



**Collaborate PASadena**

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**Collective Impact Development Plan**

USC Capstone Team – Spring 2016



Executive Summary .....	3
Project Background.....	4
Best Practices.....	5
Case Study: Milwaukee Succeeds   8	
Case Study: Learn to Earn Dayton   10	
Case Study: Alignment Nashville   12	
Asset Mapping.....	16
Recommendations.....	20
Formalize the Strategic Framework & Create Action Plan   22	
Develop Backbone Support   24	
Build Credibility & Trust between Partners   26	
Identify and Focus on Amplifying Synergies between Partners   28	
Establish Strong Ties with School & City through Partners   30	
Establish a Shared Measurement System   32	
Implementation.....	34
Conclusion .....	37
Appendixes .....	40

## Project Background

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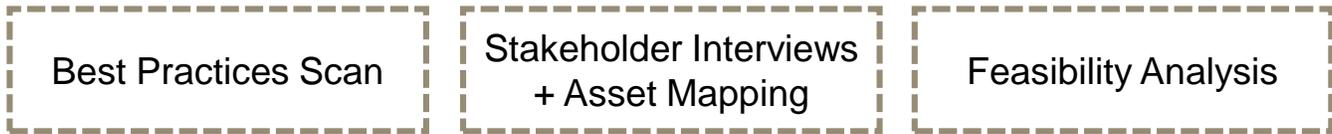
The mission of Collaborate PASadena is to help the communities of Pasadena, Altadena, and Sierra Madre collaborate to ensure desired outcomes for all children and families through the alignment of resources, shared accountability, and meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders. To help them fulfill this mission, we spent twelve weeks working to answer the following:

How can Collaborate PASadena serve as the nexus between city, school, and community-based organizations – building their capacity to improve student learning outcomes?

## Our Approach

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We identified three key methods that would help us best answer this question:

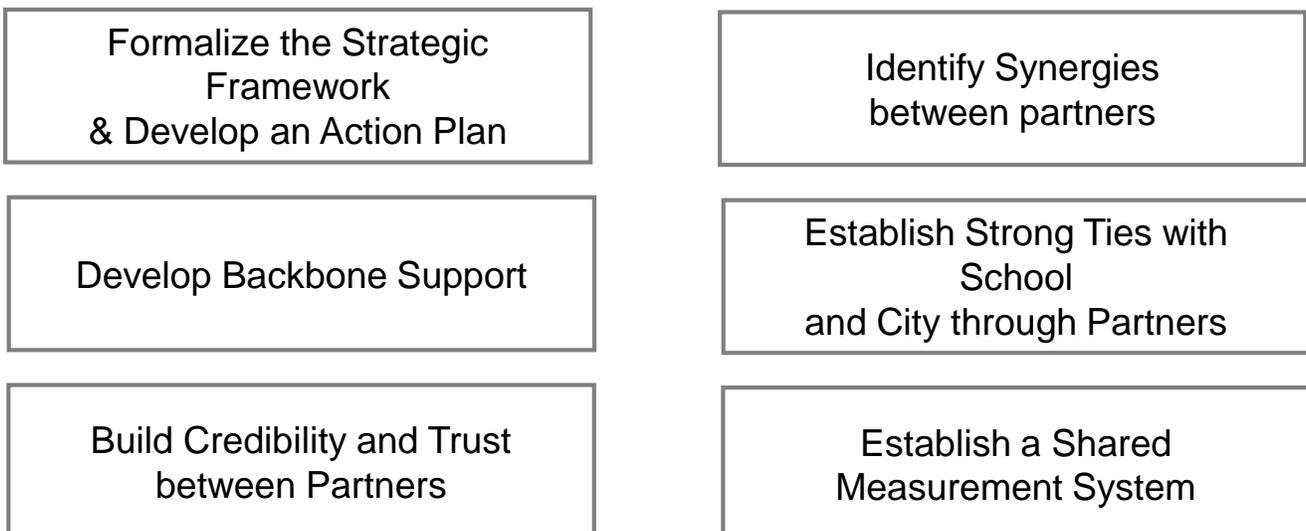


To advise Collaborate PASadena on how they can build its capacity and better achieve its mission, we gained critical insight from exploring best practices from other successful collaboratives, talking to community partners and mapping their assets, and analyzing ways to strengthen and expand current activities. Surveys, interviews, and secondary research supported this collection of relevant knowledge.

## Recommendations

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The insights from the above components allowed us to develop an understanding of how to best implement our findings within Collaborate PASadena's existing structure. This deliverable details specific aspects that Collaborate PASadena should focus on, and provides guidelines on how to implement them.



## Our Team

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This deliverable was created by USC Master in Public Administration students during the Spring of 2016. Each member of the team chose to work with Collaborate PASadena based on their interest in education, collective impact structures, and community capacity building. Over a span of twelve weeks, our team conducted a research-based project that led to actionable recommendations for Collaborate PASadena to consider.

## Client

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### History

Collaborate PASadena is a collaborative consisting of city employees, school employees, parent and student groups, community service providers and faith-based organizations. The vision of Collaborate PASadena is for the children of Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre to all grow up in a safe, stable and supportive environment that prepares them for success in school and in life. Collaborate PASadena is governed by a Leadership Council, comprised of elected leaders, school board members and school stakeholders. The collaborative is composed of four working groups: early developmental needs, student success, healthy families and supportive communities.

### Project Context

In 2015, Collaborate PASadena developed the shared goal of third grade reading proficiency and established a baseline in order to measure the collaborative's progress over time. Collaborate PASadena sought the help of a USC capstone group to develop a framework for creating collective impact around this shared goal. Specifically, Collaborate PASadena requested a best practices scan of existing evaluation methods for collective impact initiatives, proven strategies for third grade reading proficiency, and an analysis of the collaborative's current practices around the goal.



# Best Practices

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The *Stanford Social Innovation Review* developed five core conditions of collective impact initiatives that help distinguish between true collective impact initiatives and other types of collaboration. These core conditions serve as a framework that collective impact initiatives can use to measure performance. Each collective impact core condition should be paired with indicators to measure progress and capture results. This section provides sample indicators to be used with each core condition as well as an assessment of the five core conditions for three collective impact collaboratives. Because Collaborate PASadena is currently working toward the shared goal of third grade reading proficiency, this section highlights strategies that collaboratives are implementing to improve reading outcomes for students.

## What does a successful collective impact initiative look like?

The Collective Impact Forum, a resource for individuals using the collective impact model to tackle large-scale problems, developed an impact assessment tool to aid practitioners in evaluating their progress. Collective impact is not just a new way to collaborate. Instead, a collective impact initiative must include five core conditions:

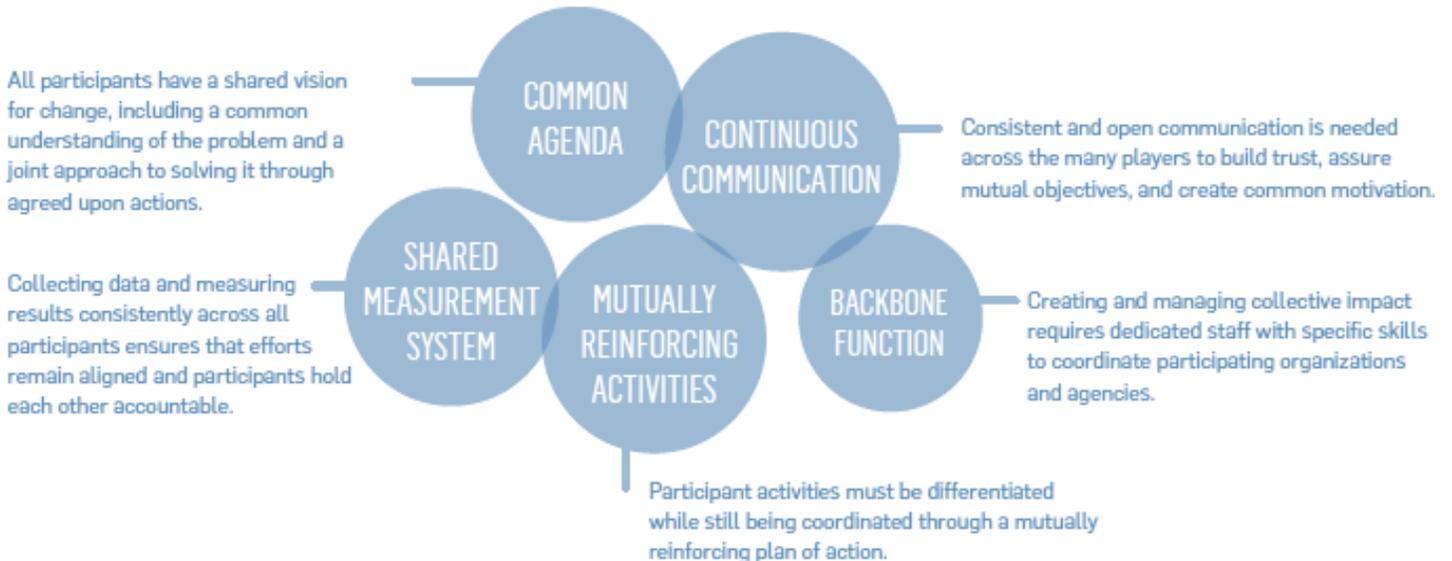


Figure 1: Five Core Conditions of Collective Impact  
 Source: Preskill, Parkhurst and Juster. "Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact: Assessing Progress and Impact"

After these conditions are satisfied, the initiative can focus their attention on structure. The structure is composed of three main groups: an oversight group, usually called a Steering Committee, various working groups that focus on specific strategies, and a backbone function or lead organization that has the capacity to coordinate the efforts of all partners involved.

