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# The emergence of PK-12 blended capital partnerships: a framework for understanding how urban school leaders and outside partners work together

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dissertation

**THE EMERGENCE OF PK-12 BLENDED CAPITAL PARTNERSHIPS:  
A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS  
AND OUTSIDE PARTNERS WORK TOGETHER**

by

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requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

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**ABSTRACT**

Increasingly, school-based partnerships have been tied to education reform and the entrance of new private capital into the PK-12 sector. As a result, what may have been an at-will school-business partnership in the 1980s may today resemble an embedded multi-partner arrangement around professional development, teacher evaluation, or turnaround support. From curriculum to practice, and from human resources to operations, unto a simple YMCA after school partnership is being added a new wave of collaborations focused on school improvement, integration, and scalability. The purpose of this investigation is to consider the historical context of public-private PK-12 partnerships and elucidate how recent policies emphasizing—sometimes mandating—collaboration between schools and outside agencies can lead to benefits and challenges for PK-12 leaders at the site level. A major challenge to school leaders is that they are relatively unfamiliar with managing partnerships in general, which leaves them even more unprepared to deal with new arrangements that are complex and reform-driven (Bennett & Thompson, 2011).

This investigation introduces a new conceptual framework for understanding the environment in which school partnerships exist today. By coupling sources from a multitude of cross-disciplinary fields, such as urban studies, business, nonprofit management, and organizational theory, an effort is made to explain the emergence of this new system from both a historical and theoretical perspective. Further we introduce a proposed PK-12 Blended Capital Typology and methodology for analyzing how decision-making and accountability is shared between partners in these arrangements. Through a single sample case, our goal is to identify themes that will support additional research using this framework.

*Keywords: PK-12 partnerships, blended capital partnerships, PK-12 public-private partnerships*

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## List of Abbreviations

**Area-Based Initiatives (ABIs)** – A generic term for any publicly funded initiative targeting an area of social or economic disadvantage, which aims to improve the quality of life and/or the future life chances of residents and their children.

**Investing in Innovation (i3) Grants** - An innovative grant fund established as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It provides support to local education agencies (LEAs), and nonprofit organizations in partnership with schools or a consortium of schools (US Department of Education.).

**Lead Turnaround Partners (LTPs)** - Non-profit organizations or private consultants on contract with the district central office or state to turn around schools. Lead Partners usually sign contracts for a 3–5 year period with their responsibility ranging from a cluster of schools to a single site. The partner usually has an “intense embedded relationship” with each school during the turnaround period (Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, 2010).

**Local Education Agencies (LEAs)** – A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

**My Brother’s Keeper (MBK)** – President Obama’s new blended capital initiative, backed by \$200 million from private foundations, to help troubled African American youth.

**Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (PEC)**- A set of domains highlighting indicators of effective partnerships between outside agencies and PK–12 leaders. This is used in the theoretical framework of this research, with indicators being used as the basis for interview questions. (Wallace Foundation 2014).

**Social Impact Bond (SIB)** - Also known as a *Pay for Success Bond* or a *Social Benefit Bond*, is a contract with the public sector in which a commitment is made to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings (Wikipedia, 2014). Funds are raised from investors to provide social service providers with the working capital to deliver their services (Social Finance, 2014).

## Glossary

**Area-Based Initiatives (ABIs)** – A generic term for any publicly funded initiative targeting an area of social or economic disadvantage, which aims to improve the quality of life and/or the future life chances of residents and their children.

**Blended Capital** – A form of investment whereby public, private and philanthropic dollars may be pooled to support a particular common cause. Origins of the term are in the field of international economic development. The term itself is often used in the nonprofit sector.

**Coproduction** – posits that coproduction is a process through which inputs from individuals who are not “in” the same organization are transformed into goods and services (Ostrom, 1996).

**External Providers** – Private organizations—for-profit and non-profit—contracted to provide a variety of goods and services aimed at school improvement.

**Impact Investing** – Investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return. Origins of the term are in global microfinance initiatives but increasingly being used in the U.S. nonprofit sector.

**Investing in Innovation (i3) Grants** - An innovative grant fund established as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It provides support to local education agencies (LEAs), and nonprofit organizations in partnership with schools or a consortium of schools (US Department of Education.).

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**Private Sector Match** - Potential grantees under the i3 program are responsible for obtaining private-sector matching funds or in-kind donations. Only contributions from non-governmental (private) sources count towards the matching requirement.

**Social Impact Bond (SIB)** - Also known as a *Pay for Success Bond* or a *Social Benefit Bond*, is a contract with the public sector in which a commitment is made to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings (Wikipedia, 2014). Funds are raised from investors to provide social service providers with the working capital to deliver their services (Social Finance, 2014).

**Social Innovation** - A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable than present solutions, and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole (Stanford Social Innovation Review).

**Third Sector** - The part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc. (Oxford Dictionary).

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **OVERVIEW**

For nearly 50 years, schools have been working with outside partners to meet the needs of students and families. The typical arrangement is usually a limited, straightforward relationship with relatively defined roles—schools are in charge of teaching and learning and the partner provides complementary services, like after school care or mentoring. And historically, there have been just a handful of partners that work directly in schools. Prominent examples include the YMCA or the Boys and Girls Club, which provide after school care for families and mentoring for inner city youth, respectively.

Fast-forward to 2017 and we have a vastly different environment where partners offer products and services tied directly to curriculum, practice, and operations. Gone are the days where a school fulfills its duties and neatly passes off responsibilities to the partner at 3:00. Today, that same YMCA is not just offering an after school program; they are more deeply embedded in the wellness curriculum, parent and community outreach, or even school design. And like thousands of new organizations working in schools, that same YMCA now brings a growing amount of resources—or capital—to the table. As a result, the same outside agency may have more say in curriculum, teacher selection, student discipline, or operations. This is not the traditional collaboration of yesteryear; this is just one example among thousands in a dramatically altered PK–12 partnership landscape.



The example above is neither fictional nor unique. Indeed, just prior to the publication of this study the YMCA announced an unprecedented plan to co-create and -manage a middle school in conjunction with a local school district. And they are not alone. Today, there are more than 185,000 organizations doing business directly in the K–12 sector, almost of which did not exist just two decades ago. More broadly, this is the result of a dramatic expansion in philanthropic giving over the last two decades, which, in turn, has given rise to a nonprofit (third) sector that accounts for more jobs than construction, finance and insurance combined (*Urban Institute, 2013*). Due in part to neoliberal tax policies that emerged in the 1980s, which incentivized giving rather than paying taxes, billions of dollars in new private capital has found its place in the education sector.

As a result of these policies, there are now 65,000 Foundations contributing nearly \$41 billion to education causes—in addition to venture capital worth \$1.4 billion, a thousand-fold increase in the last decade. More recently, governments at the state and national level have eagerly introduced mechanisms to take advantage of the vast sums of private dollars. Policies like the Investing in Innovation Grants (i3) and My Brother’s Keeper have institutionalized these partnerships by combining the government’s resources with those of other impact investors through a concept known as “blended capital”, a form of investment whereby public, private and philanthropic dollars are pooled for a particular common cause (Starr, 2013). They are envisioned as transformative partnerships between districts, nonprofit groups, higher education, or business (Adams, 2013).

The emergence of this blended capital phenomenon as a driving force in education marks a significant game change in three distinct ways: First, blended capital, by definition, ensures that all stakeholders have some direct investment in the collaboration. Whether it is through monetary or physical capital, each partner has “skin in the game.” Second, recent mandates that tie funding—be it from government, private industry or philanthropy—to partnerships imply a relationship that is less voluntary and more embedded than in the past. Put simply, a site or district leader is no longer able to ignore the external partners who do not comply with his or her desired practices. The resources associated with blended capital demand that school leaders collaborate with relevant stakeholders to drive improvement in PK–12 settings. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, these partnerships are inextricably linked to reform efforts to drive school improvement and meet the needs of our most disadvantaged students using innovation and “rigorous experimentation” (Cavanagh, 2011).

### **Rationale for Study**

There is considerable research on collaborations involving family and parent involvement, youth development, mentoring, turnaround schools, and health services just to name a few. In comparison, there is limited research to date on how recent funding and policy changes, specifically the emergence of blended capital, is affecting the interaction between service providers and school leaders. Specifically, research suggests that stalwarts like the Boy’s and Girl’s Club or the YMCA, which

provided complementary services in previous decades, are today being joined by a new breed of agencies focused on social impact and innovation. It is this intersection between emergent reform-minded players and schools where the challenges of partnerships comes to the fore. And it is here where PK-12 leaders are challenged to attend to multiple, conflicting elements of feedback (Riley, 2004) like never before.

### **Research Problem**

Lingering concerns that have plagued partnerships for decades include unclear roles for external providers, conflicting goals between school leaders and partners, and divergent motives for partnering in the first place. New concerns include how to integrate external providers that are more deeply embedded in practice; how to work with organizations that are seeking to replicate programs across different communities; and how to respond to impact investors that demand more stringent, measurable outcomes. Research suggests that school leaders are relatively unfamiliar with the intricacies of managing school partnerships in general, leaving them even more unprepared to deal with the dynamics between intermediary organizations in pursuit of radical change (Bennett & Thompson, 2011). The focus of this investigation was to understand how school leaders can effectively respond to the emerging demands created by the power of blended capital.

## Research Question(s)

The primary question of this investigation is *how do school leaders and outside partners effectively share decision-making and accountability in a new era of blended capital partnerships?* Unlike previous research on this issue (which often focused on business partnerships), this investigation sought to introduce a new conceptual model that explains the convergence of values and systems from other sectors now working directly in schools. By honing in on a specific type of blended capital partnership this investigation sought to uncover how these distinct worlds are working together in a school setting; how school leaders and partners share in decision-making; and what, if any, stresses arise as a result of these arrangements.

The primary question this investigation sought to address is:

How do PK–12 leaders and partners in blended capital arrangements effectively share decision-making and accountability?

Related and important questions are:

What external pressures affect these relationships and are they a source of conflict?

Are external partners driven by motives and/or systems of accountability other than school improvement?

PK–12 leaders exhibit distrust of partners brought by blended capital arrangements? If so, why and how is this manifested?

How do the sources of funding (i.e. public vs. private vs. philanthropy) facilitate or inhibit the effectiveness of the partnership?

## **Plan of Inquiry**

To capture the impact of blended capital on school leaders, this investigation developed an intensive case study of a partnership in which an urban school leader was working effectively with an outside agency in a blended capital arrangement. Using a theoretical framework that builds on the concept of blended capital as it is applied within the PK-12 context, this investigation uncovered critical, emergent themes around power and decision-making in these burgeoning relationships. By examining these interactions in the micro context of a school and the initiative for which they have partnered, important clues emerged about the macro concerns of outside agencies working in schools, specifically how power and accountability is shared or transferred between partners.

## **Personal Interest**

My interest in this topic stems from my own experience as a school administrator in a high-needs turnaround school from 2008 to 2013. As our school entered its second year in turnaround status, we partnered with a community foundation that provided funds for prize gifts aimed at motivating students. Through a set of incentive programs our goal was to increase attendance and academic achievement school-wide. Although this was not a complex blended capital partnership (since the foundation was the only investor) the experience embodied many of the challenges created by blended capital arrangements. As in other cases, the partnership rapidly devolved into a political storm pitting district

and foundation leaders in a battle over policy decisions. Initial altruistic efforts turned into expectations from the partner that they would have a voice on matters beyond the focus of the particular project, such as curriculum and school funding. A symbolic moment in the relationship was when the foundation leaders requested to be seated alongside school district leadership at the school graduation, a request that was denied. This event led to dissolution of the partnership and the creation of a contentious relationship that continues to this day (Balsler, 2014).

My experience with blended capital partnerships, specifically the emergence of third sector players in education, also comes from my research in nonprofit fundraising and public relations. The former was particularly influential; since it was here that I was introduced to the concept of *social innovation* (SI) and *impact investing*. The *Stanford Center for Social Innovation* defines SI as a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable than present solutions, and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole (Phills, Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008). Although unbeknownst to me at the time (and many educators today), the concepts of blended capital and social innovation speak directly to the work being done in the PK-12 sector, especially in regards to partnerships. The business and nonprofit sectors are referring to social innovation and impact investing; educators are talking about reform and funding. They are both saying the same thing, just using different terms. This investigation is an initial attempt to bring these worlds together.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Blended capital partnerships as a new paradigm**

Blended capital is a product of a broader transformation occurring in third sector funding, social innovation and impact investing. While these concepts have evolved over last two decades in community- and health-related fields, today they are at the heart of education partnerships and reform and, arguably, the next frontier of social innovation in education. By its definition blended capital implies that each partner, the school and the outside agency, enters into the partnership with its own resources, values, and expectations. Viewed through the lens of blended capital, then, one could say that PK–12 partnerships represent a convergence of industries and sectors. Likewise it represents a new power and decision-making structure whereby organizations once operating in relatively separate spheres must now work together within the halls of a school.

A core contention of this investigation is that educational leaders and outside agencies working in schools represent distinct cultures and, as is often the case, varying, and sometimes competing, entities to whom they are responsible. For example, it is fair to assume that both school leaders and partners are driven by localized objectives such as school improvement and meeting the needs of students. However, the former may be influenced by expectations of elected school boards, who in turn echo the desires of state officials; in comparison, outside partners may be driven by a funder’s expectations to bring programs to scale, or perhaps by meeting other measures of efficacy that are part of their respective industry, such as

reduction of labor costs. In essence, while both groups may share the goal of improving student or school outcomes, there may exist other motivations driving their decision-making processes and, ultimately, the way each partner measures success, which may not be shared.

### **An empirical example: Traditional versus PK–12 blended capital paradigm**

The proliferation of blended capital partnerships in education has transformed how power is shared and distributed among key decision-makers in the PK–12 sector. While some refer to this as the diminishment of authority from traditional schools and districts, others see it as the realization of a truly democratic education system—a model of collaboration where outside organizations, educators and communities join forces to address the many challenges facing America’s schools. While this is occurring in a variety of ways across the country, a single case is presented here as an example.

### ***Typical Urban Setting and Challenges***

Pinellas County Schools (PCS) is the 25<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the nation serving over 105,000 students from the St. Petersburg and Clearwater area. It is one of the largest school districts in the country, serving twice as many students as does the Boston Public Schools and more than the Detroit and Atlanta Public schools combined. Like many of its urban counterparts, PCS is faced with daunting challenges in most of its schools, including meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and closing a persistent achievement gap between



demographic groups. PCS consistently ranks at the bottom of the table in state district rankings; they have more F and D schools than neighboring peers; and they are facing legal challenges from parent and civil rights groups. Pinellas County Schools ranked 49<sup>th</sup> out of 67 in a recent school district ranking published by the Florida Department of Education. This places them as the lowest performing urban school district in the state. The only districts that ranked lower than PCS were poorer rural districts (Florida DOE, 2014).

While the challenges for the district are vast, at the school level the areas of emphasis are quite specific: Across the district black males are performing on average significantly poorer than whites, a phenomenon so severe that the district are defendants in a decade-long lawsuit filed by the NAACP on behalf of parents (Bradley v. Pinellas County School Board). A recent report noted that, since 2010, 252,681 hours of school have been missed by black students for being suspended; 54 percent of black students received an in-school suspension compared to 20 percent of white students; 53 percent of students given out-of-school suspensions are black; and 23 percent of black students without disabilities were suspended multiple times, nearly four times the rate of white students. Likewise, black students perform worse on standardized tests, particularly in reading and math, and have significantly lower graduation rates across the district. Further, African-American students are underrepresented in gifted classes; 48 percent of students identified as emotionally and behaviorally disabled are black, twice as many black students drop out of school than white, 32 percent of students held back a grade are

black; and only eight percent of teachers are African American, nearly half the state average (Luckey, 2015). The Law Center noted “unnecessary school-based arrests, suspensions and expulsions... are part of the school-to-prison pipeline that cuts short a child’s education and increases the likelihood of incarceration” (ibid, pg. 2).

### ***The Traditional Versus Blended Capital Paradigm***

“We have to come to the table together. No longer can the school board plan for us. No longer can the community be ignored in terms of having a voice and having ideas about what works and what we’d like to see happen.” — James Myles, community leader in the Pinellas County Schools case.

To address these immense challenges one can assume that a bevy of services are needed in the schools. This includes programs to expand mentoring and tutoring, improved literacy instruction, and more robust mental health services. In addition, teachers serving these students may need improved cultural awareness training and other competencies to better serve at-risk students. Perhaps whole schools need to revamp their curriculum or teaching staff. Unfortunately, while alarming, this is the condition in many urban centers across the country. While the circumstances are nothing new, how the schools choose to confront these challenges may very well be new.

### ***Traditional Paradigm***

Historically, the responsibility for meeting the needs described above rested primarily on the shoulders of the school. If students needed to read better, the school hired more reading teachers or elevated master teachers to literacy coaches. If they needed more mental health services they hired more counselors or school psychologists. If teachers needed professional development, this too fell to the

district or, in turn, the school leaders. In the most drastic cases a school may have been placed in turnaround status and the district “rehired” all of the faculty and staff. In many cases, even mentoring services were delegated to teachers. In short, in the traditional paradigm almost all of the services associated with the challenges described above were conceived and rendered directly through the schools and/or the school district. In this respect, it is a tried tradition of urban schools that programs come and they go; homegrown initiatives designed to meet the ever-increasing demands of the American student are as predictable as they are vast.

#### *PK-12 Blended Capital Paradigm*

Today, in a blended capital paradigm, there may be significant differences in how these programs are conceived, funded, and delivered at the site level. Put simply, in most urban public schools there is a good chance that many of the services described above will not be delivered by the school, but rather through an intricate network of partners. More specifically, in Pinellas County Schools there exists a growing list of organizations fulfilling the duties once delegated internally to schools. In many of its turnaround schools, for example, teachers are trained, mentored and evaluated by a third-party agency, The New Teacher Project (TNTP). In addition, over a half a million dollars of grants have recently been awarded to community-based organizations working on the plight of young black males and at-risk youth. Examples of this include a recent initiative titled SpringZone which seeks to bring together six mentoring organizations for reaching black males, a successor to another initiative, Not My Son, which had similar objectives. Both of

these programs will utilize a blend of public and private funds, including a quarter million dollars from My Brother's Keeper. Lastly, in perhaps the greatest example of a transformative, embedded, blended capital arrangement, the YMCA recently announced that they will build and co-manage a new middle school alongside this district.

### **Arena Models and Elite Theory**

*The [Newark] school reform movement's focus on measurable results and "business-style management" is laudable. But it is downright chilling to watch the leadership team throw around buzz phrases from business best-sellers with minimal focus on the nuanced requirements of applying these principles to the education ecosystem generally or to the Newark public schools particularly –New York Times on Mark Zuckerberg's gift to Newark Public Schools (Knee, 2015).*

At the center of this investigation is a belief that deliverables are only part of the equation; equally important is the process for producing those deliverables, that is how decision-making and accountability is shared between partners. Therefore, to get to the heart of the matter, the literature review and methodology in this study goes to lengths to consider the broader context of how power, money, and authority plays out in these arrangements. To facilitate this connection, Mazzoni's Arena Models and Elite Theory, coupled with an Extended Case Method approach inspired by ethnographers Michael Buroway and Max Gluckman, are presented as a means to tease in the theoretical implications of dominant cultures entering previously isolated ecosystems. As discussed in chapter three, comparing the PK-12 field to isolated groups is not meant to be a derogatory analogy, but rather a useful metaphor for examining cultures in transition, and for better understanding how these groups interact as they enter each other's domain. This is important because

the literature has not examined the power relations and the influence of the environments within which partnerships are implemented (Miraftab, 2004).

Private sector firms approach local governments and their impoverished communities with the message of power sharing, but once the process is in motion the interests of the community are often overwhelmed by those of the most powerful member of the partnership—the private sector firms (Miraftab, 2004, pg. 89).

Specifically, some critics contend that partnerships have less to do with altruism and more to do with access and power. Mazzoni's Arena Models (Fowler, 1994) and Elite Theory (Anfara & Mertz, 2006) assert that policy decisions, particularly in education, are being made outside of the public sphere. Decisions that appear to be made in the *macro arena* through voting or public pressure, for example, are actually being made by leadership elites through subcommittees, interest groups, or more recently, foundations and giving. There is a growing chorus of critics expressing unease at the role of philanthropists as de-facto policymakers.

“The rich make a choice: Would I rather donate or pay taxes? The donors are taking the place of the state. That's unacceptable... it would have been a greater deed on the part of Mr. Gates or Mr. Buffet if they had given the money to small communities in the US so that they can fulfill public duties” (Frank, 2010).

Even third sector partnerships, once viewed as neutral, are beginning to be viewed with distrust. Some argue that nonprofit arms are merely extending the reach of existing privately funded organizations. Educators have voiced their dismay as thousands of groups with virtually no track record are gaining public

funding for major reform efforts. These concerns are being exacerbated by impact investors whose aims may be to reach scalability by introducing programs in new communities. While holding out for the best, one must contemplate the implications for those school leaders that have to manage something that worked in one school but may not in theirs.

Empirical examples of Elite Theory and Arena Models in the PK-12 space are becoming increasingly common. Take for instance a \$100 million dollar grant in 2009 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to revamp the teacher evaluation process in Tampa Bay, Florida. In this case, traditional processes for instituting—certainly evaluating—such a reform would have traveled through the state legislature. Instead, through negotiations predicated primarily on the massive sums of money being exchanged, the local district and the teacher’s union received exemption from a state law that affected every other district. Yet, by most accounts the initiative was deemed a failure, leaving teachers demoralized, displaced, and the district in financial distress (Sokol, 2015). Making matters worse, the foundation pulled out of its final year of the partnership (citing a change of mind on teacher evaluation as an approach), leaving the school scrambling to fill the funding gap with public Title I dollars. This highlights the dangers of public entities becoming overly dependent on private dollars for the sake of expediency—a “hollowing out” of sorts discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

Other examples include the \$100 million matching grant from the Zuckerberg Foundation to Newark public schools to institute major education reforms. As was

the case in Tampa, altruistic intentions were undermined by a lack of coordination and agreement at the grass roots level, particularly among teachers and school leaders (Knee, 2015). Lastly, in perhaps the greatest example of elite theory in action, the recent appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education was met with widespread outcry from not only educators, but also peers in the philanthropy sector. To many in traditional schools responsible for educating the vast majority of students, the ascension of a wealthy heir to a family fortune, whose only real experience in public schools came through a foundation that paid no taxes, was truly the embodiment of elite theory.

Again, these timely examples are not to say that giving to education causes, even on a grand scale, is inherently negative; they merely bring to light the perils of morphing elite giving with educational policy. For the purpose of this investigation, the introduction of these principles is an important mechanism to remind us that the success of partnerships is inextricably linked to the process by which they are conceived, funded, and managed. As one New York Times reporter recently noted regarding the Zuckerberg gift:

The school reform movement's focus on measurable results and "business-style management" is laudable. But it is downright chilling to watch the leadership team throw around buzz phrases from business best-sellers with minimal focus on the nuanced requirements of applying these principles to the education ecosystem generally or to the Newark public schools particularly. (Knee, 2015).

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The current PK–12 partnership landscape lies squarely at the intersection of education policy, philanthropic and foundation giving, and a burgeoning nonprofit and education technology industry. These represent powerful interests that are influencing policy and practice in the education sector at unprecedented levels—often through partnerships. Further research is needed, then, to understand how school leaders and partners interact and what if any concerns may be manifesting at the site level. At best, without a clear understanding of the dynamics at play we could be undermining the intent of policies aimed at harnessing the power of PK–12 partnerships. At worst, we may be ignoring the development of an entirely new paradigm that is redefining how authority and accountability is shared—or transferred—between school leaders and their partners.

The fact that school leaders and partners are often trained in different ecosystems, using different terms, and operate under different systems of accountability is what makes the focus of this investigation so important. Far from being merely an issue of semantics, this investigation sought to explore the notion that disconnects between PK–12 leaders and outside organizations are core to the consternation that surround education reform efforts, and it speaks directly to the misalignments that can occur between schools and partner organizations as they embark on initiatives together. In short, by taking a broader perspective of the macro-political environment in which these partnerships exist, this investigation explored the degree to which the development of a shared language and shared



goals that were carefully articulated were important elements in an effective blended capital partnership.

### **Building a New Analytical Framework**

This investigation makes the case that the historical developments of PK-12 partnerships, coupled with new policies around blended capital arrangements and educational reform, have exacerbated long-standing concerns and created new pressures that may be affecting how partners interact and, perhaps, how power is distributed at the site level. In terms of practice, one can assume that school leaders are being confronted with not only persistent issues that have faced PK-12 partnerships for decades, but also emergent pressures brought by working with a new breed of players more deeply invested in the process. Age-old concerns around setting clear role expectations, shared objectives, and measurable outcomes with partners are being met with deeper questions around power, authority, and accountability.

### ***Proposed PK-12 Blended Capital Partnerships Typology***

To better address these complex variables, this investigation proposes a new framework and typology that examines partnerships using the concept known as *blended capital*, a phenomenon that involves multiple stakeholders joining forces to address a concern of mutual importance. The concept of blended capital is used regularly in nonprofit and philanthropic circles (often the drivers of the partnerships under investigation) but rarely in education. Blended capital combines

elements of economics and organizational theory that speak directly to the emergent PK-12 partnership paradigm, and it touches precisely on the fears surrounding education reform in general and collaborations with outside agencies in particular. It is, in its simplest form, a typology for disaggregating the noisy partnership landscape by examining what matters most —what each partner brings to the table. Table 1.0 introduces a proposed typology.

*Table 1.0: A Changing Partnership Landscape: PK-12 Blended Capital Typology*

|                           | <b>Traditional Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)</b>                    | <b>School-Business Partnerships</b>                             | <b>Blended Capital Partnerships</b>  |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Players</b>            | PK-12 schools, community agencies, higher education                     | PK-12 schools, businesses, municipal authorities                | PK-12 schools, community agencies, non-profit companies, for-profit companies, foundations   |
| <b>Examples</b>           | PK-12 School and YMCA partner to offer beyond-the-school-day activities | PK-12 School and IBM partner to offer career pathways program   | PK-12 School and talent agency partner to recruit, train and evaluate teachers               |
| <b>Services</b>           | Supplemental Services; Physical Space                                   | Sponsorships; Physical Space; Technology; Internships, Speakers | Program Development; Practice; Human Resources; Technology; Financial & Operations Expertise |
| <b>Funding Sources</b>    | Local, State, Federal Grants; Indirect philanthropic giving             | Businesses grants; Direct corporate giving                      | Public Funds, Private Industry Funds, Foundations Grants                                     |
| <b>Outcome Objectives</b> | Supports current school and partner objectives                          | Supports current school and partner objectives                  | Creates new services, Embedded integration; Initiatives change; Social Impact                |
| <b>Scale Objectives</b>   | School, district & local community                                      | School & Partner Community                                      | School; Replication regionally or nationally   |
| <b>Accountability</b>     | Established by School or Education Agency                               | Established by School and/or Partner; Rarely Present            | Established by multiple players; Data-focused  |
| <b>Obligation</b>         | At-will collaboration   | At-will Collaboration   | Contracted Partnership   |

## **Applying the Framework**

Having presented a more sophisticated review of the environment in which these partnerships exist, this investigation sought to apply this new analytical framework in a single case study with the hopes of identifying basic themes and guiding principles that provide the field a deeper understanding of how PK-12 leaders and partners navigate these complex relationships. At the very least, PK-12 leaders need greater awareness of the principles associated with the new partnership landscape, and they need new tools to help them manage these roles moving forward. Likewise, partner organizations and individuals working in schools need to understand the nascent takeaways uncovered in this investigation, most notably how partner leaders set goals that are mutually beneficial and how they build systems of trust and accountability.

This investigation did not seek to unearth definitive findings, but rather build a base upon which subsequent research can examine the validity of these guiding principles across different contexts. For example, future investigations can compare the responses between urban, suburban or rural contexts; determine whether the professional background of participants cause differences in perception; isolate the effects that a school's socio-economic status can have on setting measurable objectives.

### ***Extended Case Method: Micro as an Extension of the Macro***

To employ the framework, a single case was identified that met the criteria of the PK-12 Blended Capital Typology in a setting, and it was analyzed utilizing a

modified version of Extended Case Method. It was hoped that this approach would allow for the identification of themes that give real voice to decades of conjecture, opinions, and ungrounded ideas. At the most basic level this new paradigm asks that we consider the question, “how is success measured?” That is, if two partners are working on a common goal, and if each brings resources to the table, then are they both seeking the same outcomes? If so, how do they make decisions to reach those outcomes? Miraftab (2004) contends that the literature on public-private partnerships has not examined the power relations and the influence of the environments within which partnerships are implemented. Further, he argues that research has often ignored the “distributive implications” of authority brought by such partnerships, specifically that power-sharing arrangements fail to address the inherent conflict between profit-driven interests of the private sector and welfare-driven interests of the communities. As discussed in chapter three, a case study inspired by Extended Case Method maximizes all available inputs, beginning with a deeper awareness of the macro political environment of these arrangements.

As to whether this case can be transferred to other settings with an infinite array of variables, Buroway (1995) and others remind us that all research involves some initial takeaways of a single case in a confined space. This is but one particular expression of the general. In this respect the nascent results from this study, coupled with expert advice made over the years, are best captured in chapter five which outlines recommendations for rethinking partnerships and retraining partner leaders, as well as suggestions for transferring the work to the hypothesis-testing

phase of research through quantitative methods.

***Wallace Foundation Continuum for Effective Partnerships***

Measuring the effectiveness of partnerships remains constrained by inadequate information about the impact of specific interventions and a lack of consensus on best practices for managing PK–12 partnerships. O’Reilly (2007) contends our greatest challenge is teasing out the effects of programs that bind schools, families and community-based organizations. In terms of working with support agencies, strategic linkages are lacking between schools and organizations (Anderson-Butcher et al, 2006).

Therefore, to ground this analytical framework in accepted domains of successful school partnerships this research utilized the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (PEC) recently developed by the Wallace Foundation. Published in 2014, this continuum identifies key domains present in the literature and areas of concern at the center of my field research. Specifically related to methodology, this continuum was used to ground questions on specific indicators of effective partnerships. That is, if we agree that effective communication is a vital component of any partnership, then what specific mechanisms do school principals and outside partners deploy to communicate effectively? Transforming the theoretical indicators in the Wallace PEC into questions for the participants would hopefully provide us with valuable insights into the empirical dynamics at the site level.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### EVOLUTION OF PK-12 PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

#### *Brief History of PK-12 Partnerships*

The relationship between schools and community is an American ideal that has been well articulated by the likes of the Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson, and philosopher, John Dewey. However, explicit partnerships with schools and community groups did not emerge until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through the early 1900s much of public education was taken over by municipal, state, and federal agencies as a result of the Progressive Era reforms (Warren, 2005) and the emergence of “informed intelligence” whereby many communities deferred to the opinions of experts and professionals working in the field (Glenn, 2014). The first organized school-community partnership occurred in New York City in 1956. The School Volunteer Program, as it would become known, viewed school “as everybody’s business” and involved community members in a variety of tasks, such as weighing children, testing their vision, and preparing instructional materials. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s contributions consisted primarily of mothers and citizens helping with a variety of school functions, such as decorating classrooms and supervising students (Gray, 1984).

