

SUSTAINING CROSS-SECTOR SYSTEMS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN:

INTERIM LESSONS FROM THE *BY ALL MEANS* CONSORTIUM



October 2019

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL
EDREDESIGN
THE EDUCATION REDESIGN LAB



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This report covers the period between May 2017 and August 2019.

ABOUT THE EDUCATION REDESIGN LAB

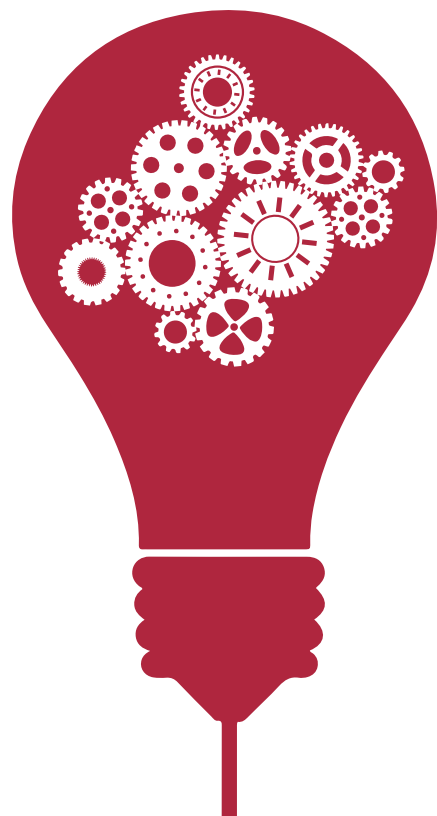
Paul Reville, Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and former Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, launched the Education Redesign Lab in 2014. Our mission is to give every child in the United States the opportunity to succeed in education and in life. We hope to lead a movement to create a new and more comprehensive education model. In order to overcome widespread inequity in child development and education supports, opportunities, and outcomes, we must dramatically redesign, align, and integrate our systems of development and education for all children and youth.

The Education Redesign Lab is engaging in three primary areas of work: supporting field work in communities through the By All Means initiative, an ambitious effort to achieve systemic and integrated improvements in services for children; movement building to convene leaders from policy, practice, research, and advocacy to nurture a national movement for this broader conception of education and child development and promote a children's opportunity agenda; and research that includes evaluating our field work and conducting original research to inform our programmatic, policy, and advocacy work. If we personalize supports, services, and opportunities starting in early childhood, tailor instruction to meet each child's needs, braid health and social services with schools, and provide access for all to high-quality expanded learning and enrichment opportunities, then we will ensure that all children—and all means all—have a much fairer chance of succeeding in education and in life.

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INTRODUCTION

Decades of school reform have done little to close achievement and opportunity gaps, particularly between children growing up in poverty and those who are not. Research consistently shows that income is the factor most strongly correlated with children's success or failure,¹ yet schools are ill-equipped to address the myriad challenges associated with poverty, from the availability of academic supports and enrichment opportunities to regular health care and experiences of childhood trauma, to name a few. Schools also continue to struggle to meet the needs of children with disabilities and learning differences and those whose first language is not English. It has become increasingly clear that focusing our efforts solely on schools is too narrow an approach if we are to attain equitable outcomes for all children.

In 2016, the Education Redesign Lab (EdRedesign) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education launched a network of communities, called By All Means (BAM), to create collaborative, cross-sector solutions to address the multifaceted needs of children. EdRedesign partners with and supports communities to establish integrated systems of support and opportunity that span the scope of children's lives from birth through postsecondary education or training. The BAM approach is based on a set of core components, including mayoral leadership and the creation of a cross-sector children's cabinet, that can be adapted to the needs of different communities. Other core components of BAM are twice-yearly convenings at Harvard, a part-time "consultant" in each community, supported by EdRedesign, who facilitates the cabinet's work, a commitment to identifying and tracking metrics,

and technical assistance on a range of needs, including financing, community engagement, data use, and policy implementation.

EdRedesign chose cities initially, and still focuses on local jurisdictions, because of their increasing importance as sites of innovation and leadership given the lack of attention at the federal and, often, the state levels of government. In the spirit of experimentation central to our "lab" orientation, BAM has expanded its focus to include a rural community as well as different governance and leadership structures.

One of EdRedesign's goals in creating BAM was to document the communities' successes and challenges in order to inform and smooth the way for others interested in implementing a similar approach. To do that, EdRedesign researchers visited each community twice a year to observe children's cabinet meetings and interview key people, including the mayors, superintendents, and other cabinet members. We also surveyed attendees at the end of each BAM convening. In our first report, *Building City-Wide Systems of Opportunity for Children* (2018), we documented BAM communities' initial efforts and examined elements related to leadership, including cabinet effectiveness; partnerships and relationships; external factors; data; and funding. This second report draws from what we learned as communities moved from creating new systems to implementing them and as EdRedesign transitioned from the first to second phase of BAM, with a particular focus on factors that support the sustainability of collaborative efforts over time.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustaining collaborative action long enough to make meaningful, lasting change requires commitment and leadership over many years, but changes in leadership, staffing, finances, and policy priorities, not to mention political and labor upheavals, all pose risks to the long-term survival of this work. As BAM continues to progress during its second phase, it is clear that sustaining this complex work in the face of multiple challenges requires both adaptive and technical solutions. Adaptive solutions involve shifts in priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties, while technical solutions use existing expertise, structures, and procedures to solve problems.² In cross-sector collaboration, stakeholders must work together in new ways, disrupting traditional silos. Our BAM work further challenges the status quo by implementing a whole child approach that meets children

where they are and gives them what they need to grow, learn, and thrive. As such, adaptive solutions are necessary both to encourage stakeholders to work together differently and to demonstrate the need for building a comprehensive, personalized system of supports and opportunities for children and youth.

At the same time, communities can leverage new and existing practices, policies, and strategies to tackle technical challenges related to collaborative action, such as creating dedicated staffing to undertake this work. Sustaining this complex work also requires fostering a community-wide demand for change. Communities can build a broad public demand for change by making the case for *why* this is essential for creating thriving communities and showing progress toward long-term goals.

REPORT OVERVIEW

First, the report introduces the transition of BAM into its second phase—BAM 2.0. This section highlights BAM 2.0's distinct features, which include the development of personalized plans for students and the strengthening of the backbone function. Next, we chronicle the progress of each BAM community and its latest developments through individual profiles. We then explore elements related to the overarching theme of sustainability, including using data to measure progress; the role of networks; internal capacity and

leadership; backbone support; funding; and community engagement. In addition, the report features four spotlights illustrating different components of cross-sector work, including initiatives related to out-of-school time, college and career success, integrated supports and opportunities, and collaborative action in a rural context. The report concludes with a set of key takeaways to inform the ongoing work of our BAM communities as well as others' efforts around the country.

TRANSITIONING TO BAM 2.0

The first phase of By All Means lasted, by design, for two and a half years. During this time, the six initial cities created children's cabinets, established collaborative goals, raised funds, and began implementation of new or expanded initiatives to support children's success and wellbeing.

In May 2018, EdRedesign launched BAM 2.0 to continue partnering with communities in their efforts to create new systems to support children. EdRedesign identified two specific focus areas for BAM 2.0: designing and implementing personalized Success Plans for children and youth, and creating a backbone structure for its cross-sector collaboration (described in greater detail below). Communities also committed to dedicating at least a part-time staff person to support the work. EdRedesign continues to support the consortium in BAM 2.0 through twice-yearly convenings, funding a part-time consultant to each community, and providing political and substantive guidance. As communities have built more internal capacity to support their efforts, the consultant role has, in many cases, become more of a logistical support and liaison with EdRedesign than a key driver of the initiative. During this time, EdRedesign has sought to address three areas of particular need and interest: funding, data, and community engagement. EdRedesign enlisted the Children's Funding Project to assist BAM communities in strengthening their fiscal strategies, and is partnering

with consultants to provide strategic support related to community engagement and data.

Five of the original six cities—Oakland, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Somerville and Salem, Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island—opted to continue as members of BAM, and two new partners joined. One of these, the **Partnership for Resilience** (the Partnership) in Illinois, had already been collaborating with EdRedesign for several years. The Partnership for Resilience, a collaboration between one of the state's teacher's unions and the state's pediatrician's union, guided by a steering team, operates as a health and education collaboration in the economically struggling suburbs south of Chicago called the Southland to address childhood trauma. In 2018, they expanded to a second, rural, site called Resilient Southern Illinois. Although the Partnership's leadership and governance structure differ some from the other BAM communities, many other aspects of the effort are similar.

The second community to join is Chattanooga-Hamilton County, Tennessee. Chattanooga-Hamilton County will build on its existing cradle-to-career effort, called **Chattanooga 2.0**. An unusual feature of Chattanooga is its two-mayor governance structure, with one mayor having responsibility for the city itself and the other for Hamilton County, in which Chattanooga resides.

TRANSITIONING TO BAM 2.0

SUCCESS PLANS: DEEPENING THE COMMITMENT TO PERSONALIZED SUPPORTS

During the first stage of BAM, the establishment of children’s cabinets laid a cross-sector foundation for addressing children’s needs holistically. BAM 2.0 is now expanding this focus to emphasize another central tenet of EdRedesign: personalizing supports and services for every child. This effort reflects EdRedesign’s conviction that if we are to meet the needs of every child, from supporting students with learning differences and English Language Learners (ELL) to providing connections to afterschool, health, and other social services, communities must have ways of identifying each child’s needs, strengths, interests, skills, and achievements. Communities also need ways to create and capture customized plans for action and to keep track of each child’s supports and services over time.

The Success Plans initiative is designed to put this idea into practice. In 2019, EdRedesign published a report, *Success Plans: Promising Tools for Customizing Student Supports and Opportunities*, that lays out a vision for transforming how communities support children as well as a comprehensive scan of existing efforts to create individual plans. Recognizing that communities have different needs and will have a range of points of entry for their Success Plans, EdRedesign has developed a set of Guiding Principles to shape

their development. Among others, these principles stipulate that Success Plans should be personalized, comprehensive, student-centered, and equitable.