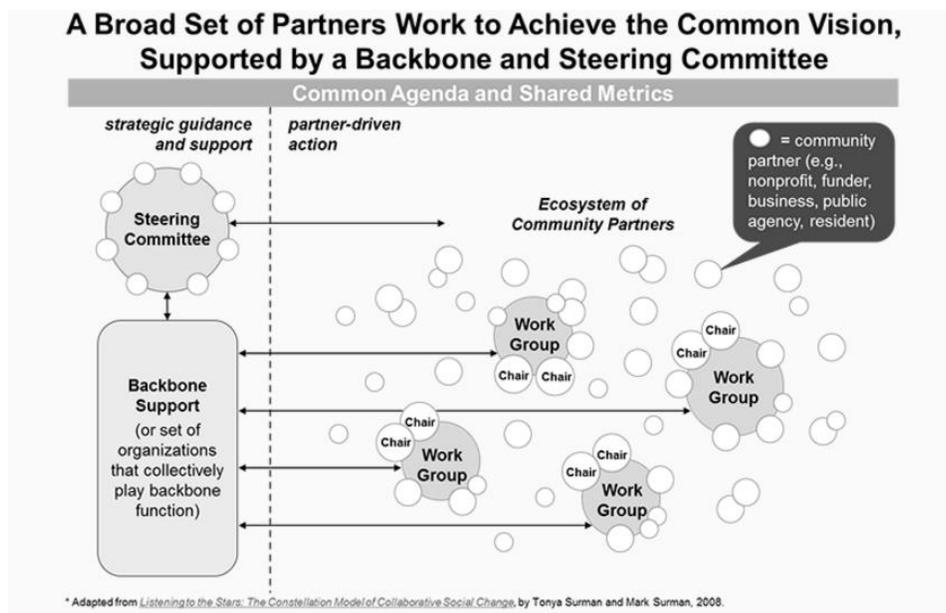


Figure 2: A Broad Set of Partners Work to Achieve the Common Vision, Supported by Backbone and Steering Committee  
 Source: University of Kansas. "Community Tool Box"

## How should a collective impact initiative be evaluated?

The early years of a collaborative span one to three years and are characterized by a focus on building relationships and establishing the core structure and processes. It is important to set indicators to track the success of the collaborative during this developmental phase. Each collective impact core condition should be paired with indicators to measure progress. It is also important to note that during the developmental phase, most of the indicators will be qualitative in nature, requiring interviews, surveys and focus groups. Below are the five core conditions with corresponding indicators.

### Common Agenda

- The steering committee is representative of voices from all relevant sectors and agencies
- All stakeholders involved (partners and the broader community) understand and can articulate the problem
- Data is used to inform strategies and action plan

### Shared Measurement System

- Partners understand the value of having a shared measurement system
- Specific methods are employed in order to achieve active participation of all members in determining indicators and data to be collected
- Partners agree to provide data on indicators in a timely manner

### Continuous Communication

- Working groups meet on a regular basis
- Partners correspond and align their efforts regularly with or without the guidance of the backbone staff
- External stakeholders are consistently engaged and provide valuable feedback which is integrated into the overall approach

### Backbone Infrastructure

- Backbone staff are respected by the partners and the community as a whole
- Backbone infrastructure provides support by managing the project, monitoring progress and connecting partners to leverage resources
- Backbone infrastructure ensures the alignment of multiple partners and is strategic when seeking new opportunities

### Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- An action plan clearly specifies the activities that different partners have committed to
- Partners understand their goals and how those contribute to their working group
- Partners know the role of the various working groups and how they all tie in to the common agenda

The following case studies provide an assessment of the five core conditions within three collaboratives. Because Collaborate PASadena is currently working toward the shared goal of third grade reading proficiency, we highlighted strategies that these collaboratives are implementing to improve reading outcomes for students.

## Mission

Milwaukee Succeeds is a broad-based, community-wide collaboration that aims to improve educational outcomes for every child in Milwaukee, in every school, cradle to career. Using a data-driven process that focuses resources on high-impact strategies, Milwaukee Succeeds' mission is to move the needle on what works for kids, and better position our children and our community for a successful future.

## Five Core Conditions

### *Common agenda*

Milwaukee Succeeds' Executive Committee developed the agenda, vision and strategy for the collaborative. The collaborative is chaired by three individuals from different aspects of the education continuum from a university president, to a community volunteer and the CEO of a large insurance company. All stakeholders involved care about children's success, regardless of the type of school they attend. The collaborative agreed to establish four goals: kindergarten readiness, school readiness, career readiness and social & emotional health and collectively developed indicators to measure their progress towards reaching these goals. At the time of their 2015 milestone report, 10 out of 11 benchmarks were heading in a positive direction.

### *Backbone structure*

Milwaukee Succeeds was founded in 2011 by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Committee, Milwaukee Association of Commerce, Milwaukee Urban League, United Way of Greater Milwaukee and the Helen Bader Foundation. When the backbone structure was first established, the organization included four staff members and five, part-time coordinators who were on loan from various companies. Currently, Milwaukee Succeeds employs five staff from directors to managers and an assistant.

### *Shared measurement system*

Milwaukee Succeeds published an annual Milestone Report as a way to track how students are performing across education sectors. This data includes results from public schools, choice schools and charter schools. Indicators are all tied to goals. For example, the school readiness goal includes indicators around third grade reading and math.

### *Mutually reinforcing activities*

Milwaukee Succeeds conceptualized its work into four goals and developed networks made up of various stakeholders who work together towards a common outcome. These networks rely on data and leverage their own knowledge and the expertise within the community and develop new programming to fill any existing gaps. For example, because the K-12 academic success goal is very complex and involves various strategies, three networks were created focusing on tutoring and experiential learning, in school support and parent engagement. All networks commit to using evidenced-based strategies to improve the shared outcome of third grade reading proficiency.

### *Continuous communication*

Milwaukee Succeeds is composed of eight networks that meet on a monthly basis and are led by coaches who use data-driven approaches to either adapt existing practices or develop new ones, thus focusing on continued improvement.

## Strategies for Third Grade Reading Proficiency

### *Implementation of practice*

Milwaukee Succeeds implemented four strategies to improve reading outcomes for students.

**Tutoring** – Milwaukee Succeeds developed a 1:1 tutoring program that uses trained and consistent tutors, has oversight to guarantee fidelity to the model, and uses pre- and post- testing to measure progress. The program recruits and trains volunteer tutors from nearby universities and pairs them with students at elementary schools.

**Parent engagement** – Milwaukee Succeeds partners provide parents with simple strategies they can use when interacting with their kindergarten through second grade students to reinforce their reading skills. According to research, parents are more likely to follow these strategies if they are taught to use them as opposed to only receiving the information in writing. Partners have developed and delivered workshops to almost 500 parents at 25 different sites.

**Teacher coaching** – The network partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools, Northwestern Mutual, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to pilot a teacher coaching model. Research suggests that teachers implement less than 5 percent of the strategies they learn during professional development- but the number jumps to 80 percent when the strategies are coupled with effective coaching. A coaching model was developed to provide teachers with training and materials to support early reading strategies and supplemented with ongoing one-on-one coaching.

**Experiential learning** – Milwaukee Succeeds partnered with museums and art organizations to expand experiential opportunities to more students in order to help them build vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. Parents, teachers and tutors have access to a website that offers educational experiences using the vast resources of the Milwaukee community to engage young readers.

### *Results*

- A majority of students doubled their reading progress in less than two months of implementing coaching for teachers.
- 76% of parents who attended a workshop reported that they changed the way they read with their children.
- 30% of students in tutoring improved one complete grade level on the reading assessment.

### *Lessons learned*

The impact of the interventions is greater if schools are implementing multiple, aligned interventions. Students who are receiving tutoring made greater gains when reading strategies were reinforced in the classroom. Thus, teachers play a critical role in improving reading outcomes and should be a key partner in developing initiatives.

### **Sources:**

For more information about Milwaukee Succeeds: [www.milwaukeeesucceeds.org](http://www.milwaukeeesucceeds.org)

Alignment Nashville. "Milwaukee Succeeds 2015 Milestone Report." 2015 (accessed April 2, 2016).

## Mission

Our mission is to ensure that children in the Dayton region are successful students and ultimately successful in the world of work. Our community's vitality and its attractiveness to employers depend on having educated citizens and a knowledgeable and skilled workforce.

## Five Core Conditions

### *Common agenda*

Dayton's ReadySetSoar is the component of the Learn to Earn Dayton initiative that focuses on ensuring that children are "ready for kindergarten" and that every child is reading well in the third grade. An Executive Committee that includes the mayor, a county commissioner, and leaders from business, public education, higher education, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector lead the effort. ReadySetSoar is part of the Campaign for Grade Level Reading and includes three main strategy areas: kindergarten readiness, summer and after school learning, and attendance.

### *Backbone structure*

Learn to Earn Dayton is comprised of an executive director and director of workforce & community development. The ReadySetSoar staff includes a director, assistant director and two program managers. According to the ReadySetSoar director, the reason why the backbone structure was successful from the very beginning was that the executive director was well-respected, credible and trusted in the community.

### *Shared measurement system*

Learn to Earn Dayton came together as a community to track data that is tied to youth's success. This collaborative shares its results publicly in an annual report to showcase where they are succeeding and pinpoint areas for improvement. They have chosen the following six metrics to track and measure progress: % of children who are ready for kindergarten, % of third graders who are proficient in reading, % of fourth graders who are proficient in math, % of students who graduate from high school, % of students who enroll in college during the first 2 years after high school, and % of students who have a degree within 6 years after graduation.

### *Mutually reinforcing activities*

Learn to Earn Dayton developed an interactive toolkit to help rally the entire community around the third grade reading proficiency goal. In the toolkit, they specify three ways every member of the community can help ensure all students are "super readers". The first is to ensure that children are entering kindergarten ready to learn. Second, is getting all children to school everyday and on time. Third, to provide quality after-school and summer programs for students.

### *Continuous communication*

All working group meet on a regular basis. ReadySetSoar sends constant e-mails to provide updates and important information. ReadySetSoar executive staff meets with the 16 different school district superintendents. In addition, the Learn to Earn executive director is a professor at the University of Dayton and has many connections with higher education professionals.

## Strategies for Third Grade Reading Proficiency

### *Implementation of practice*

Learn to Earn Dayton has implemented four strategies to improve reading outcomes for students.