#### *1980s-1990s: Growth of PK-12 Partnerships through Business*

As with other segments in the field, the publishing of a *Nation at Risk* (1983) and its message of “rising tide of mediocrity” in education played an important role

in fostering awareness for the need to introduce new skills, services and capital in schools (Cox-Peterson, 2010). Partnership with community groups was offered as an answer to this dilemma. Seely (1984) presented a direct challenge to the informed intelligence orthodoxy that services provided by educators equaled learning. The whole responsibility for education, he noted, was not delegated solely to the government; it was a shared duty between home, school, and community. He argued that reform movements often come and go because there are no fundamental changes to the way business is done. In education this would begin by redefining where, how and from whom PK-12 services are provided. Danzberger and Usdan (1984) referred to it as a “practical necessity” to support the partnership model, stating that:

The question before us all ... is whether we believe that the economic and social stakes are high enough...to move us to pool our resources. If we do not recognize our potential for mutual gain, in a few years partnerships will have become just one more interesting educational reform movement to be studied by the chroniclers of the social history of the 20th century. (p. 393)

The 1980s would see a significant increase in school-business partnerships. By 1983, 4.3 million volunteers, including 18% of businesses and 40% of schools were involved in some type of PK-12 partnership (Marenda, 1989). The latter was an increase from just 17% a decade earlier. A 1988 Conference Board survey of 130 corporations listed 65% had some involvement in primary and secondary schools—up from 42% just two years earlier (MacDowell, 1989).

By the 1990s there were over 140,000 school-business alliances, offering

everything from work-study opportunities to small classroom grants (Trachtman, 1994). In its "lowest form," adopt-a-school models were initiated by which single businesses partnered with local classrooms (Bennett & Thompson, 2011). Starting with project-driven collaborations and service learning projects, by the 1990s these affiliations had advanced to take on a variety of service delivery models envisioned by Seely, including technology implementation, mentoring, and tutoring programs (Hiatt-Michael, 2003).

### ***2000s–2010s: Growth of Partnerships through Nonprofits and PK–12 Reform***

To understand the transformation of external organizations into embedded agents of PK–12 innovation one must first examine the reasons for growth in the nonprofit sector over the last several decades. Twenty years ago one would be "hard pressed" to find a community-based organization actively working on education issues (Warren, 2005). Today, over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations dot the landscape, contributing nearly a trillion dollars to the economy and accounting for 10% of the nation's employment. Over the last decade nonprofits in the United States have grown at a faster rate than private business and government. Combined, these groups represent more jobs than construction, finance and insurance (*Urban Institute, 2013*). By 2009, nearly 33,000 human services organizations collected over \$100 billion in federal, state and local government contracts (Borris, Elizabeth T., Erwin De Leon, Katie L. Roeger, and Milena Nikolova, 2010). In 2014 over 185,000 nonprofit organizations collected billions of dollars by



doing business in the PK-12 sector (NCCS, 2014).

Some contend that the emergence of the third sector is a direct result of broken government ideology and Ronald Reagan's trickle down policies enacted in the 1980s. According to some, neoliberal policies sought a reduced role for government on the grounds that it was inefficient, and that local or private markets were better suited to provide services (Miraftab, 2004). Another corollary is that the size of the nonprofit sector is inversely related to the willingness of government to provide certain programs that are now being offered by third parties. As a result of this "hollowing out" (Lecy and Van Slyke, 2012), many government-operated industries were gradually replaced by smaller state and local entities—with business and nonprofit groups becoming the preferred vehicle to fill the voids.

"Government plays an important role in this context by encouraging and discouraging the growth and density of nonprofit organizations through legislation and the use of policy tools. The more hollowed out that government becomes in providing services the greater the likelihood that it will reallocate scarce financial resources to nonprofit organizations using a variety of policy instruments and revenue forms." (p. 192)

It is no coincidence that with the shrinking role of government-operated programs, non-government and community-based organizations (NGOs and CBOs, respectively) have found increased meaning in public sector activities like education (Miraftab, 2004). To put it more broadly, the age of public *versus* private dollars crowding each other out is over; we must learn to bind these resource streams to build *sector capacity* (Lecy & Van Slyke, 2013). Where government once offered little more than a common denominator of generic programs with the broadest

appeal, their recent grant-giving for partner mandates has dramatically transformed the proposition of fulfilling social and education services.

It is no longer asserted that the government lacks capacity in social sectors merely because of a median voter phenomenon. Rather, citizens demand market-based solutions to complex social problems that entail decentralized governance and networked arrangements with third-party providers (p. 195).

The rise of both individual and foundation giving has also played a major role in nonprofit growth. As of 2013, charitable giving to education causes was over \$41 billion, a rise of 8.9% over the previous year—the largest increase among all categories (Charitable Giving Statistics, 2013). Some have compared the role of foundations to the R&D arm of the nonprofit industry, as they have been more willing to fund organizations and initiatives in the early stages of development. There are also the indirect effects of previous investments, where in a sense, the growth of one organization has had a direct effect on the growth of another. In the case of KIPP Schools, for example, the fact that many of the founding principals were Teach for America alumni contributed to more investment from private donors who had long supported the latter.

“When the Fishers learned that two-thirds of KIPP principals were alumni of Teach for America, the couple began to contribute large gifts to help that organization grow as well. Today the funding models for KIPP and Teach for America are no longer anchored in philanthropy, but the investments of foundations and individual philanthropists...” (Kim and Bradach, 2012)

Taken together, these two examples exemplify blended capital, or what is sometimes referred to as blended value investing (BVI), in its most fundamental

form. It is an idea rooted in global economic development whereby corporations develop new products and services, establish new markets, and test new business models that will affect society as a whole. Institutional philanthropies are attracted to this because of the potential to leverage capital, expertise and infrastructure from the private sector, and because it allows them to potentially create self-sustaining social enterprises (Global Foundation Leaders Advisory Group, 2014).

***A Foundation Laid: PK-12 Partnerships through Blended Capital***

*"In a perfect world, I'd love to have another \$100 million, but that's not the world we're in" Arne Duncan, 2014 (Camera, 2014)*

In terms of federal funding, the best-known programs of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTT) did not explicitly focus on partnerships; yet, they nevertheless played a major role in catapulting external organizations to the center of the funding universe. The former alone infused \$732 billion into the education market, with \$620 million designated just for supplementary services (Gelberg, 2007). More recently, i3 Grants introduced over a billion dollars directly into blended capital collaborations. Unlike its predecessors, Investing in Innovation (i3) grants state explicitly that grantees must “have partnerships with the private sector that will provide matching funds” (*Investing in Innovation Fund*). Originally founded in 2008 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the i3 program allocated nearly \$650 million in 2010 and \$135 million this year (*Investing in Innovation Fund, 2014*). These are competitive grants awarded to local

educational agencies (LEAs), private companies, and nonprofit organizations in partnership with one another. (A sample i3 grant including private sector matching criteria is provided in the Appendices 1.1–1.3).

Depending on the maturity of the program and type of grant, the level of “private sector match” can range from 15% to as low as 5%. All grants must focus on closing the achievement gap with estimated award ranges as follows:

- Scale-up grants: Up to \$20,000,000 – Proven programs set for replication or expansion into new communities.
- Validation grants: Up to \$12,000,000 – Proven programs designated for growth.
- Development grants: Up to \$3,000,000 – Proposed programs with a promising innovative approach to solving achievement gap concerns.

In a recent interview, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan admitted that the federal government is no longer able to sustain the level of funding it once provided (Camera, 2014) noting "this is going to be a public-private partnership where we want to invest but will only invest where the local community is stepping in. Our goal is to be a supportive partner and provide assistance as you need it" (p. 22). Nonetheless, he has made it clear that a foundation has been laid, which he expects will shape how public schools provide services moving forward—with or without federal support.

## **GROWING IMPETUS FOR PK-12 PARTNERSHIPS**

*“I’m reaching out to some of America’s leading foundations and corporations on a new initiative to help more young men of color facing especially tough odds to stay on track and reach their full potential.” – President Barack Obama, January 28, 2014*

Today it is widely accepted that no single organization can meet the needs of the community, nor can a single organization transform a school to meet those needs (Berliner, 1997). Among other reasons, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and NCLB have placed schools under unprecedented pressure to nullify the effects of years beyond the schools' control (Cox-Peterson, 2010; Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). From a societal perspective, some citizens, most notably education reformers, believe that an infusion of private resources into public education is socially and personally beneficial (Deiglmeier, 2010). From an organizational perspective, many believe that schools lack the capacity to solve problems and improve their own performance (Smith & Wohlstetter, 2006). According to this school of thought more than ever, educators must enter into alliances, networks, coalitions, consortia, virtual relationships, councils, federations, compact agencies or other arrangements. Conversely, others contend that collaborations between private and even nonprofit sectors “do not engender the kind of trust and open exchange required for collaborative relationships to flourish” (Gray, 1989, p. 188). School-business partnerships, in particular, are historically beset by power struggles.

## **Types of Partnerships**

Despite the history of partnerships in many fields, there is no one accepted typology for understanding PK–12 partnerships. For example, Smith & Wohlstetter (2006) highlighted various approaches based on depth, level of interaction, and interpersonal integration. Likewise, Fullan (2005) proposed *first order* or *second order* types. Whereas first-order change extends to current operations and values within the organization, second-order change entails a break with the past. Cox-Peterson (2010) proposes an approach where arrangements are either “explicit, implicit, of null,” with each representing a varied level of detail pertaining to roles and expectations. Given that blended capital partnerships are generally change-oriented, one can assume that most would be categorized as second-order and explicit in nature.

## Illustration 2.0: Types of PK–12 Partnerships<sup>2</sup>

- **Wraparound services** integrate or locate health and human services at school sites and use school facilities and resources for the benefit of the entire community. These kinds of connections are generally called “full service” or “community” schools (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000; Dryfoos, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Lawson, 1999; Shaul, 2000).
- **School-to-work** initiatives that link career training and real-life experiences with academic content (Hughes et al., 2001; Reynolds, Walberg & Weissberg, 1999).
- **After-school** programs that provide remedial or enrichment learning activities for students while maximizing the use of school resources and fulfilling parents’ need for childcare (Miller, 2001).
- **Turnaround / Community-based School reform** efforts that simultaneously seek to improve local schools, build the social networks that exist in the community, build the capacity of local community members to take action and solve problems at the local level, and create “new standards and expectations for life in the community” (Rockefeller Foundation, 1997, as cited in Jehl, Blank, & McCloud, 2001, p. 4).
- **School-business partnerships** in which businesses provide schools with resources, business expertise, and volunteers (Otterbourg, 1998; Sanders, 2000; Shirley, 1997).
- **Connections with community organizations**, such as local health and human services providers and community-based youth development organizations, to provide services or enrichment opportunities for students at or near the schools (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999b; McMahon, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, & Griffith, 2000).
- **School-university partnerships** where universities, usually colleges of education, provide expertise, resources, and professional development to schools while schools participate in research studies or other professional collaboration projects (Restine, 1996; Zetlin & MacLeod, 1995).
- **Direct support** from individual community members (church members, neighbors, and other adults) to students, to provide learning opportunities, expectations for educational achievement, and support for overall student well-being (Cordiero & Kolek, 1996; Honig, Kahne, & McLaughlin, 2001; Yancey & Saporito, 1997).
- **Connections with educational organizations**, such as museums, libraries, and cultural groups, to provide out-of-school opportunities for informal teaching and learning (Faucette, 2000).
- **Community service or service learning** programs that link academic content with activities that allow students to contribute to the well-being of the community (Schine, 1996; Wang, Oates, & Weishew, 1995).
- **Tutoring and academic support** in specific school subjects by community-based



<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, (2001). Community Connections. *In School, Family, & Community Connections*. National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

## **Partnerships as a Democratic Imperative**

The admission that schools can't go it alone has opened opportunities for outside organizations to fulfill the wide range of learning and developmental needs that communities demand (Bathgate & Silva, 2010). And while schools could provide these opportunities on their own, the advantages of providing them through partnerships are many. One such benefit is a reduction in what some researchers call the "walled in" or walled out" dynamic (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Iachini, Gerald Bean, Flaspohler, and Zullig, 2010). For decades schools have worked in relative isolation, leaving valuable resources, expertise and diversity on the other side of the wall. This not only fails to capture the valuable assets that exist in every community, but it can also lead to misalignments in policy and funding decisions, as the various sectors are unaware of each others' needs. In this sense, whether or not a school can provide those services—be it basic supports or enrichment—is not the primary concern; ensuring community involvement and mutual understanding is.

The democratic implications of including students and families in school decision-making are empirically significant. A study by Scales (2005) concluded that increased levels of parent involvement in school functions led to expanded social capital and other external assets in their children, such as "achievement motivation, responsibility, planning and decision-making, personal power, and positive view of one's personal future" (p. 175). Mosley and Grogan (2013) learned that expanding participatory functions through community-based organizations increases public involvement in decision-making and ultimate buy-in from different



stakeholder groups. The researchers determined that local residents were more likely to trust community-based organizations above businesses, government and even schools. In virtually every category, leaders of nonprofit organizations—even above religious institutions—were believed to best represent “the views of the residents they serve” (p. 839). In a similar vein, Keith (1996) pointed to the importance of developing horizontal ties that create social networks and economic opportunities beyond the school—and beyond our own immediate circles of influence.

In terms of community engagement, the integration of external influences has become commonplace in sustainable-development urban strategies (Oliviera & Breda-Vasquez, 2012, p. 523). This is more advantageous in regions that have historically been deprived of social services and innovation. Especially in these communities, *clustering* resources are “considered socially innovative if they introduce changes in the social landscape characterized by injustice, or if they contribute to the empowerment of local actors, particularly the underprivileged in public decisions” (Mouleaert, Martinelli, Swyngedouw and Gonzalez 2005; Oliviera & Breda Vasquez, 2012 p. 24). Trujillo, Hernandez, Jarrell and Kissell (2014) suggest that programs like these are essential to overcoming implicit biases that produce inequitable outcomes along racial lines. Using a framework of Structural Racialization and Urban Regime Theory proposed by Stone (1987) and Powell (2008), the authors remind us that “persistent practices, cultural norms, and institutional arrangements create and maintain racialized outcomes in society”

(Powell, 2008, p. 785). “These theorists blur would-be distinctions between political, economic, nonprofit, and social spheres, expanding the notion of politics and government to one of governance, whereby political mobilization includes a broader alliance of governmental and nongovernmental actors (Trujillo et al., 2014, p. 903).

To see a modern example of this one need only consider the highly lauded Harlem Children’s Zone in New York City. By looking beyond the accepted constructs of “school problems,” Geoffrey Canada was able to morph the conversation from one of improving schools to one of eradicating poverty through comprehensive community engagement. Cornelius and Wallace (2011) agree with this approach noting that regeneration projects operating in areas of urban deprivation require deep engagement in the underlying social cause, often through third sector organizations.

By 2010 the HCZ experiment turned into the nation’s premier example of blended capital and impact investing connecting schools and communities. The success was so notable, in fact, that Barack Obama sought to emulate the program across 20 cities nationwide (Spitalewitz, 2009).

Of course, Geoffrey Canada’s HCZ is only one example, and it is admittedly a unique case not suited for replication in most communities. For most the impact of partnership-led community involvement is felt through modest measures aimed at increasing the voices of parents, teachers and other stakeholders. Over the last several years numerous parent activist organizations have sprung up across the

nation, in many cases supplanting traditional PTAs and spearheading groundbreaking reforms (Riddell, 2012). While they each have their own community-based agendas, what they share in common is a younger constituency of activists focused on innovation and, increasingly, policy. Therefore, the focus of many of these groups is to provide those constituents with new avenues for interacting with policymakers to connect policy and practice (Sawchuk, 2011). Once engaged, these groups have played important roles in reshaping the dialogue on third rail concerns. These new organizations are playing a vital parallel role as a moderate voice in historically partisan camps, especially at the local level.

### **Partnerships as a Medium for New Services**

*“Community partners promise some of the best prospects for connecting (or reconnecting) disengaged youth with school-based learning and for preventing dropouts” (Bathgate & Silva, 2010).*

There is little debate that poor students need services in addition to the standard academic curriculum and, more specifically, additional time in a learning environment that is focused on their learning needs. Understanding this is critical to closing the achievement gap. In this regard, the emergence of youth-serving community programs, many offered by nonprofit groups, create positive caring relationships and access to vital social capital (Sanders, 2003). "Community partners promise some of the best prospects for connecting (or reconnecting) disengaged youth with school-based learning and for preventing dropouts" (Bathgate & Silva, 2010). Proponents of these programs laud the evidence of

connecting high-quality constructive learning activities during after-school hours with positive social and behavioral outcomes (Miller, 2011). Making these connections has become especially important as family structures continue to change and students are faced with new stresses.

The question, then, is whether or not these services should be provided by the school. Promising all-inclusive platforms, such as the Knowledge is Power (KIPP) model, are a step in the right direction. Likewise, in Oakland a plan to create district-wide, full-service community schools by 2016 has been the centerpiece of local reform efforts. Haddock (2013) notes that this reform was based on the rationale that each school could serve as a comprehensive site for families to access academic, health and other social services specific to their local community.

The ideal community school would encompass before- and after-school enrichment programs; family support centers; medical, dental, and mental health services; adult education and job training; voluntary academic, interpersonal, and career assistance; and regular community engagement around curriculum, student learning, and community problem-solving. In such schools, the school sees the community as a resource for the school, and the community views the school as a resource for itself (Trujillo et al., 2014, p. 899).

But these too have limits. For one, providing everything internally can lead to a lack of diversity as students are exposed to one environment for the majority of their waking hours. This reverts back to the walled-in approach discussed above. Also, all-inclusive programs face added pressures of stretching their resources too thin. This is particularly evident in charter schools, where offering wraparound services can often lead to burnout among staff (Brewer, 2014). A study conducted

in 2011 showed that some KIPP schools experienced annual turnover rates of faculty and staff that can be as high as 49 percent, with many respondents citing exhaustion resulting from working too intensely on others' needs over their own (Kovacs, 2011). Lastly, critics contend that many of these programs ignore the community and home life as a matter of policy. They do this in order to give their teaching staff a sense that all students, regardless of home life or socio-economic background, have equal opportunity to succeed. While commendable, this brings to light the specter of diminishing strong community ties essential for mutual understanding (Cuban, 2003), which are also seen as leading indicators of academic achievement.

The most recent example of a partnership aimed at spreading responsibility among community stakeholders is My Brother's Keeper, a blended capital initiative launched by President Obama in 2014. The program is focused on harnessing local resources to address the plight of young men of color. Commencing with \$200 million in 2014, My Brother's Keeper seeks to: develop a public-private campaign to actively recruit mentors for youth and improve the overall quality of mentoring programs; make data collection more available and transparent; and generally support locally driven efforts that are more comprehensive in addressing the educational, physical, social and emotional needs of young people (My Brother's Keeper Blueprint for Action, 2014).

## **Partnerships as a Tool for Change**

The fact that education must adapt to a rapidly changing marketplace is not a phenomenon unique to schools, as industries across the spectrum are being forced to learn from—and work with—one another. Consider, for example, how the newspaper industry must adapt to social media and blogging. Because of technology, media companies must not only accept that anyone can be a reporter but they must arguably harness this evolution or perish. Murphy, Perrot, and Rivera-Santos (2012) posit that *absorptive capacity* between sectors has become a necessity in all industries as they seek to maintain a competitive advantage.

This ability to adapt is even more important in high poverty schools, and it is here where the independence of external partners can be most beneficial. Unlike schools and districts, external partners are not subject to direct political authority and are more focused in their aims (Corchran and Lawrence, 2003). This freedom can help site leaders stay focused on long-term policy mandates while external partners focus on instituting meaningful change in operations and teacher practice (Beabout, 2010). On a structural level, Boyne (2002) supports this suggesting that public sector organizations are constrained predominantly by the political system rather than the economic system. Even at the site level school leaders face micropolitical interactions between different constituent groups (Datnow, 2000). Insiders often struggle to institute change because individual educators hold a range of opinions on any reform agenda, thus every effort is resisted by some contingent of school staff and faculty (Malone 2011).

External providers, on the other hand, can act as agents for creativity, alternative thinking and the introduction of new systems. This has played a major part in altering the organizational processes of schools. As cited by Smith and Wohlstetter (2006), Sagawa and Segal (2000) suggest that the popularity of public private partnerships stems from organizations looking across sector boundaries to meet their own needs. “According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), each of the three economic sectors /nonprofit, for-profit and public/possesses distinct strengths. From this perspective, public private partnerships are motivated largely by a pursuit of the comparative advantages inherent to organizations in the other sectors” (p. 250).

In their seminal work on organizational analysis, DiMaggio & Powell (1991) argue that isomorphic pressures transfer systems and norms from one sector to the next, creating a homogeneity of values across multiple industries. In education, *coercive pressures* from economic and state agencies to conform to accepted business practices led schools to adopt values, standards, and systems that reinforced the cultural expectations of the larger society. According to this theory, the professionalization of schools, improved teacher credentialing and expanded accountability tools are a byproduct of school-business partnerships. Sun, Frank, Penuel, & Kim (2013) concur that the “regulatory regime” brought by NCLB legitimized meeting external demands in schools, including the diffusion of new institutions within schools. In some cases this involved the development of

distributed leadership models, such as mentors that mimicked corporate middle management; in others it concerned new approaches to professional development.

### **Partnerships as a Vehicle for Scalability**

*“Nearly every problem has been solved by someone, somewhere....[the problem] is we can’t seem to replicate [those solutions] anywhere else” — President Bill Clinton*

A decade ago the problem was, in fact, not enough scalability and replication of successful programs, but rather a reliance on too many new, “breakthrough” ideas, especially among the nonprofit community. As Bridgespan founder Jeffrey Bradach noted in 2003:

With a few exceptions, the nonprofit sector in the United States is comprised of cottage enterprises – thousands upon thousands of programs, each operating in a single neighborhood, in a single city or town...Time, funds, and imagination are poured into new programs that at best reinvent the wheel, while the potential of programs that have already proven their effectiveness remains sadly underdeveloped (Kim and Bradach, 2013).

Requiring partnerships as a stipulation for federal funding serves the dual purpose of identifying best practices and increasing efficiency by binding organizations together as they enter new markets. For example, CEO of Rocketship Education, John Danner, argued against navigating a “crazy quilt of regulations” noting, “the way we get leverage is by doing the same thing over and over again and by specializing in what we do best.” (Cavanagh, 2012, p. 14). In Milwaukee, they partnered with another nonprofit organization for teacher recruitment; nationally they are very closely aligned with Teach for America. “We’ve got to go where we can get the most quality in one swoop,” he noted (Ibid, p. 15).



In part due to market pressures and the government's insistence on partnerships, many communities have had little choice but to evolve. The city of Atlanta, once ambivalent about outside groups, received grants to work with reform-based organizations. The same can be said for other major cities across the country, including Detroit, Denver, and Los Angeles (Holley et al, 2013). While disagreements on whether the two entities will work as partners or under a "parallel system" (Smarick, 2008, p. 40) are likely to persist, the "collaborative relationship is becoming institutionalized...charters need to start thinking about how we start move from suspicion and competition with districts to collaboration and cooperation" (Ibid, p. 41).

For investors, PK-12 partnerships operate in that sweet spot between business, public policy and governance, making them uniquely appealing for growing programs to scale. For example, many nonprofit organizations are often products of community- or city-led movements that tie agency goals with broader urban initiatives. Investments in these programs usually begin at the local level—both to minimize casualties and to nurture the best ideas to scale (Oliviera & Breda-Vasquez, 2012). When an idea has proven itself the implications can stretch well beyond the original mission. In a recent example, The Learning Accelerator (TLA), an initiative aimed at improving support for educators through professional development, acquired millions of dollars in private financing with the aim of expanding beyond its original borders (Learning Accelerator, 2014). Under the expanded mission the organization seeks to codify the curriculum for a principal

training program; they will expand their MyLearning platform for personalized teacher professional development across multiple communities; and they will launch a statewide fellowship program in Rhode Island. Whereas in the past this initiative may have focused on a particular school, today the funds are channeled to an external provider deploying concurrent innovations across the country.

TLA's story is notable, but it is by no means unique. Following the recipe laid out by the i3 and Race to the Top grants, venture capital firms have eagerly stepped up to invest in startup education companies and fledgling businesses (Cavanaugh, 2013). At a recent ASU/GSV Education Innovation Summit hundreds of organizations and major players in the private investment sector came together seeking partnerships. Mark Grovic, general partner for New Market Venture Partners in Maryland, summed up the enormous level of interest by stating, "I had 15 scheduled meetings with companies and 25 informal get-togethers...I can count on one hand the [investors] who didn't come" (Cavanagh, 2013).

While the cases mentioned above encapsulate the vision of bringing education programs to scale, they pale in comparison to the potential espoused by some economists' predictions. Because the investments often deal with massive concerns of universal import (i.e. poverty, literacy), some believe that major institutional players, such as Wall Street hedge funds, will eventually get in the game. Over time, new financial structures will emerge creating new pools of capital and secondary markets. This is captured most eloquently by Steven Goldberg (2009).

Goldberg makes the case for why reaching scale in socially-minded innovations is not only vital, it is attainable on a grand scale in the foreseeable future. Perhaps most provocatively, he argues that it will happen when, as he put it, these investments are in the hundreds of *billions* (not millions) of dollars. This, he argued, will stimulate Wall Street into the market, ushering in a new era of financing. This theory is supported by others who argue that many investors are waiting for the emergence of profitable enterprises that improve the lives of the poor in fundamental ways (Starr, 2012).

Astonishingly, many of Goldberg's examples are focused on education. As he described it, we may see an age where a private organization enters into a multi-billion dollar *social impact bond* (Social Finance, 2014) with a state or school district to reduce dropout rates by 5% over a ten-year term. Or perhaps a healthcare provider receives a grant to reduce teen pregnancy over the same period. In both cases the idea is the same: Blended capital is distributed to both private and public partners with a common *goal* rather than a *service*. Needless to say, the fruition of such a mechanism would fundamentally change how and when scale is achieved in social enterprises, starting with education.

Lastly, it is important to note that the emergence of replication and scale does not necessarily mean that innovation is not occurring in the receiving community. For example, viewing this from the perspective of parents in a participating community, the introduction of a new program—be it through partnerships or otherwise—is in itself a step in a *new* direction, an innovation in

that context. As one report noted in 2004, “Scaling social impact can occur by increasing the positive social impact created, decreasing the negative social impact of others, or decreasing the social need or demand” (CASE, 2013).

Illustration 2.1: Snapshot of Partnership Benefits

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | <p><b>Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced "Walled in" - Walled Out" Dynamic</li> <li>• Improved Mutual Understanding</li> <li>• Expanding participatory functions through community-based organizations increases public involvement in decision-making and ultimate buy-in from different stakeholder groups (Mosley &amp; Grogan 2013)</li> </ul> |
|   | <p><b>Capital</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial, Expertise, Social Capital</li> <li>• "Community partners promise some of the best prospects for connecting (or reconnecting) disengaged youth with school-based learning and for preventing dropouts" (Bathgate &amp; Silva, 2010)</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Perspectives</li> <li>• Exposure to Different People, Faces</li> <li>• Developing horizontal ties create social networks and economic opportunities beyond the school—and beyond our own immediate circles of influence" (Keith, 1996)</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced Teacher Burnout</li> <li>• Schools that offer wraparound services themselves can lead to burnout among staff (Brewer, 2014)</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p><b>Change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More flexibility to institute reforms</li> <li>• External partners are not "subject to direct political authority and are more focused in their aims" (Beabout, 2010)</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p><b>Scalability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments usually begin at the local level—both to minimize casualties and to nurture the best ideas to scale. When an idea has proven itself the implications can stretch well beyond the original boundaries (Oliviera &amp; Breda-Vasquez, 2012).</li> </ul>   |

## **PROBLEMS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE PK-12 PARTNERSHIPS**

A case could be made that the recent wave of policies are nothing new; schools are merely turning, as they have in the past, to outside agencies to buoy lagging funding, to address market demands, and to meet the challenges brought by increased standards. The difference, however, is that stalwart partners of the past, which filled early voids in the previous decades, are being joined by a new breed of agencies focused on social impact, innovation, and reform.

### **Unclear Roles & Expectations**

Regardless of industry, it is widely accepted that partnerships are most effective when all parties see the benefits that the alliance will bring to stakeholders. If collaborative efforts are viewed as mutually valuable, then each individual's commitment to the success of the partnership is encouraged (Hands, 2005). Historically, the problem in the education sector is that schools are not seen as equal contributors but rather the primary beneficiaries of most arrangements. Some argue this is the result of relationships founded under adverse circumstances that have placed schools at a major disadvantage, and where educators are seen as failing (Hoff, 2002). This is supported by early findings that showed business executives exerting more control and exhibiting harsher tones as they sought to institute their values on school leaders (Trachtman, 1994). In some cases former partners even went as far as to lobby their own legislators for reform.

Clearly, a strong inhibitor of community-school partnerships lies in the tremendous influence that businesses can and often choose to exert over school aims—aims that may have some public support, as measured by polls or acquiescence, but which are not the outcomes of democratic, open deliberation among all community partners (Abowitz, 2000, p. 337)

As cited by Hoff (2002) many business-education partnership activities tend to be “brief and episodic, involving a school here and a classroom there” (p. 60). When business leaders attempt to delve deeper they are often frustrated by the inability to transform the school, which in turn leads to disengagement. This phenomenon was echoed by Cuban’s (2004) study of Boeing’s partnerships in the 1980s and more recently by Abowitz’s analysis of partnerships between Cincinnati schools and local employers. In the case of the latter, nearly 300 internships were provided to students in a wide range of programs. Initial teacher and student responses were favorable as graduation rates increased. Yet by the sixth year conflicts arose over who had authority. The researchers noted that by the end of the first decade this could hardly be considered a partnership at all, as parents and students were virtually invisible players. Site leaders argued that the two cultures were incompatible, with businesses focusing too much on the bottom line. Executives countered that schools were resistant to change and that districts did not include them in goal-setting meetings. Ultimately, the weight of expectations from the partners was so severe that many schools simply chose not to continue.

## **Conflicting Goals in Change Environments**

One would hope that earlier concerns have been assuaged as the partnership paradigm has matured. However, similar tensions have only escalated with the introduction of new players, such as Lead Turnaround Partners or LTPs (Corbett, 2011). Lead Partners are non-profit organizations or private consultants on contract with the district central office or state to turn around schools. Lead Partners usually sign contracts for a 3–5 year period with their responsibility ranging from a cluster of schools to a single site. While the role of these partners can vary, in many cases they wield unprecedented authority in a variety of areas, including: decision making on school staffing; selecting new or retaining current principals; and aligning services for the provision of core academic and student support. The partner usually has an “intense embedded relationship” with each school during the turnaround period (Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, 2010).

Not surprisingly, the demand for LTPs among superintendents remains low. The mantra is that the burden of accountability (and blame) is placed on schools and districts while partners receive only credit for success. “School-improvement in districts and schools,” Datnow (2000) noted, “is de facto a conflict-ridden process because power is distributed (usually unequally) among individuals, groups, and organization possessing dissimilar education values and interests” (Kowalksi, 2013, p. 76). In addition, in some states schools that fail to turn around under the partnership face receivership status from the state, whereby an external provider (often charter schools) are given a contract to operate the school. Naturally,

educational leaders balk at any relationship that would see them turn over their schools to an outside organization, even more so to relatively unproven ones with a mixed record of success. As one State agency staff member pointed out, given the high stakes to succeed and the mixed track record of vendors, districts are reluctant to “turn over” authority to [LTP] operators (Corbett, 2011).

