Operating Committee to support the program's operational roll out and to ensure there is sustainability.

Perhaps most importantly, the Operating Committee is a venue where individuals, who often have high-profile positions that bring them in conflict with one another, appear to set those issues aside to focus on supporting and maintaining the Say Yes program for the sake of the city. As noted above, the Operating Committee is meant to be a gathering of people who represent constituent organizations and community roles and functions; they are not present merely as individuals. But it is the interaction among these persons that comes to matter most, first as they come to know and trust each other, and second as they bring their institutional resources into the room and thus can quickly facilitate the kind of joint problem solving that would be much more difficult to achieve under normal operating conditions in Buffalo.

The Community Leadership Council is comprised of about 40 community leaders from government, business, philanthropy, and the social service sector. It is co-chaired by high-profile individuals with a big stake in the Say Yes initiative, including the mayor of Buffalo, the Deputy Erie County Executive, the president of the Buffalo Board of Education, Buffalo's representative on the New York State Board of Regents, and the chair of the Say Yes Scholarship Board. Meetings of the Community Leadership Council take place about three times a year and are open to the public. The purpose of these meetings is primarily information sharing but also to encourage community leaders to be ambassadors for the initiative and to give community members the opportunity to engage and ask questions.

Say Yes Buffalo has established task forces to correspond with the services the partnership provides, such as for legal services and for afterschool programming. These groups are comprised of community volunteers, representatives of service-providing organizations, and Say Yes staff. They start with a general idea about what children and youth need, draw in the community members and service providers who can help envision, guide, and resource each service area, and—importantly—consider from the start how to develop a stable and sustainable funding and operational model. Each task force is represented on the Operating Committee. The religious leaders task force has a slightly different function; it convenes a group of local pastors, many from the Black and low-income neighborhoods, to help with community engagement and information sharing.

The last important management structure for Say Yes is the Scholarship Board, comprised of local business people and philanthropists who are leading the effort to raise a spend-down fund and an endowment that will fund the scholarship promise for years to come. This is not an easy task, as it seeks to commit extensive local dollars to a single, enduring appeal, even as other charitable needs, including a number of other local scholarship funds, continue to exist in Buffalo. Nonetheless, the Board has stepped up to the challenge. Say Yes estimates an eventual target of $100 million is needed to fund the endowment fully (based on current student enrollment in Buffalo). The Scholarship Board is confident it will be able to raise the money.

Funding the collaboration. Say Yes to Education has developed a financial strategy for its citywide chapters. This includes initial seed money from the national office to fund the financial analytics that are done before a chapter is established in a city, the core partnership operations, initial implementation of the support services for students, and development of the Postsecondary Planning System, a student management system database. The national office makes this multiyear commitment to the chapter city; typically it is about $15 million. It is gradually reduced over an anticipated timeframe of five years. Eventually, local revenue sources are expected to fund the core operations and the wraparound services students receive through the partnership. This funding

is meant to be sustainable, primarily by being embedded as stable expenditure lines in school district, city, or county budgets. Some of the funds from local sources are anticipated to be state or federal monies.

This financial strategy has been implemented in Buffalo and many of the support services are now being incorporated into the yearly budgets of local government. For example, Say Yes recently reached an agreement with BPS for a seven-year funding plan for afterschool programming. This was a major accomplishment as afterschool funding had been a problematic issue in the city for years and it caused many disruptions in students' academic support.

As another example, Say Yes Buffalo has had a gradual rollout of an ambitious plan for school-based mental health clinics, and they are now in place in all of the district's school buildings. Funding comes through the county government budget. The long-term funding strategy is for Medicaid to reimburse the county on a fee-for-service basis, estimated at about $122,000 per clinic per year. The Buffalo Community Foundation provided $8000 in seed funding for each clinic to get up and running before the county could begin to bill Medicaid.

The mental health clinics are a good example of how Say Yes operates as a partnership. In the community forums and conversations held when Say Yes was a possibility and then in the early start-up phase, there were many discussions about schools' need for help with students who were exhibiting "diagnosable" social-emotional or behavioral issues. Outpatient community mental health services were not easily accessible; school staff had neither the time nor training to address serious issues, and the school district didn't have the resources to provide more assistance. Say Yes convened a task force to address these concerns, and it planned and continues to monitor the clinics. The actual service providers are local mental health agencies who establish "satellite clinics" in schools. Say Yes brokered and facilitated the funding and operational arrangements among the agencies, the county government, and the school system. Sometimes people refer to these clinics as Say Yes clinics; other times they are identified with the name of the mental health agency working in the school, but overall people seem well aware that Say Yes has had a key role in this initiative.

The Say Yes financial strategy also covers a "last-dollar" scholarship promise for eligible students who attend and graduate from public schools in the city. This scholarship is intended to close the gap between students' financial aid awards of all kinds and their college tuition bill. For students attending public colleges and universities in New York State, the scholarship is funded through an endowment fund (or spendable fund) raised by the locality. Scholarships to private schools, both local and national, that have agreed to join the Say Yes Higher Education Compact are funded by the colleges and universities themselves, primarily in the form of tuition discounts. Smaller grants are available to students who do not qualify for the scholarship (for example, if all of their tuition costs are covered by other sources), to pay for other school expenses.

Many private colleges from around the country who are part of the Say Yes Higher Education Compact see this kind of financial support to students as part of their mission. For the local private colleges, it can be more challenging. Theoretically, providing extra tuition discounts to a growing number of students should be offset by increases in total enrollment, with more students bringing tuition dollars to the colleges from their federal loan sources, and/or their own resources in more affluent families. But this rebalancing will take some time to achieve. Moreover, the costs of supporting these new students seem to be increasing because they often require more assistance and support. Say Yes Buffalo has responded to this situation by providing more programmatic supports for their Scholars.

Implementation of services. The most prominent benefit Say Yes provides is the college scholarship. When Say Yes was first introduced to the Buffalo community in a very public way, the scholarship was introduced first,

to convey the value and importance of the Say Yes program and to generate excitement. Each year since the program's inception, the number of students who are eligible for and apply for the scholarship has increased.

The wraparound support services provided by Say Yes are intended to help vulnerable students who cannot obtain similar services on their own. To the public, these services are much less visible than the scholarship, but nonetheless are critically important elements of the Say Yes framework. Say Yes has implemented a full range of services, many in all schools in the district. They include the placement of family support specialists in each of the city's 55 public schools; legal clinics in selected schools around the city for families in need; mental health clinics in all schools and several mobile health units that provide health information and reproductive health services; summer internships, employment, and mentoring; FAFSA completion workshops and other help with college access; mentoring for students as they transition to college; and summer bridge programs to prepare students for the college environment. Afterschool programs and summer camps provide extended learning opportunities to students, and early childhood education interventions are now being planned. While the scholarship is available to all public school students in Buffalo, whether in traditional or charter schools, the wraparound services have been implemented only for the students enrolled in traditional district schools.

Many of the support services are the result of specific determinations from the national Say Yes foundation about the kinds of services that are needed to help students finish high school and move to college. However, the Buffalo partnership also provides services that have been identified locally as important, such as the summer internships and mentoring from local businesses. Many of the wraparound services have been available in Buffalo before, but the general perception seems to be that these services were poorly coordinated, implemented, and funded.