**Access to books** – One primary ReadySetSoar activity is a book drive. Last year, almost 28,000 books were collected and donated to over 2,600 students. This effort included partners from libraries, churches, rotary clubs and the city. The goal is to provide each child with 10 books, one for each week of summer vacation.

**Toolkit** - ReadySetSoar partners developed an interactive toolkit that provides partners with actions they can support and a list of ways to become involved. The toolkit contains actions everyone from parents, employers, elected officials to healthcare and community partners can do to support the goal of third grade reading proficiency.

**Summer learning** - The initiative used summer learning programs to help struggling readers make the progress needed to become proficient. These programs were promoted through partnerships with libraries and nonprofit organizations. As a result, participation in Dayton Metro Library's Summer Reading Club increased by 48%. Adults can also participate in Summer Reading Clubs. Topics range from kitchen chemistry to healthy living, technology and Dayton's history. In addition, the United Way of Greater Dayton expanded Freedom Schools®, a program that provides summer and after-school reading enrichment, serving more than 300 students over the summer.

**After-school programs** - Two schools partnered with nonprofit organizations such as the YMCA and won 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Grants to serve 300 children after school.

### *Results*

- Freedom Schools students in all age groups at all sites made statistically significant gains in six literacy-related areas assessed such as passage reading fluency and multiple choice reading comprehension.
- Third grade reading proficiency increased 6.9% from 52.6% in 2009-10 to 59.5% in 2013-14.

### *Lessons learned*

Start summer planning as early as possible to ensure programs are up and running quickly. Buy-in from all the regional stakeholders, including elected and appointed officials makes things possible at the policy and practice level that would not be achievable otherwise.

### **Sources:**

For more information about Learn to Earn Dayton: [www.learntoearn Dayton.org](http://www.learntoearn Dayton.org)

Learn to Earn/ReadySetSoar. "Stories of Success From Cradle to Career: 2014 Annual Report." 2014 (accessed February 21, 2016).

Dayton Metro Library (2014, May 05). Dayton Metro Library's Summer Reading Clubs.

R. Lightcap, personal communication, April 21, 2016

## Mission

The mission of Alignment Nashville is to bring community organizations and resources into alignment so that their coordinated support of Nashville's youth has a positive impact on public school success, children's health, and the success of the community as a whole.

## Five Core Conditions

### *Common agenda*

Alignment Nashville is governed by a Board of Directors who meets quarterly and includes the Mayor, Director of Schools, President/CEO of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, university presidents, leaders from the nonprofit and business industries, and philanthropists. The collaborative's long-term goals are to increase the high school graduation rate, increase college and career readiness, improve children's health and wellness, and support community prosperity.

### *Backbone structure*

The backbone structure consists of an executive director, associate executive director, chief operating officer, two associate directors, a consultant, three managers and two coordinators. From its inception, Alignment Nashville was developed in order to align all city resources toward a common goal. The backbone staff has allowed the collaborative to build the capacity of participating organizations in order to have a wide impact.

### *Shared measurement system*

Alignment Nashville is divided into 15 different alignment teams. Each team creates a plan that addresses a community goal, then uses a trademarked strategy called Invitation to Participate™ to make sure the broader community is engaged in the process of aligning resources. The team provides the oversight needed to implement strategies and is responsible for collecting data to measure impact. Once the effort has achieved the desired impact, it becomes institutionalized either in the community or the school district.

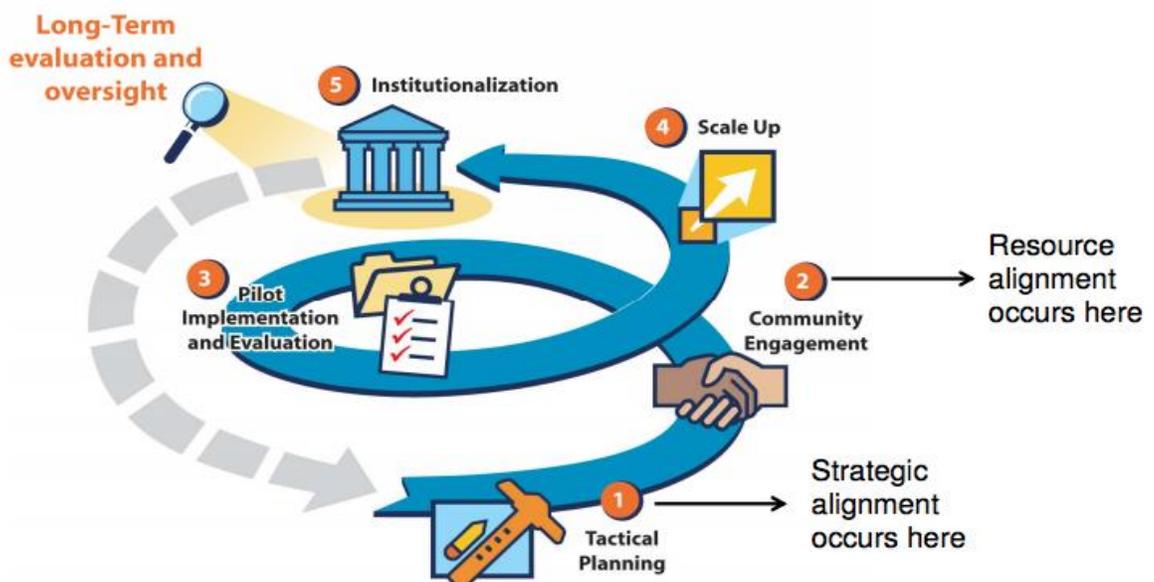


Figure 3: Alignment Nashville's design and implementation Process  
Source: Alignment Nashville. "Alignment Nashville Annual Report 2015."

## Mission

The mission of Alignment Nashville is to bring community organizations and resources into alignment so that their coordinated support of Nashville's youth has a positive impact on public school success, children's health, and the success of the community as a whole.

## Five Core Conditions, cont.

### *Mutually reinforcing activities*

Alignment Nashville's alignment teams have both a chair and vice chair who lead the group. Each team works on a specific need, develops tactics, sets outcomes, measures impact and reach, and uses that information to plan next steps. All teams work towards the long-term goals and understand that various alignments teams must work together to ensure a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. For example, Alignment Nashville's long-term goal of increasing high school graduation is supported by multiple alignment teams, including the Pre-K, High School, and the Adolescent Sexual Responsibility team.

### *Continuous communication*

Alignment Nashville uses the Invitation to Participate™ (ITP) process to engage the whole community in its work. Any organization or member of the community can subscribe to an email blast and learn about the collaborative's common goals and outcomes. This process allows anyone with creative ideas to align themselves with existing efforts. The ITP process also allows organizations to be part of the solution by lending their resources towards achieving Alignment Nashville's common goals. Alignment Nashville has also developed a technology tool called ComCoefficient (ComCo) to help integrate the collaborative's principles, structure, and processes. Alignment team members, staff, and members of the community have access to this online portal and use it to collect knowledge, collaborate, and track progress.

## Strategies for Third Grade Reading Proficiency

### *Implementation of practice*

Alignment Nashville has implemented four strategies to improve reading outcomes for students.

**Volunteers** - Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Nashville connects over 170 volunteers to pre-kindergarten through fourth grade students in 14 Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). The volunteers read to students and serve as positive role models who encourage them to develop their literacy skills. Volunteers and teachers complete surveys to provide feedback about the program. The RIF staff reviews this data and uses it to inform and tailor their program to ensure its usefulness.

**Parent engagement** - The Parent Alignment Team developed Parent University in order to provide parents and caregivers with necessary skills to help them teach and advocate for their children. Parents and caregivers who participate get free access to trainings, information, resources and services that are connected to student learning. The annual Parent University Conference drew almost 800 parents, community members and students in 2015. A total of 37 workshops were offered in key areas such as academic readiness, social and emotional health and leadership advocacy.

**Access to books** - The organization Book'em provides thousands of books to low-income students every year. The organization relies on donations from businesses, organizations, individuals and other groups who conduct book drives. The books are sorted and distributed to schools, nonprofits and other agencies to give to students who cannot afford them.

**Summer learning** - The Elementary Alignment Team created an initiative called Fun Adventures through Character Education (FACE) Camps to provide MNPS elementary students with quality learning experiences in the summer. FACE camps aligned character education traits that students were learning about in school with programming offered by community organizations. The team partnered with teachers and coaches to create curriculum that can be packaged and used by organizations throughout the year. They are also working to partner with community and faith-based organizations to scale this program during the summer.

### *Results*

- In one year, about 2,200 students in 140 schools participated in the RIF program and benefitted from reading and interacting with community members who shared their love of reading. Students who completed the RIF survey said that they frequently spend time reading for pleasure.
- 99% of parents and caregivers who participated in Alignment Nashville's Parent University said that they felt "more informed about school, health, and community resources" and 100% of parents and caregivers said that they plan to use information they learned at the conference.
- In 2015, Book'em collected more than 40,000 books and distributed them to children and teenagers through their partnerships with about 80 organizations therefore ensuring these students have age-appropriate books of their own.
- FACE camp was created in 2010 and the Alignment team is looking to institutionalize this program in the coming year.

## Strategies for Third Grade Reading Proficiency

### *Lessons learned*

The Invitation to Participate™ process fosters community engagement by partnering with unusual suspects who have unique skills and abilities, and work towards developing creative solutions to complex problems.

By adopting Alignment Nashville's design and implementation process (creating a tactical plan, using the Invitation to Participate™ process, implementing the initiative, scaling and institutionalizing the effort) all teams are making progress toward systemic change.

### **Sources:**

For more information about Alignment Nashville: [www.portal.alignmentnashville.org](http://www.portal.alignmentnashville.org)

Alignment Nashville. "Alignment Nashville Annual Report 2015." (2015). (accessed February 28, 2016).

GuideStar. Book'em. Retrieved from <http://www.guidestar.org/profile/58-2000621>

Jaggers, M. (2015, January 9). Community Engagement [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://portal.alignmentnashville.org/alignment-blog>



# Asset Mapping

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In order to better understand the available resources and potential opportunities for Collaborate PASadena to grow its impact, we interviewed 17 stakeholders in the community – affiliated with the school, city, and community-based organizations. We then outlined their assets, needs, and synergies to demonstrate the key takeaways from the interviews. In this section, we will discuss how Collaborate PASadena can use the assets of its partner organizations to build internal capacity, match needs and assets, and amplify its total impact, using the low-hanging fruit approach.