Even third sector partnerships, once viewed as neutral, are regarded with distrust. Some argue that nonprofit arms are merely extending the reach of existing privately funded organizations. Educators have voiced their dismay as thousands of groups with virtually no track record are gaining public funding for major reform efforts. Consider The Learning Accelerator example—one of thousands across the country. By any reasonable definition this is a new, relatively unproven organization. Yet the funding they received will place them at the center of school leadership and teacher training at the site level. Consider too that another aim of these investments is to reach scale by applying the practices in multiple cities across the country. While holding out for the best, one must contemplate the implications for those school leaders having to manage something that worked in one community but may not in theirs.

Lastly, the recent call to continue even without federal funding emphasizes the crossroads of both the policies themselves and American political ideology. In many states, federal mandates are increasingly seen as overreaching, with some governors going as far as to sue the government for using financial incentives to influence state law (Howell, 2014). While states and districts willingly accepted



grants at the height of the recession, and while they in many ways agreed with the broad concept of community-based partnerships, the reality of federal intervention is starting to set in. Schools now find themselves in the middle of a political firefight regarding the definition and impact of federalism.

### **Motives and Power-Sharing**

Above all, lingering concerns remain regarding the motives driving these partnerships. Detractors contend the arrangements are too often driven by self-interest as the same companies working with schools are simultaneously working to receive tax breaks that reduce public school funding (Trachtman, 1994). Some are concerned that corporations are "relatively autonomous actors who operate with unbounded rationality in order to pursue their self-interests" (Bennett & Thompson, 2011). Others scoff that businesses continue to engage in shortsighted public relations campaigns tied to a broader political agenda, a claim supported by Stone (2001). He discovered that many Atlanta businesses engaged in initiatives for a single year during an election cycle, only to retreat back to conventional issues attached to their own interests shortly after. He also uncovered that when it came to educational policy, these same business leaders ranked the effects on their own children's school as their greatest priority.

As a result of these misgivings many site leaders approach partnerships from a protective stance (Bradshaw, 2000). School-based activities, principally curriculum, are left outside of the influence of partners. This can quickly transform

into “low risk” relationships centered on donations and technical support rather than school improvement (Beabout, 2010). Mazzoni’s Arena Models (Fowler, 1994) and elite theory (Anfara & Mertz, 2006) legitimize the concerns of school leaders, asserting that policy decisions are being made by leadership elites through informal processes, including giving. In this respect, a grant makes the grantor a de facto policy-maker and arguably circumvents democratic due process. Kowalski (2010) agrees, speculating that state policymakers have, in counsel with business elites, relied on a political-coercive change strategy that has taken command of school reform from educators whom they viewed as incapable of acting independently to improve their own schools. Cuban (2004) argues that today community elites are using the media to spread a message of “civic capacity” and “social capital” that is, at its core, inspired by business schools.

Given this, it is conceivable that programs like My Brother’s Keeper and US2020 (2014), both of which seek to bring private sector mentoring in schools to unprecedented levels, are merely a means to an end. Similarly, the current push to emphasize STEM programs could be viewed as crowding out other initiatives to benefit employer rather than community needs. While creating a generation of coders may seem noble, we have not established whether this is the need or desire of parents, employers, or better yet the students in a particular community. Especially given the business nature of these initiatives, we must be vigilant that a new “tyranny of missionaries” (Abowitz, 2000) does not usurp the tenets of a supportive partnership –between genuine equals with converging interests.

## **Measurable Impact**

For city and PK–12 leaders the challenge is to convert assets that exist at the community level into viable programs that produce long-term results. In practice, however, many collaborations often lack tangible benefits to show those results. Through the 1990s less than 10% of partnerships surveyed had built accountability measures into their programs. Also, rather than focusing on meaningful challenges, such as poverty or literacy, alliances focused on marginal issues with little substance (Hoff, 2002). While partners were interested in school reform, they were unwilling to invest heavily in those efforts. The amount of money devoted to causes was relatively minimal leading to mostly short term "on-the margin" activities (Trachtman, 1994).

Measuring the effectiveness of programs in turning around low-performing schools remains constrained by inadequate information about the impact of specific interventions. To address this, i3 grants have strict accountability measures built into the program, including specific definitions for what constitutes strong and moderate evidence of success. Unlike many other federal grant programs where evidence is just a selection criterion, in the i3 program, measurable impact is an eligibility requirement (Investing in Innovation Fund, 2013). A variety of measures are used, with a heavy reliance on data and even experimental or quasi-experimental research design. Likewise, My Brother's keeper calls for direct evidence of increased graduation rates and reduced suspensions.

These are notable steps for quantifying the effects of any initiative. Yet, reaching conclusions on local impact in schools is complicated by methodological uncertainties and a lack of institutional measures. O'Reilly (2007) contends our greatest challenge is teasing out the effects of programs that bind schools, families and community-based organizations. In terms of support agencies, strategic linkages are lacking between what is happening during the school day and after school (Anderson-Butcher et al, 2006). These breakdowns are only likely to intensify as partners face increased pressure to meet specific targets required by impact investors—including the federal government.

### **Push for Scale**

On a macro-level some believe that support organizations run the danger of becoming less impactful as too many agencies with overlapping missions vie for limited resources. Critics argue that some nonprofits siphon valuable resources from schools and districts that are charged with serving most of the population. As one policymaker remarked, “The vast majority of people getting into the field are not ready to do the work” (Dillon, 2010). In Boston, for example, there are no fewer than 12 nonprofits focused on college access for at-risk youth (College access programs in Boston, 2015). This raises doubts about the overhead costs associated with such redundancy. And while the blended capital system is designed to build organizations to scale, the truth is few entities can match the reach and scope of public institutions. Goldberg (2009) argues that for all its fanfare, popular

prototypes in the nonprofit sector still only reach a small fraction of publically funded initiatives. “After 20 years of spectacular growth,” he writes, the case study for nonprofit innovation “is still only reaching 3.3 percent of the total need it set out to meet” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 3).

Interdependence theory tells a similar story. Salamon (1987) writes that demand for new services may initially induce private donations, but it is questionable whether that alone is enough to drive nonprofit density in the long term. Put another way, the government may choose to invest in agencies providing services rather than engaging in activities itself, such as funding a health clinic versus a health department. Over time governments may eliminate their own programs entirely and rely on these agencies exclusively to provide services. Likewise, those same agencies rely increasingly on scarce government monies as the key source of revenue to fulfill its mission and maintain its scope of activity (Milward and Provan 2000). In the end both the government and the local agency become solely dependent on even more limited public monies and less reliable private sector funds.

Seen through this lens one could argue the new paradigm is not replacing bureaucracy with local control; rather, it is replacing public control with private control. Then, depending on the size of the agency, we are merely replacing one bureaucracy with another. It is, to many detractors, a veiled shift toward privatization and singular agendas with many of the key players standing to inherit an environment where public institutions—even schools—are unable to compete.

Beneath the surface ... a much more nuanced shift in administration and policy has gone virtually unnoticed .... Even if the public institution in your neighborhood, or the one that your child, niece, or nephew attends, is a public school *in name*, outside partners may be tasked with duties ranging from teaching to counseling. (Faraone, 2015)

These concerns emerged in the late 1990s but are finding new traction amongst anti-reformers, particularly in regards to the velocity by which the scaling is taking place. Leading critics, most notably former Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, warn that we are yielding too much too soon to organizations with solutions that worked in one community but may not in another. “There's no guarantee,” Mrs. Ravitch stated, “that the clean slate's going to be better than the old slate” (Ravitch, 2011).

In explaining his reason for spinning off My Brother's Keeper (MBK) from a federal program to a private foundation, President Obama explicitly stated the need to scale in order to serve more communities. “The foundation will channel corporate and individual donations to existing programs for minority youth, with an emphasis on local programs that can be replicated in other cities” (Goodwin, 2015). In his defense, one can hardly think of an initiative better suited for replication than one aimed at mentoring young men of color. At least on the surface it appears this would be a worthwhile initiative irrespective of community context. However, below the surface it is not so simple.

Albeit worthy, the MBK case represents the climax of our incessant push for scale. It further raises the specter of drowning out community-based voices under the weight of powerful national organizations now working under a united front.

MBK has already raised over one billion dollars in private funds, and one can assume that the President of the United States making this a private foundation will make it a certain favorite among future (scarce) donors. It stands to reason, then, that this is one billion dollars less for other initiatives that may have made an impact in other communities. Again, that is not to say that this initiative is not of the utmost significance (I happen to think it is worth every penny); it is just the precedent—of transforming community ideas to national public policy to now private foundations—that one must consider.

### **Blended Capital K-12 Partnerships are Here to Stay: It is Time to Learn More**

Regardless of which camp one falls into it is undeniable that the appetite for school partnerships continues to grow, as does the number of outside agencies now doing business in the sector. The introduction of blended capital, both literally in dollars or expertise and figuratively as a construct, suggests this is more than a new era of partnerships; it is an entirely new paradigm brought by years of macroeconomic policy. Yet, determining who makes decisions, how they are made, and how success is measured remains opaque.

What is also indisputable is that we have ignored for decades the dynamics of decision-making and accountability between “insiders” and “outsiders”, between those historically entrusted with serving schools and those relatively new to the game. With these groups now working together at unprecedented levels it is time to take a closer look—one partnership at a time. Examining a single case within the

wider lens of blended capital may reveal clues as to how we might better help school leaders and partners capitalize on these partnerships in a manner that positively affects communities, schools, and ultimately, student outcomes. By taking into consideration the views of school leaders and organizations now working in schools, the hope is that we can bridge these worlds to bring greater understanding of the links that exist—and the links that are reshaping— how decision-making and accountability is shared in PK–12 partnerships.



## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW**

The central goal of this investigation is to build a sophisticated framework that will help us better examine how school leaders working with outside partners face new stresses and demands created by the power of blended capital arrangements, which in turn are inspired by educational reform. More specifically, it is suggested that pressures to scale and divergent organizational cultures may result in misaligned goals and conflict around decision-making, respectively.

To test this framework this investigation proposed carefully analyzing a principal-partner relationship to develop an in-depth understanding of a single case in its real-world context. Using Extended Case Method, this investigation sought to move beyond veiled nuances to gain a deeper understanding of how PK-12 leaders and partners navigate these relationships. The hope is that by placing localized insights within a new framework we may be able to identify themes that can be applied objectively to the field moving forward.

#### **Extended Case Method**

Case studies, inspired by the Extended Case Method, was the methodological approach chosen for this investigation. Whereas case study is especially useful for understanding a broader range of contextual and other complex issues (Yin, 2012, p. 4), the Extended Case Method specifically looks for “macro determination in the micro world” (Buroway, 1995, p. 279). This is particularly important in this research because I seek to connect what is happening at the site level (in a single

case) to the broader field of PK–12 blended capital partnerships. This involves a thorough analysis of the micro contexts of the participants, that is their schools and the initiative(s) for which they have partnered, framed within the broader environmental contexts of blended capital funding, education reform, and other policies (or priorities) that may affect the participants’ relationship with one another.

### ***Micro an Extension of the Macro***

One of the greatest advantages of using the extended case method approach is that it overcomes many of the limitations of qualitative research in education, specifically that objectivity and validity is difficult to achieve as environments can vary considerably from case to case. As some critics have argued, it is difficult to deduce transferable takeaways that are inherently micro-oriented in a defined or limited geographical space (Buroway, 1991, p. 212). However, Buroway and other ethnomethodologists address these concerns citing that all research involves some initial observation of participant (face-to-face) interactions in a confined space. As other researchers have done with villages in post-colonial periods, for example, the micro aspects of this research will consider the interactions between these participants in their time and place, perhaps as my hypothesis suggests, experiencing conflict or ambiguous roles. But taken as a whole, I hope to validate—or at least propose – “the micro...as an expression of the macro” (p. 213). It is one particular expression of the general.

### ***Groups, Cultures, and Sectors in Transition***

Max Gluckman's work transforming interpretive case method into Extended Case Method presents a most appropriate application in this research. Gluckman started by examining micro instances of colonialism in villages, yet his research evolved into the Extended Case Method, opening up villages and urban settings to the wider political and economic forces associated with colonialism.

"Whereas in the original study of the bridge opening Gluckman had regarded the social situation as an expression of the wider society, many of his followers viewed the village, the strike, the tribal association as shaped by external forces" (Buroway, 1991, p. 276). In a similar vein, in this investigation we intended to reconstruct the very notion, or theory, of what it means to "partner" in the PK-12 sector. In the most literal sense, *a bridge* has been opened between the PK-12 sector and the many other sectors now entering the space.

It is the thesis of this investigation that public schools in a blended capital partnership are experiencing phenomena akin to colonialism where outside forces have entered previously uncharted territory, and where multiple agendas, perspectives, and power struggles may be occurring in schools. This is especially true in urban centers most vulnerable to reform efforts. Prawat (2000) argues that the idea of community stakeholders having common interests in schools is a naïve notion based on Deweyan pragmatism. On the contrary, civic capacity in the context of education is not a generic quality transferrable from one issue to another, but is influenced by moving factors such as political strife, business agendas and

competing philosophies within schools. Abowitz (2011) is even more pointed by noting that public schools have become the place to engage in cultural warfare. “They are the primary sites of struggle over the political and cultural shaping of the next generation” (p. 474). Cunningham (2003) posits:

The major agents of socialization in America are families, peer groups, local communities, and schools. When a discontinuity in socialization exists, children’s potential and the future of our democratic nation are both affected adversely”(p. 777).

### ***Power, Domination and Resistance***

Comparing the current educational climate to colonialism is not meant to be pejorative but rather employs a useful metaphor for understanding what is happening in a particular sector—or micro-culture. The sector just happens to be the American public education system. Yet, considering that educational policy decisions can dramatically affect employment, distribution of wealth, and democratic participation, “one need not be a Marxist scholar to benefit from a reading of political economy perspectives this line of research is likely to bring” (Fife, 2005, p. 33).

Nonetheless, the purpose of this research was not to sit in a particular orientation but rather to build a contemporary framework of understanding to stand on the shoulders of our previously constructed historical framework (Fife, 2005, p. 34). In this regard, the works of Buroway and Gluckman are uniquely applicable for their emphasis on examining how different institutions interact with one another and how power is shared—or transferred—as those interactions take

place. "We see how the Extended Case Method leads directly to an analysis of domination and resistance" (Burroway, 1991, p. 279). "In the Extended Case method, the environment is not an arena where laws are played out but a constellation of institutions located in time and space that shape the domination and resistance" (p. 282).

Today there is indeed a constellation of emergent players and funding forces exerting gravitational forces in new directions. Having presented the wider political economic perspective, the challenge was to present what was happening at the site level and to connect these findings in a manner that makes a compelling case for transferability to other partnerships. "It is as if the whole lodges itself in each part in the form of a genetic code, which has to be uncovered through a process hermeneutic interpretation" (Burroway, 1991, p. 213).

### **Participant Criteria**

This investigation analyzed a single principal-partner relationship (case study) during a school year. In all, the study consisted of two interview sessions per participant (4 total); one observation of a partner interaction per site; one follow-up interview per participant (2 total); and a thorough analysis of secondary sources, including profiles of participant backgrounds and school environments. To be part of the study the case had to meet a specific criterion that qualified as a blended capital arrangement at the heart of the research question as follows:

### ***Participants***

Sun, Frank, Penuel, & Kim (2013) concur that the “regulatory regime” brought by NCLB legitimized meeting external demands in schools through the diffusion of new institutions within schools. In some cases this involved the development of distributed leadership models, such as mentors that mimicked corporate middle management; in others it concerned new approaches to professional development. While acknowledging the influence of these new roles, the researchers concluded that it was formal school leaders that most impacted educational practice, highlighting the need to develop specific strategies to better integrate the reforms brought by external pressures. Therefore, the participants in this investigation were direct school leaders (principals or headmasters) in regular communication (i.e. shared decision-making) with the outside agency liaison (partner leader) assigned to the site. A partner working primarily with a literacy coach, for example, did not qualify as a participant for this investigation.

### ***Blended Capital***

To represent blended capital and elite theory concerns, the partner organization chosen received a substantial portion of its funding from a third party other than the school or its education agency. A preference was placed on partners backed by major giving foundations.

### ***Focus on Practice or Curriculum***

The focus of the partnership chosen for this investigation was on initiatives that directly impacted professional practice or teaching and learning. This was important because of the diverse nature of operations-oriented contracts in technology and facilities, neither of which reflected the focus of this research.

### ***Co-curricular Integration***

Even if the program met after school, the goals of the partnership initiative(s) needed to be embedded into the regular school day.

### ***Urban School Focus***

To ensure that the investigation addressed the needs and stresses present in the literature the school was set in urban setting and served a high needs population. Both traditional and charter schools were eligible to be included in the study.

### **Recruitment Plan**

Participants were recruited from referrals provided by a network of educational leaders in urban centers. The network included high-ranking district, state and local leaders that had respective knowledge of site-based partnerships in New York City, Atlanta, Boston, Tampa Bay, Oakland, and New Orleans.

To facilitate recruitment for this case study a one-page synthesis of the study's objectives and participant criteria was provided to network leaders.

Attention was placed on ensuring a grasp of the study's ultimate objectives, which were to gain insight through unfiltered participant perspectives, on the effectiveness of the partnership. Therefore, an emphasis was placed on network leaders not communicating with prospective participants in a manner that may lead the latter to anticipate questions regarding conflict with their partners. (A copy of recruitment letter to network leaders is provided in the Appendix 1.3).

Referred participants were emailed an introduction to the investigation followed by a phone conversation to discuss the research. An *Informed Consent Document* was provided giving participants a one-page snapshot of the study's purpose and expected commitment as a participant. The summary did not overtly mention blended capital as a construct. Rather, the investigation was described as "a study of how school leaders and outside partners work together." (A copy of recruitment letter to participants and Informed Consent Document is provided in the Appendix 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7 Anatomy of a Study: Examining Successful PK-12 Blended Capital Partnerships, respectively).

Participants received a \$300.00 stipend for their time. Funds may be provided from a research grant from the Boston University School of Education. Including preparation and coordination, it was estimated that each interview would consume three hours of a participants' time per session, therefore \$150.00 per interview (\$50.00 per hour) was commensurate with rate of pay. Per Institutional Review Board recommendations, participants would be provided partial payment



even if they did not complete the entire study

## **Setting and Participants**

### ***Case Study of PK-12 Blended Capital Partnership: Micro as Extension of the Macro***

To prevent triangulation, specific details about the participants are excluded.

Pseudonyms for the school and participants were used.

#### *Local School Context*

The site selected for the study was a high performing urban charter high school located in a major city in the Southeastern United States. Historically, the vast majority of students in this city have enrolled in one of the traditional schools in the district, however in the last decade this has begun to change as each year more families choose to enroll in smaller charter schools. Most recently, the region has become a hyper competitive environment for school choice, as public dollars become scarcer, and as private dollars (locally and beyond) continue to fund private PK-12 initiatives.

As is the case in many urban districts, there is contention around the growth of charter schools and the perceived siphoning of resources to serve a smaller group of students. Locally, this dynamic is further complicated by a governance structure that places the larger (competitor) district as the formal authorizer for the charters. That is, charter schools compete for students against the very entity that vets and oversees their approval.

Similarly, the growth of partner-driven programs and outside agencies working in schools, many of which are funded by the same entities that support charter schools, are often seen with ambivalence by the larger district. For example, contracts for services provided by outside agencies—like mentoring or literacy support—come under regular scrutiny by the local Board of Education and site leaders. It is not uncommon to see Board members scrutinize the finer details of a contract, ranging from the costs of operation to the personal history of an agency leader. A single challenge can lead to the dismissal of a contract, or worse, negative press.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the region has an active philanthropy sector, including community, education, and private family foundations contributing to a wide array of programs aimed at local PK–12 schools. And just like the Board of Education, the agencies scrutinize the district and often suggest policy changes on a local and state level. In addition, this region has been chosen for numerous large-scale education reform initiatives supported by philanthropic giants like the Gates Foundation and the Wallace Foundation.

Collectively, this local environment is a blend of the old and the new, the cordial and the acrimonious. This is the ecosystem in which this principal finds herself every day.

### *About the School*

The school, Jones Academy, was founded less than a decade ago with support from two prominent leaders well known in the region. The initial goal of the school

was to provide a smaller, yet equally rigorous alternative setting for students and families, without the high costs required to attend private schools in the area. Therefore, the school aligns its curriculum with college readiness programs like Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, and AVID. Students who are admitted take the PSAT so the scores can be used as a baseline assessment of student aptitude at time of admission. They deploy a modified block scheduling system and offer athletics and extra-curricular programs.

The school serves a diverse student body from various parts of the city, with current enrollment between 400–600 students. Since its inception, there has been growing interest in the school, with enrollment applications increasing each year. At the time of this investigation, there were approximately 150 seats available for 600 applicants. The school had a waiting list for all four grades and was selecting students from an open public lottery. The overall makeup of the students was approximately half White, one quarter Hispanic, one quarter Black or Multiracial. Approximately one quarter of the students were on free or reduced lunch.

#### *About the Partner*

The partner organization, Deerborne Charities, is a local family foundation that provides several educational programs for disadvantaged youth in the community. In all, its programs serve several thousand students across about a dozen schools in the city—both traditional and charter. The program to be described in this case study is the oldest of its programs and serves as the cornerstone of its services to the community. Other initiatives include direct

support to related agencies and local youth sports programs serving at-risk students.

Income for the Foundation ranges between \$500,000 and \$1 million comprised of a mix of individual donations, corporate giving, and government grants. There are a handful of full time employees in the organization and its highest paid employee is the Director interviewed in this case.

#### *About the Partnership*

The partnership program for this study, Deerborne Dreamers, offered a curriculum focused on building financial literacy skills among students in grades 9–12. The program prepared students to better manage money, prepare and pay for college, and become business owners and entrepreneurs. Students met weekly after school to conduct a variety of activities, yet this was not simply an afterschool program unrelated to the school's goals. The program's goals were embedded into the economics curriculum and the overall school culture in a number of ways. During the 2016–2017 school year, approximately 75 students voluntarily registered for the program, with about two thirds of these formally enrolling. At the time of this investigation there were about three dozen students enrolled in the program.

The program was co-directed by the school and Deerborne Charities, with a local bank providing employees for periodic lessons. In this study, formal interviews were conducted with the school principal and the lead partner from the charity, who was responsible for underwriting and managing the partnership.

Collectively, they represented the partnership's leadership.

In regards to scale, it is important to note that the foundation partner supported similar programs in other schools and was looking to expand the model to other sites. At the time of this investigation the program was being introduced in a nearby middle school. In addition, there are ongoing discussions to make the program a formal elective offered during regular school hours.

### *About the Participants*

#### *The School Leader*

Mrs. Jeffries is Caucasian, in her mid 40s, and holds a bachelor's degree in English education, a master's degree in educational leadership, and at the time of this investigation, was working on her coursework in the evenings toward a doctoral degree.

Mrs. Jeffries has been working in education for nearly 20 years and has been principal of the school for the last six years. Before this role she served as a teacher in neighboring districts and at a local charter school. Immediately prior to becoming the principal of Jones Academy, she served as a building administrator at another school for 4 years. In this capacity she was groomed to succeed a retiring principal when she was recruited to take over as leader of Jones Academy. "I never set out to be a principal," the leader noted, "but these leadership opportunities sort of found me and people would approach me...and I always saw it as a new challenge and a different way to help students and the larger community..."

At the time she took the helm of Jones Academy, the school was in a precarious state at risk of closing. The school had earned low marks for several consecutive years and enrollment was declining drastically. The Board Members of the school decided that a major change was needed in leadership and Mrs. Jeffries was hired.

Mrs. Jeffries began her administration by conducting a full analysis of the school's post-graduation options and data. In interviews with recent graduates she determined that the curriculum was not challenging enough and that additional support programs were needed to ensure students were being adequately prepared for the next level. Among other initiatives, she doubled down on expanding college-level initiatives, including the establishment of the Deerborne Dreamers program.

#### *The Partner Leader*

The partner leader, Mrs. Jackson, is Caucasian, in her mid 50's, and holds an associates degree from a college. Mrs. Jackson has been working in the nonprofit space for over 20 years. Most of her work has been focused on educational programs for school-aged children, including founding the charity in this study.

Prior to being recruited to establish Deerborne Charities, Mrs. Jackson previously created a family foundation for another high profile figure in the area. She is also one of the school's founding Board members and a co-author of Jones Academy's original charter. As Director of Deerborne Charities she oversees an office of two employees and a budget of more than a half million dollars.

Since 2010, Mrs. Jackson has worked alongside the school principal to establish and manage the Deerborne Dreamers program.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

### **Intensive Interviews**

Intensive structured interviews were utilized for this study. Through structured interviews this investigation sought to acquire an unfiltered view of the participants' perspectives on decision-making and accountability in the context of their partnership. Participants represented the targeted groups in the literature and scope of study.

Questions for both interviews were derived from the indicators of the four domains in the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum pertinent to this investigation. The domains include: *Partnership Vision; System Alignment, Integration and Sustainability; Communication and Collaboration; and Joint Ownership and accountability of Results*. The questions were derived exclusively from the indicators for each domain. Examples of types of questions are noted below. (A copy of the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum is provided in the Appendix 1.9).

### ***Building Rapport***

Following the advice of Ruthellen Josselson (2004), the interview began with Little Q questions that build rapport and get the participants to reflect on their own lived experiences as educators in partnership. Through a process of interactive evaluation, the interviewer sought to gain a basic understanding of the participants'

personal and professional backgrounds, and to gain insight on predispositions, either personally or professionally, that may inform the research about decision-making and accountability.

### ***Interview 1: Open-Ended Questions***

After building rapport, the interviewer proceeded with initial open-ended questions (Josselson, 2013). Forming questions with prompts such as “How would you...” or “Tell me about...” helped elicit natural responses (Charmaz, 2006, p. 30–31), stories and anecdotes that elucidate each partner’s perspective through interactive evaluation. For example, a PEC indicator *Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals* is translated to the open-ended question *How are roles and responsibilities aligned to accomplish collective goals?* (A full script of open-ended questions is provided in the Appendix 1.10)



Table 3.0: Sample Open-Ended Questions based on Domain Indicators of PEC

| SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| DOMAIN  | INDICATORS  | QUESTION  |
| <b>ALIGNMENT</b>                                  | Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals                                     | <i>How are roles and responsibilities aligned to accomplish collective goals?</i>                               |
|   | Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned  | <i>Tell me about the systems you use for resource allocation and progress monitoring?</i>                       |
| <b>INTEGRATION</b>                                | Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members    | <i>How do you select staff that reflects the skill sets required in this partnership?</i>                       |
|   | Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be "extra-curricular"                                     | <i>How are the partnership activities embedded into the work of the organization versus "extra-curricular"?</i> |
|   | Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership                                      | <i>Do the organizations have a memorandum of agreement?</i>   |
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>                             | Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place  | <i>What processes do you have for filling vacancies related to the partnership?</i>                             |
|   | Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place | <i>What strategies do you deploy to build organizational capacity, induction and succession?</i>                |
|   | Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization                                       | <i>What strategies do you deploy for funding?</i>   |

### ***Interview 2: Closed-Ended Questions***

The second interview addressed the same indicators in the PEC albeit with pointed questions that evoked an objective response from the participant. That is, these questions sought to address the theoretical assumptions by moving beyond mere description and eventually land on personal opinions. By forming questions with “Do you think that...” or “Have you....”. participants will be encouraged to reflect analytically about the current partnership. Specific to the PEC domains, the indicator *The process for partnership decision-making is clearly articulated and involves all partners* would translate to the question *Has the process for decision-making been clearly articulated among partners?* (A full script of closed-ended questions is provided in the Appendix 1.11).

Table 3.1: Sample Closed-Ended Questions based on Domain Indicators of PEC

| SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| DOMAIN  | INDICATORS  | QUESTION  |
| <b>ALIGNMENT</b>                                  | Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals                                     | <i>Are roles and responsibilities aligned in a manner that accomplishes collective goals?</i>   |
|   | Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned  | <i>How would you rate your systems used for resource allocation and progress monitoring?</i>  |
| <b>INTEGRATION</b>                                | Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members    | <i>Do you feel that <del>staff selected for this partnership</del> have possessed the necessary skill sets to make the partnership effective?</i> |
|   | Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be “extra-curricular”                                     | <i>Do you feel like the partnership has been truly integrated vs. “extra-curricular”?</i>   |
|   | Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership                                      | <i>Do you feel that your memorandum of agreement has been crafted in a manner that will make the partnership sustainable?</i>                     |
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>                             | Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place  | <i>Have the processes for filling vacancies worked?</i>   |
|   | Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place | <i>Have the strategies deployed to build organizational capacity, induction and succession been effective?</i>                                    |
|   | Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization                                       | <i>Have strategies for maintaining funding been effective?</i>  |

### ***Follow-up Interview***

After reviewing the collated excerpts, sub-themes, and emergent themes, a list of questions were notated to create a brief a follow-up interview with participants. This was especially useful since the interviewer was using structured interviews and as such may have over- or under-estimated how much information would be gleaned from certain prompts. “Often we expect participants to develop certain themes,” Josselson writes, “and we simply don’t hear about them” (2013). Because a focus remained on how power and authority—implicitly or explicitly present—manifests in these relationships, questions in the follow-up interview were specifically focused on points of clarification pertaining to shared authority, decision-making, and trust.

### ***Length and Transcription***

To maximize the potential for honest responses, interviews were conducted outside of the school. The interviews were conducted at a local library, or in the case of the partner, at her office. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and conversations were collected using a digital recorder. A verbatim transcript was produced; non-verbal utterances (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 165) were maintained to ensure accuracy and to evaluate potential nuances in the responses.

### ***Observations***

To examine interactions between the leaders the interviewer conducted an observation of the partners working together during a planning session. Participant

observations in their own time and space, or "natural habitat" provided clues as to how partners "act and how they understand and experience those acts" (Buroway, 1991, p. 2). The goal of this observation was to record as fully as possible the micro-level context of the partnership in action. This included detailed descriptions of the setting and goals for the meeting; physical characteristics of the meeting, such as materials used; as well as verbal and nonverbal interactions of the partners.

Because this investigation did not conduct long-term observations required of a genuine ethnography, it was not possible to gain a true understanding of the "unwritten 'rules' that govern human interactions among the participants (Fife, 2005, p. 72). Therefore, the observations were deductive, centering on domains in the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum that best relate to site-based interactions. Statements and takeaways from the observations were notated using an observation tool and used in the selective coding analysis.

Data from the observation was collected initially through non-inference observation notes. To strengthen the interviewer's ability to capture instances and excerpts the observations were also audio recorded. Data from the observation notes and audio recording-analysis were transferred to a table and integrated into the narrative. (The observation tool is provided in the Appendix 1.12.)

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Analytical Approach**

#### ***Thematic Analysis***

Thematic Analysis was the approach used to interpret the data in this investigation. Thematic analysis helps identify how patterns across a dataset construct a sense of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thematic Analysis is further applicable because the focus is not on linguistic variables but rather the content, or patterns in language used to connect to “the social production of reality” (p. 177). One cannot assume that the participants are even aware of their motives, for example; they need to be drawn out through careful observation.