The BAM communities are currently in the process of designing their initial Success Plans. Their points of entry for this work vary, with some communities forming partnerships with outside organizations while others are developing their plans internally. In some cases, communities are focusing their Success Plans on a specific subset of particularly vulnerable populations, such as those who have experienced trauma in Illinois, ELLs in Somerville, or chronically absent students in Oakland. Others, such as Salem and Chattanooga-Hamilton County, are starting with the entire populations of selected schools—or in Salem’s case, of all preK-8th grade schools—through a partnership with City Connects, an organization based at Boston College with a long history of developing personalized support plans for every student in a given school. Two communities, Oakland and Louisville, are building new data platforms to enable better connections between children and services and supports. The overall consensus is that this is both a needed and a common-sense approach to changing trajectories for vulnerable children.

STRENGTHENING THE BACKBONE STRUCTURE

Another signature element of BAM 2.0 is strengthening or establishing backbone support. EdRedesign incorporated this factor based on the recognition that cross-sector collaboration requires dedicated internal capacity to succeed. Currently,

BAM communities are at different stages of formalizing their backbone support. Some are starting new organizations, while others are utilizing an existing organization to perform this function. We discuss backbone support in more detail later in the report.

In the following section, we present brief profiles of each BAM community and its cross-sector efforts to improve outcomes for children. These profiles capture both ongoing and new initiatives underway. In addition, we showcase each community’s main accomplishments—from generating significant sources of external funding to delivering integrated supports and services to each preK-8th grade student to expanding access to summer and afterschool activities.

CHATTANOOGA-HAMILTON COUNTY

Chattanooga-Hamilton County, Tennessee joined the BAM consortium in 2018 to advance their collective efforts—called **Chattanooga 2.0**—already underway. The goal of Chattanooga 2.0 is to create a comprehensive system of supports and opportunities for children and to boost postsecondary and career outcomes for youth and adults living in the county. During the 2019-2020 school year, the community is partnering with Boston-based City Connects to implement an evidence-based approach to equip Chattanooga-Hamilton students with what they need to grow and learn.

Chattanooga-Hamilton’s leaders have made rapid progress on multiple fronts. In addition to their new partnership with City Connects, they assembled a children’s cabinet to bring together a broad set of child- and youth-serving municipal agencies and community-based organizations.³ Chattanooga-Hamilton has a unique mayoral structure in which the county and the city elect their own mayors; both county and city government contribute resources to the cabinet. The county mayor and county commission have fiscal oversight of Hamilton County Schools, working in collaboration with the elected school board, which serves Hamilton County, the city of Chattanooga, and 10 other municipalities within the county. Both the county mayor and superintendent co-chair the cabinet.

Given the overlap between the new children’s cabinet and Chattanooga 2.0, Chattanooga-Hamilton’s leaders have

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS

Partnering with City Connects to create individualized plans for children and coordinate supports and services in eight schools



WHOLE CLASS REVIEW

100% of students in City Connects schools receiving a whole class review



NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hired a new executive director to lead Chattanooga 2.0, Chattanooga-Hamilton County’s cradle-to-career initiative



REPORT RELEASED

Chattanooga 2.0 released a report outlining “10 urgent strategies to transform our future”

needed to clearly define their relationship, roles, and responsibilities. Through a series of in-depth discussions, they conceptualized Chattanooga 2.0 and the children's cabinet as equal bodies (i.e., neither has authority over the other) with distinct yet complementary purposes. The children's cabinet is a systems-level entity, which can align resources and enact and/or change policies. Applying a whole-child lens, the cabinet coalesces a broad set of stakeholders who influence children's wellbeing, including those from health, housing, public safety, social services, and juvenile justice, among others. Meanwhile, Chattanooga 2.0 is a cradle-to-career initiative, focusing specifically on boosting educational outcomes for students and adults. A cross-sector steering committee, along with an executive director, oversees Chattanooga 2.0, and a set of action teams implement key initiatives. Chattanooga 2.0 provides staffing capacity for the cabinet. While each body pursues different activities, Chattanooga 2.0 and the cabinet mutually reinforce each other's goals. For instance, the Success Plans initiative informs the work of Chattanooga 2.0's action teams by providing more comprehensive data to guide their work.

The cabinet's first major activity involves implementing Success Plans as part of its City Connects partnership. To drive support for the Success Plans initiative, the cabinet has produced key messaging, clearly explaining

how these plans will help students thrive and contribute to the future workforce. City Connects implementation began during the 2019-2020 school year at eight elementary and middle schools in Hamilton Public Schools with the long-term goal of expanding across the district. All participating schools have high populations of low-income students with various types of needs. The district leverages existing school counselors to tailor supports and services for each child based on an individual review of his or her strengths and needs. Utilizing the City Connects data platform, counselors track students' progress in four domains, including academic, social-emotional, health, and family. In addition to the cabinet's Success Plans initiative, leaders plan to expand the cabinet's focus in the future to address other needs in the community.

Chattanooga-Hamilton County's cross-sector efforts garner support from both public and private sources, including the school district, chamber of commerce, and philanthropic partners such as the Benwood Foundation and the Smart City Venture Fund. Currently, the school district and the Smart City Venture Fund have allocated funding for the Success Plans implementation. As Chattanooga-Hamilton County plans for the future, its leaders are continuing to explore strategies for leveraging and aligning resources to sustain its ongoing efforts.

THE SOUTHLAND AND SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Partnership for Resilience (the Partnership) is leading a cross-sector effort to build a trauma-responsive, family-focused system that enables children—many of whom are impacted by adverse childhood experiences or ACEs—to thrive in all areas of their lives. ACEs, which range from abuse and neglect to exposure to domestic violence and family members with substance abuse disorders, can detrimentally impact children’s growth and development.⁴ By bringing together school leaders, educators, and health providers, the Partnership is working closely with school districts to enhance students’ voice, agency, and overall wellbeing through an array of innovative approaches.

This collaboration emerged from an earlier cross-sector effort called the Southland Education and Health Initiative located in the southern suburbs of Chicago in Cook County. In 2017, the Partnership joined BAM to learn from and with others across the country who are undertaking similar collaborative work to improve outcomes for children in their communities. Over time, the organization has continued to grow, launching similar work in southern Illinois, a rural area in the Illinois Delta region (see the spotlight on page 31 to learn more about these efforts).

The Partnership mobilized a broad set of stakeholders, including the Illinois Education Association (the National Education Association-affiliated teacher’s union), the Illinois chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, school districts, higher education institutions, health care providers, and community-based organizations. Unlike other BAM communities, the Partnership is helmed by a steering team—rather than a children’s cabinet convened by a mayor. In 2016, the collaboration became an independent nonprofit, which provides backbone capacity.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



TEACHER TRAINING

Trained over 750 teachers in trauma-sensitive practices in the Southland



VISION CARE

Provided vision care to 3,200 Southland students, with 49 percent receiving glasses



DENTAL CARE

Provided dental care to 2,900 Southland students



NEW RURAL SITE

Resilient Southern Illinois is partnering with 18 districts to provide training on trauma

The Partnership established Resilient Southern Illinois (RSI) in 2018, which serves as an advisory committee that guides the work in southern Illinois.

As a first step, the Partnership applied a community organizing approach, conducting dozens of individual conversations with

COMMUNITY PROFILES: THE SOUTHLAND AND SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

teachers, administrators, and support staff in order to identify their main priorities, foster trust, and develop relationships. These conversations revealed district challenges related to behavioral health, primary health care, and parent engagement. The Partnership has worked with school districts and health providers to undertake various efforts to address these issues, including forming resilience teams to train and coach teachers in trauma-informed practices, expanding students' access to school-based health services, and offering family engagement programs. Specific initiatives vary based on the needs and priorities of local school districts.⁵ Currently, 11 school districts in the Southland and 18 small school districts in rural southern Illinois are integrating an array of trauma-informed practices. The Southland is also partnering with primary care providers to facilitate children's access to mobile- and clinic-based health services, including vision, dental, asthma, and immunization care. In 2018, the Partnership chronicled the Southland's progress in a report called *Early Lessons in Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools*.⁶

The Partnership is launching Success Plans initiatives in both southern Illinois and the Southland as part of its BAM 2.0 focus. In southern Illinois, the Partnership began implementation during the 2018-2019 academic year. The initiative aims to strengthen students' transition from middle to high school by fully engaging them in the development of their plans. Middle school students enrolled at the district's junior high school (there is only one junior high in the community) jointly create individual plans with their teachers and support staff, identifying their strengths, interests, and areas of growth. The plans also contain data and information related to students' academic development, emotional and mental health, career development, and civic engagement. Based on the needs of each student, teachers

and support staff connect youth to an array of tailored supports. In the future, the school district plans to create individual electronic portfolios for all P-8th grade students.

In the Southland, the Partnership is implementing a Success Plans initiative during the 2019-2020 academic year. Cross-sector teams, comprising school leaders, teachers, out-of-school staff, and social services staff, will create student profiles for a select group of elementary school students at two schools. These profiles will capture multiple types of data and information—ranging from discipline referrals, attendance rates, and academic growth to parent involvement and access to health-related services. The cross-sector teams will regularly review students' profiles to identify their needs and match them with necessary supports. The Southland is adapting an encrypted Google for Education platform to house the student profiles. Parental consent is required for students to participate in the initiative.

In order to share its collaborative work and disseminate effective trauma-informed practices with the broader field, the Partnership hosts an annual conference at the Governors State University. This year's event explored the theme of "Trauma-Responsive Schools: Recent Lessons and New Directions,"⁷ and drew approximately 250 people. Dr. Carmen Ayala, who became the state's Superintendent of Education in early 2019, delivered the conference's keynote remarks.

The Partnership generates funding from multiple sources to sustain its collaborative efforts, including annual school district contributions, the National Education Association, and foundations such as the McCormick Foundation, VNA Foundation, Grant Healthcare Foundation, Alphawood Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust.

LOUISVILLE

In Louisville, Kentucky, cross-sector leaders have continued to work together toward their shared goal of building an integrated system of cradle-to-career supports and increasing students' postsecondary opportunities, despite facing a potential state takeover of the school district and significant budget cuts.^{8,9} Their BAM efforts focus on expanding summer learning programs and enhancing their academic rigor, in addition to implementing a new mastery-based learning approach designed to engage youth in their educational experiences. Louisville is also creating a data platform to more seamlessly coordinate services for students. Finally, they are working to raise money for college scholarships as part of their overall strategy for supporting Louisville children and youth.