The implementation of the Postsecondary Planning System has proceeded slowly but deliberately, with some setbacks, and service providers are beginning to input data into it and take advantage of its case management capabilities. This student case management system is part of a vision the Say Yes foundation has been developing over time, toward using an information system to monitor individual student progress along a developmental trajectory leading to postsecondary success. Under this approach, which Say Yes calls "pathway analytics," service providers can use information from a set of indicators about students' academic progress and their social and emotional well-being and physical health to determine whether a student is "on track" to thrive and progress to graduation and beyond. The indicators are based on research conducted by the American Institutes of Research and, later, Johns Hopkins University, and they represent critical targets of accomplishment along a successful school pathway.

Program outcomes. In Buffalo, Say Yes is committed to transparency in reporting the program's progress. At the periodic meetings of the Community Leadership Council, data are presented about implementation of the various support services for students and about the community's progress in raising funds for the scholarship endowment and placing the support services on stable budget lines with the school district, county, or other governmental units. The program also reports on key outcome indicators. Sometimes there is a delay in reporting outcomes, usually connected to the program's challenges in obtaining and verifying information from multiple sources, including the state education department, school district, and college administrative offices. In addition to reports at governance meetings, the data are also compiled into a written "Report to the Community" and are made available on the Say Yes Buffalo website.

For example, Say Yes created a multiyear staged process of placing family support specialists and other supports in schools and reported this to the public so parents would know when to expect services in their children's schools. In its annual reports to the public, the program tracks the number of students and families who have received services—for example, 219 students made use of school-based mental health clinics in 2014-15, 1227

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students enrolled in summer school, with a 69% four-week retention rate and 190 students attending 100% of the program, and 96 family cases were initiated at the legal clinics, affecting 338 family members that same year.

The program also tracks BPS graduation rates and postsecondary matriculation. The high school graduation rate was 49% in 2012 and 61% in 2015; postsecondary enrollment increased from 57% to 67% in the same time period. After the 2016-17 school year, the graduation rate was up to 64%, and the postsecondary matriculation rate was 65%.

The Say Yes framework includes two ways of measuring success: an Impact Dashboard tracking a set of "big-picture indicators and a "Program Dashboard" reporting outcomes for students receiving various services and supports, as a way of determining program efficacy. Although Say Yes does not yet have data to establish a strong causal link between support services, the college scholarship, and graduation rates and college retention, the intention is that the student case management system will help them do so. Nonetheless, some tentative connections have been reported. In 2015, for example, Say Yes reported that students who received school-based preventive services had an average 4% attendance increase over prior years; and students in the summer bridge programs at Erie Community College and Buffalo State College also saw academic improvements.

The national Say Yes organization has also commissioned external research on the Buffalo program's financial progress and program implementation. Another academic researcher, Robert Bifulco, has begun reporting program outcomes for the first two citywide Say Yes chapters, Syracuse and Buffalo. Bifulco and colleagues found that after the first few years of implementation in Buffalo, public school enrollment increased (probably drawing students from private schools rather than outlying public school districts), but housing prices had not yet changed much. Math achievement increased though language arts performance did not, and test score gaps by race widened in both math and language arts following Say Yes implementation. Although these researchers hesitate to make strong causal claims in light of limitations in the available data, they do note that observed increases in college matriculation were deemed "statistically significant and economically meaningful," especially increases in four-year college enrollment for White students and in high school graduation, college matriculation, and retention for African American students.

It is unclear how, if at all, any of the programs or benefits provided by the partnership have contributed to graduation rate changes. The scholarship promise is a clear candidate for motivating students to graduate and enter college, and the numbers of high school students applying for the scholarship have increased over time along with the graduation rate. But this association is not necessarily causal. And there is not enough evidence yet to be able to establish explicit connections between the wraparound services and student outcomes, with the exception that students who worked with school-based family support specialists seem to have improvements in school attendance.

Thus, at this point in time, the most important contribution of the collaboration may not be the implementation of the scholarship or the wraparound services, or improved outcomes for student graduation and access to college, or economic and employment gains, crucial as those are. Instead, it might be the partnership's efforts to create a collaborative civic infrastructure that rallies around improved opportunities for the city's children and youth, and a new emphasis on a college-going culture and higher expectations for all. Pragmatically, this infrastructure and culture appear in the guise of solid funding agreements with government for wraparound services and in a growing scholarship endowment. Symbolically, they are reflected in what many persons reported to us as a renewed sense of hope in the city.

Changes in the education system. The Say Yes Buffalo initiative expressly does not get involved in internal school district operations unless asked to do so. The partnership provides no services related to the technical

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core of teaching and learning in schools and intentionally stays away from issues such as teacher quality, curriculum, school choice, and attendance or behavioral policies.

Nonetheless, Say Yes considers its relationship with the school system to be absolutely integral to its program and theory of action, and the collaboration have established many points of connection. The relationship has not always been smooth or positive, but as trust develops, things seem to be working effectively for both the collaboration and the school system. The benefits to the school system are both tangible, in the form of assistance with student support services and extended learning opportunities, and more intangible, in the form of a calmer, more results-focused environment around schooling in Buffalo.

The partnership's relationship with the current superintendent, Dr. Kriner Cash, has gotten off to a positive start. The Say Yes executive director and the superintendent meet monthly to discuss ways they can support each other. Cash sits on the Operating Committee that meets once every three weeks, and, although he typically sends a deputy, if the Say Yes director explains that his presence is truly needed, the superintendent will attend himself. He also attends the Scholarship Board and the Community Leadership Council meetings. Other Say Yes supporters in the school district, such as the district's mental health professionals, help to create an atmosphere for collaboration. Say Yes leaders attribute these mostly positive relationships in part to the principle that Say Yes is not an education reform initiative.

Community engagement. Say Yes Buffalo aims for its community to be widely aware of and supportive of the initiative. Since individual students must apply on their own for the Say Yes scholarship, the program must cultivate widespread familiarity and interest. Moreover, broad public buy-in is essential for helping to create a "we can do it" attitude about high school graduation and college matriculation. Therefore, many activities are directed toward building public support for the partnership.

Say Yes has invited a large number of community partners to participate in the initiative's governance and administration, and even more are invited to public information sessions. The overall stance of the initiative is to be welcoming and responsive to community input. In part, this approach has been essential to overcome distrust and hopelessness engendered by long-standing patterns of broken promises and poor results from the Buffalo public schools.

The District Parent Coordinating Council (DPCC) is the official parent group for the public school system. Each school community elects a parent representative who is part of DPCC, and the parent representatives choose a president. DPCC leaders attend Say Yes meetings and events, and Say Yes sends representatives to DPCC events.

Relation to the national network. Say Yes to Education was established in 1987 as a nonprofit by the money manager George Weiss when he decided to offer a postsecondary scholarship promise to a cohort of middle school students from a single school in Philadelphia. Weiss is the current chairman of the Say Yes Board of Directors. The foundation's financial assets are derived from two sources: grants and other contributions, and investment income; in 2013 its assets were about $45 million. Say Yes to Education has small chapters serving students in several locations, and has now shifted to a citywide strategy that has led them from Syracuse, NY, to Buffalo, to a recent new chapter in Guilford County, NC, and an announced partnership in Cleveland, OH. The organization also has begun to provide technical assistance to cities wanting to implement the Say Yes framework, through the new Weiss Institute.