## Community-based organizations are uniquely equipped to improve educational outcomes, and their specific assets should be identified and utilized.

For a collaborative to create impact that is greater than the sum of its parts, member organizations need not only to agree on shared goals, but also have the capacity to work collectively. Through interviewing partners, we learned about the unique assets and needs of different community-based organizations. We believe Collaborate PASadena can benefit from evaluating excess assets an organization may have that could be beneficial to the collective (be it a relationship or resource), and identifying who is doing work that should be replicated or increased given its high return on investment. The following groupings reveal key assets that organizations bring to Collaborate PASadena.

### Pasadena Library

- 10 branches in Pasadena + 30 full-time staff
- Luca Libros: large successful book club for 2nd & 3rd grade students
- Offers multilingual programs (parent and child reading in diff. languages) and e-books

### Boys & Girls Club

- 2 branches in Pasadena
- Transportation from schools to their afterschool program site
- Has access to volunteers and books by partnering with city college and library

### College & Career Pathways Program

- Provides volunteer hours for high school students to read to elementary student (40 hr/student volunteer)
- Created and uses evaluation tool for student preparedness leaving high school

### Parent Resource Center

- 2 full-time staff
- Workshops for parents- transition to kinder, elementary, middle & high school
- Directs parents to resources to address both academic and non-academic needs

### Early Childhood Development (Human Services Commission)

- Strong connection with 0-5 yr. old programs
- Created a master plan to improve 0-5 yr. olds' education, physical & mental health
- Data in Early Developmental Index (EDI)

### Pasadena Education Network

- Develops online fact sheets for schools
- Conveys information from PUSD schools to parents – listserv access to 1100 parents
- Workshops for parent trainings (e.g. school preparation, language learning)

### College Access Plan

- Strong linkage with Partnership for Community, Youth, and Family
- Close ties with middle & high schools
- All their programs are partnerships- strong linkages to community organizations

### Reading Partners

- Programs for K-4 kids in 6 schools, 12 full-time staff, classroom space
- Provide take-home books, curriculum for volunteers, strong school buy-in
- Use reading evaluation tool called STAR

### Pasadena Education Foundation

- Summer programs for PUSD K-12 kids
- Provides teacher grants for programming
- Huge buy-in for 3rd grade goal, grant support available

### Caltech Educational Outreach

- Direct connection between professors, students and school classrooms
- Provides PUSD classroom support
- Summer STEM program, “project scientist” for female students

## Collaborate PASadena can use assets to build collective efforts

Collaborate PASadena can strategically use community-based organizations' strengths to further the collaborative's current goals and build out collective efforts. One interviewee said, "if Collaborate PASadena identified a need for something my organization excelled at, we would find a way to support them in that endeavor. Until then, we are just supporting the general efforts." This indicates that Collaborate PASadena has something to gain from using specific organizational assets.

Below are the specific assets that we have identified for each partner. Collaborate PASadena should use these as opportunities to build on existing activities and expand outreach and services.

### Pasadena Library

- The Library is Collaborate PASadena's access to the city

### Pasadena Education Network

- Encourage parents to be volunteers
- Distribute information through their online network of 1100 parents

### Boys & Girls Club

- Houses large population of young students throughout the school year and summer, have ample transportation and space

### College Access Plan

- Offer high school students volunteer opportunities and link this to college readiness

### College & Career Pathway

- High-school aged volunteers; capacity of 40 hours per student per year

### Reading Partners

- Expand to more schools (at 6 of 14 now)
- Serve as Subject Matter Expert for Collaborate PASadena

### Parent Resource Center

- Connect parents with different organizations according to their needs
- Serve as advertising avenue between school and parents

### Pasadena Education Foundation

- Has broad contextual knowledge to share from "Go Public" Documentary, strong grant writing abilities

### Early Childhood Development

- This commission is a pre-existing platform which links city stakeholders to early student education – linkage opportunity

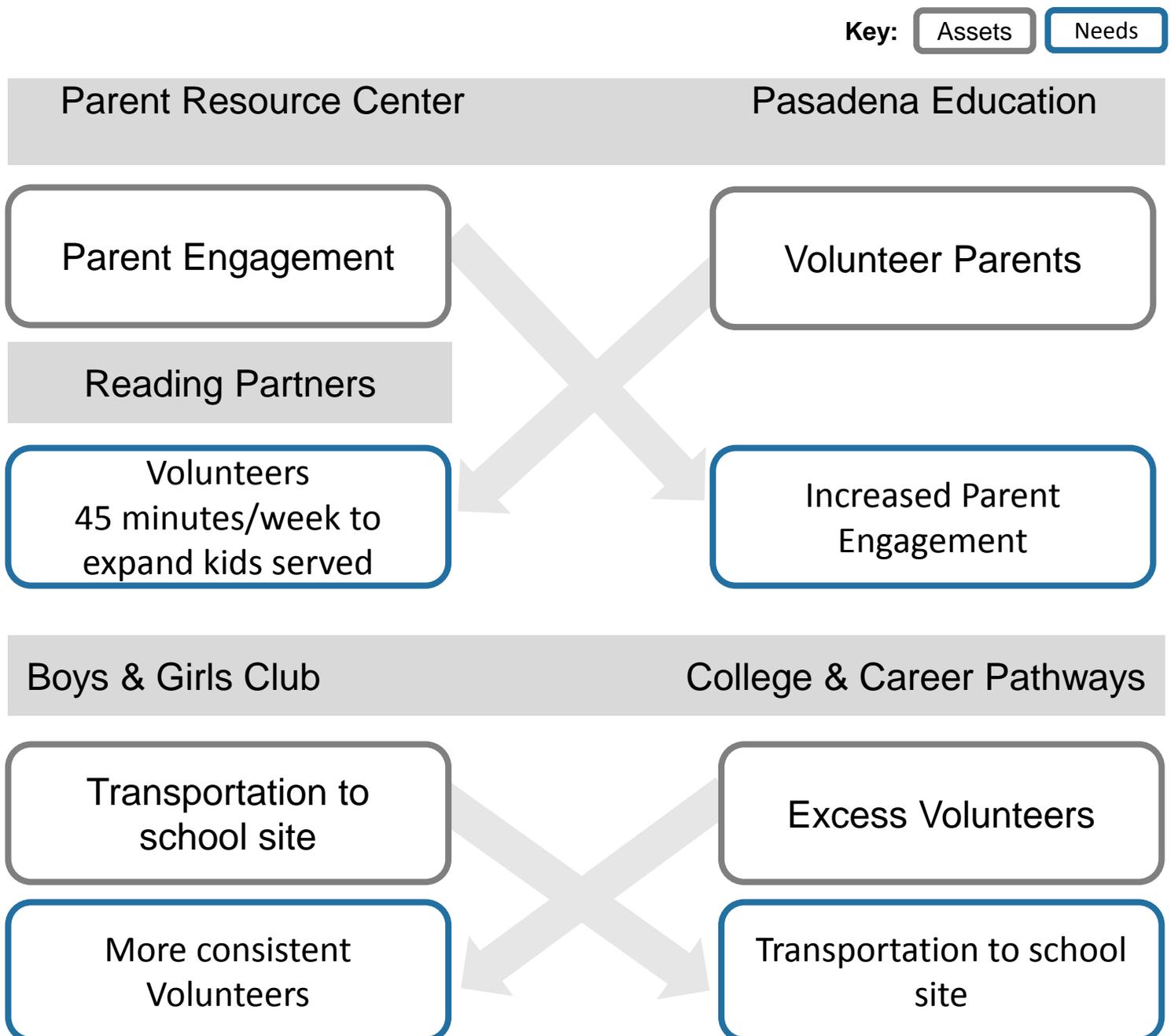
### Caltech Educational Outreach

- Provide volunteer opportunities for students

## The best way to make progress is to identify needs and match them with assets

Collaborate PASadena, and collaboratives in general, face a real constraint when it comes to the time and energy it takes to keep up with all the organizations' evolving work and challenges. It is both efficient and effective to have organizations self-report **what resources they need to increase their reach** and **what deficiencies keep them from fully realizing their mission**. Collaborate PASadena can serve as the coordinator to match organizations' assets to others' needs, making the impact of the collaborative greater than the sum of its parts.

Below are opportunities for Collaborate PASadena to match partners with assets to partners with needs.





# Recommendations

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Based on the best practices research and asset mapping activities outlined above, we have developed the following six recommendations. These are the critical steps that we believe Collaborate PASadena must undertake in order to become a productive, sustainable and effective collaborative. These recommendations apply to Collaborate PASadena as a whole and its broader goal of achieving collective impact in its community. Currently, these recommendations can be taken in the context of the current third grading reading proficiency goals. When Collaborate PASadena decides to expand to additional goals, reviewing these recommendations will also help the collaborative to grow and develop new initiatives.

## Formalize the Strategic Framework and Develop an Action Plan

The Leadership Council, partners and staff should work together to formalize Collaborate PASadena's strategic framework and develop an action plan that identifies the specific activities that will help the collaborative accomplish its common agenda

### From the Experts

Different partners will have different purposes and vision. Developing a strategic framework provides a process for identifying the common ground among partners and focusing on these commonalities to establish shared goals.

The components of a successful strategic framework include: "a description of the problem informed by solid research; a clear goal for the desired change; a portfolio of key strategies to drive large scale change; a set of principles that guide the group's behavior; and an approach to evaluation that lays out how the collective impact initiative will obtain and judge the feedback on its efforts." (Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer, 2012)

The strategic framework is then used to develop an action plan that identifies the who-what-when of each step that will be taken to reach the goal(s). This process should be reiterative and adaptive as strategies are tested and new data and feedback are incorporated.

When a collaborative has both a strategic framework and action plan, partners and the broader community can articulate the collaborative's goal and understand their role in accomplishing it.