Louisville's leaders have focused on building a strong governance structure to guide their collaborative work.¹⁰ They reconfigured the children's cabinet into an operating committee and established a backbone organization called **Evolve 502**. In addition, they assembled a board of directors, hired Evolve 502's first executive director and other staff, and created taskforces. The executive director's initial priority involves leading a strategic planning process to identify the organization's long-term goals.

Over the past two years, Louisville's two complementary efforts—the city's BAM initiatives and its partnership with the Weiss Institute—have gained further momentum. Louisville's leaders partnered with the Weiss Institute in 2017 to establish a college scholarship 2+2 program, in which students attend a community college for two years and then complete their degree at the University of Louisville. They are working to raise a substantial amount of money for

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Enrolled 850 students in expanded summer programming



NEW BACKBONE

Created a new 501(c)(3) backbone organization



MOU SIGNED

MOU signed by 23 key stakeholder organizations



NEW DATA PLATFORM

Created a new data platform to link children with services and supports

these scholarships, which are slated for the class of 2021. The Weiss Institute is also spearheading two analyses, one of academic data and one of public spending, which will inform the type of wraparound supports that Louisville's leaders decide to focus on in the future.

Currently, Evolve 502 is working to mitigate “summer slide,” which disproportionately impacts students of color. This priority emerged as a central goal based on data showing that 50 percent of Jefferson County Public School (JCPS) students are not at grade level. As part of this effort, Evolve 502 is implementing a Success Plans initiative called the Backpack League. This initiative aims to prevent summer learning loss by implementing a more rigorous academic curriculum and serving more students; prior summer programming was primarily targeted at the K-3 level and was more recreational than academic.

This past summer, the Backpack League enrolled approximately 850 students in 3rd through 6th grade. More JCPS teachers were involved this year in creating their own four-week learning experiences for children and received support from the district. In addition to programming run by the district, JCPS supported community-based providers of summer care through its Building Louisville’s Out-of-School Time Coordinated System (BLOC) partnership by bringing certified reading and math teachers into their summer programs for 75 minutes of instruction in each subject daily. Louisville’s leaders hope to expand the Backpack League to serve more students in the future.

Evolve 502 is currently using an existing JCPS data platform that is accessible to BLOC organizations to assess students’ pre- and post-test scores. A future goal is to implement Unite.US, a community-wide platform developed by Metro United Way, which will integrate health, social services, and education data, and will be used to coordinate services for students among different providers. One issue that will need to

be resolved is how Infinite Campus, which is the student information management system, will interface with Unite.US to streamline services.

The goal is for the family resource and youth services coordinators (FRYSCs) to help students by placing referrals in Unite.US for issues like homelessness or illness and connecting students with people or services who can provide supports. Eventually, they hope to have the system flag students before serious issues occur, based on factors like attendance or behavior issues that may alert the FRYSCs.

In addition to accelerating summer learning, Louisville is developing what it is calling The Backpack of Success Skills, which is a mastery-based learning approach where students demonstrate their knowledge and capture that information in a digital backpack. The backpack contains all of the student’s assessment information, as well as data on attendance, behavior, self-management, and other social-emotional information. Students defend their backpack of success skills at the end of 5th, 8th, and 12th grades. This initiative seeks to encourage students to take control of their learning, reflect on what they have excelled at, and see their progress over their years in school.

Looking ahead, Evolve 502 is exploring opportunities to secure long-term funding to ensure that all children living in Louisville acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for successful futures. The organization is conducting a three- to five-year capital campaign with the goal of raising approximately \$50 million to fund college scholarships, wraparound services, and its own internal operations.

OAKLAND

In Oakland, California, the children’s cabinet has continued its cross-sector efforts to improve outcomes for children despite facing significant challenges, including an ongoing district budget deficit and a teacher strike earlier this year.¹¹ Launched in 2016, Oakland’s cradle-to-career initiative was originally housed under the framework of the **Oakland Promise** and evolved to take on a broader approach to tackling collaborative efforts to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. Launched in 2016, this robust partnership includes the city of Oakland, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), East Bay College Fund, and the Oakland Public Education Fund. Its long-term goal is to dramatically increase the number of college graduates from Oakland.¹² In 2019, Oakland Promise moved from the mayor’s office to merge with the East Bay College Fund and become an independent nonprofit.¹³

Oakland is using this opportunity to strengthen the Oakland Promise across the school district and the city. In early 2019, Oakland’s leaders decided to move the children’s cabinet work to the Oakland Thrives Leadership Council, a body that was created to engage the city’s civic and business community. Oakland’s leaders are shifting from a public sector entity to a new structure for the work that will comprise both public and private sector leadership. City, county, and school district leadership will play key roles under this new structure.

Oakland’s children’s cabinet will use the same structure for organizing its work—“impact tables” or working groups—as it did when it operated at the Joint Powers Authority (JPA). These impact tables address a broad set of issues impacting Oakland’s children and youth, including education, health, wealth, housing, and safety. Project

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

Kindergarten to College (K2C) has been implemented at 52 elementary schools



POSTSECONDARY ACCESS

Students in Oakland Promise high schools completed the FAFSA and Dream Act application and applied to college at higher rates than those in non-OP schools¹⁷



RAISED \$33 MILLION

Raised \$33 million for the Oakland Promise “cradle to career” pilot



NEW DATA PLATFORM

Developing a new data platform to decrease chronic absenteeism in partnership with Salesforce

managers, funded by Kaiser Permanente, a locally-based nonprofit health care provider that has significantly contributed to Oakland’s collaborative work, continue to staff the impact tables.

As part of its collaborative work, Oakland’s leaders are continuing to strengthen Oakland

Promise's four core programs: Brilliant Baby, Kindergarten to College (K2C), Future Centers, and College Scholarships & Completion. Brilliant Baby offers targeted supports for babies and their parents, including money for college savings accounts and coaching and financial awards for families. K2C continues to invest in children's postsecondary trajectories by creating early college scholarships and promoting a college-going culture. Future Centers assist middle and high school students with various college and career-related activities. Finally, College Scholarships & Completion provides multi-year scholarships and an array of supports to ensure that students persist and graduate from college. NORC at the University of Chicago is currently conducting an evaluation of all four programs.¹⁴

Oakland Promise receives public and private funding from the City of Oakland, OUSD, Kaiser Permanente, the Benioffs (of Salesforce), Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and many others. In 2018, a voter-qualified measure was placed on the ballot, which would have raised approximately \$27 million annually for early childhood education and college access and completion programs, like the Oakland Promise. The Oakland City Council certified that Measure AA had passed with 62.5 percent of the vote. However, a lawsuit was filed against the City on the grounds that it did not receive a two-thirds vote. Based on the California Supreme Court's decision in *Cannabis Coalition v. City of Upland*,¹⁵ many believe that the courts will rule that Measure AA is valid. In fact, in early July, a Superior Court upheld San Francisco's interpretation that tax measures placed on the ballot by citizen initiative only need a simple majority to pass.¹⁶ The courts will continue to deliberate and ultimately make a decision for Oakland.

As part of BAM 2.0's Success Plans, Oakland's leaders have identified a specific focus—chronic

absenteeism—as a throughline priority across the five impact tables. To inform its efforts, the cabinet is exploring the issue of chronic absenteeism in a research report, which will be published later this year. The cabinet is aligning each impact table with the shared goal of reducing chronic absenteeism and is identifying indicators that they will use to measure progress. Oakland's leaders are partnering with Salesforce to build a digital platform—at no cost to the city or district—that will allow OUSD to more effectively track the delivery of supports and services to students. Salesforce is also giving free licenses to OUSD to use the platform for at least the initial implementation period.

This effort represents the first phase of Oakland's Success Plans initiative, which is expected to be implemented in two elementary, two middle, and two high schools. The school district is leveraging existing staff—site coordinators who work at Oakland's Community Schools—to provide case management for students who repeatedly miss school. In addition to monitoring students' absences, coordinators will track office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions, as well as academic benchmarks.

Looking ahead, Oakland's leaders intend for the digital platform to capture both district data and information from community-based providers. This will enable coordinators to identify which supports are helping to increase students' attendance, while also allowing providers to tailor services based on each student's needs. An afterschool tutoring provider, for example, would be able to access the platform to view a student's academic outcomes, which would enable it to customize instruction based on the child's strengths and needs. Eventually, Oakland's leaders plan to implement the platform across the district in order to develop Success Plans for all students.

PROVIDENCE

In Providence, the children's cabinet has continued to advance its original BAM priorities to bolster social-emotional supports and expand out-of-school opportunities for the city's youth. While the cabinet has made progress on multiple fronts, the city faces major challenges, including a state intervention of the school district and a budget deficit.¹⁸ A recent review by the Johns Hopkins Institute of Education highlighted several systemic issues affecting the quality of education in the Providence Public School District (PPSD), such as cumbersome bureaucratic processes and a rigid collective bargaining agreement.¹⁹ As part of the state intervention, Providence's education commissioner is developing a turnaround plan for the district, which will be implemented by the newly appointed receiver.

As the city navigates this difficult environment, the children's cabinet remains committed to working together across silos to improving outcomes for children, both in and out of school. Providence's leaders have placed mental health counselors in schools to increase children's access to vital services and offered teachers training and resources related to social-emotional learning. They have also continued to nurture existing relationships with summer learning programs. In addition, the collective effort is undertaking new work to promote kindergarten readiness.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

3X

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Tripled the number of schools (from 10 to 30) served by an onsite mental/behavioral health clinician



SCHOOL CULTURE COORDINATORS

Hired school culture coordinators at seven middle schools in response to needs identified during the 2017 All In: Providence Educational Summit



SUMMER LEARNING SEATS

Provided 1,095 city-sponsored summer learning seats



NEW BACKBONE

Created a new 501(c)(3) backbone organization

Currently, Providence works with four different partners to provide summer learning to over 1,000 students, but they hope to expand that to 500 more by using PPSD teachers, which they are now able to do through a new union contract. There were also more summer learning opportunities available to high school students in 2018 than there had been in previous years.

At the end of 2018, Providence's leaders established By All Means: Providence, a new nonprofit serving as the cabinet's backbone organization. While still nascent, the organization has focused on formalizing the organization and is planning to hire full-time staff and appoint a board of directors. By All Means: Providence aims to advance the cabinet's key priorities by providing dedicated capacity to implement its initiatives.