The national Say Yes organization provides a set of guiding philosophies and influences much of the service provision in its chapter cities, although its allows flexibility based on local context. The existence of the national network allows Say Yes to apply lessons learned in its first sites to new ventures. After several years of

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implementation, it appears that the relationship between Say Yes national and the Buffalo initiative has been dynamic and helpful. Although members of the national Say Yes organization were closely involved in the first phases of negotiation and then implementation in Buffalo, they now work more in the background with the Say Yes Buffalo executive director.

Sustainability. Plans for the survival and institutionalization of Say Yes Buffalo are largely derived from the national Say Yes to Education organization's funding and sustainability model. Say Yes Buffalo is making progress in finding stable funding sources for support services, and the scholarship fundraising is proceeding in a positive direction. Also, the collaborative governance model ensures that local leaders are invested in and involved in the program in ongoing ways.

One threat to the financial stability and survival of Say Yes Buffalo is political turnover. Incoming politicians may have a different vision for the city that does not include Say Yes, which could eliminate or alter resources allocated to the initiative in the city budget. This is one of the reasons Say Yes Buffalo takes public relations very seriously. Consistent public relations messaging about Say Yes Buffalo's work can build a publicly recognizable brand that mitigates the long-term survival risks that arise from competition or duplication of efforts.

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Alignment Nashville, Nashville, TN

Alignment Nashville (AN) is a cross-sector collaboration for education that was launched in 2002 to support the Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and has gradually established its own national network, Alignment USA.

Notable Features

Launched by business community.

Explicit goal of aligning community supports with district's established strategic plan.

Teams work closely with school system.

Has evolved organically into a national network as other cities have sought to use its structure and tools.

Background. The City of Nashville and Davidson County form a metro government and a single school district. In 2010, the population of Nashville, known in the census as Nashville-Davidson, was 603,505. Its residents are 56.3% White, 28.4% Black, 10% Latino, and 3.1% Asian. Black students are overrepresented in the public school population, making up 44% in 2014-15. The median household income is $46,686 per year. Black and Latino households earn much less than White households, but are at similar earning levels in relation to White households (64% and 65% respectively).

Initiation. In 2002, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce became concerned that Nashville was on an upward trajectory in every sector except public education and that this put the city's future at risk. It commissioned a study on how to improve educational outcomes in the county. The study pointed out that, though many organizations partnered with schools, the approach was piecemeal and ineffective; the report called for a citywide effort to coordinate and leverage existing efforts to produce better results for Nashville's students. In response, Chamber of Commerce leaders convened dozens of civic leaders for a series of planning meetings. Over time, the group decided to form a collaboration with the explicit goal of helping the school system realize its strategic plan (a plan that is reconsidered through a collaborative, community-wide process every five years). The group created a new organization to shepherd the effort and selected an executive director. With initial funding provided by two business leaders, Alignment Nashville officially became an independent nonprofit in 2007.

Operations. Alignment Nashville is governed by a 20-person board of directors that includes the mayor, the former mayor, the school district director (i.e., the superintendent), and business and community leaders. A 50-person operating board that meets monthly coordinates and oversees AN's projects, which are run though Alignment Teams (A-Teams). Over 200 local community, governmental, and educational organizations are listed as "participating organizations." The A-Teams work together to develop and pilot projects, provide oversight for implementation, and gather data to determine impact and the need for scale-up. Each A-Team includes 15-20 people, plus an AN staff member. At the time of our fieldwork, there were 12 A-Teams, down from 20, and AN may further consolidate teams to focus operations more effectively. Teams are co-led by a high-level MNPS staff member and a business or CBO leader. All co-chairs also sit on the operating board to share information, create peer accountability, and provide coordination. If an A-Team project achieves its desired impact and systemic change, it becomes a permanent component of the school system or occasionally a permanent community program. Community schools, for example, came to Nashville through an A-Team. MNPS picked them up and then that A-Team disbanded.

Implementation. The A-Teams were set up to support specific components of MNPS's strategic plan, relating to academic grade levels, special populations, health issues, and other emerging needs. Team members come from large and small nonprofits, public schools, city government, public health, higher education, and the business community. They employ their perspectives and expertise to create tactical plans to support MNPS goals. In the early years, major business leaders were active on A-Teams, and these teams were more central to innovation and reform. The active A-Team members now seem to be from CBOs rather than from business.

The Academies of Nashville are considered the A-Teams' biggest success. These high schools have become national models for integrating core academic subjects with career and technical education. Specific businesses are involved with particular schools (like Nissan with the Academy of Engineering and Automotive Technology) to provide internships, help develop the curriculum, provide guest speakers, and so on. Many partners contributed to this effort and AN provided a mechanism through which CBOs and the school system could work together, primarily to solicit funding.

Community engagement. Some perceive Alignment Nashville as not welcoming grassroots community engagement. One civic leader said that Alignment Nashville's leadership discouraged authentic bottom-up influence, for example, from student activists. Speculation was that engaging with community or youth groups would distract from AN's mission to support the school director's strategic plan. Alignment Nashville has now hired a staff member to bring neighborhood people onto A-Teams and to involve them in their work. However, the extent of the engagement of the grassroots community in collaborative decision-making is still limited and generally its input consists of focus groups or surveys. These efforts happen as needed and are not systematically ingrained into the formal practices of the collaboration.

Use of data. Alignment Nashville uses a data system constructed in collaboration with Deloitte, which modified an existing platform to create a custom portal. The system allows A-Teams to choose their own data both to use for internal accountability and to determine whether a program should be scaled up and institutionalized. The system does not interface with the MNPS data system. A-Teams determine their own goals and how they should measure success in meeting their goals. Though the initiative aims to contribute to increasing graduation rates, college and career readiness, children's health and wellness, and community prosperity, how or to what extent each A-Team, or AN as a whole, may be contributing to meeting these goals is not being specifically calculated. Alignment Nashville's 2015 annual report listed progress and setbacks in each of these areas but did not tie any of these changes to AN's particular contributions.

Evolving into a network. About five years ago, Alignment Nashville began to develop its own national network to share its approach. Alignment USA (AUSA) grew organically without any active marketing. In addition to Nashville, AUSA has 17 members including Bay County, FL; Coachella Valley, CA; Detroit, MI, Elgin, IL; Honolulu, HI; Jackson, MS; New Hartford, CT; Rockford, IL; and Sacramento, CA. AUSA has produced a "tool set" for the network and conducts an invitation-only institute once a year.

Challenges and adjustments. When the founding executive director, Sydney Rogers, stepped down, her long-time deputy director, Melissa Jaggers, smoothly transitioned into the leadership role. The former executive director and some members of the board are interested in expanding AUSA and developing it as a separate organization; other board members, though supportive of AUSA, do not want to change the network's status until they are confident that its strategic plan and financing will not detract from the work in Nashville. Because AN's explicit goal is to support the school system's strategic plan, school district leadership changes could especially affect AN's work. In fact, AN's relationship with MNPS has waxed and waned with the various heads of the system over the past 15 years. Alignment Nashville seems to be establishing a stronger relationship the school director who took office in July 2016 than with his immediate predecessor. The new school district team

seems to see AN as neutral conveners and a real asset, asking to form a new A-Team to promote facilitation between MNPS and charter schools.