#### ***Familiarization and Selective Coding***

The transcripts were first reviewed for “surface meaning” (p. 205), setting initial codes to mark instances of particular interest. The selected codes were then combined into themes, collating excerpts accordingly. For example, if the participant provided a detailed overview of his or her organization’s goal to reach new communities this was initially noted this as “goals”, placing that in its corresponding code. However, a broader theme around “scale” may have emerged later, at which point the excerpt would be placed in its corresponding category. Likewise, if a participant recalled a particular disagreement with the partner it may have initially been coded as “conflict” but later placed it in a specific *type* of conflict.

### ***Collating Themes & Excerpts***

The combined excerpts were collated along their respective codes and grouped accordingly into the broadest possible sub themes that reflected the focus of this investigation. For example, the following sub themes were derived from excerpts: Social Capital (SC), Resource Allocation (RA), Accountability (AC), Information Flow (IF), Goal Alignment (GA), Data (D), Measurable Outcomes (MO), and Expected Outcomes (EO).

*Table 3.2 – Sample exemplar quotes from participants*

| <b>Theme</b>                | <b>Principal</b>   | <b>Partner</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Decision-Making (DM)</b> | <p><i>“...generally we get together and discuss how we will deal with that particular issue.”</i></p> <p><i>“she was awesome. I can’t remember exactly how we came to that decision. Um.. I think, mmmm, I called the meeting. But she was really cool with it and we decided to make it a regular thing.”</i></p> | <p><i>“I had some general idea of who was in charge of the day to day activities, so I did I kinda go into it knowing that ....”</i></p>                           |
| <b>Scale (S)</b>            | <p><i>“Nothing at all. I really don’t know anything about that. Cause I don’t have an office here, um, so I really I don’t have any knowledge of how that got to the teachers.”</i></p>  | <p><i>“Our organization does quite a bit with other schools ....Yeah mostly urban schools, um, in the south, we do lots of programs with them in my _____”</i></p> |

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure appropriate sampling, participants were chosen that represented, most accurately, the types of blended capital relationships present in the literature and in the current policy landscape. However, acknowledging that this is still a

small sample an attempt was made to carefully articulate the wider social context (Braun & Clark, p. 282) and implications of any outcomes from the research. From the script to the analysis, this investigation was mindful of providing a “replication logic” that will be transferable from one case to another, and from one community to the next (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 200).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Readers were provided a reasonable level of context in order to interpret the findings. Therefore, a general overview of location by region (i.e. Southeast United States), type of setting (i.e. urban charter school), type of partnership (i.e. “teacher improvement”), and demographics (general socio-economic breakdown of school) was provided. However, because the investigation dealt with funding and policy concerns of a politically sensitive nature, pseudonyms were used for the cities, partner organizations, schools, and names of participants.

### **Limitations to Design**

#### ***Dyad Observations***

The original study proposal suggested two observations of the principal and partner dyad working together in a planning session. However, in this case, the principal and the partner rarely met in person and communication always occurred electronically. Repeated attempts to coordinate a meeting between the dyad were unsuccessful, and it was felt that further forcing the matter would contaminate the



data as the researcher would be shaping the environment. This was especially troublesome, as the research would be influencing critical actions, like why partners were meeting in the first place and how they communicated—instead of observing interactions in "their time and space." Ultimately, a single planning session between the partner leader and school-based team was conducted.

### ***Observation Recording***

In the proposal it was suggested that a video recording of the planning session would provide the researcher with more opportunities to catch nuances. However, after conducting several interviews and reviewing the landscape it was concluded that a video recording would negatively impact the authenticity of the interactions. Among other concerns, the planning meeting no longer included just the original participants, thus videotaping other members of the community raised concerns about confidentiality and consent to those not pertinent to the investigation. Also, given that no other part of the study utilized video, and coupled with non-participants unfamiliarity with the study, it was reasonable to expect that a camera would influence interactions. Therefore, a more discreet audio recording of the planning session was collected.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

### INTRODUCTION

This study utilized structured interview questions derived from indicators in the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (PEC). Of the six domains in the PEC, the four used for this investigation include: *Partnership Vision; System Alignment, Integration and Sustainability; Communication and Collaboration; and Joint Ownership and Accountability of Results*. Each interview focused only on indicators in the PEC, however questions were worded differently for each session. Whereas open-ended interviews (Josselson, 2013) formed questions with prompts such as “How would you...” or “Tell me about...”, the second interview asked the participants to take a more objective stance. By beginning questions with “Do you think that...” or “Have you....”, participants were encouraged to think more critically about the partnership. (A full script of open-ended and closed-ended questions is provided in Appendices 1.10–1.11, respectively)

Once interviews were completed, the transcripts were reviewed for surface meaning and initial codes were designated to mark instances relating to a similar idea, or what Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to as “central organizing concepts” (p. 224). These are “concepts, topics, or issues which several codes relate to” (p. 225). As these concepts became large, rich, and complex enough they were promoted into subthemes (Charmaz, 2006). For example, as a participant explained the partnership’s goals (responding to questions in the Vision Domain, for example) the response was initially coded as “goals”; as the frequency of a specific type of goal

grew, such as “raising social capital”, this was promoted to subtheme. Excerpts with instances to social capital were then collated accordingly. If another type of “goal” emerged across the data, such as promoting academic skills, this too was designated as a subtheme titled “Academic Skills” and placed under the Vision Domain. A detailed review of how each subtheme was generated is provided below.

Relationships between subthemes, combined with field observations, evolved into emergent themes that told the story of this partnership in a broader context. The emergent themes section integrates the subthemes alongside the theoretical and historical underpinnings presented in this investigation. It was important not to create too many nested layers of themes, but rather to provide a simple transition from subthemes to emergent themes that “simply capture an idea encapsulated in a number of themes” (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p. 231). In this regard, the three emergent themes presented in this investigation not only tell the story of this single case, but also provide a basis for transferring this research to future settings.

After spending several months with the collated excerpts, subthemes, and emergent themes, a list of follow-up questions was generated to get to the heart of the research question(s). Questions in the follow-up interview were specifically focused on points of clarification pertaining to shared authority, decision-making, and trust between partners. Responses to the follow-up questions were integrated into the emergent themes narrative under its own subsection titled *Power, Domination, and Resistance*.

## **SUBTHEMES**

Identifying subthemes was an active process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.225) in which the researcher was looking for similarity and overlap between codes. “You want to identify a number of themes that capture the most salient patterns in the data relevant to answering [the] research question” (ibid). Therefore, the combined excerpts were collated along their respective codes and grouped accordingly into the broadest possible subthemes that reflected the focus of this investigation. Excerpts were not collated according to when the question was asked, but rather what the participant said, and more specifically how that response related to the organizing concept—or eventual subtheme. This meant that organizing concepts, or different instances relating to a similar idea (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.224), were spread out among all of the PEC Domains. For example, a principal’s response to a question in the Communication Domain may have related to a similar partner response to a question in the Vision Domain. In this case, both excerpts were collated into the mutual subtheme.

Ultimately, the following subthemes were derived from initial codes and related organizing concepts: Social Capital (SC), Resource Allocation (RA), Shared Responsibility (SR), Accountability (AC), Goal Alignment (GA), Embeddedness (EM), Formal Protocols (FP), Information Flow (IF), Expected Outcomes (EO), Measurable Outcomes (MO), Data (D), and Scale (S). Specific definitions of each subtheme are provided below.

### Partnership Vision

*Social Capital (SC)* – Instances articulating how the partnership promotes networking, experiences, and skills for long-term economic and cultural growth among students and families.

*Academic Skills (AS)* – Instances articulating how the partnership promotes specific proficiencies in academic areas, including post-secondary preparation.

### System Alignment, Integration, and Sustainability

*Shared Responsibility (SR)*– Instances articulating how partners share in decision-making

*Goal Alignment (GA)* – Instances articulating how participants view the partners’ role and their own role

*Embeddedness (EM)* – Instances that demonstrate how the goals of the partnership are integrated into the school day.

*Resource Allocation (RA)* – Instances articulating how the partnership vision is supported through the allocation of resources.

### Communication and Collaboration

*Formal Protocols (FP)* – Instances articulating how partners explicitly design and execute methods of communication.

*Information Flow (IF)* – Instances articulating how partners share information, formally or informally.

### Joint Ownership and Accountability of Results

*Expected Outcomes (EO)* - Instances articulating what outcomes partners expected from the partnership initiative.

*Measurable Outcomes (MO)* – Instances pertaining to how partners used quantifiable measures to evaluate the partnership’s effectiveness.

*Accountability (AC)* – Instances articulating how partners held each other responsible for executing their particular role in the partnership.

*Data (D)* - Examples of how partners use data or other objective means to measure outcomes.

*Scale (S)* – Instances speaking to the program’s expansion into new schools or settings.

### **Domain Subtheme: Partnership Vision**

Questions in the Vision Domain asked participants to describe the reasons for partnering, specific goals for the partnership, how they formulated a joint agenda, and how they set action steps and timelines for executing the partnership. Based on participant responses, a salient pattern emerged around shared objectives aimed at expanding opportunities for students and families, grouped collectively as the subtheme Social Capital. Social Capital is defined as resources available in and through personal and business networks, including ideas, business opportunities, financial capital, influence, emotional support and goodwill (Baker, 2000). In this study, participants expressed various instances in which the partnership promotes networking, experiences, and skills for long-term economic and cultural growth among students and families.

As described in the emergent themes section of this study, participants repeatedly cited goals pertaining to social capital across the PEC Domains. For example, when asked about objectives for the partnership the principal and partner responded, respectively, as follows:

... the benefits to the kids is immense – they will also have a lot of great networking opportunities and scholarships have definitely been fostered and cultivated...We really go into the corporate community ...and bring in CEOs and attorneys, and accountants and different people in positions of authority and we have the COO for the [local sports franchise] that's on the panel.

Another subtheme generated from the Vision Domain revolved around Academic Skills. Although it was featured far less prominently, instances

articulating how the partnership promoted proficiency in academic areas, including post-secondary preparation, were noted under this subtheme.

*Table 4.0 – Subtheme Excerpts: Partnership Vision*

| <b>Sub Themes</b>          | <b>Principal</b>   | <b>Partner</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Social Capital (SC)</b> | <p><i>“... the benefits to the kids is immense – they will also have a lot of great networking opportunities and scholarships have definitely been fostered and cultivated...”</i></p> <p><i>“taking a trip to, ummm, a resort and they learned about the ins and outs of that resort, and like part of like the life skills is etiquette, even like if you’re having to meet with somebody in a business type partnership – you’re meeting somebody and it’s that initial social meeting – what are the proper behaviors for etiquette? Some of our kids have never been to a sit down restaurant”</i></p> <p><i>“There’s a life skills portion of the curriculum as well as the financial literacy portion of the curriculum”</i></p> <p><i>“...so just to, um, make them very comfortable and hopefully they see themselves in the future with those opportunities.”</i></p> <p><i>“...resources, networking, one of the huge things [the partners] do for the students is, uh, they actually provide, all expenses paid, the trip at the end of the program – for kids who have successfully completed the program. Um, I mean, they pay for luggage provide toiletries – there’s a jacket that the kids get that will say Deerborne Charities or Deerborne Dreamers, um, so it really is incredible, they pay for the whole experience that many of these kids never would have had.”</i></p> | <p><i>“We have life skills and soft skills after work so to really create a well-rounded individual. It's kind of a two prompt as far as the financial literacy and then with the life skills and soft skills we do resume writing, we do etiquette training, diet, fine dining so on and so forth. These are things that obviously are helpful for the students.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, obviously, benefits the students. It offers them the programming that they won't have at the school if we weren't there.”</i></p> <p><i>“They actually do a panel interview where we have executives from the community and community leaders come and students have to dress as if they were going to an interview and they have a set of questions that are asked to each of the students.”</i></p> <p><i>“We really go into the corporate community ...and bring in CEOs and attorneys, and accountants and different people in positions of authority and we have the COO for the [local sports franchise] that's on the panel.”</i></p> <p><i>“I want to do this program” and I said “okay” we need a population. It's very difficult to have a partnership without a population and a destination as I said before.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our number one goal is to see that the students are enriched through advanced education and financial literacy. And that they are rewarded by a life-changing experience of a trip that is educational, it's fun and, like I said, it's life-changing.”</i></p> |

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*"...one of the lessons I mentioned before is etiquette so the charity may actually bring someone in to teach the etiquette portion if we don't have someone involved that year who can teach the etiquette portion. Need to go to an actually nice sit down restaurant and of course they talk about how to dress everything from how you place the napkin in your lap to where silverware are to is it proper for like who at the table she order first i mean there's a lot of social rules within etiquette especially when it comes to dining that they just wouldn't know they would have no idea."*

*"the charity may actually bring someone in to teach the etiquette portion.... [students] need to go to an actually nice sit down restaurant and of course they talk about how to dress everything from how you place the napkin in your lap to where silverware are, to is it proper for like, who at the table should order first...I mean there's a lot of social rules within etiquette especially when it comes to dining that they just wouldn't know they would have no idea."*

*"Because they're spending every week with them and there's an opportunity that they have to connect to somebody that will help the student or to say, hey I know you're looking for a job in hospitality I have somebody at Hilton you can apply with. And our kids have gotten jobs as a result of those relationships so its definitely networking too."*

*"...[measure our success based on] those who get jobs based on you know relationships made in the program."*

*"Well with-- now let's go back to we are 100% graduating, 100% post-secondary or skill, post-secondary enrollment, military or - what's the work I am looking for."*

*"Yes, [students have] been to South Africa twice."*



|                                    |   |
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|                                    | <p><i>"I think I mentioned to you in the earlier interview how we identify the young man who was involved with...and we knew of his financial situation and going even further with helping this young man making sure that he was able to go to college and would be-- would not have to worry financially. Those are the things that when working with [the partner] that's something that the kids see."</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Academic Skills (AS)</b></p> | <p><i>"... as a result of the partnership, 'cause the kids when they're going to colleges, or as a result of a really strong portfolio, will have better chances of getting into colleges"</i></p> <p><i>"We want to ensure that the students are fiscally sound when they go to-- when they graduate and go to college. That they have a clear understanding of the pitfalls and things that can happen. One of the major things that we want to see happen for our students is for them not to incur debt as a result of going to college. Student loans are horrible."</i></p> <p><i>"With the program also, we have a life skills and soft skills set to the program two days-- two times a month they do the financial literacy in two times a month."</i></p> <p><i>"A program just started at the school called the Venture Capital and it's through -- it's an entrepreneur program. It's like Shark Tank that goes on at the same time as the Deerbome Charities financial classes go on."</i></p> |

### **Domain Subtheme: System Alignment, Integration, and Sustainability**

Participant responses in the System Alignment, Integration, and Sustainability Domain were collated along the following subthemes: *Shared Responsibility, Goal Alignment, Resource Allocation, and Embeddedness*. This domain included important indicators around shared goals and whether or not resources were being adequately allocated to accomplish these goals. The subthemes of Shared Responsibility and Resource Allocation were notably pertinent to the research questions in this study. Whereas the former was useful to gain insights into how partners shared in decision-making, the latter provided an empirical perspective on whether outside partners were fully invested in meaningful long-term impact, a persistent problem raised in the literature. Questions like, *How are resources allocated to accomplish the partnership's objectives?* or *Have enough resources been allocated to this partnership?* brought out important details about the flow of blended capital in the arrangement.

Comments like, “[there is] no resource allocation—the partner provides 100%,” as well as detailed cost figures of the partnership, were drawn out through a natural iterative process. As a result, rich subthemes began to fuse around shared responsibility, goal alignment, and embeddedness, with the latter evolving as an emergent theme. Likewise, questions like “How are roles and responsibilities aligned in a manner that accomplished collective goals?” landed at the center of how leaders carve out spheres of influence to co-manage decision-making. A sample principal’s response to sharing authority is as follows:

So the curriculum and instruction part of it would be a shared responsibilities, because, although there is standard curriculum within the Dave Ramsey curriculum the life skill portion is something that would be decided upon together.

Similarly, the partner articulates in detail how boundaries are drawn in regards to roles and responsibilities”

But because we are the one financing and implementing that part of the program, I pretty much do most of the brainstorming from here. [the Principal] is not really involved in that. However, [the teacher] who -- will probably have input in that when we finally decide, you know, ‘Okay, here's where we're going, here the options, the things that we can do.’ Those would be decisions that would be collaborative. [the principal] is not really involved with that.

*Table 4.1 – Subtheme Excerpts: System Alignment, Integration, Sustainability*

| <b>Sub Themes</b>                 | <b>Principal</b>   | <b>Partner</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Shared Responsibility (SR)</b> | <p><i>“Then with the lifeskill portion of the curriculum as well as even the logistics it’s about collaborative planning”</i></p> <p><i>“... we meet and we discuss [responsibilities] and then you know there’s a lot of email communication ‘cause we can’t always meet ... they’re discussed when planning, um, also communicated and then when things actually are executed or they occur, its articulating decisions as well because if it’s, you know, here’s the curriculum and then its what we’re going to be doing with the students and then it actually happens...”</i></p> <p><i>“a lot of concrete steps so, number one, its meeting with the partner to plan and terms of planning out um logistics of the classroom space, the teacher who will be the, um, point of contact, um communication home to the families and the students on a regular basis about the program um you know, ordering the materials to be shipped to the school so</i></p> | <p><i>“I pretty much run the program and if there were things that [the principal] had questions about, obviously, she could come to me. But it’s the decision is basically, made here, in this office.”</i></p> <p><i>“But because we are the one financing and implementing that part of the program, I pretty much do most of the brainstorming from here. [the Principal] is not really involved in that. However, [the teacher] who -- will probably have input in that when we finally decide, you know, ‘Okay, here's where we’re going, here the options, the things that we can do.’ Those would be decisions that would be collaborative. [the principal] is not really involved with that.</i></p> <p><i>“But I think I didn’t spend enough time [vetting the teacher leader] because [the former teacher] had</i></p> |

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| <p><i>there on time. Making sure that everybody who's coming in has the correct credentials like the pass and we know whose on campus doing what, all those introductions have been made to the parents and the students. So i guess that's some of the logistical side"</i></p> <p><i>"so the curriculum and instruction part of it would be a shared responsibilities.. Um Because, although there is standard curriculum within the Dave Ramsey curriculum the life skill portion is something that would be decided upon together."</i></p> <p><i>"Really being the doer a lot of times behind the scenes, not necessarily getting a lot of credit but sometimes all of the dealings that she accomplished very successfully, and just her humble nature..."</i></p> <p><i>"I embrace people who step up and...run their program they can't and it's beneficial for the students that ...and sponsor she's being updated on things and you know, I just find it excited on that and just hearing about what the kids are doing and then celebrating with them."</i></p> <p><i>"I have no problem. It's definitely not a control thing because once I said she's a founding member of the school. It is as much her school as it is my school. It's our school so I have no reservations about having her completely run the program because I know she has the students best interest at heart."</i></p> <p><i>"Her being a board member I've worked with her on other projects. We're on the development committee together. When she did charity events for their-- for charities and she well, invite the students and invite me out it gives showcasing the school where it's celebrating the students. We're in that, doing that together."</i></p> | <p><i>recommended [the new teacher]. I don't think I spent enough time really getting to know her and to observe how she basically teaches and deals with the kids. Every personality is different. I think my evaluation process with her wasn't long enough. I've learned a lot through these first few months of making sure that with her, I need to have everything pretty much written down and clear. With [the former teacher] it was just, we would talk about it, we'd know where we're headed and it was implemented.'</i></p> <p><i>" [Decision-making is shared between partners] somewhat. As it pertains to finance, that would be no. As it pertains to the educational aspect, it would be yes."</i></p> <p><i>"We're both there every week and we were just seeing some things. On a meeting that we had last week obviously we were there and we talked about the importance of ... just really decided that we needed to have a housekeeping day with the kids. That's what we did yesterday because we went through of all their [me files]"</i></p> <p><i>"[in other schools] We do them basically in a partnership with people who are willing to go ahead and implement programs and we go ahead and we provide the resources. At the same time, we're involved, but maybe not as hands-on as we are over at the school."</i></p> |
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| <p><b>Goal Alignment (GA)</b></p>      | <p><i>“Well, with Deerborne Charities, they’re purpose is to, umm foster education and development in and to empower youth in our area so they’re also fulfilling their mission for youth in the [area] through Deerborne Kids program”</i></p> <p><i>“So, from the partner they have identified a great pool of students that they know they’re going to be able to see the success of the program. So, its tried and true you know in terms of, we’ve got a great group of kids and parents and families and staff members where this is going to work. We also provide the space.”</i></p> <p><i>“...if they’re looking for first generation college student or somebody who is financially in need or whatever it is. If it’s a Deerborne kid I know I can say, bring your portfolio- lets pull your information so I can send it for this opportunity.”</i></p> <p><i>“When I first came on board as principal of [the] High School it was very evident to me early on, [the partner’s] commitment on her nature as a servant, she knew helping kids and putting forth all of her time and energy and talents and resources in doing that.</i></p> <p><i>“Being a founding member she’d have buy in. She had dedication and commitment just like we all do when we’re working tirelessly for the school. She was one that I felt should be in charge right away.”</i></p> <p><i>“I knew that she was always going to be a person that says the kid’s best interest is mine and that there would be follow through on that.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Well, as a non-profit, it's our goal to serve people in the community and it benefits us because it offers the opportunity, a population and a destination for us to serve.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, [ the partnership goals are being] I think that’s an ongoing process though. We have to continually sit down and evaluate. The goals from time to time will change based upon success or failure.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our number one goal is to see that the students are enriched through advanced education and financial literacy. And that they are rewarded by a life-changing experience of a trip that is educational, it’s fun and, like I said, it’s life-changing.”</i></p> |
| <p><b>Resource Allocation (RA)</b></p> | <p><i>“[resource allocation] is fantastic... partner provides everything we need....we provide great pool of student.”</i></p> <p><i>“[there is] no resource allocation—the partner provides 100%.”</i></p>  | <p><i>“We need students---[the] school is an excellent fit Financially. We [support] financially, our employee, in time. My assistant, myself, we’re there every week.”</i></p>   |

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| <p><i>"Resources on our end is providing the teacher, which we have a great teacher who kind of is the point of contact."</i></p> <p><i>"[the bank partner provides content], because they are the partners that come in to teach the financial literacy part of the [money management] curriculum."</i></p> <p><i>"...resources, networking, one of the huge things [the partners] do for the students is, uh, they actually provide, all expenses paid, the trip at the end of the program – for kids who have successfully completed the program. Um, I mean, they pay for luggage provide toiletries – there's a jacket that the kids get that will say Deerborne Charities or Deerborne Dreamers, um, so it really is incredible, they pay for the whole experience that many of these kids never would have had."</i></p> <p><i>"...the teacher who does actually receive a small stipend too from the business partner"</i></p> <p><i>"So, you know the partners come in um we provide the kickoff space and the classroom space and um on the school end we order the materials so the kids will have it an ummm and you know house the binders"</i></p> <p><i>"Number 1, looking at the needs of the kids and also what uh financial literacy needs there are I mean [the curriculum] is awesome. And that's already research-based and it's you know, been tested and it's an established curriculum."</i></p> <p><i>"They will even provide food you know when it comes to parent meetings so like the kickoff meeting, you know they provided pizza because it was an after work , after school meeting for the kids – so they really are very accommodating."</i></p> <p><i>"I will say both [business partner] ...this is</i></p> | <p><i>"Yes. I mean, it all together. I would say that our program budget is probably \$65,000 to \$70,000."</i></p> <p><i>"I think everything that -- I mean, it's a true partnership. I mean, when there's things that are needed when we're at the school with copying or so on and so forth. It's not an issue truly though the majority of the resources are from here and the [business partner], obviously, with their employees and with the books and all of the literature so on and so forth."</i></p> <p><i>"I do grant writing, I do -- we have fundraisers. I mean, people that donate on the annual basis. It's really not a cost- the cost of the program as far as, you know, obviously, [the business partner] takes care of the curriculum and the materials. Now, on the life skill side, I provide materials for the students. But as far as that the actual program itself, it's not very costly."</i></p> <p><i>"The most expensive part is the trip. Obviously, which is -- we take 40 people for a week. We provide all of their clothing, suitcases, backpacks. I say clothing, shirts, like pants and shoes, they take care of...But their suitcases have their names and embroidered on them, so everywhere we go, we can see us. We know whose part of our group. And we have a security detail that travels with us."</i></p> <p><i>"[the trip is] the most expensive partnering, probably on the upper side of \$50,000."</i></p> <p><i>"[The Bank] is our partner that offers this curriculum to us, free of charge. Their employees go into the</i></p> |
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| <p><i>their paid staff that they are sending out during the work day to do the program, not only that but, um, they've, you know I don't know if this was paid or not but they've had a Dave Ramsey speaker that was doing a several school tour within the state of Florida come to [the school] to do an assembly after school for the families and students... as well and then there was a drawing for \$100 scholarship for anyone in attendance and that was through [the business partner], I mean they donated that."</i></p> <p><i>"And then they've provided food for, uh, any parent meeting and for the students."</i></p> <p><i>"Um as far as who instructs and teaches it that all comes from the business partner so there are individuals from ... the business partner"</i></p> <p><i>"[the process for filling vacancies] works, yes, because [the teacher] is new to the position this year and it was-- she was kind of involved with some of the activities last year so she was identified as a teacher that knew about the program, was an elective teacher so maybe didn't have as heavy as a course load and would be able to take it on. That's why she was asked to be the teacher lead on [the program]."</i></p> | <p><i>school and they actually implement the class itself while we're there to assist, be there, have incentives for the kids and so on, so forth. We basically had [the school founder] and myself had a meeting with the people at the Bank and they said look [the founder] wanted to get into financial literacy, he's big and in money matters and things like that."</i></p> <p><i>"[The partnership at this] High school... It's the most expensive, it's very difficult. If we didn't have our founding partners, there is no way we could do it."</i></p> <p><i>"Well, I kind of answered that before. I didn't really select [the staff that reflects the skill sets for the partnership]. Cheryl came to me and made the suggestion for Tina, Maggie already knew because Maggie had been with me and their willingness to do it. I mean, that's a big deal, a lot of teachers don't want to stay after school. Lot of them as they're done they want to just get out of the building. So, the fact that they're willing to give their time, speaks loudly, not everyone is going to make that an option."</i></p> <p><i>"[in regards to developing or deploying organizational capacity] Well, [James] is not doing it anymore. They've expanded his territory so, he's going from here all the way down to Brighton and so I've got two, Antony and Samuel and Colleen both work for [the business partner] and they're volunteering their time. We had an issue last year; [James] was not able to come in, so there were several times when we didn't have an instructor."</i></p> |
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*"We provide absolutely everything, even the clothes they need for the trip."*

*"Now, [the teacher and assistant principal] are getting a stipend through the grant that we have, but it's not a lot. It's \$50 a class, which is not a lot of money, but I'm sure it's helpful for them."*

*"Yes, because those resources are budgeted through our office and work pretty hard throughout the year to do grant writing in order to ensure that those resources are in place. [The partners] provide resources for [the school] at no cost to the school or to us in terms of the curriculum, the teachers, or the educators. Yes, I would say definitely the resources are there."*

*"I would [rate our systems used for resource allocation as] good. On a scale of one to 10, I would say seven, which is not great. Once again, that's also a work in progress."*

*"[in regards to staff selection and filling vacancies], I do. I think once again, it's still an evaluation process of that. It's very difficult when you work with the same person for four years and then you're switching to a completely different personality. Once again, I probably should have spent more time in the interview process with maybe several of the instructors at the school, for educators to really see the best fit but I took Sheryl's recommendation. She left suddenly. It was the week before school started."*

*"They've really worked hard yesterday. It was good to see them"*

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|  | <p><i>engaging in things and Mister did a good job of helping them to get-- because we're so used to having things available to us. My thought process is not of a school process. It's like, "Okay, we need copies of your report cards, blah, blah, blah." How are they going to print them?"</i></p> |
| <p><b>Embeddedness (EB)</b></p> <p><i>"So, number one it becomes initially not only something that the students commit to but also the families. We just had the kickoff you know last week and during that kickoff it was for families as well as the students 'cause there are commitment forms that the families and the students signs that basically says that there will be regular attendance"</i></p> <p><i>"So some of the during the day during the day experiences come through our elective course, so for example we have a college and career and personal development course where the students will be doing some of those activities like resume writing interview skills they also do that through their economics course as well as through um"</i></p> <p><i>"I would say that it's been integrated because we're so small and the kids with what they're doing use that skill set. "Because during the day, they are having to use financial literacy skills, like within their economics classes and when they're having-- like if they have their college readiness course."</i></p> <p><i>"I see that these skills that they're using, they're using it-- they're applying those skills within the curriculum."</i></p> <p><i>"In terms of time, it is very much kind of separate in terms of when it occurs, but the kids-- it's embedded within the culture of the school because the kids wear their [Deerborne Charity] shirts on Spirit Days or when they're going out to</i></p> | <p><i>"I don't know that there is an answer to [embedded activities in the partnership], honestly...Not really do it into the school day, because it's after school."</i></p>   |

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*do community service.”*

*“It's things that we're announcing on the morning show when we're praising them and recognizing them. So I would say the time spent in doing the program is separate but everything that they do matches kind of what we do within school.”*

*“We're dealing even historical documents of the school and seeing her name was on everything in terms applying for the charter being a founding board member.”*

*Part of that, start-up was very collaborative in nature but then once it was set it was set. Pretty much it falls on the decision with [Mrs. Jackson] running it. Keep getting out even with a job like that. Now, she runs with it, it's been very successful and it's sustained over the past several years.*

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### **Domain Subtheme: Communication and Collaboration**

Participant responses in the Communication and Collaboration Domain were collated along the following subthemes: *Information Flow* and *Formal Protocols*.

While this Domain did not produce as much volume in its own subthemes, several responses contributed greatly to subthemes in other domains and, ultimately, to the most important emergent theme, *Partners Who Trust One Another*.

For the most part prompts in this Domain focused on logistical questions around processes for communicating effectively and keeping relevant stakeholders informed. Nonetheless, this Domain included vital clues in the research, specifically whether PK-12 leaders exhibit distrust of partners brought by blended capital arrangements. Among other prompts, participants were asked how they built trust in their relationship, and more explicitly whether or not they even trusted their partner.

Seemingly benign questions around information flow revealed a deeper trend around the principal yielding considerable authority to the outside partner. For instance, when asking the principal about communication systems, she responded that “I wouldn't say we have defined roles and responsibilities but I think it's mutually understood who does what.” As described in the emergent themes section, critical decisions, including management of site-based personnel, were often delegated to the outside partner. “The people that are in that building,” the partner noted, “are the ones that can see and know what is going on. So it is extremely important that that information is disseminated back to us and that we

clearly define roles and responsibilities.” This in turn led to follow-up questions asking participants to reflect on how they built a level of trust profound enough to enable this level of autonomy.