Providence's leaders have continued to explore ways to meaningfully engage community members in its cross-sector initiatives, building on their previous efforts. After the inaugural All In: Providence Education Summit in April 2017, Providence's leaders published a report²⁰ outlining several recommendations and organized community conversations on key topics. These conversations resulted in concrete actions, including a plan to invest in

school facilities and the hiring of middle school culture coordinators to foster positive school climate and student engagement. The second All In: Providence Education Summit occurred during the teachers' contract dispute in May 2018.²¹ This event focused on sharing progress related to the priorities identified during the first summit and eliciting further input on these efforts. The Nellie Mae Education Foundation funded both events. While Providence's leaders didn't convene a summit in 2019, they are continuing to explore effective strategies for raising awareness about their collective efforts and intentionally involving families and students.

In order to sustain their collaborative efforts, Providence's leaders are pursuing both national and local funding. In particular, the cabinet is seeking an estimated \$250,000 to provide seed funding for its backbone.

As Providence's leaders navigate the transition underway, the children's cabinet and new backbone offer a strong foundation from which to inform and support the state's turnaround plan for the school district. This period of change also provides an opportunity for Providence's leaders to reassess their main priorities as they continue to work together to improve outcomes for the city's children.

SALEM

In Massachusetts, Salem’s comprehensive movement—named **Our Salem, Our Kids**—to support children both in and out of school continues to gain momentum. Through a partnership with Boston-based City Connects, Salem’s leaders are building an integrated system of supports and opportunities to ensure all children have what they need to thrive. While Our Salem, Our Kids has seven overarching objectives, Salem’s leaders are working to address three specific elements impacting children and youth this year: early childhood education; out-of-school programming; and access to healthy food.

Salem’s children’s cabinet serves as a governing board for Our Salem, Our Kids. The work is implemented with the support of the Partnership Collaborative, which is a network of approximately 60 youth-serving individuals and organizations from throughout the city. Working groups have been formed from Partnership Collaborative membership to focus on each objective. As part of its BAM 2.0 focus, Our Salem, Our Kids is exploring funding options to establish a backbone organization and hire an executive director, which would provide capacity for implementing the cabinet’s initiatives.

As part of its original BAM focus on fostering children’s social-emotional wellbeing, Our Salem, Our Kids partnered with City Connects to develop individual plans—or Success Plans—for all preK-8th grade students in

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SUCCESS PLANS

Every child in a preK-8 school has an individual Success Plan through its partnership with City Connects



WHOLE CLASS REVIEW

100% of students received a whole class review



SERVICES DELIVERED

17,294 total services delivered



NEW DATA INDEX

Developed a new Salem Child Thriving Index of data

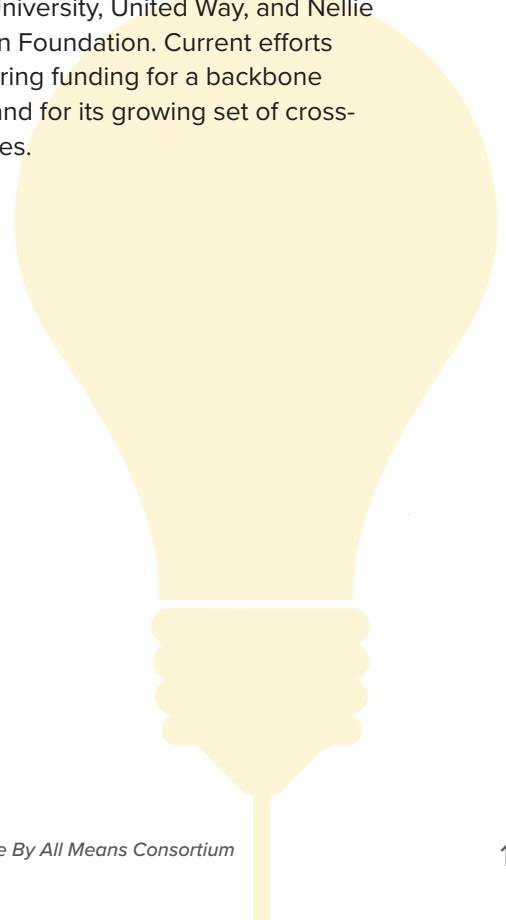
the district in 2017. (Read more about Salem’s partnership with City Connects on page 39.) The 2018-2019 school year marked the district’s second year of implementation. City Connects-trained school adjustment counselors create plans for all students, identifying their academic and nonacademic strengths and needs and linking them to various prevention, intervention, and enrichment services in the community. Counselors monitor student progress through the City Connects data platform. Improved outcomes are anticipated by the end of this school year (the City Connects model takes three years to show academic gains). While a community benefits agreement with North Shore Medical Center allocated initial funding for the City Connects implementation, the district is now supporting the initiative as part of its operating budget.

The cabinet decided to extend its original focus to address additional factors impacting the city’s young people—ranging from early childhood education and out-of-school programs to mental and physical health care and healthy foods—and developed a set of common objectives to guide this broader effort and to create a deeper public understanding of how children in Salem are progressing on the measures. These objectives are outlined

in the Salem Child Thriving Index, which was presented to the wider community last spring. Objectives correspond to academic and nonacademic indicators and identify specific activities that the cabinet is working on, such as expanding access to out-of-school opportunities and addressing food insecurity.

Our Salem Our Kids believes that community support is integral for its success and has created a website to better explain the importance of the work. A community-wide communications campaign is planned for this year. To raise awareness and build broad community buy-in, Our Salem, Our Kids has enhanced its communications and messaging strategy. In 2018, Salem’s leaders enlisted Fresh Since 2015, with support from a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, to create a logo for the effort. With the support of EdRedesign, the website has been updated as well.

Our Salem, Our Kids garners fiscal support from multiple sources, including the school district, Salem State University, United Way, and Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Current efforts focus on securing funding for a backbone organization and for its growing set of cross-sector initiatives.



SOMERVILLE

In Somerville, Massachusetts, the children's cabinet has continued to advance its BAM priorities to expand access to high-quality, longer-day early education and care, bolster summer and afterschool opportunities for school-aged youth, and integrate health and human services into its broader efforts for children. Somerville's leaders are coordinating a mixed delivery system, which aims to ensure that all young children participate in learning environments that nurture their healthy growth and development and are ready to enter kindergarten. They are also maintaining strong partnerships and forging new relationships with an array of out-of-school providers. A recent effort involves developing personalized plans for English Language Learner (ELL) students in Somerville.

SomerPromise, a community-wide cradle-to-career initiative based in the city's health and human services department, continues to provide backbone support to the children's cabinet to implement these cross-sector efforts.

Over the last two years, Somerville's cross-sector efforts have continued to grow. A recent three-year grant of \$1.5 million from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care will enable Somerville's early education department to further strengthen their mixed-delivery system of early education and care. The early education department will partner with local child care centers and Head Start to boost quality in preschool classrooms across the city. Somerville's leaders are also launching a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of early education and care and existing options in the city to increase access to its mixed-delivery system. In addition, they hope to increase families' access to wraparound health supports. Meanwhile, a

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



RAISED NEARLY \$3 MILLION

Raised nearly \$3 million for preschool expansion



VISIONING REPORT

Somerville Learning 2030 visioning report with broad community input, funded by \$100K grant from Nellie Mae



MORE THAN DOUBLED AFTERSCHOOL PARTICIPATION

More than doubled afterschool participation from 700 to 1,500 and created four new partnerships with providers



NEW FOUNDATION

Created the Somerville Education Foundation to promote learning opportunities for all residents

three-year grant of nearly \$1.4 million from the Commonwealth Children's Fund, issued jointly to the city's Department of Health and Human Services and the Somerville Public Schools, is supporting a cross-sector effort to support children from prenatal to age three,

as well as bolstering home visiting capacity and community partnerships for SomerBaby, an education- and health-focused welcome baby visit program. The grant will also support Somerville's Single Point of Entry access system, which the city is developing to facilitate the registration process for both preschool and out-of-school programming, in addition to providing child care tuition assistance for families.

Out-of-school time represents another area of growth for Somerville. The recently hired out-of-school time coordinator formed a network of the city's out-of-school providers, which is working together to expand access to high-quality afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities. The cabinet continues to maintain strong partnerships with several nonprofits and has also recruited new organizations. The network currently includes 24 school- and community-based providers. Similar to its efforts around early education and care, the cabinet is organizing a campaign to inform families about existing out-of-school options. (See the Spotlight on page 34 to learn more about Somerville's out-of-school efforts.)

Another recent effort is the cabinet's Success Plans initiative, which aims to tailor supports for ELLs in early elementary school and their families. The initiative began as part of a summer learning program in 2019. Currently, three schools are developing plans for each child in collaboration with their families, identifying their strengths and needs, and connecting them to a range of wraparound supports, including health, legal, and basic needs. Wraparound and family support coordinators use Student Insights, a data dashboard housed at the school district, to track students' academic progress and attendance. In the future, the cabinet intends to scale the Success Plans initiative to reach more students.

The cabinet is also working to meaningfully engage community members in its efforts. In early 2018, the cabinet received a \$100,000 grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation to lead a visioning process called "Somerville Learning 2030," which involved city-wide surveys and a series of public conversations to understand existing opportunities and challenges affecting young people's learning both in and out of school and to identify long-term priorities. In the spring of 2019, this process culminated in the release of *Learning in Somerville: Community Feedback, Somerville Learning 2030 Listening Project Findings*.²² This report will inform the development of a set of future goals to enhance learning experiences for Somerville's young people.

Another cabinet focus involves using technology to share information about its initiatives and available resources for children and families. It updated the **Somerville Hub**, an online directory of programs, services, and recreational activities to provide more extensive information for multiple age groups, and also created a web page on the city of Somerville **website** that describes the cabinet's efforts.

Somerville's cabinet leverages both public and private funding to support its cross-sector efforts, including from the city, school district, state, and multiple foundations. In 2018, the Somerville Education Foundation was established, which operates as the cabinet's fundraising and advocacy arm to support aligned goals. In addition to the investments in early education and care work, the Biogen Foundation continues to contribute to the city's out-of-school programming, specifically supporting its partnership with Citizen Schools. Somerville's leaders are actively seeking funding for their Success Plans initiative as well as additional resources to sustain their cross-sector efforts into the future.