Sustainability and effectiveness. Because Alignment Nashville convenes the mayor, the business community, the school director, and other major players on its governing board, it expects to stay around even in the face of changes in leadership positions. However, while AN may continue to be successful at what it calls "providing tools that bring the community together for more effective results than we could each accomplish alone," to advance the real goal of improving the health and education of the community's youth will ultimately requires a greater public investment. The executive director hopes AN will increase public confidence in making such investments, saying, "Real issues take money and resources to address. … But you don't have a strong case for resources unless you're using what you have as effectively as possible." Another local civic leader who agreed that inadequate funding was a major problem said, "There's a little more belief that the school system is worth supporting, which has not always been the case."

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, Savannah, GA

The Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA) was founded in 1988 to coordinate the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative in Savannah, Georgia. YFA was also the collaborative body and fiscal agent representing Chatham County in the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, a set of county collaboratives established by the state and inspired by YFA. The YFA's authorizing legislation was repealed in 2017.

Notable Features

Formed in 1988 in response to Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative.

Funded to coordinate cross-sector collaboration on behalf of "at risk" youth.

Formally dissolved in 2017.

Initial focus on system change; later focus on neighborhood and community interventions.

Early use of data to identify disparities and needs.

Background. The population of Savannah is approximately 54% Black; 37% White, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. The student body of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, which consists of about 38,000 students, is about 63% Black and 27% White. Savannah has a median household income of $36,466, and there are stark differences in the median household incomes of Blacks ($28,224), Hispanics ($31,867) and Whites ($49,174). In terms of educational attainment, about 14% of the population 25 years and older has not graduated high school and about 28% of the population 25 years and older holds a bachelor's degree or higher.

Initiation. In 1988, the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA) was organized and authorized by the state to serve as the collaborative to implement the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures initiative. New Futures sought systemic solutions to enhance the delivery of educational and social services to improve the life outcomes of urban youth. Savannah's proposal was spearheaded by then-city-manager Don Mendonsa. To be eligible for the five-year, $10 million awards, midsized cities had to present a plan that incorporated (1) an "oversight collaborative" composed of government, schools, community-based organizations (CBOs), and parents (though not business); (3) a case management system; (4) integrated services for youth; and (5) development of a management information system. Cities were also required to pledge to raise an additional $5 million in matching funds.

Operations and implementation. Otis Johnson, an African American educator, social worker, and community organizer, was selected as the founding executive director. For its first ten years, under Johnson's leadership, and with major corporate CEOs as board chairs, YFA operated a dynamic collaborative, largely in accordance with the Casey Foundation's model. At that time, YFA had 50 employees (administrative and direct service). For the first five years, the community contributed $10.5 million in new money and $8 million in redirected funds and in-kind contributions, more than meeting Casey's matching-fund requirement. Its original strategy was to tackle a range of issues like low academic achievement, teen pregnancy, health, and dropping out by placing case managers in the schools to work with the students and their families. Later it moved away from school-based case management and worked to provide comprehensive services to residents of the section of the city ("Area C") where the need was greatest.

School system. YFA placed staff in schools to intervene with at-risk students, but it never worked closely with the school system. From the start, the school superintendent had been reluctant to cooperate. The

superintendent had initially expected to convene the planning group to respond to the Casey Foundation invitation, but the mayor's office acted first, and the city never gave the school system a significant role in the process. The superintendent saw his mission as carrying out the Board of Education's strategic plan and didn't see the value in working with groups who had other ideas. The deputy superintendent was the liaison to YFA during planning process, but, later, when he was appointed superintendent, he was no more cooperative than his predecessor. The lack of connection between YFA and the school system appears to have continued; in the collaboration's waning years, the superintendent did not attend YFA meetings.

Use of data. According to respondents, YFA was a pioneer in the use of data. Early on, it disaggregated data by race and attempted to use transparent indicators to track whether the school system was meeting its objectives. This was apparently a factor in the group's strained relationship with the school system. The decision to establish the Family Resource Center in Area C resulted from a scatter-map analysis of data about social, educational, and employment conditions in the city's neighborhoods. These data were also used as a tool to engage residents in the initiative.

Community engagement. Part of YFA's strategy under Johnson was to promote community advocacy and demand more involvement of grassroots individuals and organizations in decision-making. Johnson was sensitive to and effective working with issues related to race and racism, taking care to ensure that the right messenger engaged the right audiences. He recognized the importance of building public accountability through informed, organized community groups in low-income neighborhoods. He also understood that to ensure resources are allocated, the "elites" have to stay engaged and buy into the work.

Johnson hoped that YFA would continue to push for active community engagement after he left. He expected leadership continuity within the organization and through his new role as a council member and later as mayor. This was derailed when, in part as a result of Mendonsa's opposition, Johnson's longtime deputy, his preferred successor, was not selected as executive director.

The YFA executive director at the time of our fieldwork, Edward Chisolm, said he had wanted to engage some vocal community activists, but some members of the board of directors disagreed. They felt that "we shouldn't be antagonistic."

Challenges and adjustments. Initially, the school district tried to keep YFA case managers out of the schools altogether, citing student privacy concerns. When YFA lawyers learned that parental consent could satisfy privacy laws, it overcame this resistance. Case managers were given access to the schools to meet with students, but their relationship to the schools was tenuous and their advocacy for students was resented by some school staff. In 1993, the Casey Foundation conducted a review of each New Futures site's progress and awarded Savannah an additional $1 million over two years. In this next phase, YFA changed its strategy from focusing on "at-risk youth" in the local public school system to a broader effort to involve families and the community. Moving away from school-based case management, it transitioned to providing comprehensive services to residents of the section of the city where the need was greatest. It established the Family Resource Center, which provided the services that community surveys determined were most important, including Head Start, afterschool programs, a health clinic, computer lab, case management, support for applying for government programs, a dance troupe, and community meeting space, under one roof. It also launched school-based health clinics in two high schools. In 1998, Johnson stepped down to run for elected office (he eventually became a two-term mayor of Savannah), and the organization's budget, staffing, and influence declined.

The Family Resource Center eventually closed for lack of funding and interest. In 2016, the city council ended the city's annual budget appropriation for YFA, its main funding source for years. In 2017, the YFA board then voted to sunset the organization and asked the legislature to repeal its authorizing legislation.

Now that YFA has officially been dissolved by the state, a new youth services collaborative is expected to be authorized under the aegis of the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, a unique state agency that provides technical support and some funding to collaborations that have been established in each of Georgia's 159 counties. (A website for the Chatham Family Connection Collaborative described the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority as "the collaborative body and fiscal agent representing Chatham County in the Georgia Family Connection Partnership.") According to one informant, the impetus for the Georgia Family Connection Partnership came from the state's low ranking (48th in the U.S.) in 1990 Kids Count report released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The governor wanted to do something to change the ranking. His staff visited YFA in 1992-93 and decided that a grassroots local strategy was the way to go, instead of running everything from central state offices. The Partnership originally worked with 15 counties who volunteered to look at their data, come up with a plan, and put together a collaborative to see if it would work. Soon other counties wanted to follow suit. YFA served as Chatham County's local collaborative member of the Partnership for many years.

Sustainability and effectiveness. The Savannah Youth Futures Authority had an unusually long life span. At the same time, it is clear that it changed considerably over time and did not sustain the effectiveness of its early years. All of our interview respondents agreed that Johnson's resignation was a factor; many opined that the board had made a mistake in passing over Johnson's deputy who was White in favor of a candidate from Florida whose identity as a Black woman was apparently thought to be an important consideration in her favor. This individual resigned after a year, and, during that crucial year, the Casey grant ran out and YFA lost much of its funding and much of its stature in the community.