### From the Partners

The need for a tighter strategic framework was mentioned several times during interviews. One interviewee said, "to create alignment, Collaborate PASadena should identify targets and a timeframe and then enlist different organizations to use their assets to reach this goal." A more specific plan is very important to push goals forward and mark benchmarks from time to time.

Another organization said, "When Collaborate PASadena identifies a need for something [we] are great at, we would find a way to get it done." In many ways, lack of a specific strategic framework and action plan (with component roles and responsibilities) means Collaborate PASadena is missing opportunities for specific, targeted support that could better distribute the workload.

Other stakeholders believe that to be successful in moving the needle on third grade literacy, it is absolutely critical to have targets (the what) and timeframes (the when). For example, Reading Partners hopes to make a 10% improvement in the number of students reading at grade level in 4 years- setting this goal forces action (L. Zachar, personal communication, March 10, 2016)

Collaborate PASadena also "needs to be sensitive to how long a person will hang in with them without seeing return." Partners will begin to lose faith in the collaborative's potential to impact the community if Collaborate PASadena is unable to facilitate a concrete action plan.

## Formalize the Strategic Framework and Develop an Action Plan

The Leadership Council, partners and staff should work together to formalize Collaborate PASadena's strategic framework and develop an action plan that identifies the specific activities that will help the collaborative accomplish its common agenda

### Barriers

Setting a clear, specific strategic framework is necessary to develop mutually reinforcing activities, but it can be quite challenging to create buy in and agreement among partners. While it can be easy to agree to a large goal, it is more challenging to tell people what to do, to identify what will work, and to get all partners to agree on steps. Having an effective and respected facilitator can also be challenging to find, but is critical to facilitating this process.

### Implementation Steps

- Leadership Council and partners review Collaborate PASadena's current strategic framework and ensure that it meets the criteria noted above and has buy in from all partners, in addition to the Leadership Council. This can be done at a dedicated set of Leadership Council meetings, or the council could develop a new working group, comprised of council members and partner staff who are tasked with refining and finalizing the framework. Collaborate PASadena consultants can facilitate.
- For example, for the current goal of third grade reading proficiency, the strategic framework should identify the specific strategies that Collaborate PASadena will implement to achieve this goal. Based on our best practices research, we recommend that Collaborate PASadena look for ways to expand summer learning and parent engagement programs, as these have been demonstrated to be highly effective strategies.
- Once the framework is formalized, consider drafting an MOU that each partner organization will sign to demonstrate their acceptance and commitment. A sample MOU can be found at [coalition4nbyouth.org](http://coalition4nbyouth.org).
- Use existing working groups to then develop an action plan for addressing the third grade reading goal. This plan should include concrete steps specifying what will be done and where, by and with who, and when it will happen. Partners work together to develop these steps, using data and the asset mapping resources to create mutually reinforcing activities.
- The action plan should include short- and mid-term goals that serve as benchmarks for reaching the long term goal(s). Goals should be "SMART+C": Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed and Challenged (Community Tool Box, 2015). Case studies can be used to establish clear and feasible timeframes.
- All partners and council members should have an opportunity to review and comment on the action plan to identify any opportunities that might be missing. The LC may also want to open one of its meeting for input from the community. Once the action plan is agreed to by all stakeholders, the plan should be communicated widely to the community to gain buy in and seek specific areas of assistance as identified in the plan.

## Formalize the Strategic Framework and Develop an Action Plan

The Leadership Council, partners and staff should work together to formalize Collaborate PASadena’s strategic framework and develop an action plan that identifies the specific activities that will help the collaborative accomplish its common agenda

### Implementation Steps, Cont.

To help Collaborate PASadena think strategically about its current activities and how these connect to the collaborative’s goals, we have developed the following logic model. Collaborate PASadena should use this logic model to think about how its existing resources and activities (“inputs”) lead to the desired outcomes. Activities and resources might need to be changed or altered in order to effectively achieve these outcomes as these strategies are tested.

Inputs		Outputs	Outcomes		
Resources	Activities	Indicators	Short-Term	Intermediate	Long-term
			(constituent benefits)	(through constituents' changes)	(problems solved)
Partner staff: full time and part time employees, volunteers	Partners collaborate to provide reading programs, homework help and literacy support to students.	95% of PUSD students receive reading assistance	Student needs are identified early and students are provided individualized support;  Children get access to more books and read more frequently;  Increased communication among different partners, Leadership Council, and community stakeholders;  Partners have a better understanding of each other's goals, activities, and current needs;  Parents have knowledge and resources to support their child's learning;  More community members are available and trained to support students	More students read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade;  Lower grade retention, chronic absenteeism, and dropout rates; Improved school averages on standardized tests;  Partners share resources and align activities to better serve all PUSD students;  Parents support children's learning and are more involved in their children's academic achievements;  There is community-wide awareness and involvement in education programs via funding, volunteering, and support.	The children of Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre all grow up in a safe, stable and supportive environment that prepares them for success in school and in life;  Children succeed in school, graduate at higher rates and get better jobs;  More families have children in PUSD schools.
Backbone staff	Working groups coordinate training of volunteers to support partner programs	95% of PUSD students receive afterschool/ summer homework help and academic support			
Leadership Council members (volunteer)	Partners meet regularly to share resources and coordinate activities	50 new volunteers trained every school year to support students via partner programs			
Parents	Parents learn via parent engagement programs and support children's literacy	100% of partners participate in at least 6 CP meeting per year			
Funding	Leadership Council helps guide strategy, communication between CP and community, and fundraising activities	60% of PUSD parents participate in parent training			
Supplies, space, equipment and other materials	Backbone staff coordinate meetings, facilitate communication and reporting, collect data and finances, manage website	CP raises \$50,000 annually to support activities			

## Develop Backbone Structure & Hire Full-Time Staff

Develop a formal backbone structure with paid, full-time Collaborate PASadena staff supporting the Leadership Council and partners. The backbone organization should be a well-respected, community-based organization.

### From the Experts

Developing and managing collective impact initiatives requires a separate, neutral organization with staff who can serve as the backbone structure for the collaborative. This staff is responsible for facilitation and coordination between the collaborative’s steering committee (i.e., Leadership Council), participating organizations, and stakeholders. (Turner et al., 2012).

An independent, paid staff plays a critical role in the collaborative by “guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.” This staff must be trusted and respected in the community (Community Tool Box, 2015).

This staff’s activities are focused on the collective impact **process**, not outcomes. See below for an example of what full-time staff will help the collaborative accomplish (Turner et al., 2012):

Activity	Short-term Outcomes (Illustrative)	Intermediate Outcomes (Illustrative)
1. Guide vision and strategy	Partners share a common understanding of the need and desired result	Partners’ individual work is increasingly aligned with the initiative’s common agenda
2. Support aligned activities	Partners increasingly communicate and coordinate their activities toward common goals	Partners collaboratively develop new approaches to advance the initiative
3. Establish shared measurement practices	Partners understand the value of sharing data	Partners increasingly use data to adapt and refine their strategies
4. Build public will	Community members are increasingly aware of the issue(s)	More community members feel empowered to take action on the issue(s)
5. Advance policy	Policymakers are more aware and supportive of the initiative’s policy agenda	Policy changes increasingly occur in line with initiative goals
6. Mobilize funding	Funding is secured to support initiative activities	Philanthropic and public funds are increasingly aligned with initiative goals

Staff should include at least one full-time coordinator to take on the tasks above, but successful collaboratives frequently have two to seven people. Alignment Nashville, for example, has seven core staff. For a small collaborative, one individual may hold multiple positions. Project U-Turn (Philadelphia) is composed of three full-time employees including a vice president, data analyst and policy analyst. (The Bridgespan Group, 2014).

Local United Ways often serve as the backbone organization for collaboratives due to their strong capacity and respect within their community (Milwaukee Succeeds, Learn to Earn/ReadySetSoar). Full-time staff are housed within the United Way and supported by the steering committee, typically including partner representatives, school and city officials, and community stakeholders.

## Develop Backbone Structure & Hire Full-Time Staff

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### From the Partners

A common thread throughout conversations with Collaborate PASadena's partners is the need for a full-time staff member to serve as the "backbone" of the collaborative. Partners agreed that having full-time staff is essential to the collaborative's sustainability.

One nonprofit leader said, "we need someone who it is their job to keep tying the knots and nurturing the work that's going on - it's a full time job getting everyone in the same room together." Partners voiced concerns that if Collaborate PASadena is too wearing on its partners, it raises the barrier to entry for new organizations. The energy of partner organizations should be put into collaboration and the strategy that underlies it, not in building collective impact capacity.

### Barriers

Our team recognizes the barriers to establishing this role are significant. As one partner said, in order to be sustainable Collaborate PASadena needs to have a full-time staff member who can help more widely market the collaborative's efforts and fundraise. To hire a staff member, however, requires fundraising.

### Implementation Steps

- Determine the organization that can be the physical home of Collaborate PASadena full-time staff.
- Based on feedback from the Leadership Council, the Flintridge Center, Day One, and Pasadena Education Foundation are possibilities. Collaborate PASadena should consider perceived neutrality and respect within the community, capacity to support additional staff, and capacity to support fundraising when selecting the backbone.
- Solicit funding for staff positions from stakeholders including cities, the school district, community and education foundations, and local businesses.
- Hire Collaborate PASadena coordinator and assistant(s) with the skills to accomplish the tasks noted above. Particular emphasis should be placed on hiring full-time staff who can effectively facilitate communication among partners.

## Build Credibility and Trust Between Partners

Create a formal mechanism for fostering communication between partners, including the Leadership Council. When all members of the collaborative are in constant communication, this will help build trust and credibility among the group and there will be greater opportunities to identify synergies and high-impact activities.

### From the Experts

The importance of trust building cannot be overstated. Experts have identified three mind-shifts to help collective impact groups achieve large-scale change (Kania, Hanleybrown and Juster, 2014). These are:

- **Consider who is engaged:** ensure that all the right people are at the table, since cross-sector perspectives can improve the understanding of the problem.
- **How they are working together:** “relational is as important as rational.” Collective impact groups succeed when they focus on **both** the use of evidence and strengthening relationships. There is power in “collective seeing, learning and doing.” Sharing credit is as important and taking the credit.
- **How progress is taking place:** this requires adaptive problem solving or continuous learning and adaptation. Participants must also shift their thinking about their work as part of a larger context and consider how they contribute to the larger puzzle of activities.