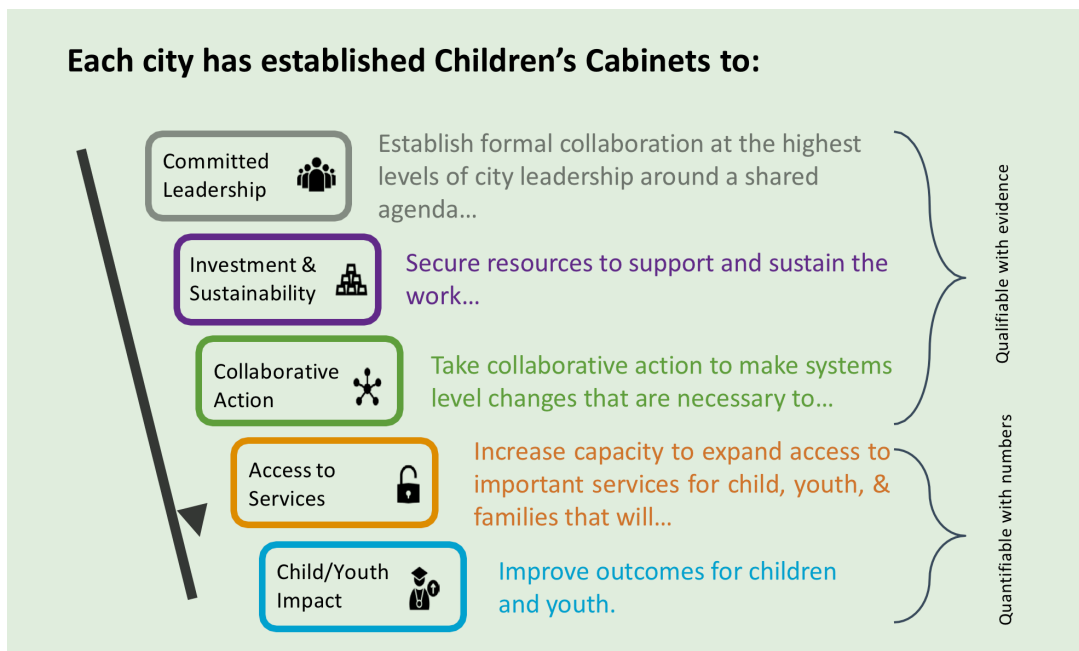
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Each BAM community has made meaningful progress in coordinating supports and opportunities to better serve children, as illustrated in the previous profile section. To examine how communities can maintain their cross-sector approaches into the future, this section of the report explores the factors that affect the long-term sustainability of collaborative systems of support and opportunity for children. These factors include using data to measure progress; the role of networks; internal capacity and leadership; backbone support; funding; and community engagement. Interviews with children’s cabinet members in each community revealed important insights about how these elements have facilitated—and in some cases, hindered—their ability to sustain collaborative action over time. The following section explores these elements, drawing on information and data from interviews, surveys, and the broader field.

USING DATA TO MEASURE PROGRESS

Since collaborative work takes time and, initially, involves more process than programmatic or outcomes changes, tools for tracking progress need to take into account the different stages of the work. During the first phase of BAM, EdRedesign developed a framework, called the *Measures of Success*, for communities to use in identifying and measuring indicators of progress. This framework identifies five categories, from “committed leadership” to “child/youth impact.” EdRedesign has

created rubrics reflecting continuums of development for the first two categories and data templates for the other three. The *Measures of Success* also contains a “throughline” document for communities to identify the pathway from their high-level goals to their initiatives to indicators of increased access to supports and, ultimately, to child-level outcomes. The following graphic displays the *Measures of Success* framework.



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All communities already collect a great deal of student data as part of their accountability systems, but determining how to align that with collecting and communicating data specific to their collaborative work has been challenging for most communities in the early stages of the effort. The strongest evidence of progress to date comes from increases in funding for youth programs and services and expanded access to a range of opportunities and supports, including a vast increase in new services for children in Salem, substantial increases in summer programming in Somerville, Providence, and Louisville, and expanded access to early childhood education in Somerville.

Several communities are in the process of creating new data platforms that will enable them to better personalize supports and services to children. Louisville is working with Unite.US to design a platform that will streamline referrals and tracking of social services in its initial phase, and will connect with the school database in its next phase. Oakland is partnering with Salesforce to

create a new data system as part of its Success Plan effort to reduce chronic absenteeism. Salesforce is developing the system pro-bono, and will make it available for free to Oakland for at least an initial time period.

Salem has become a leader in taking a comprehensive approach to data use. After initially struggling to identify what data to track, they decided to create a broad new “Thriving Child Index” of seven objectives relevant to children’s healthy academic, social, and physical development in support of their multifaceted Our Salem, Our Kids initiative. These include access to high-quality preK and K-12th grade education, out-of-school opportunities, housing, food, and health care, in addition to supporting children’s social and emotional health. Between the new index and their expanded data collection as part of City Connects, city leaders have seen a huge jump in their use of data in the service of Our Salem, Our Kids. As one leader said, “We’ve met and exceeded our goals for data collection.”

THE ROLE OF NETWORKS

By All Means was conceived of as a cohort of communities that would support and learn from one another in order to provide a network of support that would help them sustain their efforts. That element of the initiative has proven to be an essential feature, and one that has increased in importance over time. As communities have come together through the convenings over a period of years, they have developed relationships that have enabled them to learn from one another’s challenges and successes and helped them sustain momentum. As one Oakland team member explained, “It’s comforting to know we are all grappling with similar issues and can help each other out.”

Additionally, the role of EdRedesign as a convener, partner, and support for communities has been important for communities’ ability to sustain the work. In a 2018 article for the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Paul Reville and Lynne Sacks identified five elements of a cohort-based approach that have been instrumental for BAM.²³

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These elements are:

- 1. *Strengthening internal community relationships:*** At every convening, cabinet members expressed how useful it is to have dedicated time away from distractions to work together within their teams. Although cabinets meet regularly, those meetings are generally short and focused on specific action items rather than longer-term strategizing or in-depth explorations of specific issues. One attendee said that “having time together is invaluable,” and another, “Most helpful was meeting with my team and local teams to share problem solving, successes, and strategies.” After hearing at the first BAM convening that the teams wanted more time to work together, EdRedesign scheduled at least two substantial “team time” sessions at each subsequent convening.
- 2. *Formal and informal cross-community learning:*** The convenings also provide opportunities for communities to share expertise and to learn from others in the consortium. While academics and other outside experts play an important role in the convenings, nothing can replace learning from others who are working through the same issues on the ground. As a Chattanooga team member said, “It has been especially helpful to learn from our peer cities’ successes and challenges.” Another found the chance to work across teams invigorating, saying, “I love meeting with other cities to dig into the work.” As the initiative has progressed over time and communities have faced a range of common challenges, from staff turnover to new state oversight of school districts, this cross-community learning has taken on an added dimension. City and cabinet leaders have turned to their peers in other communities for guidance on how to address these management or political upheavals.
- 3. *Positive peer pressure:*** The expectation that every community will share updates on their progress at each convening creates what one mayor called “positive pressure” to make meaningful progress in the interim. The friendly competition among mayors and public accountability helped create a sense of urgency for the work.
- 4. *Support for backbone staff:*** While not every community has established a formal backbone organization, all need staffing capacity to ensure the cabinets meet regularly, set agendas, and keep the work moving forward between meetings. EdRedesign supports a part-time consultant to each community to fill this role, which has proven essential to sustaining the efforts locally. EdRedesign also regularly convenes the consultants across communities, both by phone and in person, to serve as supports for one another and share progress.
- 5. *Outside support and expertise from a network convener:*** Just as the backbone staff or organization provides essential support for cross-sector collaboration within a community, a convener of a consortium of collaboratives can offer both practical expertise and a forum for reflecting more broadly on the reasons for taking on this work. The BAM consortium has been fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from leading experts in topics ranging from leadership to racial equity to sustaining collaboration. For example, Ronald Heifetz, who has spent decades writing about and supporting leaders of all kinds as they navigate complex challenges, has participated in BAM since its inception to help mayors and other community leaders think about their roles and how to most effectively use them for change. As previously described, EdRedesign has also worked with communities to create an evaluation framework, called the *Measures of Success*, and has provided assistance to communities on issues such as financing, community engagement, and equity. In addition, EdRedesign has developed guidance for cabinets on specific topics, such as *Redesigning Systems of Child Development and Education to Ensure Success for Children with Learning Differences*, to ensure these strategies are fully incorporated into their work.

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NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY CHALLENGES

Committed leadership and dedicated internal staffing capacity are necessary for children’s cabinets to sustain their cross-sector efforts.²⁴ In BAM, mayors and superintendents jointly lead the work, while part-time consultants and supporting staff help coordinate the cabinet’s daily activities.²⁵ According to EdRedesign’s theory of action, mayors play a powerful role in mobilizing cross-sector stakeholders around a common goal and advancing community-wide initiatives.²⁶ All BAM children’s cabinets, with the exception of the Southland and southern Illinois communities in Illinois (which have a different governance structure), continue to benefit from committed mayoral leadership.

In addition, ensuring that the superintendent is committed to the community-wide effort and has a positive working relationship with the mayor is crucial.²⁷ According to a cabinet member, “[The superintendent] and [mayor] being not just present but giving their endorsement and engagement, I think, has allowed success.” In a recent survey, most BAM communities believe that they have successfully garnered mayoral and superintendent involvement in their collaborative efforts.

This structure has been effective in many BAM communities; however, internal capacity—having both sufficient personnel and continuity in key roles—remains a challenge. According to a cabinet member, “The ongoing challenge is always that this is no one’s full-time job. And I’m sure that’s the challenge everywhere. And so you have a group of really talented and committed people who have really demanding jobs outside of this. And it’s been inspiring to see people take out the time that they don’t have to do this.” One of the BAM-sponsored consultants similarly described the need for additional capacity. “If we build this one organization, it’s highly sustainable. The thing with the cabinet is that they all have full-time jobs. We need to hire people for whom this is their full-time job,” the consultant said.