Under Johnson's successor, YFA apparently lost renewal of a $1 million federal Healthy Start Initiative grant (and, according to one informant, YFA got on a federal "don't fund" list because of financial mismanagement). Once the money was gone, many of the CBOs, school district personnel, and others who had been working with the YFA dropped out or lost interest because they were no longer getting any funding through or with the assistance of YFA.

As our informants described, the executive directors appointed since then were YFA staff people who were promoted for the job; all of them, including Ed Chisolm, the last executive director (who, at the time of our fieldwork, had had that position for eight years) were described as decent people who do their best, but, as Chisolm himself acknowledged, were unable to fill Johnson's shoes.

According to one informant, personnel and structural issues also undermined the organization. For example, Mendonsa, in trying to maintain control of YFA after Johnson left, excluded many partner organizations from formulating a succession plan. He worked exclusively with the core statutory board (composed of city, county, and school board representatives) and alienated the community-based organizations. Business support also fell away, jeopardizing early broad-based alliances.

In discussing the formal termination of YFA, many interviewees spoke of the need for any organization to reconsider its purposes and adapt to new conditions after a certain period of time. As one person put it, "Nothing lasts forever. Healthy organizations must re-examine where they are. YFA did not do it early enough."

YFA leaders take pride that YFA helped to build a lasting "culture of collaboration" in Savannah. In recent years, there has been a mushrooming of collaborations in the city. There are collaborations tackling homelessness,

health, juvenile court reform, and poverty among others. Many of the same people are members of all of these efforts. One observer said, however, "It's now expected that organizations will collaborate. But no one will fund pure collaboration now."

There is some hope that by formally dissolving YFA and creating a new cross-sector collaboration in Savannah under the auspices of the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, the new entity can be more successful than YFA had been in recent years. The structure the legislature had originally established for YFA proved to be a problem, according to one observer. It set city, county and school board authorities as the governing board, and gave the community-based organizations and business groups no real power in the organization. A new entity formed through the Georgia Partnership can perhaps restructure the Board and overcome this problem.

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority

Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis, MN

The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) is a collaboration of local nonprofits, businesses, schools, and families that serves families and children in an area of northwest Minneapolis. Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone, its goal is to "close the achievement gap and end generational poverty" in that neighborhood by providing comprehensive supports to families and children from cradle to career.

Notable Features

Serves one neighborhood with high concentration of poverty and crime.

Takes an intergenerational approach.

Uses a family coaching model to provide comprehensive supports, services, and referrals.

Works closely with its community, hiring former clients as coaches and including parents in its leadership structure.

City context. Minneapolis is a city of about 400,000 people as of 2015, approximately 65% is White; 18% Black; 10% Hispanic; and 6% Asian. Racial demographics have shifted in recent decades; in 1980, 87% of the population was White. As a whole Minneapolis residents are relatively well educated: 48% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The high school dropout rate is 3% and the unemployment rate is 7%. The median household income is $50,791, but it has a large Black-White income gap. The median household income among Blacks is $19,003 while that among Whites is $61,442. NAZ focuses on a section of the northern part of the city with different demographics. It serves a population that is 79% Black, 7% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 4% multiracial, and 3% White. About 73% of NAZ families earn $19,000 or less per year, single-parent families represent 51% of households, and 25% of students are homeless or highly mobile. According to NAZ, 29% of entering kindergarteners in the zone are deemed "ready to learn,"[67] 37% of Black youth graduate on time, 16% of Black youth graduate ready for college, and only 13% of those who attend a public university graduate in four years. The area served by NAZ also accounts for a majority of crime committed in the entire city.

School system. The Minneapolis Public School District (MPS) serves about 37,000 students in 92 schools. Some 23% of these students qualify as English language learners and about 19% qualify for special education services. In 2015, the public school system was 33.7% White, 37.7% Black, and 18.5% Hispanic. About 63% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, an indicator of poverty. Student proficiency rates in Minneapolis are lower than the state as a whole. In 2016, 44.1% of MPS students were proficient in math (all grades) compared with 59.5% statewide. Similarly, 43.2% of MPS students were proficient in reading (all grades) compared with 59.9% statewide. School district leadership has been unstable in recent years. Minneapolis also has a large charter school sector. As of 2014, 31 charter schools served 10,757 students. Compared with traditional district schools, Minneapolis's charter sector contains a larger proportion of students of color. About 70% of charter school students are Black or Hispanic.

Initiation. In 2005, a Minnesota foundation organized a trip for Northside leaders to the Harlem Children's Zone. Following that trip, a steering committee of local leaders interested in replicating HCZ was formed. It was co-hosted by the PEACE Foundation, a local community-based organization that had been working to address violence since 2003, under its founder City Councilman Don Samuels, and had shifted its emphasis toward education under the leadership of his wife Sondra Samuels, who took charge two years later to allow her

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[67] See http://allhandsraised.org/what-we-do/our-approach/our-top-priority/

husband to run for reelection. Having read Kania and Kramer on collective impact, PEACE Foundation leaders recognized the need for a backbone organization and persuaded the steering committee that their organization was best equipped to play that role. In 2008, after a period of planning, restructuring, and organizing, the PEACE Foundation became the Northside Achievement Zone. NAZ applied for and, in 2012, won a five-year federal Promise Neighborhood grant of more than $25 million. The NAZ proposal included an innovative peer-support model inspired by neighborhood improvement research from the University of Minnesota. The federal grant has allowed the organization to increase its size and activities significantly, as well as to expand its influence.

Operations. NAZ's governance structure is composed of the leadership staff, the Board of Directors, the Parent Advisory Board, and the Strategic Leadership Team. The Board of Directors has 22 members who represent the school system, local government, nonprofits, and the business community. The 17-member Strategic Leadership Team is composed of mid-level and executive-level representatives from a variety of sectors. NAZ has a staff of 75, including its coaches who are full-time salaried employees and academic, housing, career, and behavioral health specialists. There is, however, a high level of turnover (20-25% per year). Some of the coaches go onto to jobs with partner agencies.

Implementation. NAZ takes a two-generation approach to ending poverty by surrounding both the parents and children with an "ecosystem of support" that includes housing; employment; tutoring; health and mental health; legal services; parenting; early education; and personal finance. NAZ originally served a 255-block zone; it now serves families and children most in need who largely attend partner schools, most of which are outside the original zone. NAZ works with eight "anchor schools": four district schools, one Catholic school, one alternative school, and two charters. It connects families with supports via a "family achievement coach." NAZ has determined that its model works best when its coaches are based in the schools and can be involved with school personnel and other partner organizations that may be operating in the school. NAZ has nearly 30 coaches, 17 based in partner schools, five in early childhood centers, and five based in NAZ's central office working with students who don't attend a partner school. Each coach partners with about 30 families. NAZ coaches and specialists work with a broad range of community agencies. The coaches receive on-going training in child development, engagement practices, data use, and so on. Another key component of the work is NAZ Family Academy—a series of parenting education and empowerment training programs: College Bound Babies for parents with children birth-3, Ready to Succeed for parents with children transitioning to kindergarten, College Bound Scholars (K-5th grade), and Foundations (empowerment training for parents and expanding to include a series to middle school students). Each class meets for 9-12 weeks.

Community engagement. To engage the community effectively, NAZ employs coaches who have been recipients of its services. This innovative staffing approach has significant implications for positive community engagement. NAZ's leaders and near all staff members are also long-time Northside residents also adds significantly to NAZ's ability to relate well to the community. Two NAZ parents also sit on the board of directors. NAZ's operational structure includes a Parent Advisory Board.