*Table 4.2 – Subtheme Excerpts: Communication and Collaboration*

| <b>Sub Themes</b>            | <b>Principal</b>   | <b>Partner</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Formal Protocols (FP)</b> | <p><i>“...generally we get together and discuss how we will deal with that particular issue.”</i></p> <p><i>“she was awesome. I can’t remember exactly how we came to that decision. Um.. I think, mmmm, I called the meeting. But she was really cool with it and we decided to make it a regular thing.”</i></p> <p><i>“No, I wouldn't say we have defined roles and responsibilities but I think it's mutually understood who does what.”</i></p>   | <p><i>“I had some general idea of who was in charge of the day to day activities, so I did I kinda go into it knowing that ....”</i></p> <p><i>“The people that are in that building are the ones that can see and know what is going on. So it is extremely important that that information is disseminated back to us and that we clearly define roles and responsibilities...”</i></p>  |
| <b>Information Flow (IF)</b> | <p><i>“you know there’s a lot of email communication cause we can’t always meet ... they’re discussed when planning, um, also communicated and then when things actually are executed or they occur.”</i></p> <p><i>“So on the side with planning, its actual physical planning meetings and lots via email because this is our third year of doing [the program] it pretty much is well established and runs fluidly and really it’s just calendaring and then communication about if there’s any needs that arise with the students”</i></p> | <p><i>“But it's kind of when I -- week-to-week basis and [the teacher] and I really ....[the principal] and I did we communicate throughout the week. It’s not just, ‘Oh, I should go to school.’ We talk, we collaborate together.”</i></p> <p><i>“[Timelines, roles, responsibilities and outcomes are clear] sometimes, but those are things that once again you go back and you have to reevaluate. With me having new partners at the school this year, well with Tina being a new partner at the school. It's help me to see where I have to be more proactive in some ways because you get complacent when you have the same-- like when [the former teacher] was my partner, there was a clear vision, she is just a different person.”</i></p> <p><i>“I would say [yes, we are able to share responsibility for actively advocating for our</i></p> |

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| <p><i>“So with that facilities request form it was that business partner...and then our teacher representative is the one that, um is the contact at our school ...will look at, ok what dates are available? [the teacher] does the facilities request form and then it goes through our normal school process. So anything that’s to do with, hey this is what we’re planning, can you get it ready on the school side the business partner, [the partner] will communicate that to [the teacher and the teacher] does all the logistical planning on the school side”</i></p> | <p><i>partnership]. I'm always reaching out to our partners for the opportunity for them to get involved. With our panel interviews that we do at the end of the program with the kids, we really go into the corporate community in [the city] and bring in CEOs and attorneys, and accountants and different people in positions of authority and we have the COO for the [local sports franchise] that's on the panel.”</i></p> <p><i>“Well, during board meetings obviously everything is shared and because we are under [state laws] it's also shared via the website...[we put out an annual report.” We have one that's given to the board basically, and it would be available to anyone in the building. I don't really think that we put it on the website to tell you the truth.”</i></p> |
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### **Domain Subtheme: Joint Ownership and Accountability of Results**

Participant responses in the Joint Ownership and Accountability of Results Domain were collated along the following subthemes: *Expected Outcomes (EO)*, *Measurable Outcomes (MO)*, *Accountability (AC)*, *Data (D)*, and *Scale (S)*. Among other points, excerpts landing under this Domain provided important insights on how partners defined measurable outcomes and how they held each other accountable for achieving these outcomes. In addition, the Domain touched indirectly on significant questions in the research, such as *Are external partners driven by motives and/or systems of accountability other than school improvement?* and *What external pressures affect these relationships, and are they a source of conflict?*

As described in the literature review, the implied notion in both of these questions is that outside partners may be driven by motives to scale out programs into new communities; they may be focused on showing measures of progress that are not necessarily aligned with a school's objectives; or, more generally, that partners are not overtly defining mutually dependent measures of accountability. Also implied is the idea that the source of funding, in this case a foundation underwriting much of the partnership, may result in power struggles that inhibit the effectiveness of the partnership.

Responses generated through an iterative process indeed brought out critical takeaways on all accounts. Most notably, subthemes on *Data* and *Measurable Outcomes* contributed to the emergent theme around substantive partnerships. The

focus on measures which were not tied to data or short-term objectives, but rather mutually agreed-upon long-term outcomes, contributed greatly to the partnership’s effectiveness. But it also contributed seeds for future inquiry around whether or not partners should be held accountable for academic outcomes beyond their control.

The principal and partner, respectively, describe how they measure results:

To make sure that the kids are getting into college and to do so with the financial literacy skills not to go into debt number 1, in getting into college and number 2 as just a working individual that is going to be, you know, that is going to be presented with credit cards when they get in there ...What does it mean to have a loan, college loan what is to ya know what does the percentage rate mean, so its just anything that has to do with finances as they’re move into the adult world

Well, obviously, [in regards to using data to guide decision-making, we have to look at the outcomes for the program and obviously that's data in itself—Well with-- now let's go back to we are 100% graduating, 100% post-secondary or skill, post-secondary enrollment, military or - what's the work I am looking for?

*Table 4.3 – Subtheme Excerpts: Joint Ownership and Accountability of Results*

| <b>Sub Themes</b>             | <b>Principal</b>   | <b>Partner</b>  |
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| <b>Expected Outcomes (EO)</b> | <p><i>“Um, I’m sure that there are- but that’s something I’d probably have to get you because I mean, there is a timeline of all the lessons that are done, that’s all planned out as well, I know”</i></p> <p><i>“To make sure that the kids are getting into college and to do so with the financial literacy skills not to go into debt number 1, in getting into college and number 2 as just a working individual that is going to be, you know, that is going to be presented with credit cards when they get in there ...What does it</i></p> | <p><i>“[outcomes are] evaluated according to this. That, along with their curriculum requirements, they're evaluated and then they have the opportunity to go on a week trip. We take a ....last year we went-- we did a college and financial tour and the year before we did we went to Washington DC we did educational.”</i></p> <p><i>“[To measure progress] I guess it would be the same -- we go back to outcomes and some of the things with our life skills and soft skills part portion. [the foundation has] worked really hard to tighten up some things because [the former teacher] and I used to just come to class and not necessarily have all of our curriculum</i></p> |

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| <p><i>mean to have a loan, college loan what is to ya know what does the percentage rate mean, so its just anything that has to do with finances as they're move into the adult world"</i></p> <p><i>"a big part of the curriculum is that they create a portfolio and this portfolio has their resume has anything that has to do with colleges has a budget they have to create for their first year in college"</i></p> | <p><i>written down or what we were doing and [current teacher] I have, literally, gone through and lesson plan for all of our life skills classes and so I really feel like that's tightened up quite a bit."</i></p> <p><i>"[performance measures are] just part of -- it was already built into the program, there are pre and post. As far as the life skills and soft skills portion, that evaluation happens at the end. I mean, we certainly have a complete -- when they go through their panel interview and they're evaluated and then I have books that they are creating a portfolio and in that it's called a Me File, it's all about me. In that they have to get four letters of recommendation, they have to complete a resume and they have to have all of their certificates of achievement and awards things that, basically, that if they're going to apply for college I mean going to make a college application this book can go with them."</i></p> <p><i>"Everything that they need is going to be in one place, all of their report cards GPAs, all of those things and that book is completed by the end of the program. When they go to their panel interviews, they have to bring their book with them and people that are in the panel to the chance to look through it and see and ask questions, accordingly."</i></p> <p><i>"[we looked at] all their binders and made notes and we were just like, 'Okay, they're not getting this.' We went through all the workbooks to see where they were to monitor their progress. Basically, yesterday was a day of, "All right guys, this is important. If you really are 100% in you want to participate in this until the end, you got to do this right. This is not just, you show up, you get candy and you leave. This is for you."</i></p> |
| <p><b>Measurable Outcomes (MO)</b></p> <p><i>"I guess we would say [data used] is qualitative...because its always debriefing and reflecting to see what worked and what didn't work and um like i said because its um been an annual program and event</i></p>  | <p><i>"We do [have expected outcomes], we have a pre-test and a post-test. Post-test that we do, so, that really gives us an opportunity to see what our outcomes are, timeline obviously is our calendar throughout the school year we have a set calendar and basically, everything is laid out. We have community service events</i></p>   |



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| <p><i>then we really see what more smoothly what works we make adjustments where we need to.”</i></p> <p><i>“this kid you know, um graduated from Deerborne Charities business boot camp he’s now going into business and finance at University of Florida. He got a really good foundation of it here and he got to see this business and he got to meet this person and you know really solid resume and we got to tap him into this scholarship so there’s just so many ways that this program and this partnership helps our students”</i></p> <p><i>“Among the participants I would say the success of the participants as measured in various ways such as college acceptances scholarships they’ve received you know completion of the portfolio and then level of quality in which they’ve done the activities”</i></p> | <p><i>that they have in mandatory to participate in like twice a year and then we do a couple of field trips as well.”</i></p> <p><i>“[data are] not really [used to guide decision-making]”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, [data are used formally or informally to guide long-term goals], I mean that’s -- it sounds like such a technical term because basically we’re just saying that we’re giving them the information of the kids that have stayed and so on and so forth. I mean that’s -- yes.”</i></p> <p><i>“And obviously the school grade is also a pretty great reflection as to where we are but there is a massive amount of data. I mean, obviously they come through the school. We have the reading assessments, the math assessments. We are aware of all of these things and so for us we can really look at where we are progressing in the areas of need. I think the biggest challenge we have, and I am sure that most schools have this challenge, is staff moving to different positions leaving the school and then having to fill those spots.”</i></p> <p><i>“ [in terms of the data like reading scores and school grade], I don’t think you could really take one away from the other, because they all go hand in hand. I think the data that we get on the assessments from the testing which is unfortunate because that old testing system is skewed. But I think that helps us to really be able to improve our strategic plan and move to a direction. You can’t really just take the graduation data and not also consider the data that leads to that.”</i></p> |
| <p><b>Account-ability (AC)</b></p> <p><i>“ I don’t know - um if someone [from the business partner] doesn’t show up- I’m like, [partner leader], what the heck? And then she’ll be like I don’t know what happened and then we follow up and be like why didn’t you who up then they tell us and then they show up the next time so i guess communication - but that rarely happens because</i></p>   | <p><i>“I don't think there is any [roles crossing organizational boundaries].”</i></p> <p><i>“No. I mean other than the fact that I’m on the actual that governing board I don't know if that would be a boundary, I don't know. In that aspect, I am responsible for her evaluation as part of a being board member so, she’s accountable to the actual board. But outside of that, I don't view our partnership in a way that</i></p>   |

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*its also like having enough people involved so its jumping in where you need to"*

*I'm her boss or something like that."*

*"Honestly, because we've been doing it for five years. It runs like a well-oiled machine it's not like we're recreating the wheel or reinventing the wheel each time and obviously, sometimes we get together and we say, "Hey, maybe we can do this differently"*

*"[I would rate follow up on progress as] 80%."*

*"[In regards to holding each other accountable] "Well, obviously that would be through data when we have-- we set up the criteria for the students and as we go through them we monitor process and....that would be in exactly what I was telling you. What happened last week when we were seeing that certain things were not taking place and just basically going back and through communication across the partnership assessing where things are and saying okay, obviously we are not in that building every day."*

*"The people that are in that building are the ones that can see and know what is going on." So it is extremely important that that information is disseminated back to us and that we clearly define roles and responsibilities going back to like we go back to the binders, go back to the workbooks that these are things that should be checked. Treated as if this is your class and how you would evaluate and how you would hold them accountable, and that is the way that we want things to happen. But if that is not clearly defined in the beginning then there is a communication problem, which we have solved. So anyway, I hope that answers."*

*"I go back to what I told you before. I really feel like in my self-evaluation, I should have been a little bit more proactive in the interview process. I feel like in my management, that that would be an area that I would have to grade myself and say, 'You failed there.' Not that this can't work, but I guess, because everything happened so fast and I really didn't spend*

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|  | <p><i>enough time, I was more in getting it going on. I wasn't maybe sitting back and saying, "Okay, let's sit down. Let me get to know this person and see if it's a good fit."</i></p> <p><i>"Well, here's the thing. You have to follow the money. You have to understand that the way that I am governed, or my boss is, is funding a program, it's very important that we're extremely hands-on in the way that things are implemented. That's not saying that were in control, it's talking about accountability. With some of the other programs, things are run differently."</i></p> <p><i>"That might be a little bit different. But with the amount of funding that goes into this, and the fact that I'm accountable for this from top to bottom- they're not being evaluated by [the founder], I am. They're being evaluated by me, and that information is going back to him. But he's holding me accountable for this entire process."</i></p> |
| <p><b>Data (D)</b></p> <p><i>"[Data are used in decision-making] when those outcomes in terms of percentages of college acceptances completion of the program - i bet there is GPA tracking at the end to- i probably may just not know about it."</i></p> <p><i>"[Data used to assess partnership effectiveness] i guess we would say its qualitative...because its always debriefing and reflecting to see what worked and what didn't work and um like I said because its um been an annual program and event then we really see what more smoothly what works we make adjustments where we need to."</i></p> <p><i>"This kid, you know, um graduated from [the program] business boot camp he's now going into business and finance at University of Florida. He got a really good foundation of it here and he got to</i></p> | <p><i>"Yes, [data is shared between partners], they're there, you know, what I'm saying? This is-- they're constantly there. Yes, I would say with [a bank manager] who's the head of community relations for a Bank here in [the city], she's basically, their boss when it comes to sending the employees out but yes, I mean we all, obviously, share information back and forth and they take information back to her."</i></p> <p><i>"Well, obviously, [in regards to using data to guide decision-making, we have to look at the outcomes for the program and obviously that's data in itself—Well with-- now let's go back to we are 100% graduating, 100% post-secondary or skill, post-secondary enrollment, military or - what's the work I am looking for?"</i></p>  |

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| <p><i>see this business and he got to meet this person and you know really solid resume and we got to tap him into this scholarship so there's just so many ways that this program and this partnership helps our students"</i></p> <p><i>"I would say the success of the participants as measured in various ways such as college acceptances scholarships they've received you know completion of the portfolio and then level of quality in which they've done the activities"</i></p> |   |
| <p><b>Scale</b>      <i>No references to scale</i></p>  | <p><i>"We've done programming at [Springs] Community Center and actually we just implemented an adult and a youth financial literacy program there and we're going into [Jones] Middle School to offer financial literacy at [Jones], as well. Obviously, we had the school and we said, "Well, let's start there." We've been there for five years and now we're starting to branch out to other areas as I just said."</i></p> <p><i>"[Springs] Community Center is in [town] Springs and it's an enterprise community, and pretty impoverished. So, we're dealing with different demographic with students. Then add our school which will be the same to [Jones] too because [Jones] is a Title I school as well, I believe. It will be interesting to see, how it goes. I mean, [Jan] is working."</i></p> <p><i>"Well, let me put it to you this way. When we started, the first time, the first class that we had, we had about 20 students. In last year, registration we had 45, this year get 65 kids register. We can only take 40 because of the classroom size. I think, obviously, we're moving in the right direction. There's a lot of interest from the students and the parents. I mean, I don't know if that answers your question."</i></p> <p><i>"Implementing the program at [Springs]"</i></p> |

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*Community Center and she will be working with Jones, as well.*

*But with the partnership that we have, with [Springs Community Center], Hope [Laura] is the program director over there. So she's working directly with Hope and what she is doing, is going through the book and kind of taking some things out that they feel like will not really apply to the students."*

*"You really do have that option when you go through the program to customize it, and that's kind of where we're at with [Springs] Community Center and in Jones there's a middle school"*

*"Actually, [the program at Jones] starts this week. [Charlene Dominguez] is the assistant principal over there. [Charlene] was my partner at [Deerborne Charities] and she got hired as the AP of curriculum at [Jones], so now, we're going to expand our partnership to there as well.*

*"She's on our board. She has approached us with the opportunity to have this, actually, implemented as part of the curriculum during school and the kids are credited with; she said, "there is not a high school that has a financial literacy program."*

*"No. [we do not have a Memorandum of Agreement]"*

*"So, this may actually end up morphing into a classroom situation, in school credited"*

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## **EMERGENT THEMES**

Themes are identified as "bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone" (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). Indeed, these excerpts are empty without the context provided in this research, including an insular PK-12 ecosystem, a partnership history fraught with acrimony, and a new wave of private capital flooding the education space. Taken in this broader view, however, this research has uncovered three key themes that are enduring and transferable— a micro extension of the macro. These are: partnerships built on *substance*; partnerships with high levels of *embeddedness*; and partner leaders who *trust one another*.

### **Partnerships Built on Substance**

Partnerships are most effective when the collaboration is viewed as mutually valuable, and when each individual's commitment to the arrangement is encouraged (Hands, 2005). In this partnership, the promotion of social capital among the students and families is a clear, shared objective, albeit partners had different ways of articulating this. Neither participant ever used the words "social capital," yet both agreed that the priority was to give students experiences beyond their immediate network, and to prepare them for a life after graduation. "Hopefully they see themselves in the future with [these] opportunities," the principal stated.

This is a notable goal given that a major benefit of partnerships is exposure to positive caring relationships and access to vital social capital (Sanders, 2003).

The benefits were captured most poignantly in statements made by the school principal.

Because [students are] spending every week with [partners] there's an opportunity that they have to connect to somebody that will help the student, or to say, 'hey I know you're looking for a job in hospitality, I have somebody at Hilton you can apply with.' And our kids have gotten jobs as a result of those relationships so, it's definitely networking too.

The fact that social capital is *the* one common objective speaks to the very nature of beyond-the-fringe partnerships and the benefits of building horizontal ties (Keith, 1996). During one observation, for example, the students were delving deep into the art of bargain shopping and negotiating for the best price on purchases. Through videos, classroom discussion and follow-along activities, the students considered the finer details of price markups, walk-away power, cost-benefit analysis, consignment shopping, and the importance of maintaining integrity when striking a deal.

Similar lessons were offered in units spanning financial literacy themes like consumer awareness, budgeting and saving, buying cars and homes, and paying taxes. While some of these topics are covered in a typical economics course, the level of breadth and depth offered here serves as a perfect example of My Brother's Keeper Blueprint for Action (2014), which calls for "locally driven efforts that are more comprehensive in addressing the educational, physical, social and emotional needs of young people (My Brother's Keeper Blueprint for Action, 2014).

Even participants' mentions of specific academic results were related to the broader mission of expanding horizons. For example, rather than focusing on

immediate indicators like grades, discipline, or attendance, participants echoed longer-term outcomes of college admission, scholarships, expanding social networks, and controlling personal debt. “Our number one goal,” the partner noted, “is to see that the students are enriched through advanced education and financial literacy, and that they are rewarded by a life-changing experience.”

We really go into the corporate community ...and bring in CEOs and attorneys, and accountants and different people in positions of authority and we have the COO for the [local sports franchise] that's on the panel.

Note that many of the outcomes mentioned are not measurable at all.

Repeated probing for objective academic indicators—often the drivers of school-wide curriculum policy—resulted in a response like this:

[The goal of the partnership is] to make sure that the kids are getting into college, and to do so with the financial literacy skills [they need] not to go into debt. Number one, in getting into college, and number two, as just a working individual, [managing] credit cards when they get in there.

The partner concurred, stating that “as a non-profit, it's our goal to serve people in the community, and it benefits us because it offers the opportunity, a population and a destination for us to serve.”

[Students] are creating a portfolio and in that it's called a Me File, it's all about me. In that they have to get four letters of recommendation, they have to complete a resume and they have to have all of their certificates of achievement and awards... things that, basically, that if they're going to apply for college I mean going to make a college application this book can go with them.

While acknowledging that one cannot ignore leading indicators like standardized reading and math scores, the reduced emphasis on pre- and post- tests



is empirical evidence that external providers can move schools beyond the regulatory regime (Sun, Frank, Penuel, & Kim, 2013), and it supports the notion that partners can act as agents for creativity and alternative thinking. “My thought process is not of a school process,” the partner recalled. “Let's go back to [the fact that] we are graduating 100% [ f our students], 100% are achieving post-secondary enrollment [or] military...that's the work I am looking for.”

On a sector level, focusing on substantive, if opaque, objectives tied to upward mobility negates concerns that partners are motivated by self-serving, shortsighted objectives (Stone, 2001). It is a direct contradiction that partners are unwilling to invest more heavily in more meaningful challenges, such as reducing poverty or illiteracy rates (Hoff, 2002). And on a site level, Sanders (2003) reminds us that closing the achievement gap among underprivileged students demands that we move beyond the standard academic curriculum, as well the often-myopic instruments by which they are measured. In short, through this partnership the school is able to extend its reach—it's focus—beyond typical school initiatives, and the “the benefits to the kids is immense.”

### **Partnerships with High Levels of Embeddedness**

It is interesting to note that the partner, unlike the principal, viewed this program as being mostly an extra-curricular opportunity. Even in follow-up questioning in the integration domain, the partner replied, “I don't know that there is an answer to this, honestly...[we do not] really do [the program] into the school

day, because it's after school." When asking the principal, however, a long list was cited that described a profoundly embedded arrangement. The principal highlighted how skills are rooted in the economics curriculum and the life skills elective; how habits of mind are integrated into the school day; how teachers and resources are allocated; and most importantly, how families are incorporated into the mission.

So, number one it becomes initially not only something that the students commit to but also the families. We just had the kickoff you know last week and during that kickoff it was for families as well as the students 'cause there are commitment forms that the families and the students signs that basically says that there will be regular attendance

Although not explicitly stated, one can assume that the partner is fully aware of how integration is vital to school-community development. Increased levels of parent involvement in school functions lead to improved academic achievement, motivation, responsibility, and expanded personal confidence (Scales, 2005). As cited in the literature, Mosley and Grogan (2013) determined that the public are more likely to trust community-based organizations to best represent "the views of the residents they serve" (p. 839), a quote that is nearly verbatim from a previous partner leader response: "As a non-profit, it's our goal to serve people in the community ... [the school is] a destination for us to serve."

While participatory functions for families are important, true commitment in any partnership is often measured through the allocation of hard capital, be it time or money. Perhaps more than any other area, a lack of meaningful investment is the single greatest source of conflict between partners (Beabout, 2010; Bennett and

Thompson, 2011; Hoff 2002). This is especially true in reform environments, where partners are eager to institute major change but are unwilling to finance those efforts (Trachtman, 1994).

Yet in this case there were numerous indicators of significant outlays of hard capital unlike the typical sponsorship. “[There is] no resource allocation,” the principal remarked, “the partner provides 100 percent... everything we need.” As for direct financial contributions, this fell unambiguously to the partner. The hard costs of the program—mostly for curriculum materials, a teacher stipend, and the capstone trip— were set at approximately \$80,000. If one accounted for personnel time, the costs could reach well over \$150,000 per year.

The burden of securing this capital fell exclusively to the partner leader

I do grant writing, I do – we have fundraisers. I mean, people that donate on the annual basis. It's really not a cost. The cost of the program as far as, you know...[the business partner] takes care of the curriculum and the materials. Now, on the life skill side, [the foundation partner] provide materials for the students.

In addition, the business partner assigned employees to conduct hands-on financial literacy lessons as well as travel with the students on the capstone trip.

[The Bank] is our partner that offers this curriculum to us, free of charge. Their employees go into the school and they actually implement the class itself while we're there to assist, be there, have incentives for the kids.

Foundation partners were also physically present for most if not all aspects of the program, including instructional time. The partner noted:

I mean, it's a true partnership... when there's things that are needed, when we're at the school with copying or so on and so

forth. It's not an issue... the majority of the resources are from here and the [business partner], obviously, with their employees and with the books and all of the literature...

Even more surprising is how the foundation partners took on mundane tasks in the school. During an observation of a class session, the partner leader worked alongside a foundation staff member to review student binders while a business partner conducted a financial literacy lesson. In many scenarios these responsibilities might be delegated to school-based personnel, yet here the partner liaisons diligently reviewed the "Me Files" of each and every student. Binders included copies of report cards, letters of recommendation, a detailed list of extra-curricular activities, a completed resume, and PSAT and SAT scores.

[We looked at] all their binders and made notes and we were just like, "Okay, they're not getting this." We went through all the workbooks to see where they were to monitor their progress. Basically, yesterday was a day of, "All right guys, this is important. If you really are 100% in you want to participate in this until the end, you got to do this right. This is not just, you show up, you get candy and you leave. This is for you."

Lastly, the high levels of embeddedness were evident in how the program maintained continuity through change. For instance, during the course of the investigation a business employee was no longer able to participate in school activities. A similar situation occurred when the teacher liaison was reassigned at the beginning of the year. Seamlessly, each vacancy was filled without disruption to the program. The partner and principal, respectively, recall their experiences filling vacancies:

Well, [James] is not doing it anymore. They've expanded his territory so, he's going from here all the way down to [another

region] and so I've got two, [Jim] and [Jack] and [Maggie] both work for [the business partner] and they're volunteering their time.

[The process for filling vacancies] works, yes, because [the teacher] is new to the position this year and it was – she was kind of involved with some of the activities last year so she was identified as a teacher that knew about the program, was an elective teacher so maybe didn't have as heavy as a course load and would be able to take it on. That's why she was asked to be the teacher lead on [the program].

Given the fragility of school-business partnerships, one cannot take for granted that transitions will occur so smoothly. Rather, in many arrangements it would be the norm to see a program deteriorate absent charismatic leaders.

### **Partners Who Trust One Another**

When beginning this investigation my own experiences led me to expect instances of misalignment and distrust between partners. These biases are most evident in the research questions chosen for this study. Yet, what I encountered was not a relationship forged on misgivings (Bradshaw, 2000), but rather the exact opposite. What I observed were partners with immense trust for one another, and much to my surprise, little ambiguity around decision-making and authority. “I wouldn't say we have defined roles and responsibilities,” the principal noted, “I think it's mutually understood who does what.”

Remarkably, questions on the *who* and *what* were often delegated to the partner. This included critical matters around resource allocation, curriculum purchases, teacher assignments, and accountability of personnel. “I pretty much run the program,” the partner responded, “and if there were things that [the principal]

had questions about, obviously, she could come to me. But the decision is basically, made here, in this office.” In a more specific follow-up response, the partner noted that if “it pertains to finance, [it] would be [me making the decision]. As it pertains to the educational aspect, it would be [a shared decision].”

...Because we are the one financing and implementing that part of the program, I pretty much do most of the brainstorming from here. [The Principal] is not really involved in that.

The principal concurred with this arrangement, stating that she was satisfied receiving updates and “just hearing about what the kids are doing and then celebrating with them.” “I embrace people who step up and...run the program,” she noted.

In defining indicators of effective partnerships, the PEC Domain on communication explicitly states, “collaboration among partner organizations is characterized by deep trust, mutual respect, and regular and effective interaction.” These indicators were most evident in observations between the school-based team and the partner leader. In one team meeting, for example, the partner leader served as the primary facilitator, providing calendars, agendas, and other materials to the teacher and assistant principal. The team worked together collegially, even laughing and exchanging high fives. While there were some mild disagreements, there was little doubt as to who was in charge. “I am very much a behind-the-scenes worker,” the partner claimed, “but if I tell you something is going to get done, you can be sure it's going to happen.”

As to trust and mutual respect, perhaps nothing is more telling than the full

discretion afforded the partner to not only manage the team, but also select the teacher leader. The principal's outright deference in this regard was a living contradiction of the low risk, protective stances that leave many school-based activities outside the influence of partners, particularly in matters of personnel and curriculum (Bradshaw, 2000, Beabout, 2010). On the contrary, the partner here had full control over both domains. The "school is part of me," the partner recalled, "and I think it's obvious to [the principal] that my goal is strictly for the benefit of the kids in the building." In a follow-up interview asking the partner to what this level of trust could be attributed, she responded as follows:

Well, I think it goes back to when [the principal] was hired...there were a lot of questions, a lot of learning...really relying on her board for information and assistance to grow the school...There was a level of respect from the beginning, because [the school founder] and I both are founding board members, and obviously, once again, his name is on the building.

When prompting the school leader on the same question, she responded that she takes a hands-on approach when needed. She also recalled that during the early stages of the partnership decisions were much more collaborative, but that "once it was set...[it] pretty much falls on the decision with [the partner] running it. Now, she runs with it, it's been very successful and it's sustained over the past several years."

If someone [like a business employee] doesn't show up, 'I'm like, ... what the heck?' And then [the partner leader] will be like I don't know what happened, and then we follow up...but that rarely happens because it's also like having enough people involved, so its jumping in where you need to...

Interestingly this actually occurred during an observation in which the business employee did not arrive. The foundation partners filled in as teachers without incident.

### ***Power, Domination and Resistance***

The implications of this dynamic are not to be understated. As mentioned in the challenges section of this research, concerns have persisted for decades around unclear roles for external providers and conflicting goals between school leaders and partners (Bennett & Thompson, 2011; Riley, 2004). Given this, the notion that a school principal would yield authority in this manner to an outside organization was nothing short of a revelation to this researcher. Yet it also spoke to the power that comes when trust and continuity are abundant.

Without question the maturity of the relationship, which was on its sixth year at the time of this investigation, played a big role in the level of autonomy given to the partner. Nonetheless, the nuances of this partnership, especially an outside partner who is also a board member, coupled with quotes like “we are both board members” and “his name is on the building” brings to light questions of domination and resistance raised by Burroway and Gluckman. For example, was the principal genuinely trusting or was she fearful to take a more assertive role against a partner who was technically her supervisor? While initially viewed as a limitation, this relationship served as an ideal microcosm of the blended capital paradox. It was truly a living “constellation of institutions located in time and space that shape the



domination and resistance” (Burroway, 1991, p. 282).

To explore this concern, a series of follow-up questions were posed to each participant. The questions centered on the data gathered from the interviews and observation, as well as relevant literature pertaining to shared decision-making and authority. It was important throughout the investigation to make the partners feel comfortable about sharing their thoughts; this was perhaps the closest we would delve into conflict between the partner leaders, if it existed. As with the previous interviews, an overt attempt was made to frame these questions in a manner that would not place participants in a protective stance themselves.

*Table 4.4 – Follow-up Questions on Authority and Decision-making*

|                             | <b>Principal</b>  | <b>Partner</b>  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Authority</b>            | <i>I observed a principal who trusted a partner very unconditionally to manage a school-based team, and really, to just make most of the decisions. To what do you attribute that level of trust?</i> | <i>I observed a principal who trusted you very unconditionally to manage a school-based team and really to just make most of the decisions. To what do you attribute that level of trust?</i> |
| <b>Autonomy</b>             | <i>The management of the team, it was wonderful to see how the team interacted. Do you have any reflections on allowing the partner to manage the school-based team as a partner?</i>                 | <i>The management of the team, it was wonderful to see you interacting and to see how the team interacted. Do you have any reflections on managing the school-based team as a partner?</i>    |
| <b>Power and Resistance</b> | <i>Do you think there's any apprehension or fear to speak up because of the unique relationship, specifically a partner who is also a board member to speak out about any aspect of the program?</i>  | <i>Do you think there's any apprehension [from the principal] or fear because you're a board member to speak out about any aspect of the program?</i>   |
| <b>Decision-Making</b>      | <i>The last question is about the decision-making. One of the pieces</i>  | <i>The last question is about the decision-making. One of the pieces that I look at,</i>  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p><i>that I look at...is just how partners make decisions. What was really interesting in this partnership is you make most of the decisions. As a former school leader, that to me is remarkable. It really is. Can you reflect on this?</i></p> | <p><i>and this is just how partners make decisions, what was really interesting in this partnership is you make most of the decisions. As a former school leader, that to me is remarkable. It really is. Can you reflect on this?</i></p> |
|--|--|--|

When asking the partner explicitly if this unique relationship may have contributed to a fear of speaking up, she responded with a blunt one-word answer:

“no.” When prompted for more detail she responded as follows:

Well, here's the thing. You have to follow the money. You have to understand that the way that I am governed, or my boss is...is funding a program. It's very important that we're extremely hands-on in the way that things are implemented. That's not saying that we're in control, it's talking about accountability. With some of the other programs, things are run differently.