Similar to the trend documented in our first report, several BAM communities have experienced leadership transitions and turnover in other key positions such as city staff roles and the BAM-sponsored consultants. Earlier this year, for example, two BAM communities had superintendent departures. A lack of continuity can affect a cabinet’s momentum and level of support. According to a cabinet member, “I think a lot of times [superintendents] want to be able to stay in the job, but if their board changes over...and they want the next new shiny thing, then that’s what happens, or if the mayor changes over....That’s one of the reasons why we just don’t make progress, because you have to have time for things to...[get] traction and grow.” Another cabinet member remarked, “Where you have a cabinet, that is essentially Mayor So-and-So’s Cabinet, I think that leaves you very vulnerable to it being thrown by the wayside in a change of administration.” In addition to potential setbacks from leadership changes, some communities perceive that turnover in any cabinet role could delay their efforts. “I think any sort of departure of a cabinet member would be a speed bump along the way. I think that we’re all really engaged but I do think it would be tricky if anybody left. Everybody is filling a unique role,” a cabinet member said.

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In order to address the challenges posed by a lack of dedicated staffing and inevitable turnover, BAM 2.0 required that communities designate a cabinet member to allot 25 percent of her or his time to support the work of the cabinet, in collaboration with the BAM-sponsored consultant. While all communities had already identified supporting staff—representatives from either the school district or the city—to fulfill this function, BAM 2.0 sought to formally embed the role into an individual's job description. This aligns with the value BAM communities place on having dedicated staff to perform this role. In a recent survey of convening attendees, nearly all respondents reported that staff support is critical for their long-term success.

In Salem, the cabinet decided to expand the role—in this case, the school district's director of community engagement and partnerships fills the position with funding provided by the district—from 25 percent to 50 percent. This decision illustrates the district's high level of commitment to Salem's cross-sector efforts and offers an encouraging precedent for other communities. In another instance, a BAM community created an entirely new position to bolster its capacity to scale a specific initiative. Somerville established an out-of-school time coordinator position to oversee its growing afterschool and summer partnerships. In both Salem and Somerville, greater capacity has helped to propel their collective work.

BUILDING A BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

Backbone support is considered one of the five conditions for implementing collaborative action.²⁸ According to the nonprofit consulting firm FSG, backbones fulfill six functions: offering strategic direction, facilitating communication between partners, managing data collection and analysis, overseeing communications, coordinating community outreach, and fundraising.²⁹ A 2018 study of 25 collective impact initiatives found that backbone support was an important factor in advancing cross-sector efforts.³⁰ While BAM 2.0 asked communities to allocate 25 percent of a stakeholder's role to cabinet activities, EdRedesign recognized that this amount of time was insufficient for sustaining the long-term work. Further, our first report documented how leadership changes and shifts in other key roles could adversely impact cross-sector efforts. As a result, all BAM communities are expected to develop a backbone by establishing a new organization, partnering with an existing organization, or creating new staff positions as a mechanism for both expanding staff capacity and institutionalizing the work.

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According to a recent survey, the majority of BAM communities believe that a backbone is important for ensuring their long-term success, both for providing capacity to implement their work and sustaining it despite leadership changes. “There’s been a lot of momentum around [the creation of a backbone] because I think the feeling was that there just wasn’t a lot of capacity to carry out a lot of the things that the cabinet was hoping to do, and so it seemed like a logical progression,” a cabinet member described. “I think [sustainability] will entirely depend on how the 501(c)(3) comes out, and the level of engagement and involvement with that. Because I think that’s actually the impetus for launching it, [that] people want there to be an organization with capacity that can operate independent of whoever the mayor at the time is,” added the cabinet member.

In addition to enhancing staff capacity, a backbone offers a neutral entity that can bring a diverse set of stakeholders together who have different—and sometimes competing—interests and priorities. “I think having an executive director too, is seen as that neutral, I call it ‘neutral authority,’ some people say ‘honest broker’ type of role that’s removed from all of our organizations around the table. I think having that leader will continue to drive the work forward, and I think that’s what’s been missing,” one cabinet member said.

Communities are taking a variety of approaches to creating backbone support for their collaborative work. Some are forming new nonprofit organizations to serve this function, while others are building on existing organizations or creating new staff positions, but not new organizations. In Providence, for example,

the children’s cabinet established By All Means: Providence as a nonprofit organization that will act as its backbone, but it is still in the process of formalizing roles and raising money. In other cases, the children’s cabinet is leveraging support from an existing organization, such as SomerPromise in Somerville.

Launching Louisville’s Backbone

Among the BAM cohort, Louisville has the most well-established backbone organization. Originally launched by the children’s cabinet as Louisville Promise, the backbone was rebranded as Evolve 502. Louisville invested a significant amount of time and energy to create a backbone in order to address capacity issues. According to a cabinet member, “The challenge was trying to figure out how to balance the needs for Louisville Promise [now Evolve 502], and the time commitment, because there is a significant time commitment.” This year, Evolve 502 boosted its capacity by hiring its first executive director and new staff, assembling a board of directors, and creating taskforces. In addition to augmenting staff capacity to implement the cabinet’s initiatives in Louisville, another cabinet member reflected on the role of the backbone in institutionalizing the work: “I think that’s why it’s so important to get the structures right....Mayors come and go. So while the infrastructure piece is not the most inspiring, it’s the most important to get right in terms of sustainability.”

While Louisville’s leaders agreed that forming a backbone was an important next step in advancing their common goals, they had to make several key decisions as they moved from concept to implementation. They needed to determine the backbone’s overall governance structure and how

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it would interact with the cabinet. To guide this process, the cabinet initially formed a core group, which later became three subcommittees focused on the executive director search, fundraising, and governance. During this time, Louisville's cabinet spent considerable time working to define the relationship between itself and the new backbone by identifying each other's key roles and responsibilities.

Ultimately, Louisville's leaders decided to evolve the cabinet into two separate bodies: an operating committee, which would meet regularly to oversee the cross-sector initiatives and make decisions about programming, and a board of directors, which would convene top leadership on a quarterly basis, including the mayor, superintendent, and an array of executives. They also created taskforces responsible for implementing the backbone's initiatives. According to one stakeholder, this structure enables members to more effectively carry out the work. "I think it's a better mix of people, it's a more diverse group of people, which is good....it [has] more sort of operational and planning and implementation focus, so that one of the reasons why I like this group is, I think that this is going to be a group that will step into the work in a different way than somebody who's running a big organization can," the cabinet member said. The structure is still relatively new, however, and when asked how well it's working, the individual responded that it's "a work in progress" and that it "will not be clear for a while."

At the same time, Louisville's leaders realized that the operating committee members typically lack the authority to distribute resources and that they would need approval from the board to move work

forward. The board only meets quarterly, which could impede the pace of the work. As an Evolve 502 member described, "The concern around that was, 'Well, the board's only meeting four times a year technically, and we don't want to hold up progress.'" In response, Louisville's leaders decided to create an executive committee of the board that meets during the intervals between the quarterly board meetings, enabling the operating committee to obtain necessary approval related to programming changes and budgetary matters.

Resolving the numerous questions related to governance issues and hiring an executive director took time. Most stakeholders felt that progress was stagnating a bit as a result of continued conversations about governance and expressed an urgency to regain the lost momentum. A cabinet member commented, "I think there's a balance between trusting the process and letting it move at its own pace, and at the same time moving and making progress is probably pretty good... Can we translate the higher level discussions about what would be a good thing to happen [to] can we get it on the ground as a functional entity actually working? And that translation is always a little bit messy, it's kind of the nonprofit equivalent of passing legislation. It's sort of ugly in the process, but if you can get it out on the other side, you can do good with it."

Louisville's leaders have built a strong foundation to operationalize and sustain their cross-sector efforts. Their successful launch of Evolve 502 illustrates a promising example of how communities can form a backbone with the capacity to implement initiatives and advance a children's cabinet agenda.

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SECURING LONG-TERM FUNDING

Funding represents a fundamental component of sustaining cross-sector collaboration—both to implement programming and to operate the backbone. Raising funds to support the backbone capacity can be particularly challenging since funders often prioritize direct services. Without sufficient resources, collective efforts simply aren't viable. BAM communities recognize this reality, and they overwhelmingly agreed in a recent survey that funding is essential for their long-term success. “You could put the best intentioned people around the table, but unless they've got the money to support it and the backing, it's not going anywhere,” described one cabinet member. While BAM communities believe that funding is critical, a majority report a lack of or limited success related to their fundraising efforts. Given the fiscal constraints facing communities across the country, this isn't surprising. In Louisville, for example, rising pension costs have contributed to a significant budget shortfall affecting the metro government,³¹ while Providence and Oakland are grappling with budget cuts in their school districts.³² Although funding represents a formidable challenge for both starting and sustaining collaborative work, BAM communities have continued to use multiple strategies to obtain financial support for their cross-sector efforts. Our first report documented myriad approaches, including re-allocating or raising public dollars, generating private funding, and garnering in-kind support.³³ Over the last two years, BAM communities have applied similar strategies.

In Somerville, the children's cabinet has tapped multiple funding streams, including from the school district, city, state, philanthropies, and corporations. A multi-year grant from Biogen, for example, has enabled Somerville to expand its out-of-school programming. “I think that [the Biogen funding has] allowed us to scale the initiatives quicker and deeper than we would have otherwise [have done] if it was just our own funding, or just a philanthropic side with their funding,” described a cabinet member. Notably, the cabinet has secured substantial support this year for its early education and care initiatives, including a competitive three-year grant of \$1.5 million from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care as well as a three-year grant of nearly \$1.4 million from the Commonwealth Children's Fund.

In another case, a BAM community has maintained a close relationship with a funder, which has benefited its collaborative work both financially and strategically. In Oakland, Kaiser Permanente, a locally-based nonprofit health care provider, continues to finance the

project manager role and key initiatives of the health impact table, and to play an important role in the Oakland Thrives Leadership Council. It is also supporting the upcoming publication of Oakland's chronic absenteeism report. According to one cabinet member, “Of all the corporate partners I've worked with in the last 30 years, [Kaiser is] one of the most unique in terms of their unwavering, unconditional support of the public sector.” Another cabinet member shared a similar perspective, remarking, “Kaiser...[is] very unusual in a good way...it's almost like they end up becoming like another public agency... with the way they're willing to commit resources, not just money but time and strategy.”

Some BAM communities are also engaging in efforts to identify the array of state and local funding streams for child- and youth-related services. Understanding this complex landscape is an important first step in order to more intentionally align and/or reallocate resources. In Louisville, the Weiss Institute is producing a fiscal analysis of the city's public

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spending, while Somerville and Providence have partnered with the Children’s Funding Project, which assists states and localities in developing strategic, comprehensive financing strategies to close the opportunity gap, to create fiscal “maps.” These maps are intended to uncover existing spending gaps and overlaps in services for children.