Use of data. NAZ has a fairly sophisticated family-based data system known as NAZ Connect that tracks progress for individual participants with a focus on student outcomes. NAZ Connect is an online achievement planning and data collection system. It records services provided by partner organizations and progress toward individual student goals. These data are then used to support families as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs involved. NAZ has articulated four major goals: (1) increasing kindergarten readiness from 28% to 80%, (2) increasing reading at grade level by third grade from 16% to 70%, (3) increasing grade-level math proficiency by eighth grade from 29% to 70%, and (4) increasing on-time graduation, with students prepared for college from 51% to 80%. In 2016, an evaluation indicated that NAZ participants tend to perform slightly better than their peers in the zone who are not enrolled in NAZ programs, but outcomes have not improved on

every indicator. Although the early evaluations have been mixed, the extensive data collection and analysis have impressed local leaders and have helped to mobilize political and financial capital to support NAZ.

National networks. NAZ works with other collaborations in the city and with PolicyLink, national organization that contracts with the federal government to provide support to all Promise Neighborhood sites. NAZ has received important management training, communications strategies, and other resources from PolicyLink. NAZ is seen as complementary to, rather than competitive with, another major cross-sector collaboration that operates actively in Minneapolis, Generation Next. "Gen Next," which has a strong relationship with Strive, is a Twin-Cities-wide, policy-level organization focused on cradle-to-career issues.

Sustainability. Respondents expressed confidence in NAZ's leadership, emphasizing their strong professional credentials, powerful board, and deep grassroots community connections. As advised by PolicyLink, NAZ has planned for sustainability after the end of the Promise Neighborhoods grant. Early on, NAZ set up a long-term sustainability committee that included a number of funders and initially raised $1.6 million. Since then, board members wrote a business plan and secured major grants from General Mills and Target, both headquartered in Minneapolis. In June 2017, NAZ received $10 million grant ($2 million per year for five years) from the Ballmer Foundation. NAZ has a diverse list of other contributors, including major foundations, business groups, and individuals. Eventually, NAZ hopes to obtain regular, on-going public funding; over the years it has secured several million dollars in state funding. In 2015, NAZ was part of a coalition of education collaborations from around the state that secured a $6 million investment from the Minnesota legislature, including $2.4 million over two years for NAZ.

Northside Achievement Zone

Oakland Full-Service Community Schools, Oakland, CA

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) maintains a system of 35 full-service community schools and has identified 15 more for expansion by 2020. The district aspires to having all of its 86 district-run schools become full-service community schools.

Notable Features

Initiated following collaborative districtwide strategic planning process to address inequities.

Schools integrate focus on academics, health and social services, youth development and community engagement.

Partnerships at community schools directed by Coordination of Service Team and a community school manager.

Program managed by dedicated department at the school district.

Background. Oakland has had a long history of racial conflict, persistent inequities, and fiscal difficulties. The city has undergone demographic changes since 2000, as the burgeoning Silicon Valley tech industry has brought an influx of young professionals seeking affordable housing. Nearly 30% of Oakland's census tracts have seen significant increases in median home values and average educational attainment. Today, Oakland's approximately 400,000 residents are roughly 27% Black, 26% White, 26% Hispanic, and 16.5% Asian. Between 2000 and 2010, Oakland saw a 7.6% decrease in the Black population, and a 3.2% increase in the White population. The median household income in Oakland is $52,583. However, the cost of living is 46% above the national average. The cost of housing is 110% higher than the national average. Black households earn 47.4% of what White households earn on average, while Hispanic households earn 62.2% of what White households earn.

School system. The population of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), which dropped by about 17,000 students during that period, currently consists of approximately 50,000 students: 45% of students are Latino, 27% Black, 13% Asian and 10% White. Thirty percent of students are English language learners and 74% are low-income. For the 2014-15 school year, only 29% of elementary school students were meeting or exceeding state reading proficiency standards at district-run schools, only 18% of middle schoolers met or exceeded state proficiency standards in math, and 56% of high school students graduated with acceptable grades in the courses that are specifically required for admission to California state universities.

Charter school enrollment grew from under 1,000 in 2000-01 to over 7,000 in 2006-07 and over 11,000 in 2014-15. Currently, roughly 30% of Oakland schools are charter schools, the highest percentage of charter schools in a California district.

Initiation. Between 2002 and 2009, OUSD dealt with steep budget cuts, a $100 million emergency loan from the state, and state receivership. In 2009, the state returned governance to the school board, which hired a new superintendent, Tony Smith. In 2010 Smith imposed an unpopular contract that removed class-size restrictions, laid off personnel, and maintained teacher salaries. His plan to close 25-30 city schools to balance the city's budget was strenuously protested; ultimately only five were closed. In 2011, after a collaborative, district-wide strategic planning process, OUSD unveiled a plan to alleviate persistent patterns of racial, socioeconomic, and other forms of inequity within the city's public schools. Its centerpiece was the goal to create a district-wide, full-service community school system by 2016. "Full service community schools" attempt to meet the comprehensive needs of students by coordinating a range of afterschool, health, and other services. Often these

are made available at the school site, and the providers work closely with school personnel. The district's choice of this approach, which was adopted unanimously by the school board, was motivated by the desire to develop a broad initiative that could unite various factions and groups in a common reform initiative, as well as by the desire to support schools during the funding crisis that followed the 2008 recession by leveraging additional community and philanthropic support.

Implementation. Creating full service community schools district wide requires collaboration between the school district and a host of local CBOs, municipal agencies, and philanthropies within both the city and the county. OUSD had been partnering to provide wraparound services in some of its schools for many years. Through partnerships, the district had already created 12 school-based health centers. It also had a robust afterschool initiative funded by federal, state, and local sources. OUSD's initial goal was to transform 50 of the district's 86 schools into community schools (charters were not included in the plan), targeting lower achieving schools first. The San Francisco Foundation, a long-time community school booster that was interested in promoting a 100% full-service community school district, provided early funding. As of 2016, OUSD had created 35 full-service community schools, staffed with full-time site coordinators, called community school managers (CSMs); it had identified 15 additional schools for future expansion. Though the district wanted CSMs to be funded by community partners, currently nearly all are private-grant funded district employees (only three are CBO employees). Over time the schools are expected to pick up the cost of the CSMs. District personnel still talk about all 86 schools eventually becoming full-service community schools, but, in the more affluent areas of the city, they foresee only providing specific needed services.

Operations. A report by the Gardner Center at Stanford University on five "mature" OUSD community schools found that each of their sample schools had partnerships with multiple agencies, often upwards of 20 or 30, and each school appeared to have at least one core partnership with an agency that played a more significant coordinating role. It also found that CBO staff were not distinguished from district employees but were all considered school staff. (Fehrer & Leos-Urbel, 2016). OUSD community schools each seem to be working with a multitude of CBOs, and public and private sector partners, not only for wraparound services, but also for academic supports. To coordinate this expanded CBO involvement, each community school has a Coordination of Service Team (COST) that discusses student needs, creates a coordinated plan to activate appropriate services, and organizes partnerships with outside organizations and service providers. Although not all of these positions are always filled, each COST ideally includes the CSM, a nurse, a behavioral health specialist, a school counselor, a parent liaison, a restorative justice practitioner, and CBO representatives. One respondent said that the community-school model has resulted in higher standards for partnerships and higher quality partnering agencies and personnel.