A statement like “you have to follow the money” may be interpreted a number of ways. However, given the context here, one can assume that the high levels of investment (or embeddedness) brought by the partner inspire a certain level of confidence expressing this bold view. Put another way, the partnership philosophy, which includes a more hands-on approach by the partner, is inextricably tied to the resources the partner brings to the table. For the partner, the school is receptive to this approach or they are not; as the principal (or school), you either want a partner that is fully committed or you do not. For better or worse, there is no middle ground. And perhaps that is a good thing.

We [are] basically in a partnership with people who are willing to go ahead and implement programs and we go ahead and we provide the resources. At the same time, we're involved, but maybe not as hands-on as we are over at the school. That might be a little bit different.

When asking the principal the same question, she shared a nearly identical response:

I have no problem [with the partner leader being a board member]. It's definitely not a control thing because, like I said, she's a founding member of the school. It is as much her school as it is my school. It's our school so I have no reservations about having her completely run the program because I know she has the students best interest at heart.

While, in this case, a deeper partner involvement appears to be a net positive, it is important to consider all of the variables in play. In this regard, this case had several advantages in its corner, not the least of which are two leaders with complementary leadership styles and a school that is currently performing at a high level. The fact that it is a charter school is also an important consideration. Changes in any of these, among other variables, could result in different responses. Or they could result in even more questions, like "how much embeddedness is too much?" or "can too much embeddedness present a conflict of interest?"

Alas, we will never fully answer all of these questions from one or even a multitude of cases, nor will we agree on a simple "good" or "bad" determination of this control paradigm. But we can make informed assumptions when comparing the takeaways from this case with the vestiges of past failed arrangements. More specifically, we can glean deliberate decisions that blunted concerns around authority between school-based leaders and outside partners.

For starters, there appeared to be minimal misalignment in regards to scaling the program into new communities. While the partner did have aspirations of expanding into new schools, there were few references that pointed to this being a

primary focus. Second, there were clearly defined roles and systems of communication. Whether or not these are conventional best practices (i.e. the principal makes all decisions or partners should meet face-to-face) is not a concern; the fact is it worked. According to the partner this was not always the case.

So it is extremely important that information is disseminated back to us and that we clearly define roles and ... Treated as if this is your class and how you would evaluate and how you would hold them accountable, and that is the way that we want things to happen. But if that is not clearly defined in the beginning then there is a communication problem, which we have solved.

Also related to this, the partners' understanding of the important role site-based leaders play was a direct rebuke of historical biases that saw schools as beneficiaries of partnerships rather than equal contributors (Hoff, 2002). The partner was keenly aware of the dependence on each another.

What happened last week when we were seeing that certain things were not taking place, and just basically going back and through communication across the partnership assessing where things are and saying okay, obviously we are not in that building every day. The people that are in that building are the ones that can see and know what is going on.

The appreciation for mutual interdependence extended beyond academics, as the partners collaborated on initiatives related to fundraising, public relations, and student incentives.

Her being a board member I've worked with her on other projects. We're on the development committee together. When she did charity events for their - for charities and she well, invite the students and invite me out it gives showcasing the school where it's celebrating the students. We're in that, doing that together.

Likewise, the partner had a firm understanding of the importance of accountability. Especially in a philanthropy sector where there are few accountability measures, the partner's sensitivity here most certainly enhanced the relationship, if even implicitly.

...with the amount of funding that goes into this, and the fact that I'm accountable for this from top to bottom – they're not being evaluated by [the head of the foundation], I am. They're being evaluated by me, and that information is going back to him. But he's holding me accountable for this entire process.

The partner even went as far as to take responsibility for her own decisions in selecting personnel. She shared how, in retrospect, she should have been more thorough in vetting the teacher leader position. Facing a time crunch, she accepted the former teacher's recommendation, which itself was based primarily on availability.

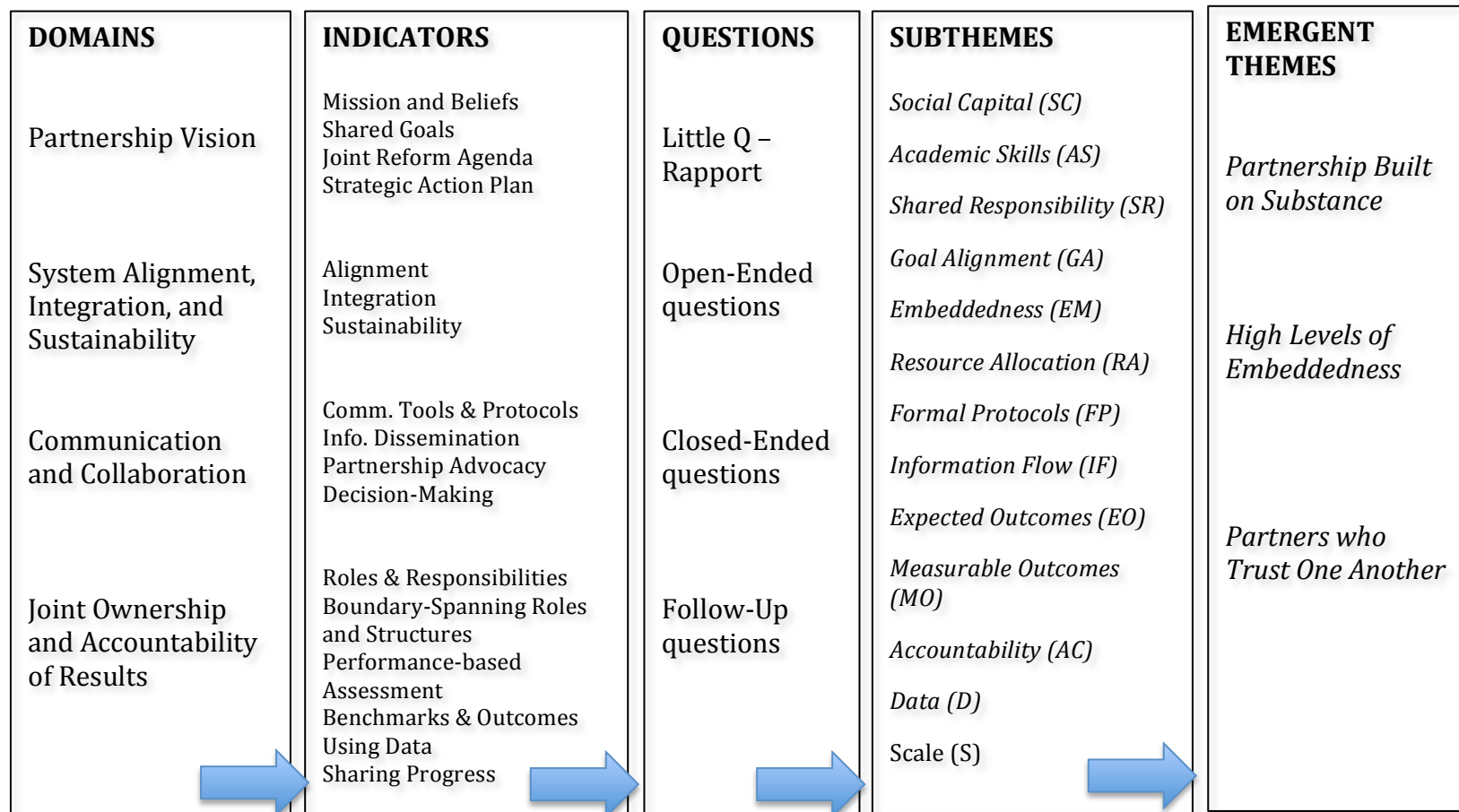
I really feel like in my self-evaluation, I should have been a little bit more proactive in the interview process. I feel like in my management, that that would be an area that I would have to grade myself and say, "You failed there." Not that this can't work, but I guess, because everything happened so fast and I really didn't spend enough time, I was more in getting it going on....Once again, it's on me that I didn't take the time to do that.

Last but not least, the greatest contributor to overcoming power concerns may go back to why the partners chose to collaborate in the first place. Too often partnerships are not based on a genuine need, nor are they rooted in the school mission (Bouillion & Gomez, 2001). Rather, arrangements often lack coherence and are implemented on a shallow level. The term "Christmas tree schools" is used to describe such relationships (Bryk et al, 1998).

Yet that was not the case here. Instead, the leaders established a clear genuine problem first and worked backward, maintaining a steadfast focus on long-term objectives tied directly to students and families. It was not only what the students, the school, and the community needed; it was simply what made sense (MacDowell, 1989). In a partnership landscape that grows noisier by the day, the ability to make sense is perhaps the greatest lesson learned from this successful PK-12 blended capital partnership.

*Illustration 4.0 – Evolution of Emergent Themes:*

This investigation generated interview questions based on indicators found in four selected Domains in the Wallace Foundation Partnership Effectiveness Continuum. Through an iterative process of open-ended, closed-ended, and follow-up questions, 13 subthemes were generated that informed our understanding of this PK–12 partnership in a blended capital context. From these subthemes, three emergent themes were generated suggesting areas of emphasis moving forward and implications on research, theory, and practice.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The primary goal of this investigation was to define PK–12 partnerships through a new blended capital lens, and then to use Extended Case Method to identify a set of overarching themes that would help us better understand how school leaders and outside partners share decision-making and accountability in this ecosystem. Through semi-structured interviews and observations, this research produced 13 subthemes that articulated how partners set goals, how they set out to accomplish these goals, and how leaders worked together to hold each other accountable. Yet it was not until these subthemes were coalesced into a broader historical and theoretical perspective that the real story began to take shape. Ultimately, this investigation identified three emergent themes that made this case a harbinger of successful PK–12 blended capital partnerships moving forward. These include: a) partnerships built on substantive outcomes, b) partnerships with high levels of embeddedness, and c) partners who trust one another.

This research extends current theory on school partnerships by supporting existing beliefs that collaborations are most effective when each partner is viewed as an equal, and when outcomes are focused on objectives that meet enduring needs of students and families, even if it is not quantifiable in the traditional academic sense. This reinforces findings from previous studies in two ways: a) partnerships



should be focused on solving meaningful challenges, such as poverty, literacy and dropout rates, rather than on marginal issues with little substance (Hoff, 2002; Sanders, 2003; Bathgate & Silva, 2010). The singular focus on building social capital among students—embodied through expanded financial literacy skills and networks—is perhaps a nascent ideal for defining *substance*, if not a model. b) Partners play a vital role in connecting high-quality constructive learning activities during after-school hours that impact positive social and behavioral outcomes (Miller, 2011).

In addition, PK–12 blended capital was poignantly represented through a deeply embedded partnership that defined *capital* as more than money; it is also about investing time and sweat in a school. Findings from this case suggest that meaningful investment by the outside agency helped build trust between leaders, and it enhanced the opportunity for outside partners to impact school-wide curriculum and interactions with site-based personnel. This addresses persistent gaps in strategic linkages between what is happening during the school day and after school (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2006). Further, we gleaned how partner leaders build trust for one another over time, over periods of transition, and yes, over email. Collectively, these themes address long-standing concerns about trust between partners and provide fundamental areas of emphasis to better understand the relationships and power dynamics that make PK–12 partnerships click.

### **Limitations**

This case is an admittedly small sample to ascertain definitive conclusions.

Outcomes may vary considerably in a larger data set, in case studies situated in different contexts, or in cases where critical variables have not been controlled. Significant differences may result based on varying personalities or professional backgrounds of participants. For example, partner leaders may be more or less likely to project (perhaps unknowingly) professional credentials as a sense of authority over insiders (teachers and administrators). This was a concern of business-school partnerships in the 1990s, and it may again emerge as certain groups enter into alliances with schools. Likewise, partnerships focused on teacher practice or a host of other initiatives unlike the one analyzed in this study may produce widely different outcomes.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, THEORY AND PRACTICE**

By using a micro version of Extended Case Method, and by incorporating the Partnerships Effectiveness Continuum, this investigation provides a framework to guide subsequent research on school partnerships, particularly where blended capital is involved. Through this research we have provided a broader lens from which to view the benefits and stresses of partnering; we have identified key domains and indicators of effective partnerships; and we have isolated areas of particular emphasis. It is expected, then, that this investigation will provide ecological validity (Braun & Clarke, 2013) for understanding PK-12 partnerships in a new paradigm in which many (if not most) collaborations now live. This includes a firm understating of the history, benefits, and shortcomings of PK-12

partnerships; the criteria and mechanisms for receiving funding in this environment; and an orientation to the unique organizational nuances facing educational leaders as they enter into cross-sector collaborations.

### **Implications for future research**

Given the three emergent themes in this investigation, additional qualitative research is needed to uncover details on important related questions, such as: *How do partner leaders build trust? How do we define “substance”? How do outside partners build high levels of embeddedness? And how much embeddedness is too much?* Important questions posed by this research but that need further analysis include: *What external pressures affect relationships between site-based leaders and partners? Are external partners driven by motives and/or systems of accountability other than school improvement? Do PK–12 leaders exhibit distrust of partners brought by blended capital arrangements? How do the sources of funding facilitate or inhibit the effectiveness of the partnership? How does the need to bring partner-based programs to scale affect all of the above?* Lastly, although beyond the scope of this study, a bounty of research exists in examining the perspectives of teachers and students placed under the direction of an outside organization.

The framework and methods deployed in this study provide a “replication logic” that is transferable from one school to another, and from one community to the next (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 200). Similar case studies or focus groups using analogous participant criteria should provide additional insights to determine the validity of these findings. Central to this, it is proposed that researchers seek out

dyads that closely resemble embedded partnerships with outside agencies, preferably those supported by a foundation. Using methods in this investigation, we may find similar takeaways reinforcing existing theory, or perhaps contradictory findings that move us in a new direction. Conversely, examining cases with comparable participant criteria but focused on different programs may reveal pertinent insights.

To inform our thinking further, this qualitative research may lead to quantitative measures that will peel back the effects of other confounding variables. In turn, these will help us answer additional research questions that can be generalized across groups. For example, with enough cases we could: compare the responses between urban, suburban or rural contexts; determine whether the professional background of participants cause differences in responses; and we could isolate the effects that a school's socio-economic status may have on setting measurable objectives. The overarching themes from this investigation may hasten the creation of tools for gathering these data. Producing a carefully constructed survey around the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum, perhaps asking participants to respond to the closed-ended questions using a scale, would be an appropriate next step. For instance, a survey administered to school principals across different contexts may help us uncover broader patterns that define successful (or unsuccessful) partnerships in urban versus suburban settings, in traditional versus reform environments, and in arrangements that are more or less embedded around curriculum and practice.

More specifically, we could hone in on areas that would help us identify shortcomings in trust, embeddedness and goal alignment. Although this is just a crude example, we could probe for types and levels of stresses and develop a hypothetical score—say, a “Partnership Effectiveness Score.” Conducting a factor analysis or regression study across 200 blended capital arrangements may uncover differences between: urban-suburban arrangements; specific mode of collaboration; type of organizations working with the school; sources of funding, and so forth. Coupling these findings with other valuable data, such as participants’ backgrounds and school indicators, could provide even more insights. At the very least, we could determine which variables in the original subset hang together (Ledakis, 1999), informing new theories or strengthening our understanding of critical areas.

More generally, continued scientific research is needed to evaluate fairly the effectiveness of recent policies emphasizing outside partnerships. Nowhere is this more evident than in models focused on transformation and turnaround schools. Examining the use of LTPs in low-achieving schools should be the highest priority. In addition, we must seek out better mechanisms for measuring the impact of family and community assets on academic outcomes. “Through what mechanisms and under what conditions,” Corbett (2011) writes, “do specific elements of parent [and community] involvement influence critical student attributes and outcomes?” (p. 10).

## **Implications for theory**

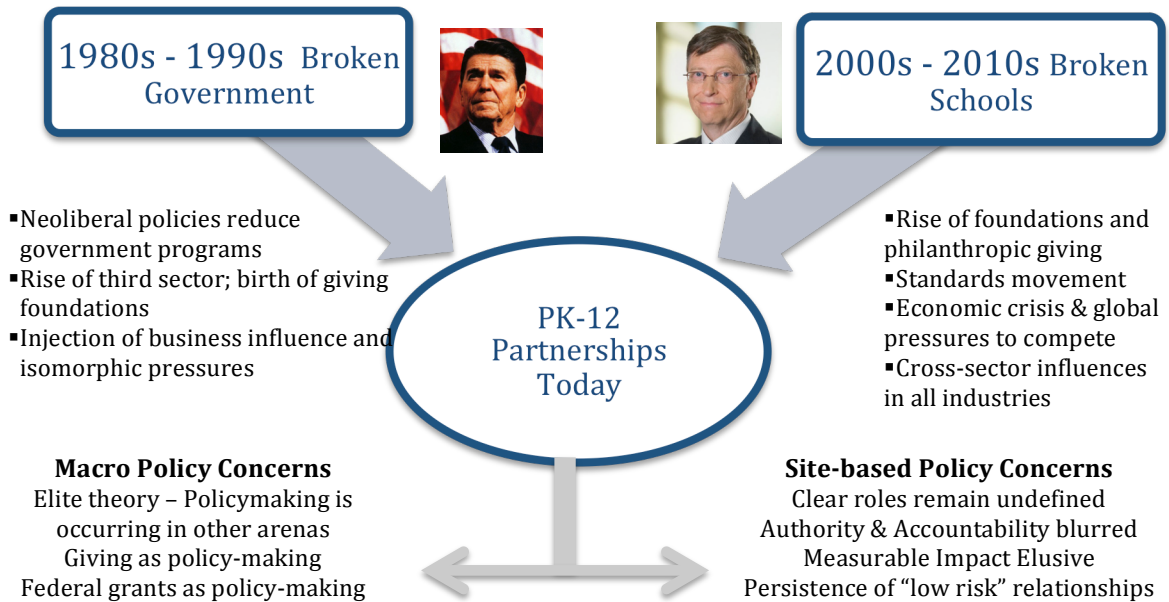
A fundamental premise of this investigation is the belief that a proliferation of organizations doing business in education will not only transform how schools meet their constituents' academic, social, and emotional needs, it will also transform how leaders at all levels share power in the PK–12 sector. In terms of policy, this means that once polarized dichotomies of “private” versus “public” or “traditional” versus “reform” must now operate in a gray space where no one camp (or agency) holds all of the power—or owns all of the risk. We are indeed in a new era of blended capital where governments, like other impact investors, play the role of facilitators maximizing each group's comparative advantage. When the public sector provides direct funding to schools, they do so by hedging others' investments—increasingly, those of burgeoning foundations and private industry—and by tying the initiative to a new way of doing business.

This study's insights make several contributions to theory in this context. The proposed PK–12 blended capital framework redefines the new paradigm in which these partnerships live and, perhaps most importantly, explains how we got here. The latter is particularly relevant when considering the scale of capital entering the PK–12 sector and the controversy surrounding autonomous investors who may act as unofficial policymakers. As stated in the literature review and articulated in illustration 5.0, there are compelling parallels—and some might say, correlations—between the neoliberal ideologies of the 1980s, which sought to reduce the influence of government and expand mechanisms for private giving, and

the broken schools rhetoric of the 2000s which often drives education reform and, indirectly, the growth of PK-12 partnerships.

The theoretical framework proposed in this research seeks to connect the current macroeconomic and political environment to insights from researchers who have analyzed groups, sectors, and economies in transition under similar circumstances. The work of Michael Buroway and Max Gluckman, coupled with the introduction of Elite theory and Arena Models, extends our understanding of how educational leaders navigate complex relationships through an undercurrent of domination and resistance (Buroway, 1991). While acknowledging that cross-sector collaboration and blended capital is not a phenomenon specific to the PK-12 sector, this study highlights a historical record that does not weigh favorably for school-based leaders (Cuban, 2004; Abowitz, 2000). Indeed, while the promise of co-production is undeniable, the fact remains that for decades PK-12 partnerships have been beleaguered by problems ranging from ambiguous roles for external partners to inconsistent goals between school leaders and outside agencies. There are also longstanding apprehensions about a private sector that does not view schools as equal partners, but rather as one-sided recipients (Hoff, 2002). Therefore, the theoretical implications of this investigation reiterate the urgent need to prepare leaders to manage collaborations with a new breed of partners that are more embedded in practice, in matters of curriculum, and even personnel.

Illustration 5.0: Evolution of PK-12 Partnerships – A Theoretical View



<sup>1</sup> Anfara, V. A., & Mertz, N. T. (2006); Fowler, F. C. (1994); Dimaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). Howell, K. (2014); Sun, Frank, Penuel, & Kim (2013); (Starr, 2012); (NCCS, 2014).



## **Implications for practice**

The partnership examined in this investigation exhibited characteristics that not only made it successful, but did so by working beyond the typical fringe initiatives present in the literature. Nowhere is this more evident than the focus on expanding social capital among youth and families. In addition, a case can be made that this arrangement is not just an anomaly created by the leadership of a few charismatic individuals, but rather a model for other blended capital arrangements to emulate. This investigation uncovered two important elements that are worthy of emulation. They are a) rethinking partnerships and b) retraining partners.

### ***Rethinking partnerships***

*Having too many partnerships results in information overload, a lack of coherence or shallow implementation of multiple reforms—what Bryk and colleagues (1998) term “Christmas tree schools.”*

For districts and schools success begins with a philosophical understanding that they have choices when selecting a partner (Sanders, 2003). This includes establishing clear goals that are not one-sided but are founded on common concerns. In this case, social capital and improved financial literacy skills were shared concerns that clearly drove the mission, but having a shared concern is not enough. Berliner (1997) recommends identifying this type of partnership as *Limited, Coalition or Collaborative*. Whereas the Limited framework may be applicable for an after-school tutoring program with a third party group, collaborative partnerships require more formal outcomes and include shared

decision-making. Ensuring these roles and expectations are clarified early on will help outsiders know exactly what is expected of them.

In the relationship represented in this investigation, the outside partner was deeply embedded in many ways, yet there were boundaries that limited expectations, most noticeably around accountability. To be clear, the program in this investigation did have academic objectives, however the targets were never solely based on achievement data that could drive a wedge between partners. Rather than focusing on short-term objectives like test scores, which are all too often present in a data-driven PK–12 culture, these partners set goals tied to long-term indicators—some beyond the scope of either partner to measure. This arrangement embodied the advice that partner leaders should establish environments of trust that contribute to the overall academic achievement of students (Hiatt-Michael, 2003). Voluntary collective responses will only materialize in cohesive communities of interest where all stakeholders share similar values (Paarlberg & Gen, 393).

While it may seem counter-intuitive, Bradshaw (2000) suggests that we should consider the positives of limited curriculum integration, at least where achievement data is concerned. This sentiment is found in numerous studies, including this investigation. There is limited research to suggest that partnerships focused on services versus instruction are the best use of resources (p. 90). Among other reasons, educators expect to be in control with matters related to the regular school day. In this regard, Bouillion & Gomez (2001) suggest that partners establish

a genuine problem first and work backwards. Do not fit the program of study to the partner, but fit the partner to the program of study. It should be an “organic process” that emerges from students' discoveries and discussions. School partnerships that offer the most fulfillments focus on specific areas of curriculum where the outside partner involvement makes sense (MacDowell, 1989, p. 10). In this case, the partners’ supplemented financial literacy skills far beyond what is available in a typical economics course, never mind the immense contribution they made to giving students experiences beyond their immediate circles of influence.

### ***Retraining partners***

The retraining of the partners includes focusing on a) better communication and b) professional development focused on partnerships

*In any type of partnership, each party must engage in communicative relations, relationships that transform each or all through the process of communication — John Dewey, 1925*

### **Improved communication**

It is clear from this investigation that additional training is needed in a variety of areas. Although certainly not unique to this space, both teachers and partners need to develop proficiency for entering into formal contracts with one another. Among the hard skills, teachers and partners should learn how to craft formal memorandums of agreement (MOA), something that was not present in this partnership. MOAs not only help establish roles and boundaries, they can also prove useful when partners need to provide evidence of blended capital funding.

Related, these agreements should establish protocols to delineate whether a partnership is engaged in *First Order* or *Second Order* change (Fullan, 2005). Whereas First-Order change extends current operations and values within the organization, Second-Order change entails a break with the past. Turnaround partnerships require both types. In addition, these contracts should integrate partners in a manner that values interdependence rather than appearing as if one is dependent on the other (Malone, 2011). Create an "enablement framework" where sources of funding are identified and established before the partnership begins (Bradshaw, 2000).

Further, leaders should develop patterns of reciprocity where partners make a concerted effort to truly understand—and respect—the dynamics of the PK–12 sector, not just attempt to transform it (Bennett & Tompson, 2011). Conversely, schools must acknowledge shared ownership with their partners (Hoff, 2002 p. 73), a clear strength in this case. This is best accomplished by creating structures and activities that openly articulate and measure meaningful outcomes important to both groups (Berliner, 1997). Based on this study, “meaningful outcomes” need not be purely quantifiable.

Another hard skill to consider is how leaders can develop better systems of communication, not just between each other but also between the school and the broader community. In this investigation, a premium was placed on communicating internally through email. Additional updates were provided through periodic reports, the school website, and a newsletter. However, with the exception of

mentions in the school bulletin, many of these channels appeared to be internal or initiated out of compliance rather than intentional public relations efforts, especially in regards to highlighting the partnership. In other words, instead of celebrating the partnership's successes with members of the public, one must search through dense documentation. The partner recalled how they shared information with the public:

Well, during board meetings obviously everything is shared and because we are under [state laws] it's also shared via the website....[we put out an annual report]." We have one that's given to the board basically, and it would be available to anyone in the building. I don't really think that we put it on the website to tell you the truth.

This deficit brings to question whether or not principals are prepared to prosper in an environment where proof of success, even if anecdotal, is not just a luxury; it is a requisite for attracting the wide array of impact investors involved in PK-12 funding today. This is truly at the heart of building successful programs to scale, a continued area of emphasis in private grants. It is clear from this research, as well as empirical observations elsewhere, that school leaders are not focused on the transferability of a partnership to other communities; partners, however, should be acutely focused on this.

To be a model of best practices in this domain, then, partner leaders need to establish protocols that incorporate the community through outreach efforts, and through continued co-production. For starters, this means establishing relationships with businesses *before* entering into partnerships—often through public relations efforts. When the time comes to enter into collaboration, partners

should hold strategic conversations with stakeholders that include business leaders, city leaders and educators (Ghysels & Thibododeaux, 2006). Grants like i3, for instance, require participation in *Communities of Practice*. A community of practice is a group of grantees that agree to interact regularly to solve a persistent problem or improve practice in an area that is important to them (Investing in Innovation, 2013). In addition, Katz (2009) suggests that schools develop advisory boards consisting of 15–20 members and conduct meetings at least once per month to promote integrative activities like field trips and classroom participation by employees. At the very least partners need to be more intentional about their processes, terminology, and messaging. Explicitly crafting MOAs—versus just “agreeing”—is a good start.

Successful partners like the one in this case can play an important role in expanding successful PK–12 partnerships in their region. Nielsen and Hayden (1993) provide a summary of best practices for communities seeking to involve local agencies in schools. In an analysis of successful partnerships in South Carolina, they outlined the importance of forming coordinating councils consisting of universities, local chambers of commerce, social service agencies, and other members from the public and private sector. Networking through centers of excellence allowed businesses to share strategies for working with schools, in a sense creating the potential for both the institutional and personal changes espoused by other researchers. Also, the establishment of an *Educational Collaboration* led by superintendents brought the voices of 17 separate agencies

into one common system. Through sharing and protocols on a multitude of fronts, South Carolina leaders proclaimed that “education renewal [was] not a buzzword; it [was] a revolution” (p. 76). Similarly, the partner here could play a vital role building local capacity for more effective collaborations with schools, which in turn would benefit all stakeholders in the long run.

*Professional development focused on partnerships*

Site leaders must understand the different professional perspectives of those who work with students and their families in and beyond the school setting (Camera, 2014). Yet surprisingly studies have shown that a small portion of educators receive training in community involvement (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Thus it is here where the importance of building a new skill set among school leaders is most essential. Doing so would be similar to what occurred in the early 2000s, when a movement emerged to address skill gaps in data-driven and instructional leadership (Grogan & Robertson, 2002).

Initiatives for creative school leadership models should be expanded. The focus of these programs should be to instill emergent skill sets critical to succeeding in a new blended capital framework. This includes new skills around program-building, partnerships, marketing, communications, and fundraising. While still nascent, the ability to forge partnerships has been embedded in some capacity in most leadership rubrics (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Districts and educational leaders should harness this by building explicit professional development and

measurement tools around blended capital arrangements. Attention should be paid to specific partnership-management rather than the more general categories of “parent and community involvement.” Other proposals include establishing partnerships between schools, districts, outside agencies and institutions of higher education that expose leaders to both successful models and local agencies doing work in the K–12 sector. Model programs exist in Philadelphia (Kaimal, Barber, Schulman, & Reed, 2012) and Hillsborough County Schools in Tampa, Florida (King, 2014).

By their very nature, partnerships demand risk-taking and entrepreneurship, qualities that make many educational leaders uneasy (Davis & Molnar, 2014). PK–12 policymakers need to create environments that accept some level of risk and experimentation for site leaders. In this regard, this investigation highlights the benefits of cross-industry collaboration and sharing values across sectors—like entrepreneurship and risk-taking. It also highlights the prevailing thought that PK–12 leaders are in need of skills and expertise from the private sector. If this is the case, then the opposite is also true. External partners need to consider embedding senior members of their organization in the school partnership—that is, actually working in some capacity in the school. This ensures that mutual understanding and respect is embedded in the partnership from the top down, as was the case in this investigation.

Expanding skill sets among educators is not an easy task. This is attached to the broader challenge of diversifying the education profession as a whole. A



primary reason partnerships have been cultivated to begin with is the need for expanded capacity and competencies within the field. This is further compounded by a crisis around a lack of ethnic diversity in the educational leadership ranks. “There is a gap between intention and action when it comes to diversity at the leadership level in the education sector” (Koya Leadership Partners & Education Pioneers, 2014). The 2013 study conducted by Koya Partners and Education Pioneers found that the number of leaders of color dramatically decreases above the director level. Thus, we must continue to invest in efforts to attract a new wave of educators from a wide range of backgrounds, industries and interests. Promising approaches include more partnerships between LEAs, institutions of higher education, and private leadership-centered organizations like Education Pioneers. Education Pioneers’ mission is to partner with philanthropic organizations to “make education the best managed sector in the economy.” They offer a wide range of services to LEAs, with a particular emphasis on attracting new talent from the private sector into education.

## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

It is abundantly clear from the literature presented here that collaboration with community agencies has re-emerged as a significant element driving PK-12 reform. Beyond providing mere goods and services, the nearly 200,000 organizations now doing business in schools can help solve many of the obstinate challenges facing urban education. The codification of policy and funding systems

prioritizing partnerships is a confirmation that schools, like other industries, cannot “go it alone,” but must incorporate multiple stakeholders through a system of co-production. It is also a reminder that blended capital is here to stay. What is also clear is that we must define these collaborations in much broader ways than in the past. As educators, we must broaden our understating of the field to include the disciplines of social services, community involvement, business, entrepreneurship, third sector finance, economic development, and even urban planning. Doing so will ensure that schools can better capitalize on the resources in their community—and this will happen through partnerships.