In addition to these strategies, BAM communities are pursuing other approaches to maximize resources for their long-term work, such as launching ballot initiatives and refining their budget infrastructure. In Oakland, the city proposed a measure on the 2018 ballot, which was projected to raise approximately \$27 million annually for the Oakland Promise and its early childhood efforts. While a majority voted for the measure, the results face a legal challenge and haven’t yet been determined. Reconfiguring a community’s budget infrastructure is another approach being used to more effectively facilitate cross-sector efforts. For example, Somerville’s cabinet is planning to establish a “joint account” structure between the city and school district, which would streamline the budget process.

Finally, BAM communities are focused on generating fiscal support for the new components of BAM 2.0—Success Plans initiatives and backbone organizations. Communities have utilized various channels to support these new endeavors. For their Success Plans initiatives, BAM communities have reallocated existing funding, attracted new investment, or done a mix of both. Both Salem and Chattanooga-Hamilton-County, for instance, have repurposed school district funds to implement the City Connects model for their Success Plans; Chattanooga-Hamilton County has also obtained philanthropic support and Salem secured a community benefits agreement to pay for

the first year of implementation. In Oakland, leaders have partnered with Salesforce to build a digital platform to house individual plans. In addition to developing the platform at no cost, Salesforce is supplying the school district with in-kind licenses. A couple of members of the BAM cohort are still seeking funding for their Success Plans initiatives.

BAM communities are also in various stages of fundraising for their backbones. Louisville has secured public and private dollars for its backbone, Evolve 502, which has enabled it to hire an executive director and other staff members. In addition, Louisville is currently spearheading a multi-year capital campaign with the goal of raising money for Evolve 502 as well as for college scholarships and wraparound supports. Meanwhile, Providence and Salem are seeking a combination of public and private funding to build internal capacity—such as hiring an executive director to lead the organization—for either a new backbone (in the case of Providence) or for a not yet established backbone (in the case of Salem). According to one cabinet member, the backbone is anticipated to facilitate overall fundraising efforts. “[The backbone will] be a conduit to bring in money and spending money to get stuff done without having to go through city purchasing and all that,” the stakeholder explained.

While most BAM communities are in the early phase of developing their backbones or haven’t yet started, they can glean insights on effective fundraising approaches from the larger field. In a Collective Impact Forum survey of backbone organizations, respondents recommended several strategies for garnering support, including clearly communicating the unique role of a backbone, investing in data capacity to show impact, and setting realistic expectations about results over time, among others.³⁴

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SPARKING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the last several years, the collective impact field has more fully integrated the concept of community engagement into its framework.³⁵ While the definition of community engagement varies depending on the context, the International Association for Public Participation identifies a broad spectrum spanning the following stages: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering.³⁶ Informing represents the least intensive type of engagement; at this phase, organizations mainly provide information and updates to community members about their work. Empowering marks the most advanced stage, in which community members have decision-making authority.

BAM communities widely recognize that community engagement and buy-in are critical for executing and sustaining their work, but they also find it challenging to do well. Over 80 percent of respondents in a recent survey of convening participants indicated that community engagement is important to their long-term success, yet less than one-third reported being successful in this area. For most of the communities, a disconnect in the experiences of children’s cabinet members and the population they are serving is a contributing challenge. Despite this, most communities have taken initial steps that mainly correspond to the “informing” and “consulting” stages in the spectrum described above. Somerville, for example, is leading outreach campaigns to inform families about existing early education and care and out-of-school options. In Salem, the children’s cabinet produced the Salem Child Thriving Index as a mechanism for regularly reporting its progress to the community and worked with a digital branding agency to amplify the Our Salem, Our Kids movement. Salem and Somerville also developed websites to provide a centralized directory of relevant programs and services in their respective cities.

Some BAM communities have also undertaken concerted efforts to gather feedback from families, youth, educators,

and other stakeholders about needs and potential solutions. Providence held a second All In: Providence Education Summit in 2018, which shared updates related to efforts stemming from the inaugural 2017 summit and obtained additional input. In Somerville, leaders conducted a set of public conversations and city-wide surveys as part of a visioning process called “Somerville Learning 2030.” This process sought to identify opportunities and challenges affecting young people’s learning both in and out of school and to determine long-term priorities. *The Learning in Somerville: Community Feedback, Somerville Learning 2030 Listening Project Findings* report, published this year, highlights findings from this endeavor.³⁷ The report is intended to be used as a practical resource to inform the city’s efforts on behalf of children, which authentically reflects the perspectives of community members. “How do we take these things [from the report], which are now high level, and how do we bring them down to the field to honor them so that people feel like the input that they gave is going to result in some change?” asked a cabinet member.

Oakland has successfully engaged community members by hosting public meetings to inform them about Oakland Promise efforts and elicit feedback. “We’ve

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had over 10 meetings with the community, often having between 30 to 60 people at them...where we are sharing what we're thinking, getting feedback from the community, doing small groups. And that informed the actual policy of what we're doing as we go to city council or potentially [gather] signatures as well," described a cabinet member. Grounded in a community organizing approach, Illinois's Partnership for Resilience has sought community input to inform and guide its work at every stage. In order to determine its core areas of focus, the Partnership individually met with teachers, administrators, and support staff to understand their needs, develop trust, and build relationships.

Resilient Southern Illinois (RSI), the Partnership's newest collaborative effort in Illinois, illustrates an even deeper level of community engagement. Most members of RSI's advisory committee are from the same communities they serve, which facilitates their cross-sector efforts. "My role in the work initially has been to organize, build off the relationships that I have in this area because I was born and raised here," said one advisory committee member. Many advisory committee members also share common experiences. At the inaugural RSI advisory committee meeting in February 2018, the motivation for many stakeholders to engage in this work became clear: it was deeply personal. As members of the committee went around the room and introduced themselves, at least half of the local leaders present shared that they had personally experienced childhood trauma.

This intrinsic motivation distinguishes RSI from other BAM sites, and from urban settings more generally, where the majority

of local leaders and decisionmakers are not representative of the communities they seek to impact—through a lack of shared experiences, different racial or ethnic identities or socioeconomic background, or by not having grown up in the area. Often, more than one of these factors affects representation. As a result, RSI's leaders are uniquely invested in and motivated by the work and, perhaps more importantly, this effort is consequentially being done *with* the community, not to it: local participants didn't just grow up in the communities they are seeking to serve, they've also experienced the traumas they are seeking to heal.

Engagement also raises the issue of equity, which convening participants identified in a survey as the factor most important to the success of their work. Community members, particularly people of color, disadvantaged populations, and students, have historically been excluded from policy and decision-making processes. Cross-sector efforts can promote equity by engaging those most directly affected—in this case, families, students, teachers, and others who work closely with children—as members of a children's cabinet, advisory board, or other governing committee. Currently, most BAM communities don't involve parents or students as formal members of their cabinets, though many have expressed a desire to do so. One cabinet member observed that this lack of representation is problematic because it reinforces traditional power dynamics. "I mean, we still don't have a beneficiary of all this stuff we're designing at the table. We don't have parents just for the sake of being parents as a part of the group. We don't have students just...for the sake of

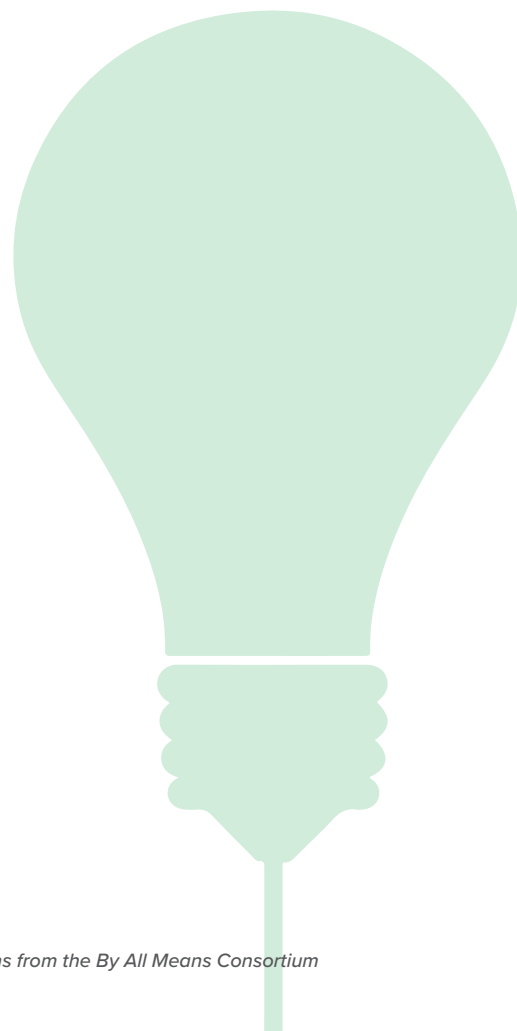
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being students as a part of the cabinet. So, we still are in our old track of those who have the power to make decisions are still the ones making decisions for others.”

Another dimension of engagement involves racial diversity. While there is racial diversity among mayors and superintendents in the BAM cohort, some communities have pointed out an overall lack of racial diversity in key leadership roles and cabinet membership. “We keep talking and using the word equity and the make-up of leadership in the city and the schools and the vast majority of the nonprofits does not reflect the demographics of many of the people that we are wanting to serve,” one cabinet member said. Another member of the BAM cohort also echoed the need for greater diversity. “I would say we have got to broaden our scope. Who’s at the table? We have a bunch of white women right now at the table. And we keep saying things

like, ‘We have to diversify.’ And we haven’t done it yet. So that would be something that I think would be a call to action for us.” At the same, however, another stakeholder noted the importance of not tokenizing people of color.

To support communities on strengthening their community engagement strategies, EdRedesign is partnering with a consultant who has deep expertise in this area and has co-developed a “dual capacity” engagement framework for families and schools. As BAM communities continue to advance their cross-sector priorities, crafting a cohesive strategy for fostering ongoing, authentic participation among families, youth, schools, and other partners will help ensure that their efforts reflect the actual needs and desires of those most directly impacted.