When members of a collaborative have gone through these three steps, there will be a higher level of mutual trust and stronger relationships between partners, strengthening the overall collaborative.

Continuous communication is essential to building trust among partners and the collaborative’s credibility in the community. The facilitator of a collective group in South Dallas talks about her experience building trust through the following approaches (Priestley, 2014):

- **Transparency:** With the leadership and with the community about the planning process and decision-making, in order for all stakeholders to contribute to the process and increase their comfort with the effort’s trajectory.
- **Credible leadership:** Steering committee and backbone organization are well known and respected in the community. They help open doors to network of residents and community organizations.
- **Keeping your word:** Complete the activities that were promised to the steering committee and to the community.
- **Space for relationship building:** Celebrate accomplishments and allow for networking between leadership, work group chairs and advisors.

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### From the Partners

Collaborate PASadena is built on the understanding that working together is better than working alone. However, because partners in Pasadena have historically worked in silos, it is critical for the collaborative to go through a trust-building process to learn how to engage with each other collaboratively. One partner explained where Collaborate PASadena is today: "beyond our self interest and history of working in silos, organizations actually do sit and do work together, but the city and school district are bureaucracies, so we need to build trust in between the entities."

Partners shared that one underlying factor that influences trust is that each group needs to feel like they will be included at the table. This is also seen as inextricably linked to creating an action plan and strategic framework, as "the people who are providing the services have to be in the room - or else creating an action plan is a wasted effort."

### Barriers

The biggest barrier here is time. Partner organization will be busy with their own work, and it can be difficult to commit the initial time and effort to build trust before collaborative work has even started.

Similarly, most organizations share the same goals, but do things differently. It will take time for organizations to understand each other's strategies and in some cases, adapt approaches to fit with the collaborative's strategies.

### Implementation Steps

- Working groups should have consistent meetings and use these sessions as a vehicle to communicate and build trust among partners. Working groups should also establish a process for communicating activities and progress with the Leadership Council. Backbone staff can help the working groups develop a system for communicating between meetings and with the Council.
- Community stakeholders, particularly parents, should be engaged via meetings and have their feedback integrated into the overall strategy. The Leadership Council and working groups should develop formal mechanisms for including these stakeholders in meetings and activities. For example, each meeting should have agenda time dedicated for community stakeholders to speak and provide input.
- The Collaborate PASadena website and social media platforms should be updated regularly and used as a platform for exchanging ideas, communicating between meetings, and gathering community input. Information about working group meetings, Leadership Council meetings, and partner events should be clearly provided online.

## Identify and Focus on Amplifying Synergies Between Partners

Identify existing alignments between partners that can be easily strengthened and expanded. These “quick wins” will help Collaborate PASadena demonstrate effectiveness and success to the broader community and build enthusiasm to continue efforts. Looking for quick wins that provide opportunities for ongoing alignment, rather than one-time events.

### From the Experts

Collective impact groups often seek to have a systems-level impact, but this can take three to 10 years to yield results. To build enthusiasm and sustain engagement from partners and community stakeholders, collaboratives should identify the low-hanging fruit or “quick wins” that can be accomplished early on. (Malenfant, 2012) Celebrating success encourages everyone to keep up their efforts and helps build the credibility of the collaborative as a whole.

One way to find and accomplish quick wins is to identify which partners are already leading successful programs that can be easily amplified or expanded with the collaborative’s support.

For example, Milwaukee Succeeds’ Third Grade Reading Network launched its first tutoring pilot in 2013 and used its early success to work with additional schools to implement and evaluate evidence-based strategies focused on improving third grade reading. These strategies included, tutoring, parent engagement, teacher coaching and experiential learning. To expand this network, Milwaukee Succeeds demonstrated the pilot’s success to leverage resources within the community, and also developed new methods to fill any gaps between partners.

### From the Partners

One partner noted that “seeing improvement in reading outcomes is difficult because it has a long time scale- outputs serve as markers and benchmarks along the way and are essential in order to maintain motivation and credibility as we move toward the larger goals.” Quick wins can serve as these outputs to motivate continued efforts.

Another common thread in interviews was the sentiment that Pasadena already has a lot of robust, impactful programs in education. However, organizations were not shy in sharing they have the potential to expand their impact if they had more resources and support.

For example, one organization said, “Collaborate PASadena should help in reallocating resources and making collective goals. There are a lot of organizations that focus on the same thing, but people are doing it in different ways. It always takes times to change and reallocate resources, but we should do it and make our programs more efficient.”

It is clear that some of the low-hanging fruit for Collaborate PASadena is to identify which organizations can have the highest impact through collaboration, and help coordinate resources toward those activities. One city employee said, “Pasadena has an advantage with its size: its small enough that the district can roll out ideas to a set of target schools, but big enough to prove what is working.”

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### Barriers

Part of achieving quick wins will be identifying those partners who already have successful programs that can be easily augmented and highlighted in the community. While it may be hard- and political- to pick such “best practices,” identifying exemplary programs will help Collaborate PASadena demonstrate where its work has already had impact, thus motivating partners and building credibility.

### Implementation Steps

- Identify partners that have existing, successful programs and look for ways to augment these through collaboration. For example, Collaborate PASadena’s parent working group could help recruit parent volunteers to participate in Reading Partner’s assisted reading programs, helping it to expand its impact.
- Implement the other “quick wins” identified in the asset mapping section. Use working groups meeting time to determine how to implement these during the next school year.
- Part of the implementation of these activities should be a communication plan for how these successes will be communicated to the broader community. Backbone staff and communications team can support these efforts.

## Establish Strong Ties to School and City Through Partners

As Collaborate PASadena formalizes its strategic framework and develops an action plan, it will benefit from identifying key players from the school district and city who can help partners align their programs and develop partnerships with city and school programs. These players should be included in working groups to ensure consistent communication and feedback.

### From the Experts

School and city partners have significant institutional knowledge that can benefit the collaborative's efforts. It is important to know what initiatives have been done in the past, and what resources and needs need to be considered.

There are numerous examples of education collaboratives that have been highly successful due to partnerships with cities and schools. For example, Dayton's ReadySetSoar initiative used summer learning programs to help struggling readers advance via school partnerships with libraries and nonprofit partners. United Way of Greater Dayton also worked with the Dayton School District to expand Freedom Schools®, a program that provides summer and after-school reading enrichment, to serve more than 300 students over the summer.

Community-based organizations often have strong relationships with other organizations, funders, schools, and students, which means that they play a key role in developing relationships with potential partners. They can help strengthen trust amongst partners by building off relationships that they have already established. Partnerships with schools during the pilot phase can also help ensure that reading proficiency activities do not have any unintentional impacts on schools.

### From the Partners

One partner said that Collaborate PASadena “works like a three legged stool: there is the city, the school district, and community-based agencies. There may be dissonance about how much of a role we each want to play, but they all need to have buy-in and feel equally represented or the stool can't stay standing.”

One community-based organization shared how partnerships with the school can help Collaborate PASadena improve communication with the community: “A phone call goes out on Sunday nights from the school, and that's a really effective way of reaching everyone.”

The easiest way to create strong ties with the school and city is by building on preexisting relationships. Current partners like Reading Partners and the Pasadena Libraries already have strong ties, and may be able to serve as liaisons to expand city partnerships with other Collaborate PASadena partners. Using these relationships to establish frequent and routine communication will allow Collaborate PASadena to build stand-alone, strong, collaborative relationships with the city and school district.

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### Barriers

The city and school entities that Collaborate PASadena engages with are limited in their ability to adjust strategic goals or plans to match the mission of Collaborate PASadena. In addition, they work within far more established and bureaucratic structures. If Collaborate PASadena wants to expand relationships with the cities and school district, it will have to work within the confines of these structures, with the goal of helping inform these strategies moving forward.

There may also be challenges with sharing information about student performance. While partners need this data to develop strategy and motivate action, the school district will not want this information to impact how schools are perceived by the public. Communication and building trust can help partners overcome this barrier.

### Implementation Steps

- Leadership Council representatives from the city and school district should identify current programs being offered by their respective organizations. They should also identify the lead point person for each program.
- Partner organizations should identify key partners at the city and schools and introduce them to working group members.
- The Leadership Council and partner staff should facilitate introductions and communication between city/district program staff and Collaborate PASadena partners. These staff should also be invited to participate in working groups and in the development of Collaborate PASadena's action plan. This will allow linkages and partnerships to develop and be incorporated into the collaborative's overall strategy.

## Establish a Shared Measurement System

Develop a system for sharing data and measuring broad goals. Use simple, guiding questions to focus on evaluation and assessing progress.

### From the Experts

To be effective, collective impact models require participating organizations to agree on how success is measured and reported. (Community Tool Box, 2015) A shared measurement system (SMS) also helps the collaborative evaluate its collective efforts. A SMS should include evaluation questions that will provide answers to partners’ most pressing needs. Good evaluation questions are typically open-ended, which enable evaluators to identify a wide range of factors, impacts and drivers. Open-ended questions also allow for the wide variation between partners’ activities and data collection methods. (Preskill, Parkhurst and Juster, 2015)

Below is a list of suggested indicators and evaluation questions that can be used for assessment. The best practices section above also contains resources on developing a shared measurement system and evaluating collaborative impact initiatives in the early stages of collaboration.