The good news is that our nation has a long history of collaboration and civic engagement in this regard. “Throughout American history, groups of citizens have voluntarily engaged in collective action to work side by side with government to plan for and actually provide public services” (Paarlberg & Gen, 2009). The difference today, many concede, is that we are no longer seeking out partnerships merely because the government has failed in its duties to provide services. Rather, the government is now a direct participant, with all players acting in concert to address the needs of their constituents. As in any endeavor involving America’s schools, success will be determined by whether all stakeholders take an active role in shaping this wave of reform. Only then will we realize the true potential of PK–12 blended capital partnerships.

Table 5.0: Anatomy of a Study: Examining Successful PK-12 Blended Capital Partnerships

| INSPIRATION   |   | LITERATURE REVIEW  |   | THEORETICAL  |  | INVESTIGATION   |  |  | RECOMMENDATIONS   |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Personal History  | Partnership History   | Benefits   | Concerns  | Elite Theory   | Arena Models   | Methods   | Sub Themes   | Emergent Themes  | Rethink   | Retrain   | Research  |
| Professional experience working in schools with outside partners                                | Pre 1970s - parent organizations  | Partnerships as a democratic imperative: Increased diversity, perspectives | Unclear roles, especially in change environments                            | Elites making all decisions, even if public unaware  | Decisions occurring outside of democratic structures   | Micro ethnography of a single case  | Partnership Vision<br>-Social Capital (SC)<br>-Academic Skills (AS)                | PARTNERSHIPS BUILT ON SUBSTANCE:<br><br>- Social capital as the common objective exemplifies beyond-the-margin partnerships  | Establish Memorandums of Agreement (MOA)  | K-12 leaders are in need of exposure to skills and expertise from the private sector                  | Continued scientific research is needed to evaluate fairly the effectiveness of recent policies             |
| Professional experience working in K-12 reform environments in urban centers                    | 1970s – 1980s Business Partnerships; Nation at Risk a call to action for corporations           | Reduction of “walled in-walled out” dynamic                                | Brief and episodic relationships; Low-risk relationships                    | K-12 seen as an isolated ecosystem now in a market economy   | Decisions not occurring in macro arena through voting or public pressure but by leadership elites through subcommittees, interest groups | “Micro as an extension of the macro” (Burroway)   | System Alignment, Integration, Sustainability<br><br>-Shared - Responsibility (SR) | - Focus on expanding horizons; Reduced emphasis on pre- and post- tests is empirical evidence that external providers can move schools beyond the regulatory regime  | Establish protocols to delineate whether a partnership is engaged in first order or second order change | Invest in efforts to attract new educators from a wide range of backgrounds, industries and interests | Examining the use of turnaround partnerships (LTPs) in low-achieving schools should be the highest priority |
| Professional history with failed school partnerships  | 1980s – 1990s – Neoliberal policies reduce government programs                                  | Medium for new services, creative thinking, and change                     | Short-term focus  | “A bridge has been opened between the K-12 sector and others entering the K-12 space”  | Giving, and more recently foundations, as a vehicle to bypass democratic processes   | “One particular expression of the general” (Burroway)                                     | -Goal Alignment (GA)<br><br>-Embeddedness (EM)                                     | -Focusing on substantive, if opaque, objectives tied to upward mobility negates concerns that partners are motivated by self-serving, shortsighted objectives  | Identify the type of partnership as Limited, Coalition or Collaborative                                 | Build new skill sets among school leaders and teachers, particularly in community development         | Expand research on the Emergent themes in this Investigation  |
| Professional history working with foundations supporting school initiatives                     | 1990s – 2000s - Rise of Foundations impacts rise of private capital in k-12                     | Increased capital—social, financial, human, expertise                      | Outside partners usurping school leaders – “Tyranny of Missionaries”        | Dominant culture grounded in business schools  | Schools are a battleground for shaping the future  | Urban charter setting school with 400+ students   | -Resource Allocation (RA)  | PARTNERSHIPS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF EMBEDDEDNESS:<br><br>- Personnel and resources allocated to program; skills rooted in the curriculum; habits of mind integrated into the school day; and families incorporated into the mission | Create structures and activities that openly articulate and measure meaningful outcomes                 | Expand initiatives for creative school leadership models  | Administer surveys based on this study and/or the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum                       |
| Professional experience in nonprofit sector and fundraising                                     | 2000s - 185,000 private K-12 companies (for- and non-profit)                                    | Increases cross-sector capacity (required in all industries)               | On-the-fringe initiatives; Schools seen as beneficiaries vs. equal partners | Urban centers more vulnerable to outside intervention  | [“Public schools] are the primary sites of struggle over the political and cultural shaping of the next generation”                      | Principal and outside partner (a foundation)  | Communication & Collaboration<br><br>-Formal Protocols (FP)                        | - Significant outlays unlike the typical sponsorship: Partner pays 100% (\$80,000+)  | Consider limited roles for partners   | Build explicit professional development and measurement tools for leaders around partnerships         | Explore new ways to use the Partnership Effectiveness Continuum in research                                 |
| Professional experience with cross-sector collaborations and blended capital                    | 2000s - Maturity of Philanthropic Giving: Impact Investing, Social Innovation, Impact Investors | Increased sustainability, especially with wraparound services              | Lack of measurable impact and accountability                                | Parallels to pre-colonial civilizations and Eastern Europe (Michael Burroway)  | “The rich make a choice: Would I rather donate or pay taxes?”  | Open-ended and Closed-ended interviews based on Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (PEC) | -Information Flow (IF)   | - Partners physically present for most if not all aspects of the program, including instructional time   | Put students first! Partner only if it makes sense, not for the sake of partnering                      | Increase tolerance for risk in K-12 ecosystem   | Design research to compare responses between urban, non-urban, reform environments                          |
| Academic experience in nonprofit fundraising, public relations, and public-private partnerships | 2010s – Major giving foundations fund large scale initiatives (\$100 million plus)              | Improved scalability of innovative ideas                                   | Divergent motives between school leaders and outside partners               | “Constellation of institutions in time and space that shape the domination and resistance.”  | Some argue that nonprofit arms are merely extending the reach of existing privately funded organizations.                                | Observation of partners working together  | Joint Ownership & Accountability of Results<br><br>-Expected Outcomes (EO)         | PARTNERSHIPS BUILT ON TRUST:<br><br>- No ambiguity around decision-making and authority—surprisingly, the partner in control   | Develop Advisory Boards   | Expose K-12 leaders to private sector environments, norms, and procedures                             | Share research with relevant K-12, business, and academic leaders   |
| Professional-academic experience with macroeconomics and educational policy                     | 2010s – 87,000 Private Foundations, many doing business in K-12                                 | Expanded participatory functions for student, parents, public              | Push for scale beyond school objectives                                     | “One need not be a Marxist scholar to benefit from a reading of political economy perspectives this line of research is likely to bring” | 2017 - Betsy DeVos, foundation head and billionaire, appointed U.S. Secretary of Education!  | Follow-up interviews  | -Data (D)<br><br>-Curriculum. Ownership (CO)<br><br>Scale (SC)                     | - School leader trusts partner with school-based team<br><br>- Curricular, embedded focus negates concerns of “low risk” relationships   | Create enablement Framework and Communities of Practice   | Do all of the above respectively for outside partners   | Make research accessible and meaningful to the general public   |

## **APPENDICES**

### List of Appendices

- 1.0 – i3 Eligibility Criteria (requiring partnership)
- 1.1 – i3 Application Example
- 1.2 – i3 Examples of Adequate Evidence of Private Sector Matching
- 1.3 – Recruitment Letter to Network Leaders
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- 1.8 – Interview Protocol – Sample Questions
- 1.9 – Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (all domains)
- 1.10– Interview 1 Script: Open-Ended Questions
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## 1.0 – i3 - Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for an award under the Investing in Innovation Fund, an eligible entity shall—  
(1)(A) have significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(2)); or

(B) have demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement for all groups of students described in such section;

(2) have made significant improvement in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and school leaders, as demonstrated with meaningful data; and

(3) demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with the private sector, which may include philanthropic organizations, and that the private sector will provide matching funds in order to help bring results to scale.

(c) Special Rule. In the case of an eligible entity that includes a nonprofit organization, the eligible entity shall be considered to have met the eligibility requirements of paragraphs (1)(A) or (1)(B) and (2) of subsection (b) if the nonprofit organization has a record of significantly improving student achievement, attainment, or retention and shall be considered to have met the requirements of subsection (b)(3) if it demonstrates that it will meet the requirement relating to private-sector matching.

## 1.1 – i3 Application Example

### *Securing the i3 Private-Sector Match A Resource for Applicants 2014*

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**i3 grantees are required to obtain matching private funds or in-kind donations. The following information describes the i3 matching requirement and includes links to additional resources that eligible applicants may find useful.**

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- I. Overview: Potential grantees under the i3 program are responsible for** obtaining private-sector matching funds or in-kind donations. Development grantees must secure a 15 percent private-sector match; Validation grantees must secure a 10 percent private-sector match; and Scale-up grantees must secure a 5 percent private-sector match (or have requested, as part of their applications, a reduction in the required private-sector match, though the match cannot be waived in its entirety and must be approved by the Department).<sup>3</sup>

Eligible applicants are not required to secure the private-sector match prior to submitting their applications. However, to receive a grant, eligible applicants that are designated as highest-rated by the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) must submit evidence of the private-sector match following the peer review of applications. Each highest-rated applicant, as identified by the Department following peer review of full applications, must submit evidence of half of the required private-sector match prior to the awarding of an i3 grant. An applicant must provide evidence of the remaining half of the required private-sector match no later than six months after the project start date. The grant will be terminated if the grantee does not secure its private-sector match by the established deadline.

To meet that obligation, potential i3 grantees should vigorously pursue all available sources of private monetary and in-kind support, including private business, local charitable and service organizations, individual private donors, as well as regional and national foundations.

To assist potential i3 grantees in meeting the private-sector match requirement, the Department has identified some potential private sector resources below. The Department does not endorse these, or any other specific private-sector

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about the i3 matching requirement, see the *Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) Program Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions* (available on the Department's website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/faq.html>).

source of support to meet the i3 matching requirement, but is providing this information as a service to potential grantees. As noted above, potential i3 grantees should pursue a private-sector match from a variety of sources, not just those listed as potential resources in Section II. Please consider the following requirements pertaining to the match:

- a. Following the peer review of applications, the highest-rated applicants will have several weeks to secure the match and provide evidence of at least half of the required private-sector match.
- b. Only contributions from **non-governmental (private) sources** count towards the matching requirement.
- c. Contributions may be **cash or in-kind**.
- d. Eligible applicants may count **existing private-sector support towards the required match** so long as these funds are **reallocated in support of the proposed project**, and the applicant submits appropriate evidence of this commitment.
- e. An eligible applicant need not have the entire match amount in hand at the time of award; however, an i3 grant award will not be made unless the eligible applicant provides adequate evidence that at least half of the required private-sector match has been committed or the Secretary approves the eligible applicant's request to reduce the matching requirement. (Again, the remaining half of the private-sector match will need to be secured no later than six months after the project start date.)

**II. Potential Resources: There are multiple resources an applicant may consider when trying to secure its i3 match. We have listed a few of these resources below. The Department has no role in the funding decisions made by any private funder, and therefore cannot guarantee that pursuing these resources will result in securing the required match. The Department does not endorse any particular funding resource, including those listed here, and strongly encourages applicants to seek matching funds or in-kind donations from a diverse range of individuals, corporations, private business, local charitable and service organizations, and foundations. Because private funders operate on a variety of different schedules, applicants are encouraged to seek the required match as early as possible and do not need to wait for designation as a highest-rated applicant to begin that process.**

**a. Foundation Registry i3**

The Foundation Registry i3 was created by 12 national foundations in 2010 to simplify the process for eligible applicants seeking matching

foundation funds for i3 applications and to improve the ability of the participating foundations to examine potential investment opportunities. Currently, 73 foundations participate in the Foundation Registry i3. Eligible applicants may register their i3 application on the Foundation Registry i3 website, which will make their proposals accessible and viewable to all participating member foundations. Please note that while the Foundation Registry i3 enables registered applicants to seek matching funds from all of the participating foundations, each foundation maintains its own decision-making authority. Additionally, not all entities that register an application will be contacted and/or funded. During the last four i3 grant cycles, 67 of the 117 highest-rated applicants that uploaded their proposals to the Foundation Registry i3 were matched by one or more Registry funders for a total of approximately \$79 million. The Foundation Registry i3 can be found at the following Internet address: <https://www.foundationregistryi3.org/>.

**b. Social Impact Exchange**

The Social Impact Exchange is a community of funders, advisors, wealth managers, intermediaries, nonprofits and researchers interested in funding and implementing large-scale expansions of top-performing nonprofit initiatives. The S&I 100 ([www.SI100.org](http://www.SI100.org)) is a web-based investment platform created by the Social Impact Exchange. It consists of evidence-based, high-performing nonprofits and contains detailed program information which will be made available to philanthropists, family foundations, wealth management firms, private banks, and other grantmakers who can make contributions directly from the platform. Applicants should note that the Exchange has created a vetting and selection process (distinct from that of i3) that it uses to evaluate scaling nonprofits for its S&I 100:

1. Eligibility criteria include:
  - a. A third party quantitative outcomes study demonstrating impact or a more rigorous evaluation (verified standardized testing scores may qualify).
  - b. Demonstrated readiness to scale through success in multiple locations and/or significant number served.
  - c. Written materials describing an organization's growth plans.
2. Exchange staff will vet nominated nonprofits to make sure they meet the eligibility criteria. This vetting is not likely to require creation of any new materials by nonprofits.
3. Each organization that meets the nomination criteria will be reviewed by several industry experts to confirm



eligibility for listing on the S&I 100. Scores from reviewers will guide the sequence of placing nonprofits on the platform.

Interested i3 applicants may contact the S&I 100 directly by sending an email to Monica Ward at [mward@growthphilanthropy.org](mailto:mward@growthphilanthropy.org).

**c. Foundation Center**

The Foundation Center is a source of information on philanthropy, fundraising, and grant programs. Its Foundations for Education Excellence Initiative and Internet site is a resource focused on education funding. It provides interactive maps of foundations supporting education reform by state and lists the top education grant makers by program/reform area. Daily news feeds include announcements of new foundation grants and programs in the field. The Foundation Center's Foundations for Education Excellence Initiative Internet site can be found at the following Internet address:

<http://foundationcenter.org/educationexcellence/>.

## 1.2 – i3- Examples of Adequate Evidence of a Private-Sector Match

### Description

While we recognize that private funders and highest-rated applicants must negotiate the specific terms of their partnerships, including performance and reporting requirements, we have received several requests for examples of the type of documentation required as evidence of the match. Therefore, we provide six examples of the types of documentation that, if submitted to the Department, would be deemed by us as adequate evidence of a private-sector match – assuming there was no other information that called the commitment into question. These are merely *examples* of the evidence that highest-rated applicants may provide to demonstrate that they have secured a private-sector match; there are many other forms in which adequate evidence of that commitment may be provided.

In order to be accepted by the Department, the documentation provided by highest-rated applicants must demonstrate that private-sector funds or in-kind contributions that equal 10 percent of the total amount of i3 funds requested for Validation grants and 15 percent for Development grants, have been committed. Each highest-rated applicant must submit evidence of half of the required private-sector match prior to the awarding of an i3 grant. An applicant must provide evidence of the remaining half of the required private-sector match no later than six months after the project start date. The grant will be terminated if the grantee does not secure its private-sector match by the established deadline. As explained in Section F (Matching Requirements) of the **i3 Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** (Revised date 6/3/13) for Scale-up and Validation grants and in Section F (Matching Requirements) of the **i3 Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** (Revised date 7/8/13) for Development grants, examples of such evidence include funding agreements with a private-sector entity or other signed documents (such as commitment letters) indicating the source, amount, purpose, and date of receipt of funds or in-kind contributions.

## SAMPLE LETTER #1: Private-Sector Funder Commitment Letter (Simple)

*Private-Sector Entity Letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear (Highest-Rated Applicant),

The (Private-Sector Entity) is pleased to provide a (# of years) grant of \$(amount) to (Highest-Rated Applicant) for the project (insert project name) as outlined in the application to the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund. These funds can be used only toward project activities as proposed in the i3 application dated XX.

The grant commitment of \$(amount) will be disbursed in installments over a (# of years) period, as outlined in the following payment schedule. The funds will be disbursed annually to your organization with the first payment being made within 30 days of the signed grant agreement.

We are confident that this program will have a dramatic impact on the student population being served, and look forward to reviewing the evaluation results and program reports, consistent with the application requirements and the grant agreement.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Private-Sector Entity)

**SAMPLE LETTER #2: Private-Sector Funder Commitment Letter (Contingent on receipt of i3 grant)**

*Private-Sector Entity Letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear (Highest-Rated Applicant):

It is my pleasure to inform you that a grant of \$(amount) has been authorized to (Highest-Rated Applicant). This grant is to be used to (grant purpose), as described in your application of (date). This grant is intended to serve as a portion of the private-sector match required for (Highest-Rated Applicant)'s Investing in Innovation (i3) application to the U.S. Department of Education.

This grant funding is contingent upon confirmation of the (Highest-Rated Applicant)'s receipt of the i3 award from the U.S. Department of Education.

It is understood that these grant funds will be used in accordance with the budget included with your application. It is further understood that no substantial changes in the budget or the grant period may be made without prior written approval from (Private-Sector Entity).

A condition of this grant is that you submit to us a final report by (date). This report should contain a fiscal accounting of grant expenditures and a narrative describing the following: (a) the objectives of the project supported by the grant, (b) activities carried out to meet each objective, (c) results accomplished and (d) any problems encountered and how they were resolved. Please note that reports are an integral part of our monitoring and evaluation process; release of any future payment or review of any future grant request will be contingent upon our receipt and satisfactory review of the information provided.

This grant is subject to financial audit upon our notification during or immediately following the grant period. A separate bank account for the grant is not required, but it is necessary that a separate accounting of this grant be maintained.

Best wishes for the success of this effort.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Private-Sector Entity)

ACCEPTED BY:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GRANTEE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE LETTER #3: Traditional Foundation Grant Agreement

*Foundation Letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear (Highest-Rated Applicant):

I am pleased to inform you that The (Foundation name) has authorized a grant of \$(amount) over (# of months or years) to (Highest-Rated Applicant) for (project name), an effort for which you are seeking funds from the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund. The grant will be paid in (xxx) installments. In order for us to make payment, we require that you accept the terms of the grant as set forth in the following paragraphs.

The grant funds and any income earned from any investment of the grant funds may be used only in support of the activities described in your i3 application of (date). Funds not used for the purposes of the grant within the grant period (date to date) must be returned to the Foundation unless an extension is approved at your request and in the Foundation's discretion. We will require narrative and financial reports on your activities during the grant period. All reports must be received within 30 days of due date.

The narrative report should demonstrate your progress on achieving proposed activities, outputs and outcomes. In your financial report you should present the entire project budget (all sources of revenue and all expenditures, not only the Foundation grant) as included in the original application, as well as the actual revenue and expenditures for the project in total.

You acknowledge that we have not designated or earmarked any part of the grant funds for the carrying on of propaganda or attempting to influence legislation (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code Sections 501(h), 4945(d)(1) and 4945(e) and related regulations; these provisions include state, federal or foreign legislation).

You shall notify the Foundation of any organizational changes during the term of the grant, including, but not limited to, changes in key personnel, changes in tax status, and changes in the project timing or goals.

Use of any of the grant funds (a) to influence the outcome of any specific public election of any candidate for public office or to carry on, directly or indirectly, any other activity that is prohibited to a public charity, or (b) to provide material support to any person or entity that engages in violent or terrorist activities, is prohibited.

The Foundation's disbursement of payment is contingent upon the Foundation's review of your work in connection with this grant and its determination (a) that you are in compliance with all terms and conditions of this grant agreement and (b) that satisfactory progress and performance has occurred and is likely to continue to occur. Funding may be

modified, curtailed, or discontinued, and any unexpended grant funds must be repaid, if at any time the Foundation determines that the purposes of the grant are not being met.

Payment will be made within 30 days of receipt of the signed letter agreement and then within 30 days of approval of satisfactory interim reports and expenditures going forward.

Except for simple statements indicating that the Foundation has provided the Grantee with funding, the Foundation name and logo may be used only with the written permission of a Foundation representative.

Please have the appropriate corporate officer sign and return this letter, indicating acceptance of the terms of the grant.

We are pleased to be able to assist you with your project.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Foundation)

ACCEPTANCE: On behalf of the [Highest-Rated Applicant legal name], I hereby accept and agree to be legally bound by the terms of the grant as set forth herein.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE LETTER #4: Commitment of In-Kind Contribution (Specific Service)**

*Private-Sector Entity Letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear (Highest-Rated Applicant):

We are pleased to confirm that we will provide in-kind contributions of a value totaling (amount in dollars) for your project (project name) as proposed for funding under the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund.

The contribution (name of Contributing Entity) will provide is our service (description of service) to the project. The value of our contribution reflects the amount of funds budgeted for project services in the proposed budget in your application and represents the amount we would customarily charge to conduct a service of the nature, size, and scope of the service described in your i3 application.

(Provide a breakdown that documents the name and description of the good or service that will be provided, the unit price or amount customarily charged for the service or goods that will be provided, and the number of units that will be provided. If the service involves donated time, also provide the number of hours or time provided and the hourly rate that is customarily charged for such a service(s). Applicants or contributing entities may refer to the Department's regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, which are set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24, for clarification on requirements pertaining to in-kind donations.)

We are confident that the project (project name) will have a dramatic impact on the student population being served and look forward to conducting the project evaluation, consistent with the application requirements and the grant agreement.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Contributing Entity)

**SAMPLE LETTER #5: Commitment of In-Kind Contribution (Discount off Costs for Goods or Services Purchased)**

*Private-Sector Entity Letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear (Highest-Rated Applicant):

We are pleased to confirm that we will provide in-kind contributions of a value totaling (amount in dollars) for your project (project name) as proposed for funding under the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund.

In order to carry out your proposed project, you have agreed to purchase from (name of Contributing Entity) (number/amount and name/description of good or service). The contribution we will provide is a discount off the cost of this good/service. We customarily charge (customary amount) but will provide an in-kind contribution of x% discount off of the list price that we customarily charged for this good/service; for your project only, we will charge a discounted amount of (discounted amount), providing a total discount of (amount of discount) per good/service.

(Applicants or contributing entities may refer to the Department's regulations on matching funds, including in-kind contributions, which are set forth in 34 CFR 74.23 and 80.24, for clarification on requirements pertaining to in-kind donations.)

We are confident that the project (project name) will have a dramatic impact on the student population being served and look forward to reviewing the evaluation results and program reports, consistent with the application requirements and the grant agreement.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Contributing Entity)



## **SAMPLE LETTER #6: Repurposing Existing Private-Sector Funds**

*Highest- Rated Applicant letterhead*  
(Date)

Dear U.S. Department of Education,

We are pleased to confirm that we will repurpose existing private-sector funds (monies our organization has raised in the past but not yet expended) over (# of years) totaling \$XXX,000 for the project (insert project name) as outlined in the application to the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund. These funds can be used only toward project activities as proposed in the application dated XX.

The existing private-sector funds we are repurposing in support of our i3 application were initially secured on (date(s)) and given by (source(s)) for (purpose(s)). By submitting this letter, we confirm that it is within our organization's discretion to repurpose these funds in support of our i3 application, and that in doing so, we do not violate any of the conditions and terms under which these private-sector funds were initially given to our organization. We also further confirm that we understand that these private-sector funds we are repurposing in support of our i3 application must be expended over the project period proposed in the application dated XX.

We are confident that the project (project name) will have a dramatic impact on the student population being served, and look forward to reviewing the evaluation results and program reports, consistent with the application requirements and the grant agreement.

Sincerely,

(President or other authorized individual),  
(Highest- Rated Applicant)

### 1.3 – Recruitment Letter to Network Leaders

Boston University  
School of Education, Educational Policy and Leadership  
2 Silber Way  
Boston, MA 02215

#### REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear XXXXX,

I am doctoral candidate at Boston University reaching out to you today to help me identify a school site leader (i.e. “Principal” or “Headmaster”) in your network that may be interested in taking part in a research study regarding PK–12 partnerships with outside agencies. The purpose of the study is to examine how school leaders and partners work together at the site level.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Partnerships between PK–12 schools and outside agencies have experienced significant growth in recent years. Increasingly, these partnerships have been tied to education reform and the entrance of new private capital into the PK–12 sector. The purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding of how school leaders and outside agencies collaborate at the site level. As the researcher, I will conduct a small study of a site-based school leader (i.e. school principal) working together with an outside partner working in his or her school.

#### **CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPANTS**

- School Leaders - Participants in the study must be school site leaders (principals or headmasters) in regular communication (i.e. shared decision-making) with the outside agency liaison (partner leader) assigned to the site. A partner working primarily with a literacy coach, for example, will not qualify as a participant.
- Co-curricular Integration- The partnership initiative(s) must be embedded into the regular school day. An after-school enrichment program, for example, would not qualify.
- Funding Source – The partner organization must receive a substantial portion of its funding from a third party other than the school or its education agency (i.e. school district). A preference will be placed on finding partners backed by major giving foundations.
- Focus on Practice or Curriculum - The focus of the partnership must be on initiatives that directly impact professional practice or teaching and learning. Operations-oriented contracts in technology and facilities are not eligible for this research.
- Urban School Focus – The school must be set in an urban setting serving high needs populations. Traditional and charter schools are both eligible for the study.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS**

The study will take place over 3–6 months and consist of:

- 3 interviews per participant (site leader and partner)
- 2 observations of partners working together during a planning meeting

**COMPENSATION**

Each participant will receive 300.00 for their participation. Participants must complete the full study to receive compensation.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Participants will be required to sign a formal consent agreement agreeing to be part of the study. Their identity will remain confidential

## 1.4 – Recruitment Letter to School Leaders

Boston University  
School of Education, Educational Policy and Leadership  
2 Silber Way  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear XXXXX,

I am doctoral candidate at Boston University conducting research on PK–12 partnerships between schools and outside agencies. I am reaching out to you today because you were identified as an educational leader whose school is currently engaged in a PK–12 partnership pertinent to my research. At your convenience, please take a moment to read over this information to determine if you would like to be part of this study. If you are interested, please reply to [wbalsers@bu.edu](mailto:wbalsers@bu.edu) or contact me directly at 727-773-5723. Dr. Hardin Coleman will serve as the advisor for the study and may be reached at [hardin@bu.edu](mailto:hardin@bu.edu).

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Partnerships between PK–12 schools and outside agencies have experienced significant growth in recent years. Increasingly, these partnerships have been tied to education reform and the entrance of new private capital into the PK–12 sector. The purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding of how school site leaders and outside agencies collaborate at the site level. As the principal researcher, I will conduct a small study of a site-based school leader (i.e. school principal) working together with an outside partner working in his or her school.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS**

The study will take place over 3–6 months and consist of:

- 3 interviews per participant (site leader and partner)
- 2 observations of partners working together during a planning meeting

### **COMPENSATION**

Each participant will receive \$300.00 for their participation

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Participants will be required to sign a formal consent document agreeing to be part of the study. Their identity will remain confidential.

You may want to discuss participation with your supervisors. If you decide to participate, please let me know no later than [DATE]. I hope you will consider taking part in this important research. Sincerely,

Walter Fernando Balsers  
Primary Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate, Boston University

Hardin L.K. Coleman, PhD  
Co-Principal Investigator  
Professor and Dean, BU School of Education

## **1.5 – Recruitment Letter to School Partners**

Boston University  
School of Education, Educational Policy and Leadership  
2 Silber Way  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear XXXXX,

I am doctoral candidate at Boston University conducting research on PK–12 partnerships between schools and outside agencies. I am reaching out to you today because you were identified as an educational leader whose organization is currently engaged in a school partnership pertinent to my research. At your convenience, please take a moment to read over this information to determine if you would like to be part of this study. If you are interested, please reply to [wbalsler@bu.edu](mailto:wbalsler@bu.edu) or contact me directly at 727-773-5723. Dr. Hardin Coleman will serve as the advisor for the study and may be reached at [hardin@bu.edu](mailto:hardin@bu.edu).

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Partnerships between PK–12 schools and outside agencies have experienced significant growth in recent years. Increasingly, these partnerships have been tied to education reform and the entrance of new private capital into the PK–12 sector. The purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding of how school site leaders and outside agencies collaborate at the site level. As the principal researcher, I will conduct a small study of a site-based school leader (i.e. school principal) working together with an outside partner working in his or her school.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS**

The study will take place over 3–6 months and consist of:

- 3 interviews per participant (site leader and partner)
- 2 observations of partners working together during a planning meeting

### **COMPENSATION**

Each participant will receive \$300.00 for their participation

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Participants will be required to sign a formal consent document agreeing to be part of the study. Their identity will remain confidential.

You may want to discuss participation with your supervisors. If you decide to participate, please let me know no later than [DATE]. I hope you will consider taking part in this important research. Sincerely,

Walter Fernando Balsler  
Primary Investigator  
Doctoral Candidate, Boston University

Hardin L.K. Coleman, PhD  
Co-Principal Investigator  
Professor and Dean, BU School of Education

## **1.6 – Informed Consent Document for School Leaders**

Boston University  
School of Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
2 Silber Way  
Boston, MA 02215

**18+ INFORMED CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH**

### ***Examining PK–12 Blended Capital Partnerships***

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by researcher Walter Fernando Balsler, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the BU School of Education. Mr. Balsler’s advisor for the study is Dr. Hardin Coleman, Dean of the BU School of Education. You are invited to participate because you are an educational leader serving in a school where a partnership with an outside organization is currently taking place. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may decide to discuss participation with your supervisors. You may retain a copy of this form for your records.

The research will take place off campus and will last approximately six months.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The researcher, Walter F. Balsler, will conduct a study to learn how school site leaders (i.e. school principals) interact with outside partners working in their school. He would like to collect information to see how these interactions occur and how the partners work together.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in the study, you agree to the following:

You agree to allow the researcher to observe two sessions where you interact with the partner during a meeting pertaining to your partnership. The sessions will take place off campus at an agreed-upon location. The purpose of the observations is to gain a general awareness of how partners interact during planning sessions. By taking part in this research you agree to being video taped throughout your time during this meeting. Observations will be recorded using video, field notes, and an observation tool.

You agree to conduct three individual interviews with the researcher. The first two interviews will last approximately 60–90 minutes and will focus on your

experiences working with the partner. You will also be asked to participate in a third follow-up interview to clarify questions raised in the observations and initial interviews.

You agree to be audio recorded while being interviewed. The researcher will inform you that the session will be recorded before it begins. These recordings will be used to transcribe the conversations at a later date and be used for research presentations about the study.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

You may be asked to share personal feelings about your experience with the partner. You may feel discomfort when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer at any time if you want to take a break or stop the interview. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

The risk of allowing the researcher to store your information for research is a potential loss of privacy. The researcher will protect your privacy by labeling your information with a pseudonym and keeping the key to the pseudonym in a password protected computer. The key will not be shared with either the school district or partnering organization.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are no direct benefits to participants.