Community engagement. To involve parents and the grassroots community, the onset of the community schools work involved mini retreats for school-site councils in which parents learned about shared leadership, budgeting, and planning. OUSD's small Office of Student, Family and Community Engagement created a family engagement rubric to support the community school initiative. CSMs also develop family liaison strategies at each site. Eight sites conduct parent-teacher home visits, another parent engagement strategy. Engaging teachers has also been important. Teachers have warmed to the community schools initiative because they see that the extra services make their jobs easier, and they support major new initiatives like the parent home visit program because teachers get extra pay.

Network support. OUSD has received important support from the National Coalition of Community Schools, the National Center for Community Schools at Children's Aid, and the Institute for Educational Leadership, all of which work closely together. The technical assistance and opportunities to visit other large-scale community-schools systems that these relationships have afforded have been critical for the initiative. The national

coalition and the networks it provided were important for maintaining the momentum of the initiative when the superintendent who championed the initiative resigned and the district transitioned to new leadership.

Use of data. CSMs are responsible for conducting needs assessments at each school site, but the district has not established any system-wide mechanisms for capturing this information. Nor does it have any system for tracking services used by students at a particular school, although it does track participation in afterschool, summer, and health-clinic programs. The district has also surveyed parents and students regarding attendance, school climate, and safety issues, and it maintains a data dashboard system for school-based health services that tracks needs, and referrals.

Challenges and adjustments. Racial tensions persist in the school system. Although the largest percentage of students in the district is Latino, school district power is disproportionately concentrated within the Black community. The district has reached out to activists in the Latino and Black communities and has had some success in getting such people to become "critical friends."

There has also been substantial turnover of key personnel. Smith resigned unexpectedly in 2013. Antwan Wilson, a former deputy superintendent in Denver, became the new superintendent in 2014. Shortly after his arrival, Wilson promulgated a new strategic plan that emphasized educational excellence and downplayed the full-service community schools initiative. However, Wilson apparently warmed to the community schools approach and became convinced that the supports that community schools provide were necessary for achieving the goal of academic excellence for all OUSD students. He seemed to have been won over because he saw that these services were important to help students concentrate on academics. The district put together a detailed plan to expand to 50 community schools and secured private funding for this purpose. Key ingredients in sustaining the initiative through that transition were the continued strong support from the school board, effective leadership and staff, and sufficient funding for the initiative. It was also important that the director of the community schools initiative had an executive-level position in the district, which provided access to the superintendent.

Sustainability and effectiveness. The district-wide community schools initiative was not only maintained but was substantially expanded under a new superintendent. But there has been even more turnover. OUSD has yet another new superintendent as of July 2017, and the community schools initiative has a new director, who was not promoted to an executive-level position. Finally, the initiative's main supporter at the San Francisco Foundation has moved on. Funding constraints also threaten the sustainability of the community schools initiative. During the 2016-17 school year, the district's financial situation continued to deteriorate and caused the district to make a slew of painful cuts. Much of the funding for the district-wide community school initiative has come from sources outside of the school district, especially foundation grants. Within the next year, however, funding for community school managers will need to come from each school's budget. Scarcity of resources for the core academic program was a major concern of virtually all respondents. Low teacher salaries (combined with rapidly rising housing costs) and teacher burn-out have created high teacher turnover, which undermines teacher quality and program stability. Finally, charter schools remain a potential threat to the sustainability of Oakland's community schools. The rapid expansion of charter schools in Oakland has fueled competition for students and declining student enrollment at neighborhood community schools, leading to a revenue loss for these schools.

Providence Children and Youth Cabinet, Providence, RI

The Providence Children and Youth Cabinet (CYC), founded in 2010, describes itself as a "coalition of more than 150 organizations and community members who work together to ensure all Providence children thrive—from cradle to career." Its current priorities, selected in part though community input, are social and emotional well-being, chronic absence, and positive school climate.

Notable Features

Launched by the mayor's office and evolved into quasi-independent initiative.

Not formally affiliated with a national network.

Increasingly works to securing funding for its partners and initiatives.

Narrowed focus primarily on student behavioral health.

Background. Providence is a city of about 180,000 people in Rhode Island, a state of just under 1,100,000. Compared with the state as a whole, Providence has a much larger concentration of residents in poverty and a much larger percentage of recent immigrants. Nearly four in ten residents are Hispanic, and Hispanics constitute a plurality of the city's population. On average, Providence residents have sharply lower incomes than the overall metropolitan area. The median household income is $37,632, and Black and Hispanic households earn much less than White households (70% and 59%, respectively). Nearly 30% of adults have not graduated from high school, and less than 30% of residents have a B.A. or higher degree. The Providence Public School District (PPSD) serves nearly 24,000 students in 42 schools. PPSD serves families who are disproportionately people in poverty and people of color compared with both the city and the state as a whole. In 2016-17, 86% of district students were eligible for subsidized school lunch (a proxy for poverty). Its student population is approximately 64% Hispanic, 17% Black, 9% White, 5% Asian, 3% multiracial, and 1% Native American. Some 25% were receiving English as a Second Language or bilingual services. Approximately 16% receive special education services. At all grade levels and in all subjects assessed, PPSD performs well below the state average. Since 2003, the school district has been under mayoral control, and the school department accounts for half of the city's operating budget. The school system operates under significant, ongoing school-funding constraints. State aid to the city dropped precipitously in the years following the recession and has not recovered. State lawmakers are only beginning to come to terms with the state's changing population and create policies and funding mechanisms to accommodate its greater poverty and diversity. Rhode Island adopted its first school-funding formula in 2010 that includes a ten-year plan to improve funding fairness and adequacy; in 2016, the state first piloted a dedicated budget line for services for English language learners in state budget.

Initiation. In 2010, Mayor David Cicilline launched the Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet to spark cross-sector collective work to improve student outcomes in the city. Among its goals were to align the efforts of Rhode Island's many nonprofits to address the unmet need for services and support for children and youth. Soon after, Cicilline announced his intention to run for a newly open congressional seat, which he won. Angel Taveras succeeded Cicilline as mayor in 2011 and appointed Angela Romans as his senior advisor on education, a position that had never existed before. With Taveras's support, Romans set about to expand the CYC. She commissioned Brown University graduate students to analyze existing data on Providence children and youth, and she convened a planning committee of the existing CYC that included representatives from schools, higher education, business, parent leadership, the school board, and Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown University. To set priorities, this committee conducted a citywide "listening tour," presenting the data

to community groups and seeking their input. From this work, it advanced five cradle-to-career goals that were adopted by the CYC: (1) all children will enter kindergarten ready to learn and prepared for school; (2) all children will have access to a portfolio of high-quality schools, teachers, and district supports; (3) all children will be supported intellectually, socially and emotionally in and out of school; (4) all children will succeed academically and graduate from high school ready for college, career, and/or credential; and (5) all youth will obtain a postsecondary degree or credential and enter a career.