	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Shared outcome measurements:	Short term: number of students participating in programs, number of new volunteers and parents participating in programs, number of shared activities hosted by CP partners	Mid term: Percent of 3rd grade students reading at grade level, average # of students absences, math and reading scores on standard tests, dropout rate, grade retention rate, funding raised	Long term: Percent of PAS students attending PUSD, PUSD graduation rates, number of PUSD students entering the local workforce
Evaluation questions:	What activities seem to be working well and where is there early progress?	How are relationships developing among partners?	What factors helped CP reach these goals?
	What are "quick wins" that have been achieved and that can be shared with the community?	How are various partners and the larger environment responding to the initiative?	How can CP continue to grow and improve?
	What activities seem to be less successful and what are the factors hindering success?	How will CP use the results of outcome measurements to allocate and coordinate various resources towards the desired goals?	What qualities have helped CP be sustainable thus far? How can CP ensure ongoing commitment and sustainability?
	What are currently existing challenges of cooperation and how can these be overcome in the long run?	How can CP use early success to garner more resources and ramp up activities?	
	How have successes and challenges been communicated to parents, to community? How can their feedback be incorporated?	How can these methods be replicated to other goals?	

## Establish a Shared Measurement System

Develop a system for sharing data and measuring broad goals. Use simple, guiding questions to focus on evaluation and assessing progress.

### From the Partners

Partners understand shared evaluation's importance. One partner said shared evaluation is important as a "way to see how supporting our public schools matters, and demonstrating the reasons it is important for us all to be invested in it - this will encourage people to buy in." Another noted that "Collaborate PASadena's alignment on a measurement system means no repeat work or misalignment is felt."

It would be helpful if every organization used the same collective measurement tool. However, asking libraries, nonprofit organizations, and schools to use the same format would be labor-intensive and unrealistic. One interviewee said that: "It is not necessary for different organizations to use a universal measurement format, but it should be more straightforward."

One partner noted that goal sheets may be an easy way for Collaborate PASadena to standardize how partners measure third grade reading without burdening them with a new tool or method. Simple goal sheets would make it easier to share data, see opportunities for synergy, and get feedback.

### Barriers

Evaluations are labor and cost intensive and require a skillset that nonprofit organizations do not always have. Evaluation tools should be simple and convenient for partners. It's also difficult to have a universal measurement tool that will work for every type of organization.

One partner brought up the challenge of incorporating multi-lingual program components into evaluation. The measurement system and evaluation questions need to be inclusive of non-English speaking participants and ensure their data and feedback is incorporated, and developing this could be

### Implementation Steps

- In the early stages: different partners should reach agreement on adopting common indicators and guiding evaluation questions to assess progress. At the same time, Collaborate PASadena should agree on and establish data collection methods and data sharing system.
- Using a partner with expertise in evaluation methods, such as Caltech, to develop the SMS would be a good way to use existing resources to develop the system.
- In the middle stages: Collaborate PASadena should ensure broad participation from partners, collecting data and measuring their results towards the shared goals. This data should be used to expand successful strategies and rework less successful ones.
- In later stages: Based on the assessment of shared data, Collaborate PASadena can help partners improve their work, strengthen their alignment, and solve problems that require collaboration among partners.



# Implementation Timeline

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We designed a brief implementation timeline for Collaborate PASadena to help the collaborative prioritize these recommendations. This timeline can be broken down into short term, medium term and long term timeframes. Because many of these recommendations need to be implemented concurrently to work effectively, we used these general groupings to help Collaborate PASadena prioritize and focus on what can be accomplished first.

## Short Term (1-6 months)

### *1. Develop a backbone structure*

Developing a backbone structure is critical so that Collaborate PASadena has a neutral staff who can take on the communication and coordination workload, as Collaborate PASadena begins to implement an action plan and aligned activities (activities where two or more partners are working together and sharing resources.) We understand that developing a backbone staff requires funding, but want to underscore the importance of having a full-time employee to take on these activities and help implement the other recommendations. Since identifying a backbone organization will take time, the Leadership Council should begin reaching out to possible organizations (PEF, Day One, and Flintridge Center) as soon as possible. Collaborate PASadena should also consider extending current consultant contracts to temporarily fill this role until the backbone is formalized and a full-time staff is hired.

### *2. Formalize strategic framework*

A clear strategic framework can help Collaborate PASadena establish clear, defined strategies for how the collaborative will achieve its goals (currently third grade reading, but also other goals in the future.) Going through the collaborative process of formalizing this framework with all partners involved will also ensure that there's buy in to how the collective will operate. This process should be started immediately so that partners can all agree on what activities they will focus on and begin to work together. The formal strategic framework, with MOUs from each partner, should be completed during this timeframe.

### *3. Create action plan*

Collaborate PASadena can begin working on its action plan once the strategic framework has buy in from partners. This process will lay out the collaborative's specific activities over the next school year so that the collaborative can begin making progress. This step should work concurrently with finding a backbone organization and hiring staff so that they can facilitate development of the plan.

### *4. Work on synergies & quick wins*

As Collaborate PASadena works on creating an action plan, visible and easy ways to begin collaborating- as noted in the asset mapping section- will become apparent. The collaborative should focus on implementing these right away and communicate these "quick wins" to stakeholders right away in order to begin building momentum around the collaborative. This will help the collaborative gather volunteers, funding and other forms of community support. Collaborate PASadena should look to implement at least 3-4 quick wins during the next six months.

## Medium Term (6-12 months)

### *1. Define measurement indicators*

Once Collaborate PASadena has an official action plan in place, the collaborative will have a better sense of what each partner will be doing and all the activities that will be taking place. This will then be the time to begin thinking about how to measure success and evaluate whether or not the action plan is working. Partners should agree on shared indicators, but the process for measuring them and collecting data may vary by partner. Research institutions such as Caltech can provide insight on how to structure the collection and data sharing process. Defining these indicators during the medium term will help ensure that the collaborative has data available for the annual review.

### *2. Use early successes to seek funding→ sustainability*

As noted above, sharing early successes and quick wins with the larger community can help generate buy in, so that community members are more inclined to give their support. Documenting early successes will also provide useful data points and examples when applying for more formal grants from donors in the greater Los Angeles area. These successes, combined with staff capacity and concrete, actionable plans, will make Collaborate PASadena more competitive as a grant seeker and thus more sustainable.

### *3. Building trust & credibility, creating long-term relationships between partners, schools and cities*

These aspects of collective impact will be ongoing throughout the collaborative efforts. However, it takes time for these relationships and trust to reach a critical mass. The 6 - 12 month timeframe of the trust and relationship building process will be critical to success as Collaborate PASadena takes its strategic framework and action plan and begins to implement activities. This is the time when these relationships will first be tested, and the collaborative will rely on mutual trust to see these initial efforts through to fruition.

## Long Term (12+ months)

### *1. Scale up by adding more educational goals with indicators*

Collaborate PASadena has already stated that it intends to add additional goals as the collaborative evolves and grows. We recommend that Collaborate PASadena wait at least 12 months- or for the above steps to be accomplished- before expanding its efforts. This will help ensure that the collaborative does not overreach its capacity and thereby threaten its early progress. Existing efforts should be able to self-sustain and continue functioning before the collaborative begins to focus on additional items.

### *2. Adopt a sustainability plan as partners and leaders evolve*

Inevitably, Collaborate PASadena's partners and leaders will change over time. Collaborate PASadena will want to develop a sustainability plan that can guide new leaders to continue efforts and provide smooth transitions across leadership changes. As partners change due to evolution in their individual missions and goals, and new partners are added, Collaborate PASadena should also have a plan in place. This plan will outline how new partners can be added and what partners will be expected to do and commit. This will help Collaborate PASadena to be more sustainable and ensure that transitions between leaders and partners doesn't cause the collective impact to diminish.

## In Summary

We hope that the case studies, asset mapping, and recommendations detailed in this report will help Collaborate PASadena to strengthen its capacity to achieve collective impact. The cities of Pasadena, Altadena, and Sierra Madre have a wealth of resources and passion that can support a thriving education system and community. We hope this report will guide Collaborate PASadena in serving as the linkages between these community resource and achieving success.

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Pictures:

Dad and Son photograph originally by Getty + Hero Images, sourced from <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/a35103/benefits-of-dads-reading-bedtime-stories/>

Kids running photograph originally by iStockphoto, sourced from <http://news.discovery.com/human/health/to-avoid-injury-kids-play-for-fun.htm>



# Appendix

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Appendix A: Interview List

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Appendix C: Superintendent Interview Transcript

Appendix D: Leadership Council meeting notes

## Interview List

Conducted between February and May 2016

Susan Schwartz	Pasadena Education Network
AnnMarie Hurtado	Pasadena Public Library
Laura Zacher	Reading Partners
Mo Hyman	College Access Plan
Paul Little	Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Suzanne Barbarian	Community Liaison Specialist, PUSD
Natasha Mahone	Parent Representative
Dawn O'Keefe	Pasadena Educational Foundation
John "J.D." Lovrensky	Boys & Girls Club
Brian McDonald	Superintendent, PUSD
Vera Vignes	Past Superintendent, PUSD
Kelly King	California Community Foundation
Tony Santielna	Pasadena Youth Council
Mitch Aiken	Caltech Center for Teaching, Learning & Outreach
Steve Mermell	Interim City Manager, Pasadena
Mary Donnelly	Young and Healthy
Marisa Sarian	Int. Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education, PUSD

## Survey Questions

Conducted between February and May 2016 – approximately 30 minutes per interview

### Background

- Program Mission
- History
- What is your program and who do you primarily serve?
- What is the scale of your impact?
- What historically works and doesn't work in Pasadena?

### Measurement

- How do you measure program outcomes?
- Should there be a collective tool?
- How do we become outcome not output focused?
- How can third grade reading be improved?

### Sustainability

- Working relationships in Pasadena?
- What is the current landscape and how do we improve that?
- How can we make Collaborate PASadena sustainable?
- What can make Collaborate PASadena work better?
- **Organization's Relationship with Collaborate PASadena**
  - What makes your group an asset to Collaborate PASadena?
  - What resources do you need?

March 28, 2016

Interviewer (I)

Superintendent Mr. McDonald (S.M.)

I: What do you think the role should be of non-school entities in improving third grade reading?