The information provided in this investigation will be used to help researchers and practitioners understand how to better manage partnerships in the PK-12 sector, and how to better deliver services associated with these partnerships

### **PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will be paid \$300.00 for participating in this research study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The members of the researcher's dissertation committee and the Boston University Institutional Review Board may access the data. Information from this study and study records may be reviewed and photocopied the institution and by regulators responsible for research oversight such as the Office of Human Research Protections, and the Boston University Institutional Review Board.

The IRB reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Study data will be stored in locked files in a locked office at Boston University only accessible to the research team. Your information may be used in publications or presentations. However, the data will never include any personal information that will allow you to be identified. Furthermore, unauthorized personnel will not have access to the data. The data must be kept for a minimum of seven years after the completion of the study.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no personal identifiable information will be used.

#### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

#### **INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Walter Fernando Balsler  
Boston University School of Education  
2 Silber Way,  
Boston, MA, 02215  
727-773-5723  
wbalsers@bu.edu

Hardin Coleman, Ph.D.  
Boston University School of Education  
2 Silber Way,  
Boston, MA, 02215.  
(617) 353-3213  
hardin@bu.edu

#### **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT - IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB directly at the information provided below. You may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by contacting the Boston University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research at 617-358-6115 or [irb@bu.edu](mailto:irb@bu.edu).



## **1.7 – Informed Consent Document for School Partners**

Boston University  
School of Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
2 Silber Way  
Boston, MA 02215

18+ INFORMED CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH

### ***Examining PK-12 Blended Capital Partnerships***

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by researcher Walter Fernando Balser, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the BU School of Education. Mr. Balser's advisor for the study is Dr. Hardin Coleman, Dean of the BU School of Education. You are invited to participate because you are an educational leader with an outside organization serving in a school where a partnership is currently taking place. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may decide to discuss participation with your supervisors. You may retain a copy of this form for your records.

The research will take place off campus and will last approximately six months.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The researcher, Walter F. Balser, will conduct a study to learn how school site leaders (i.e. school principals) interact with outside partners working in their school. He would like to collect information to see how these interactions occur and how the partners work together.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in the study, you agree to the following:

You agree to allow the researcher to observe two sessions where you interact with the partner during a meeting pertaining to your partnership. The sessions will take place off campus at an agreed-upon location. The purpose of the observations is to gain a general awareness of how partners interact during planning sessions. By taking part in this research you agree to being video taped throughout your time during this meeting. Observations will be recorded using video, field notes, and an observation tool.

You agree to conduct three individual interviews with the researcher. The first two interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will focus on your

experiences working with the partner. You will also be asked to participate in a third follow-up interview to clarify questions raised in the observations and initial interviews.

You agree to be audio recorded while being interviewed. The researcher will inform you that the session will be recorded before it begins. These recordings will be used to transcribe the conversations at a later date and be used for research presentations about the study.

You will be asked to participate in one follow-up interview about your experiences working with the partner. The purpose of this interview is to clarify questions raised in the observations and initial interviews.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

You may be asked to share personal feelings about your experience with the partner. You may feel discomfort when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer at any time if you want to take a break or stop the interview. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

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### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are no direct benefits to participants.

The information provided in this investigation will be used to help researchers and practitioners understand how to better manage partnerships in the PK-12 sector, and how to better deliver services associated with these partnerships

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You will be paid \$300.00 for participating in this research study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The members of the researcher's dissertation committee and the Boston University Institutional Review Board may access the data. Information from this study and study records may be reviewed and photocopied the institution and by regulators

responsible for research oversight such as the Office of Human Research Protections, and the Boston University Institutional Review Board.

The IRB reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Study data will be stored in locked files in a locked office at Boston University only accessible to the research team. Your information may be used in publications or presentations. However, the data will never include any personal information that will allow you to be identified. Furthermore, unauthorized personnel will not have access to the data. The data must be kept for a minimum of seven years after the completion of the study.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no personal identifiable information will be used.

#### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

#### **INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:  
Walter Fernando Balsler  
Boston University School of Education  
2 Silber Way,  
Boston, MA, 02215  
727-773-5723  
wbalsler@bu.edu

Hardin Coleman, Ph.D.  
Boston University School of Education  
2 Silber Way,  
Boston, MA, 02215.  
(617) 353-3213  
hardin@bu.edu

#### **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB directly at the information provided below. You

may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by contacting the Boston University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research at 617-358-6115 or [irb@bu.edu](mailto:irb@bu.edu).

## 1.8 - Interview Protocol

### Interview 1 Sample Questions

- What is the mission of your partnership?*
- What are the goals of the partnership?*
- How does this partnership benefit your organization?*
- How does it benefit your partner?*
- How does your organization support this partnership?*
- How does your partner's organization support this partnership?*
- How do you set needs and priorities for accomplishing short and long term partnership goals?*
- How do you feel about the resources allocated to this partnership?*
- What concrete steps have you taken to accomplish these goals?*
- Do you have specific roles and responsibilities? If so, what are they?*
- Do you have expected outcomes and a timeline?*
- How are roles and responsibilities aligned to accomplish collective goals?*
- Tell me about the systems you use for resource allocation and progress monitoring?*
  
- How do you select staff that reflects the skill sets required in this partnership?*
  
- How are the partnership activities embedded into the work of the organization versus "extra-curricular"?*
  
- Do the organizations have a memorandum of agreement?*
- What processes do you have for filling vacancies related to the partnership?*
- What strategies do you deploy to build organizational capacity, induction and succession?*
- What strategies do you deploy for funding?*
- How do you schedule meeting times and dates?*
- How do you disseminate information from meetings?*
- How do you follow up on progress?*
- What mechanisms do you use to disseminate news and progress in a timely manner?*
- How do you share responsibility for actively advocating for your partnership?*
- What strategies do you use to intentionally embed the partnership activities?*
- How do you maintain trust, mutual respect with your partner?*
- How is your collaborative relationship extended beyond the boundaries of partnership?*
- How is decision-making clearly articulated among partners?*
- How does it involve all partners?*
- How do you define roles?*
- How do you define responsibilities and expectations?*
- How do roles and responsibilities cross organizational boundaries?*
- How do you assess or measure program improvement?*
- How did you come to adopt these performance measures?*
- How do you hold each other accountable?*
- How are data used to guide decision making?*
- How are data used to assess partnership effectiveness?*
- How are data used formally or informally to guide continuous improvement?*
- How are data shared with the partner?*
- How are data shared with other stakeholders?*
- How are partners communicating toward collective goals?*

## Interview 2 Questions

- Do you feel like the partnership is achieving its mission?*
- Do you feel like the goals of the partnership are being met?*
- Do you feel like the goals are mutually beneficial to each partner?*
- Do you feel like you jointly created the partnership agenda?*
- Do you feel like there is a strategic plan in place for meeting the partnership's needs?*
- Are your needs being met?*
- Are there enough resources being allocated to accomplish these goals? If so, how? If not, how so?*
- Are the action steps set forth in the partnership strategic plan effective?*
- Are timelines, roles, responsibilities and outcomes clear? If so, how? If not, how so?*
- Are roles and responsibilities aligned in a manner that accomplishes collective goals?*
- How would you rate your systems used for resource allocation and progress monitoring?*
- Do you feel that staff selected for this partnership have possessed the necessary skill sets to make the partnership effective?*
- Do you feel like the partnership has been truly integrated vs. "extra-curricular"?*
  
- Do you feel that your memorandum of agreement has been crafted in a manner that will make the partnership sustainable?*
- Have the processes for filling vacancies worked?*
- Have the strategies deployed to build organizational capacity, induction and succession been effective?*
- Have strategies for maintaining funding been effective?*
- Have you maintained scheduled meeting times and dates as planned?*
- Have you disseminated information from meetings?*
- How would you rate your follow up on progress?*
- How would you rate your mechanisms for disseminating news and progress in a timely manner?*
- Were you able to share responsibility for actively advocating for your partnership?*
- How would you rate the strategies you use to intentionally embed the partnership activities?*
- Do you feel that you have been able to maintain trust, mutual respect with your partner?*
- Has your collaborative relationship extended beyond the boundaries of partnership?*
- Has decision-making been clearly articulated among partners?*
- Is decision-making shared between partners?*
- How has it involved all partners?*
- Have you been able to maintain the defined roles you set out?*
- Have you been able to define responsibilities and expectations as originally planned?*
- Have roles and responsibilities crossed organizational boundaries?*
- Have you been able assess or measure program improvement?*
- Were the performance measures mutually agreed upon?*
- How did you hold each other accountable?*
- How did you use data to guide decision making?*
- How did you use data to assess partnership effectiveness?*
- How was data used formally or informally to guide continuous improvement?*
- How did you share data with the partner?*
- How did you share data with other stakeholders?*

## 1.9 – Partnership Effectiveness Continuum (All Domains)

| PARTNERSHIP VISION              |   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:                     |   | CRITERIA: | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|                                 |   |           | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| MISSION AND BELIEFS             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An articulated mission and shared beliefs exist and serve as guides for the work of the partnership</li> </ul>   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| SHARED GOALS                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are clear, measurable, and feasible</li> <li>Address the common needs of the partnership</li> <li>Align with partner organization goals</li> <li>Mutually beneficial to partner organizations</li> </ul>   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| JOINT REFORM AGENDA             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is jointly created and supported by all partner organizations</li> <li>Addresses identified partnership needs and priorities with a strategic plan for accomplishing short and long term partnership goals</li> <li>Is fully resourced (time, people, finances)</li> </ul> |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulates concrete action steps for accomplishing partnership goals</li> <li>Includes timeline, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes</li> </ul>   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| MEASURES FOR ASSESSING PROGRESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses evidence-based protocols that promote continuous improvement</li> <li>Tightly align to partnership goals and strategic action plan</li> <li>Engage partnership members in assessing their own progress on a regular basis</li> </ul>                                  |           |                          |           |                     |             |

Quality Measures™ Partnership Effectiveness Continuum

| INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP |   | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:              | CRITERIA:   | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| SHARED LEADERSHIP        | Institutional leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share accountability for achieving partnership goals</li> <li>• Encourage stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Share partnership decision-making</li> </ul>  |                          |           |                     |             |
|                          |   |                          |           |                     |             |
| LEADER ENGAGEMENT        | Institutional leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate on behalf of the partnership</li> <li>• Attend and actively participate in partner meetings</li> <li>• Integrate partnership norms and values into the fabric of their respective organizations</li> </ul>   |                          |           |                     |             |
|                          |   |                          |           |                     |             |
| RESOURCE COMMITMENT      | Institutional leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly identify resources needed to accomplish partnership goals</li> <li>• Contribute time, financial, and human resources necessary to accomplish partnership goals</li> </ul>   |                          |           |                     |             |
|                          |   |                          |           |                     |             |
| PARTICIPANT INCENTIVES   | Institutional leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an institutional expectation for partnership involvement</li> <li>• Publicly acknowledge and reward collaborative action</li> <li>• Promote active participation in partnership activities</li> <li>• Provide incentives for partnership participation</li> </ul> |                          |           |                     |             |
|                          |   |                          |           |                     |             |



Quality Measures™ Partnership Effectiveness Continuum

| COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION   |   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:                       |   | CRITERIA: | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|                                   |   |           | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND PROTOCOLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes for documenting and disseminating partnership meeting minutes and following up on partner action steps are in place</li> </ul>   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An agreed upon schedule of meeting dates, times, and locations is established at the beginning of each year to support regular attendance</li> </ul>   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| INFORMATION DISSEMINATION         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanisms for regularly disseminating partnership news and progress updates in a timely manner are in place</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| PARTNERSHIP ADVOCACY              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners share responsibility for actively advocating on behalf of the partnership to gain visibility, support, and resources to support partnership goals</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies to promote collaboration are intentionally embedded in partnership activities</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration among partner organizations is characterized by deep trust, mutual respect, and regular and effective interaction</li> <li>Collaborative relationships extend beyond the boundaries of partnership meetings and are sustained over time</li> </ul> |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| DECISION MAKING                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process for partnership decision-making is clearly articulated and involves all partners</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |

Quality Measures™ Partnership Effectiveness Continuum

| JOINT OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS |  |                          |           |                     |             |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:                                    | CRITERIA:  | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|  |  | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES                     | • Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined                                 |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are understood                                      |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are operational                                     |                          |           |                     |             |
| BOUNDARY-SPANNING ROLES AND STRUCTURES         | • Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations cross organizational boundaries                     |                          |           |                     |             |
| PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT                   | • Partnership goals are assessed using performance-based measures that demonstrate program improvement     |                          |           |                     |             |
| BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES                        | • Partners agree on performance measures that will be used to assess progress                              |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Partners are held accountable for accomplishing partnership goals  |                          |           |                     |             |
| USING DATA                                     | • Data are strategically used to guide partner decision making   |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Data are used to assess partnership effectiveness  |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Data are collected and analyzed using both formal and informal processes to guide continuous improvement |                          |           |                     |             |
| SHARING PROGRESS                               | • Partners share data and information with stakeholders and  |                          |           |                     |             |
|  | • Regularly communicate partnership progress toward collective goals                                       |                          |           |                     |             |

Quality Measures™ Partnership Effectiveness Continuum

| SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY |   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|---|---|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:                                       |   | CRITERIA: | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|   |   |           | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| ALIGNMENT   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals</li> </ul>                                     |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| INTEGRATION                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members</li> </ul>    |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be "extra-curricular"</li> </ul>                                     |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| SUSTAINABILITY                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership</li> </ul>                                      |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place</li> </ul> |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization</li> </ul>                                       |           |                          |           |                     |             |

Quality Measures™ Partnership Effectiveness Continuum

| RESPONSE TO LOCAL CONTEXT         |   |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| INDICATORS:                       |   | CRITERIA: | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS: |           |                     |             |
|                                   |   |           | Highly Effective         | Effective | Partially Effective | Ineffective |
| COMMUNITY                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships are inclusive</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| PARTNER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners continually explore new opportunities to expand the partnership to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability</li> </ul> |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership has a well developed process for recruiting and inducting new partners</li> </ul>                                      |           |                          |           |                     |             |
| POLICY ENVIRONMENT                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership understands its role in influencing the policy environment</li> </ul>  |           |                          |           |                     |             |
|                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership strategic plan includes political action steps that are aimed at broadening the impact of its work</li> </ul>          |           |                          |           |                     |             |

### 1.10 – Interview 1 Script: Open-Ended Questions

| PARTNERSHIP VISION           |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| DOMAIN                       | INDICATORS  | QUESTION   |
| <b>MISSION AND BELIEFS</b>   | An articulated mission and shared beliefs exist and serve as guides for the work of the partnership   | <i>What is the mission of your partnership?</i>  |
| <b>SHARED GOALS</b>          | Are clear, measurable, and feasible<br>Address the common needs of the partnership<br>Align with partner organization goals<br>Mutually beneficial to partner organizations   | <i>What are the goals of the partnership?</i><br><br><i>How does this partnership benefit your organization?</i><br><br><i>How does it benefit your partner?</i>   |
| <b>JOINT REFORM AGENDA</b>   | Is jointly created and supported by all partner organizations<br>Addresses identified partnership needs and priorities with a strategic plan for accomplishing short and long term partnership goals<br>Is fully resourced (time, people, finances) | <i>How does your organization support this partnership?</i><br><br><i>How does your partner's organization support this partnership?</i><br><br><i>How do you set needs and priorities for accomplishing short and long-term partnership goals?</i><br><br><i>How do you feel about the resources allocated to this partnership?</i> |
| <b>STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN</b> | Articulates concrete action steps for accomplishing partnership goals<br>Includes timeline, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes   | <i>What concrete steps have you taken to accomplish these goals?</i><br><br><i>Do you have specific roles and responsibilities? If so, what are they?</i><br><br><i>Do you have expected outcomes and a timeline?</i>  |

| <b>SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY</b> |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>DOMAIN</b>  | <b>INDICATORS</b>  | <b>QUESTION</b>  |
| <b><i>ALIGNMENT</i></b>                                  | <p>Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals</p> <p>Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned</p>   | <p><i>How are roles and responsibilities aligned to accomplish collective goals?</i></p> <p><i>Tell me about the systems you use for resource allocation and progress monitoring?</i></p>  |
| <b><i>INTEGRATION</i></b>                                | <p>Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members</p> <p>Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be “extra-curricular”</p> <p>Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership</p> | <p><i>How do you select staff that reflects the skill sets required in this partnership?</i></p> <p><i>How are the partnership activities embedded into the work of the organization versus “extra-curricular”?</i></p> <p><i>Do the organizations have a memorandum of agreement?</i></p> |
| <b><i>SUSTAINABILITY</i></b>                             | <p>Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place</p> <p>Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place</p> <p>Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization</p>  | <p><i>What processes do you have for filling vacancies related to the partnership?</i></p> <p><i>What strategies do you deploy to build organizational capacity, induction and succession?</i></p> <p><i>What strategies do you deploy for funding?</i></p>                                |

| <b>COMMUNICATION &amp; COLLABORATION</b>        |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>DOMAIN</b>                                   | <b>INDICATORS</b>  | <b>QUESTION</b>  |
| <b><i>COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND PROTOCOLS</i></b> | <p>Processes for documenting and disseminating partnership meeting minutes and following up on partner action steps are in place</p> <p>An agreed upon schedule of meeting dates, times, and locations is established at the beginning of each year to support regular attendance</p>  | <p><i>How do you schedule meeting times and dates?</i></p> <p><i>How do you disseminate information from meetings?</i></p> <p><i>How do you follow up on progress?</i></p>   |
| <b><i>INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</i></b>         | Mechanisms for regularly disseminating partnership news and progress updates in a timely manner are in place   | <i>What mechanisms do you use to disseminate news and progress in a timely manner?</i>   |
| <b><i>PARTNERSHIP ADVOCACY</i></b>              | Partners share responsibility for actively advocating on behalf of the partnership to gain visibility, support, and resources to support partnership goals   | <i>How do you share responsibility for actively advocating for your partnership?</i>   |
| <b><i>COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS</i></b>       | <p>Strategies to promote collaboration are intentionally embedded in partnership activities</p> <p>Collaboration among partner organizations is characterized by deep trust, mutual respect, and regular and effective interaction</p> <p>Collaborative relationships extend beyond the boundaries of partnership meetings and are sustained over time</p> | <p><i>What strategies do you use to intentionally embed the partnership activities?</i></p> <p><i>How do you maintain trust, mutual respect with your partner?</i></p> <p><i>How is your collaborative relationship extended beyond the boundaries of partnership?</i></p> |
| <b><i>DECISION MAKING</i></b>                   | The process for partnership decision-making is clearly articulated and involves all partners   | <p><i>How is decision-making clearly articulated among partners?</i></p> <p><i>How does it involve all partners?</i></p>   |

**JOINT OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS**

| <b>DOMAIN</b>  | <b>INDICATORS</b>   | <b>QUESTION</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b><i>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</i></b>             | Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined<br><br>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are understood<br><br>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are operational       | <i>How do you define roles?</i><br><br><i>How do you define responsibilities and expectations?</i>  |
| <b><i>BOUNDARY-SPANNING ROLES AND STRUCTURES</i></b> | Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations cross organizational boundaries  | <i>How do roles and responsibilities cross organizational boundaries?</i>   |
| <b><i>PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT</i></b>           | Partnership goals are assessed using performance-based measures that demonstrate program improvement  | <i>How do you assess or measure program improvement?</i>  |
| <b><i>BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES</i></b>                | Partners agree on performance measures that will be used to assess progress<br><br>Partners are held accountable for accomplishing partnership goals  | <i>How did you come to adopt these performance measures?</i><br><br><i>How do you hold each other accountable?</i>  |
| <b><i>USING DATA</i></b>                             | Data are strategically used to guide partner decision making<br><br>Data are used to assess partnership effectiveness<br><br>Data are collected and analyzed using both formal and informal processes to guide continuous improvement | <i>How are data used to guide decision making?</i><br><br><i>How are data used to assess partnership effectiveness?</i><br><br><i>How are data used formally or informally to guide continuous improvement?</i> |
| <b><i>SHARING PROGRESS</i></b>                       | Partners share data and information with stakeholders and<br><br>Regularly communicate partnership progress toward collective goals   | <i>How are data shared with the partner?</i><br><i>How are data shared with other stakeholders?</i><br><br><i>How are partners communicating toward collective goals?</i>                                       |



### 1.11 – Interview 2 Script: Closed-Ended Questions

| PARTNERSHIP VISION           |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| DOMAIN                       | INDICATORS  | QUESTION   |
| <b>MISSION AND BELIEFS</b>   | An articulated mission and shared beliefs exist and serve as guides for the work of the partnership   | <i>Do you feel like the partnership is achieving its mission?</i>  |
| <b>SHARED GOALS</b>          | Are clear, measurable, and feasible<br>Address the common needs of the partnership<br>Align with partner organization goals<br>Mutually beneficial to partner organizations   | <i>Do you feel like the goals of the partnership are being met?</i><br><br><i>Do you feel like the goals are mutually beneficial to each partner?</i>  |
| <b>JOINT REFORM AGENDA</b>   | Is jointly created and supported by all partner organizations<br>Addresses identified partnership needs and priorities with a strategic plan for accomplishing short and long term partnership goals<br>Is fully resourced (time, people, finances) | <i>Do you feel like you jointly created the partnership agenda?</i><br><br><i>Do you feel like there is a strategic plan in place for meeting the partnership’s needs?</i><br><br><i>Are your needs being met?</i><br><br><i>Are there enough resources being allocated to accomplish these goals? If so, how? If not, how so?</i> |
| <b>STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN</b> | Articulates concrete action steps for accomplishing partnership goals<br>Includes timeline, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes   | <i>Are the action steps set forth in the partnership strategic plan effective?</i><br><br><i>Are timelines, roles, responsibilities and outcomes clear ?</i><br><br><i>If so, how? If not, how so?</i>   |

| SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| DOMAIN  | INDICATORS   | QUESTION  |
| <b>ALIGNMENT</b>                                  | <p>Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals</p> <p>Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned</p>   | <p><i>Are roles and responsibilities aligned in a manner that accomplishes collective goals?</i></p> <p><i>How would you rate your systems used for resource allocation and progress monitoring?</i></p>  |
| <b>INTEGRATION</b>                                | <p>Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members</p> <p>Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be “extra-curricular”</p> <p>Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership</p> | <p><i>Do you feel that staff selected for this partnership have possessed the necessary skill sets to make the partnership effective?</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel like the partnership has been truly integrated vs. “extra-curricular”?</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel that your memorandum of agreement has been crafted in a manner that will make the partnership sustainable?</i></p> |
| <b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>                             | <p>Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place</p> <p>Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place</p> <p>Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization</p>  | <p><i>Have the processes for filling vacancies worked?</i></p> <p><i>Have the strategies deployed to build organizational capacity, induction and succession been effective?</i></p> <p><i>Have strategies for maintaining funding been effective?</i></p>  |

**COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION**

| DOMAIN                                   | INDICATORS   | QUESTION   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND PROTOCOLS</b> | <p>Processes for documenting and disseminating partnership meeting minutes and following up on partner action steps are in place</p> <p>An agreed upon schedule of meeting dates, times, and locations is established at the beginning of each year to support regular attendance</p>  | <p><i>Have you maintained scheduled meeting times and dates as planned?</i></p> <p><i>Have you disseminated information from meetings?</i></p> <p><i>How would you rate your follow up on progress?</i></p>  |
| <b>INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</b>         | <p>Mechanisms for regularly disseminating partnership news and progress updates in a timely manner are in place</p>  | <p><i>How would you rate your mechanisms for disseminating news and progress in a timely manner?</i></p>   |
| <b>PARTNERSHIP ADVOCACY</b>              | <p>Partners share responsibility for actively advocating on behalf of the partnership to gain visibility, support, and resources to support partnership goals</p>  | <p><i>Were you able to share responsibility for actively advocating for your partnership?</i></p>  |
| <b>COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS</b>       | <p>Strategies to promote collaboration are intentionally embedded in partnership activities</p> <p>Collaboration among partner organizations is characterized by deep trust, mutual respect, and regular and effective interaction</p> <p>Collaborative relationships extend beyond the boundaries of partnership meetings and are sustained over time</p> | <p><i>How would you rate the strategies you use to intentionally embed the partnership activities?</i></p> <p><i>Do you feel that you have been able to maintain trust, mutual respect with your partner?</i></p> <p><i>Has your collaborative relationship extended beyond the boundaries of partnership?</i></p> |
| <b>DECISION MAKING</b>                   | <p>The process for partnership decision-making is clearly articulated and involves all partners</p>  | <p><i>Has decision-making been clearly articulated among partners?</i></p> <p><i>Is decision-making shared between partners?</i></p> <p><i>How has it involved all partners?</i></p>   |

**JOINT OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS**

| <b>DOMAIN</b>  | <b>INDICATORS</b>   | <b>QUESTION</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b><i>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</i></b>             | Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined<br>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are understood<br>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are operational       | <i>Have you been able to maintain the defined roles you set out?</i><br><br><i>Have you been able to define responsibilities and expectations as originally planned?</i>  |
| <b><i>BOUNDARY-SPANNING ROLES AND STRUCTURES</i></b> | Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations cross organizational boundaries  | <i>Have roles and responsibilities crossed organizational boundaries?</i>   |
| <b><i>PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT</i></b>           | Partnership goals are assessed using performance-based measures that demonstrate program improvement  | <b><i>Have you been able assess or measure program improvement?</i></b>   |
| <b><i>BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOMES</i></b>                | Partners agree on performance measures that will be used to assess progress<br>Partners are held accountable for accomplishing partnership goals  | <b><i>Were the performance measures mutually agreed upon?</i></b><br><br><b><i>How did you effectively hold each other accountable?</i></b>   |
| <b><i>USING DATA</i></b>                             | Data are strategically used to guide partner decision making<br>Data are used to assess partnership effectiveness<br>Data are collected and analyzed using both formal and informal processes to guide continuous improvement | <i>How did you use data to guide decision making?</i><br><br><i>How did you use data to assess partnership effectiveness?</i><br><br><i>How was data used formally or informally to guide continuous improvement?</i> |
| <b><i>SHARING PROGRESS</i></b>                       | Partners share data and information with stakeholders and<br>Regularly communicate partnership progress toward collective goals   | <i>How did you share data with the partner?</i><br><i>How did you share data with other stakeholders?</i>   |

## 1.12 - Observation Instrument

**DATE:**

**LOCATION:**

**PURPOSE FOR MEETING:**

| <b>DOMAIN: PARTNERSHIP VISION</b>   |                 |               |                  |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>INDICATORS</b>   | <b>PHYSICAL</b> | <b>VERBAL</b> | <b>NONVERBAL</b> |
| <p><b>MISSION AND BELIEFS</b></p> <p>An articulated mission and shared beliefs exist and serve as guides for the work of the partnership</p>  |                 |               |                  |
| <p><b>SHARED GOALS</b></p> <p>Are clear, measurable, and feasible</p> <p>Address the common needs of the partnership</p> <p>Align with partner organization goals</p> <p>Mutually beneficial to partner organizations</p> |                 |               |                  |

| INDICATORS   | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|--|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>JOINT REFORM AGENDA</b></p> <p>Is jointly created and supported by all partner organizations</p> <p>Addresses identified partnership needs and priorities with a strategic plan for accomplishing short and long term partnership goals</p> <p>Is fully resourced (time, people, finances)</p> |          |        |           |
| <p><b>STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN</b></p> <p>Articulates concrete action steps for accomplishing partnership goals</p> <p>Includes timeline, roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes</p>   |          |        |           |

| <b>SYSTEM ALIGNMENT, INTEGRATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>   |                 |               |                  |
|--|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>INDICATORS</b>  | <b>PHYSICAL</b> | <b>VERBAL</b> | <b>NONVERBAL</b> |
| <p><b>ALIGNMENT</b></p> <p>Partnership roles and responsibilities are aligned and cross organization boundaries to accomplish collective goals</p> <p>Organization systems for partnership communication, resource allocation, and progress monitoring are aligned</p>   |                 |               |                  |
| <p><b>INTEGRATION</b></p> <p>Partner organizations select skilled and committed staff with complementary skill sets and decision making authority to serve as partnership members</p> <p>Partnership activities are integrated into the work of the organization and not considered to be “extra-curricular”</p> <p>Memorandums of understanding exist between partner organizations that ensure the sustainability of the partnership</p> |                 |               |                  |

| INDICATORS   | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|--|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>SUSTAINABILITY</b></p> <p>Processes for filling partnership vacancies are agreed upon and in place</p> <p>Strategies for building organizational capacity through leadership development, succession planning, and an intentional induction protocol are in place</p> <p>Funding strategies are ongoing to ensure the partnership continues to be a viable option for partner organization</p> |          |        |           |



| <b>COMMUNICATION &amp; COLLABORATION</b>  |                 |               |                  |
|---|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>INDICATORS</b>   | <b>PHYSICAL</b> | <b>VERBAL</b> | <b>NONVERBAL</b> |
| <p><b>COMMUNICATION TOOLS &amp; PROTOCOLS</b></p> <p>Processes for documenting and disseminating partnership meeting minutes and following up on partner action steps are in place</p> <p>An agreed upon schedule of meeting dates, times, and locations is established at the beginning of each year to support regular attendance</p> |                 |               |                  |
| <p><b>INFORMATION DISSEMINATION</b></p> <p>Mechanisms for regularly disseminating partnership news and progress updates in a timely manner are in place</p>   |                 |               |                  |

| INDICATORS   | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|--|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>PARTNERSHIP ADVOCACY</b></p> <p>Partners share responsibility for actively advocating on behalf of the partnership to gain visibility, support, and resources to support partnership goals</p>   |          |        |           |
| <p><b>COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <p>Strategies to promote collaboration are intentionally embedded in partnership activities</p> <p>Collaboration among partner organizations is characterized by deep trust, mutual respect, and regular and effective interaction</p> <p>Collaborative relationships extend beyond the boundaries of partnership meetings and are sustained over time</p> |          |        |           |

| INDICATORS  | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>DECISION-MAKING</b></p> <p>The process for partnership decision-making is clearly articulated and involves all partners</p> |          |        |           |

**JOINT OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS**

| INDICATORS  | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p> <p>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined</p> <p>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are understood</p> <p>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations are operational</p> |          |        |           |
| <p><b>BOUNDARY-SPANNING ROLES AND STRUCTURES</b></p> <p>Partnership roles, responsibilities and expectations cross organizational boundaries</p>  |          |        |           |

| INDICATORS  | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>PERFORMANCE -BASED ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>Partnership goals are assessed using performance-based measures that demonstrate program improvement</p>   |          |        |           |
| <p><b>BENCHMARKS &amp; OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Partners agree on performance measures that will be used to assess progress</p> <p>Partners are held accountable for accomplishing partnership goals</p> |          |        |           |

| INDICATORS  | PHYSICAL | VERBAL | NONVERBAL |
|---|----------|--------|-----------|
| <p><b>USING DATA</b></p> <p>Data are strategically used to guide partner decision making</p> <p>Data are used to assess partnership effectiveness</p> <p>Data are collected and analyzed using both formal and informal processes to guide continuous improvement</p> |          |        |           |
| <p><b>SHARING PROGRESS</b></p> <p>Partners share data and information with stakeholders and</p> <p>Regularly communicate partnership progress toward collective goals</p>   |          |        |           |

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