Implementation. In 2012, aiming for greater independence, neutrality, and sustainability, the CYC's leadership and the mayor agreed to move the initiative from the mayor's office to AISR and renamed it the Providence Children and Youth Cabinet. For support, the CYC joined the StriveTogether network, and, using the Strive model as a blueprint, created action plans for its work groups, set indicators and targets within its goal areas, and published a baseline report. Also in 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation selected Providence as the pilot demonstration site, and the CYC as the backbone agency, for its new Evidence2Success (E2S) initiative, described as a strategy that promotes the use of evidence-based programs to improve outcomes for children and youth, emphasizing community voice in priority setting, and working to shift public funding to effective practices. The CYC spurred considerable activity during the next couple of years, attracting funding and new members and adding staff, and piloting programs. When the school department developed its new strategic direction, it aligned its goals with the CYC's.

The CYC got the E2S work underway with an E2S Work Group. As part of this work, the CYC administered a Youth Experience Survey to some 6,000 PPSD students, asking them about behavior, education, emotional well-being, positive relationships, and physical health. In partnership with the school district and city agencies, the CYC also completed a "fund mapping" project to understand how public funding was being used at the time. In fall 2013, a cross section of stakeholders examined the youth survey data, came to a consensus on priorities for moving forward, and selected a set of evidence-based programs to address them. The CYC then developed an action plan to finance and implement the programs and has netted several major grants to support them. In 2015, it received a major grant from the Rhode Island Department of Health to coordinate the delivery of the evidence-based programs to improve children's health and well-being and expand these programs in two neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty. In 2016, the CYC launched a "strategic road mapping process." It re-administered the youth experience student survey and got input on the results from over 1000 Providence parents, youth, and community members. This process led to the coalition narrowing its goals and focus. Its current priorities are (1) social and emotional well-being; (2) chronic absence/attendance; and (3) positive school climate. CYC also clarified their role as "to convene, prioritize, and take action." In September 2016, it was awarded a large multiyear grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to address city's middle school students' traumatic stress.

Operations. Under Mayor Taveras, the CYC was co-chaired by the PPSD superintendent and Romans, representing the mayor's office; a third chair was later added for a community-based organization. It set up work groups corresponding to the goals, and the workgroup co-chairs and the "tri-chairs" formed a loose leadership team. At this stage, CYC leadership recognized that the initiative needed consistent stewardship and hired a full-time director, Rebecca Boxx, who formerly led PPSD's community schools network. It later adopted a more traditional nonprofit board structure. Though its organization is still being refined, it represents itself as a broad coalition of partners including "systems, organizations, residents, and youth." Its board meets bimonthly. A number of cross-sector committees guide its operations, and several cross-sector teams manage its various projects.

Network support. The CYC has made use of technical assistance and other supports from several national networks but is not formally affiliated with any one. Early on, the CYC joined the StriveTogether network, used

the Strive model as a template, and participated in a number of Strive convenings. It worked with Strive to establish processes for building the capacity of CYC work groups to use data for continuous improvement. However, the CYC's relationship with Strive changed abruptly. As of May 2014, the StriveTogether network listed 95 initiatives as members, including Providence. In June of the same year, the number was reduced to 49. The CYC was among the 46 sites that Strive determined had not met the initial benchmarks required for membership and were therefore no longer formally part of the network. The CYC has found support from other networks, including the Collective Impact Forum, Ready by 21, and Living Cities, and Evidence2Success has become its "core operating system."

Community engagement. Some have called the CYC a leader in community engagement because it has made use of community surveys, data presentations, listening tours, focus groups, and youth engagement to seek input from community members. It also convenes a community partnership table to engage residents and service providers in the neighborhoods served by the E2S work. However, other critique the CYC for relying primarily on traditional engagement strategies that seek community input rather than using partnership strategies that would provide the opportunity for the community, which is low on adult grassroots activism and civic capacity, to organize and assume leadership. Respondents suggested that engagement of Providence residents, particularly the Black and Brown communities with lived experience of the issues the CYC is trying to tackle, needs to be designed into the initiative from the outset and built from the ground up, supporting parents and youth so they can participate effectively and become leaders within the initiative. Attention also needs to be given to racial dynamics. The current leadership of the CYC is White, and historically the nonprofit and philanthropic communities in Providence have had White leaders who are engaged with the CYC on behalf of communities that "they don't live in and don't know well."

Use of data. Early on, the CYC adopted 11 indicators associated with its five goals and in 2012 presented baseline data for most indicators. In partnership with PPSD and RI Kids Count, it developed a service and data sharing agreement to allow the district and youth-serving community-based agencies to share information to facilitate a case management approach to support students. The CYC continues to monitor those indicators, as well as to use data to support continuous quality improvement in each of its current projects.

Challenges and adjustments. While we have seen evolution in all of the cross-sector collaborations we've studied, the CYC seems to have undergone more change than most. These transitions have been occasions for its leaders to reexamine its role and operations and to pivot strategically. Having weathered the transition from Cicilline's mayoral administration to Taveras's, by 2012 the CYC had experienced both the advantages and disadvantages of being an initiative of the mayor. The mayor's office lent the CYC convening power and the potential for incentivizing alignment but also made the work politically charged. Mayor Taveras had made some decisions that were unpopular with certain education stakeholders and jeopardized collaboration. The CYC ultimately moved out of the mayor's office and set up shop at the more politically neutral Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the coalition's name was changed from the Mayor's Children and Youth Cabinet to the Providence Children and Youth Cabinet. The CYC has since become a quasi-independent organization with a fiscal agent (TSNE MissionWorks) and autonomy with respect to governance and project focus.

Leaving the orbit of the Strive network provided the CYC another opportunity to redefine itself, its mission, and its methods. Striking out on its own, CYC staff came to believe that they needed to bring funding to the table for their partners. The CYC now emphasizes its role as an intermediary that secures funding for its priorities and partners. It measures its success in part by its ability to leverage limited investments from the school district with outside funding to effect systems change for students. Finally, the CYC began with the assumption it could convene broadly and on a range of different priorities but has recognized with experience that it would be more effective with a more targeted, concrete approach. This decision has given the CYC a clearer,

more complementary relationship with PPSD. Superintendent Chris Maher said the CYC's focus on social and emotional learning, student trauma, and teacher trauma was helpful to the district. He valued the role the CYC plays in identifying interventions and effectively connecting providers with schools and its ability to bring outside resources to support the services these providers can deliver to students.

Sustainability and effectiveness. Over the years, a number of national foundations made investments in Providence but did not sustain them. In the past decade or so, Providence has received major grants from the Mott Foundation's A New Day for Learning initiative, which promoted a cross-sector collaborative of school, afterschool and city government leaders; the Ford Foundation's Time to Succeed expanded learning time initiative; the Annie E. Casey Foundation's ten-year Making Connections antipoverty community-change initiative; and Bloomberg Philanthropies' early learning initiative, among others. Knowing this history and recognizing that other collective-impact initiatives are struggling with sustainability, the leadership of the CYC appears to have put significant strategic work into the issue. A major challenge is that foundations rarely invest long term in the core work necessary for building and maintaining cross-sector partnerships and partnership members are not willing to pay to support the work of convening and coordinating. In Providence, there isn't enough private wealth available to support that work locally. The CYC's new strategic direction—its narrowed scope and pragmatic focus on securing funding for partners for selected evidence-based programs—seems promising. Though some respondents were troubled with how the CYC "follows the funding" as a sustainability strategy, CYC staff sees it as finding their niche and the most effective use of their time and talents. The CYC also sees potential in being an incubator for projects that are institutionalized elsewhere; some of its early initiatives have moved out of the CYC, and at least one has been taken up by the PPSD.

Providence Children and Youth Cabinet