S.M.: Funny I was talking about that to a colleague about this earlier. Frankly, I believe the task of educating kids, and especially in this particular case - getting kids to read by the 3rd grade - is an enormous task.... One that cannot be done just solely by the school district. Certainly there are school-based effects on student outcomes, but there are also non school-based effects, which are quite frankly larger than the school based effects. With that said, the only way for us to accomplish this is to the support of our community partners, specifically here we are talking about non-profits. So as an example, one of our initiatives now is the balanced literacy approach, and certainly it is the right way to go, but without interventions in the whole home and in the community a lot of this work could be undermined. So as an example, when you look the research around African American kids or even Latino kids, who are living in poverty. The impact of the spoken language at home on how well students do in the area of literacy is huge....So this is the point that I'm making- it will be extremely difficult for us to get the kids to read by the time they get to third grade without a partnership with the parents and a partnership with some of the nonprofits that can assist the parents at home in supporting the kids. This is huge.

I : Yeah it is clear from the size and this is sheer volume organizations working in the Pasadena external to the classroom that there is a need for it and there are some demonstrated benefits of having them. So that's good to hear. I guess my next question is should these efforts be linked to, coordinated, or guided by the school district - or is there potential to have it be coordinated by Collaborate PASadena or group entities outside?

S.M.: Mercy Center, myself were...you know the original people who worked on this Collaborate PASadena effort and I have consistently said that... and we have some for the philosophical disagreements, myself and some people associated with Collaborate PASadena... but have consistently said that this can be a loosely coupled effort- where the school district is doing one thing and other organizations are doing other things and somehow we expect that everything will just miraculously come together for the benefits of kids. It can't work in that way. So to specifically answer your question, I believe that Collaborate PASadena should be the the umbrella under which all those efforts fall. So if someone from Collaborate PASadena is going to convene a work group around this particular effort, then they would say "ok, we know in order to ensure that kids come to kindergarten somewhat ready, there are certain things we have to do. We have to coordinate with all the pre-school programs, we have to make sure that parents are trained and that they know how to read to their kids, and how to expose them to certain things." So that's one aspect. And another aspect might be the kind of services that we provide to students, the kind of expanded learning opportunities that we provide to students outside of school day - What might that look like? What kind of partnership we can enter into, and we will ensure that when students leave school at the end of the day, there is something else out there that will help them to become better readers? At the school district, we have so many things on our plate that an outside entities or neutral entity like Collaborate PASadena, would be the best organization sort of pull all those pieces together, and have those resources aligned in such a way so that we are all providing supports for the kids and we are dealing with the school based effects or factors, rather, and nonprofits are dealing with all of the outside school supports that kids' need....

S.M.: ....and there is one seamless process get us to that end that we all looking for. So just to answer your question in a succinct way, yes we believe that Collaborate PASadena should be the entity that pulls everything together.

I.: Just make sure I'm understanding, the role that PUSD should play in moving forward this 3rd grade education goal is: No.1 everything in the classroom, as well as serving whatever role within Collaborate PASadena they can be responsible for or that makes most sense.

S.M.: Right.

I.: I'm curious about what you think are the biggest points of friction or challenges towards collective movement, for the schools or any sort of education based goal going forward.

S.M.: The obstacle as far as I'm concerned is that you have outside groups that are busy working on their piece of this whole puzzle, but there is never really any kind of check-in with the school district to get the chances to give input on where it's going. I'll give you an example, so right now there is a counsel of the young child meeting that's meeting - and they're developing I guess an implementation plan for what the city will be doing, which regards to early childhood education and so forth. We have school district people sitting on that committee, but I don't know that anybody has specifically asked school district what our goals are, what we are trying to accomplish, and how can we get better alignment. It might eventually get there but it didn't start off that way. I'll give you another example. At the joint meeting with the city and the school district, Collaborate PASadena presented on this exact goal - of all students reading by the third grade... and they couldn't answer some of the question that were asked. As an example, what is the school district doing with regard to this goal? We sat there and nobody consulted with us, and so people stumbled, they couldn't answer the question. So what I am saying is that the school district is charged with getting this done, and so everybody else has to align with the direction that we are taking and provide whatever support is necessary to get it done

I : Got it. So there needs to be a stronger linkage.

S.M. : Yes. So the obstacle to me is people are off doing their own thing as opposed to sitting with the school district and trying to understand what our goals are and trying to understand what our strategies are around accomplishing some of these common goals.

I: I know this is probably a complex question but do you have a feeling about where that linkage is? I know I had the opportunity to interview an individual in the resource center and she was saying "we refer parents to a lot of different afterschool support networks" - so where within the school district mechanism is the linkage for Collaborate PASadena (or is it a couple of different places)?

S.M.: You know, we have a couple of people, and frankly I am on the leadership council but in all honesty I've had my hands full. So we have representation, but the structure is not such that people are asking the specific questions that they need to ask. There are people there who may have the knowledge but the questions are not being asked.

I: Ok so I'm hearing it is less about representation and more about making sure there is a shared agenda and conversation prior to movement forward - in any direction?

S.M.: Exactly, because you know we have our strategic directions, and we have our goals that we set on an annual basis and our strategies that we developed - so it's really not a secret but unless we're having a conversation with this outside group on specifically what we're doing and what we might want to do in subsequent years - then you really don't know where we're going. Again, sometimes people have their own agenda that they're pursuing and sometimes it doesn't align with the agenda of the school district. So somehow, there needs to be some kind of mechanism for us to engage in that kind of a conversation.

I: This blends well into my last question, which is, if you have any feedback or input into what you've already given me about how Collaborate PASadena can be the most successful - or putting an eye towards creating a structure that is both impactful and sustainable.

S.M.: Well you know, I've said this to a number of people but we need some quick wins, people are getting a little tired of hearing about Collaborate PASadena but not really seeing any tangible results. So, this could be a quick win... well maybe not so quick but we need to move a little bit more quickly in terms of implementing things... because at the end of the year, certainly at the end of this year we can show whether or not we are making any progress with our kids toward the goal of reading by third grade. We need to say "here is one milestone or one target that we set and look we've reached that target and accomplished what we said we were going to accomplish. Obviously it is not going to be kids on grade level, but certainly some little target that we can say "here's a quick win" and there are a number of examples, but we need to show something that will let people know we are making progress. I think we've done a lot of talking, we've had a lot of meetings, and people are still left... I mean I've been a part of this effort and I'm still not even sure you know what we've accomplished... I can't speak to any particular thing that would excite the average person on the street. I could tell them "you know we have a performance meter, or whatever its called, and some goals and some targets" but that means nothing to the average person. They need to hear that around this target of third grade reading we have these partners and they are going to be doing these specific things and we hope to see this at the end of the first year of implementation, do you get what I am saying? I think we just need to move more quickly and have more of a sense of urgency - because people will lose interest if they don't see results. Outside of that, you know, I think we have the right people in place now, and I think it is going to be successful, but I think there are a few tweaks that we need to make. I think once we have more collaborative-type conversations, the school district and Collaborate PASadena, that we will be positioned for success - so it's not doom and gloom, but it is a few things from my standpoint that I think we could improve upon. Outside of that, I can't really think of any other obstacles - I think there is the will here in this town. I continue to be impressed and also amazed at the willingness of people to rally around our school district and our kids - and so I think we are headed in the right direction I would just like to see us get to first base a little bit faster.

I: I think the main points you are speaking to we have heard and are articulated both within and outside of Collaborate PASadena and so helping them identify how to move forward with those in mind is our highest goal. If you don't have anything more to say I just wanted to say thank you for making time for us and I surely don't want to monopolize you for any longer.

## Meeting Notes

Collaborate PASadena Leadership Council meeting, April 27, 2016

### Group 1:

Focused on *Strategic Framework and Backbone Support*

- This group believes it is feasible to being to mobilize around this goal within 6 months - and that we need to think about how each partner plays a critical role.

### Group 2:

Focused on *Building Credibility and Trust between Partners*

- This group thinks that building a social media platform for the members in Collaborate PASadena to communicate would build trust and help hold organizations accountable.
- This platform would be a place to "cross-pollinate and exchange ideas."
- Our group also noted that this could build in an incentive for partners to be engaged and accountable to Collaborate PASadena initiatives.
- One member of this group said, "credibility is built by doing the assignment in the exact timeframe you said you would. Trust is about 'no backpedaling'."
- The communications committee is an administrator to this platform.

### Group 3:

Focused on *Strategic Framework and Backbone Support*

- This group shared that they believe there are community organizations in place that could potentially be the backbone organization - including the Flintridge Center and Day One. The larger Council agreed that the Flintridge Center is a well-respected organization the community trusts, which would make for an easy transition.
- The goal should be to find someone who is neutral and has a broad base.

### Group 4:

Focused on *Strategic Framework and Backbone Support*

- This group shared that "the goal here should be not about creating new work but doing business differently," and that achieving this requires a focus on structure.
- They also communicated that an action plan is important - and that Collaborate PASadena should look for a staff that is committed to and has the skills to work collaboratively.
- A common saying in Pasadena goes something like, "in other places, people go home to watch TV after work. In Pasadena, people go to a meeting after work." The group believes this saying is very telling - and that the focus must be put on creating a new structure, and limiting the number of meetings.

## Meeting Notes

From Leadership Council Break Session, hosted on April 27<sup>th</sup>

### Group 5:

Focused on *Building Credibility and Trust between Partners*

- This group suggested putting a button on all partners' websites that links to Collaborate PASadena, the school and the city, to demonstrate that it is affiliated with Collaborate PASadena.
- They shared that consistency and communication via a group site was worth pursuing - and that posting meeting minutes from Leadership Council meetings and the USC report could help improve transparency. Backbone staff can help with this.
- Lastly, they spoke of the "missed opportunity" to collaborate - and that "we need to change the way we think to be more focused and interlinked in our communication - thinking about what we can do for Collaborate PASadena should be first and foremost."

### Group 6:

Focused on *Building Credibility and Trust between Partners*

- This group shared their thoughts on focusing on youth outreach and on breaking into Instagram to grow awareness.
- The Mayor shared he was less optimistic than most about social media given how fast it changes - it is hard to create engaging content and delegate the responsibility for that - thus he thinks the backbone should be the core focus for now.
- They also shared the need to publicize linkages between organizations, and they encapsulated this thought by saying "information spreads online by sharing content, not creating it."