This section presents spotlights that feature cross-sector initiatives in four BAM communities. These narratives vividly show how collaborative action is making a difference in young people's lives. In Somerville, middle school students are now able to participate in high-quality afterschool programming that helps prepare them for future success. Elsewhere, an Oakland-based initiative enables high school students to explore meaningful postsecondary opportunities, and Salem elementary school students are accessing an array of supports and enrichment activities in their city. Finally, middle school students in rural southern Illinois are actively engaging in their education by identifying their interests and setting goals as they navigate the transition from junior high to high school.

“IT’S JUST THE WILLINGNESS TO HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR”: CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION IN RURAL ILLINOIS

The Partnership for Resilience and Resilient Southern Illinois

EdRedesign is working with the Partnership for Resilience (the Partnership) to accelerate collaboration between the Illinois Education Association (Illinois's NEA-affiliated teacher's union) and the Illinois chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The goal of the Partnership is to reorganize schools and communities to build resilience to childhood trauma, in part by creating and strengthening the connective tissue between the fields of health and education. The Partnership's first site—the low-resource/high-need southern suburbs of Chicago—experienced early successes outlined in a recent report entitled, *Early Lessons in Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Creating School-Health-Community Partnerships to Improve the Lives of Children*.³⁸

Encouraged by their initial results, the Partnership established a second site in 2018—Resilient Southern Illinois (RSI)—in an area of great need: the rural delta region of southern Illinois. The region served by RSI encompasses 18 school districts across 16 counties, serving over 19,000 students and spanning 6,067 square miles. This former coal-mining region faces several challenges, including a decline in population, high rates of poverty and child abuse, and the opioid epidemic.^{39, 40, 41}

With the help of the Illinois Education Association (IEA), RSI held a three-day training in June 2018 for over 170 educators, introducing the effects of toxic stress on students and offering strategies

for teachers as they assist students who have experienced trauma. Participating schools then organized school-based “resilience teams” of teachers, administrators, union leaders, and school support staff who receive ongoing training, coaching, and resources from RSI.

In addition to preparing teachers to effectively address students' trauma, the Partnership and RSI recognize the importance of equipping teachers, families, and other adults in children's lives with skills to cope with trauma that they themselves may have experienced. “One of our theories is we've got to help the adults to help the kids, so we really want to make sure that the teachers and caregivers are

able to deal with their own trauma, and then also understand how to help the kids in their charge,” one leader shared.

Another component of RSI’s work involves its Success Plans initiative, which launched during the 2018-2019 academic year in the district’s junior high school as a way of strengthening the transition from junior high to middle school. The initiative aims to increase student voice and agency by having students drive the planning process.

The advisors—any adult in the school chosen by the student—meet with students several times over the course of the year to ensure that students remain on track. Last year, the district arranged for the 8th graders to present their individual plans to the transition team at their high school. While the transition team was initially hesitant to participate, “as the morning went on the high school loosened up and became a bit more engaged and interested in the process,” described one leader. The hope is that every student in the 2019-2020 8th grade class will have a transition plan for high school.

What We’ve Learned So Far

As part of the Measures of Success framework developed by EdRedesign, RSI selected four indicators to assess its long-term impact on children. These measures are average daily school attendance, long-term absenteeism, school discipline, and teacher self-efficacy. This data will enable RSI to identify how trauma-sensitive

practices affect both student outcomes and teachers’ perceptions. Meanwhile, the RSI team has also done some evaluation of its own work. As one of the leaders recounted: “Moving into year two, we just did an evaluation meeting a couple of weeks ago when I was down there, and I think it was very helpful to fine tune what aspects of the approach are working and where does there need to be some adjustment?”

While RSI is too nascent to show any long-term impact on children, the initiative has already begun to influence how school districts address student trauma. The new part-time staff member supporting the day-to-day work of the initiative, who has spent many years working with districts in the region, relayed how encouraged she felt by educators’ responses to the trainings offered by RSI:

It’s so amazing, the eagerness and the hunger that these districts have for the collaboration of this project. Just seeing them work one-on-one and having those “a-ha” moments. Like one of the last trainings we were in, we could just see the a-ha’s when the speaker was talking about relating with students and understanding the trauma they’ve been through. There were light bulbs going off in the room and they were having conversations like, “That’s why student A was acting that way. I can do this, A, B, and C, with that student.”

Opportunities and Challenges of Cross-Sector Collaboration in Rural Settings

Since RSI's initial advisory committee meeting in February 2018, EdRedesign has explored the unique opportunities and challenges of operating a collaborative effort in a rural setting. Interviews with key leaders in the RSI efforts illuminated several core themes. These include the following:

1. Local leaders often grew up in the region and are intrinsically motivated to do the work due to personal experiences with childhood trauma.
2. While transportation and distance are a challenge, the team has adapted by using technology, providing multiple training sites, and designating a point person to liaise with the most remote districts.
3. The availability of/access to resources, services, and programs is a challenge, but this obstacle contributes to a greater willingness to help and collaborate among stakeholders.
4. The smaller size of the rural community increases access to local leadership and often means there are pre-existing relationships and trust between stakeholders.
5. The rural site takes a more collaborative, inclusive approach to the work, which is also perceived as less efficient and strategic.

As the above themes illustrate, there are clear barriers to cross-sector collaboration in rural contexts. Our work with RSI, however, also reveals the presence of distinct opportunities in these communities. For example, RSI appears to have overcome the trust issues affecting some other communities as a result of pre-existing relationships and relatively easy access to decisionmakers. Stakeholders know each other not simply through their official capacities, but also as fellow church members, gym buddies, or through mutual friends.

This advantage is closely intertwined with another benefit: rural leaders are often from the communities they serve, not just geographically, but also in shared experiences. Researchers of collaborative approaches have noted the importance of doing work *with* communities, rather than doing work *to* them: "Bringing community stakeholders to the table and shifting power to their voices, assets, and solutions can drive change at a very different level than system partners speaking on behalf of the community."⁴² The fact that RSI's leaders are so deeply embedded in the community—and that their approach is more all-encompassing and inclusive—can potentially accelerate the work in ways not experienced by other BAM communities, who have grappled with issues related to community engagement, representation, and buy-in.

“BREAKTHROUGH IS THE PLACE I CAN BE MYSELF”: CONNECTING SOMERVILLE YOUTH TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

Breakthrough Greater Boston

Paper balls fly through the air toward targets from across the school cafeteria, launched by laughing and cheering middle schoolers from homemade catapults. This isn't recess or kids playing around, though. It's a physics lesson led by Breakthrough Greater Boston (BTGB), which has provided targeted summer instruction, afterschool programming, mentorship, and college access guidance to middle and high school students in the Boston area for nearly 30 years. The diverse group of 7th graders is learning about force and motion and using these principles to design the catapults. Any one of them can explain the math behind projectile objects. Most will also tell you they love science. Several aspire to be engineers.

Breakthrough Collaborative

BTGB is an affiliate of the Breakthrough Collaborative (Breakthrough) whose mission is to “narrow the opportunity gap for underresourced students” through a six-year, year-round, tuition-free program for middle and high school students from underresourced communities throughout the U.S. Currently, Breakthrough has 24 affiliates throughout the U.S. and one in Hong Kong. Collectively, Breakthrough affiliates serve over 5,000 middle and high school students. Somerville is BTGB's third site; other sites are in Cambridge and Boston.

Students enter the program during the summer after 6th grade and continue on throughout high school. Rising 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students engage in an intensive six-week summer program each year and participate in afterschool programming. They receive supports throughout high school, including tutoring, mentoring, internships, and workshops to help prepare them to apply to and thrive in college.

The Breakthrough model embodies a “students-teaching-students, teachers-training-teachers” philosophy. Undergraduate students serve as teaching fellows, leading instruction during the middle school summer program. Breakthrough teaching

fellows are overseen by professional teachers who act as instructional coaches and mentors. The program focuses on students facing barriers that could impede their ability to attend or graduate from college.

In 2017, the Somerville children's cabinet partnered with BTGB to expand afterschool and summer opportunities for the city's youth—which represents a core priority of Somerville's BAM efforts. The first cohort of rising 7th graders in Somerville participated in the BTBG programming in the summer of 2018. The second cohort joined the program this past summer. Throughout their middle school years (7th and 8th grade) BTGB participants attend a weekly afterschool program during the school year. In high school these more intensive programs involve support with internships and college counseling.

Expanding Out-of-School Opportunities in Somerville

The Somerville children's cabinet established an OST working group focused on increasing access to quality OST programs for Somerville children. This group has forged strong partnerships with several out-of-school providers, including Citizen Schools, BTGB, the Calculus Project, El Sistema, and Groundwork Somerville.

The OST working group developed funding models that leverage support from businesses, Somerville Public Schools, and fundraising by the OST providers. These partnerships provide free access to quality programs for Somerville middle and high school students. Recently, the cabinet hired an out-of-school time coordinator who oversees a network of out-of-school providers, which is seeking to bolster access to high-quality afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities. As of 2019, Somerville is providing 1,500 afterschool and summer slots. These programs aim to increase the number of students they serve with each year they operate.

Breakthrough's ability to engage middle school students to the extent that they choose to spend their summer vacation in an intensive academic program is impressive. Several key elements have enabled the program to achieve this feat.

“Near Peer” Teacher Model

Breakthrough employs what it calls a “near peer” teacher model. The teachers in the summer program and the afterschool program are current college students, some of whom participated in the program when they were younger. Through this model, Breakthrough students have consistent contact with teachers they feel they can relate to and see as role models on the path to college. Since Breakthrough also works hard to recruit teachers from the same ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds as their students, participants have an opportunity to work with teachers in whom they can see themselves.

Small classes are also integral to the “near peer” model. Advisory groups have at most three students and academic classes have at most 10. These small groupings allow teachers to get to know their

students extremely well, provide significant individualized attention, and mitigate some challenges that new teachers might otherwise face in managing a classroom.

The summer program focuses on pre-teaching. Over the summer, students learn the skills they will see in the coming year (i.e., they learn 7th grade skills and content in the summer before 7th grade). This model helps students enter the coming year ahead of the game. “I used to be worried about speaking in math class, but now when the teacher shows us something new, I already know it from Breakthrough and I share my answer a lot,” explained one student. This approach also helps differentiate Breakthrough from other summer academic programs which are often focused on remediation. “I thought summer school was boring before I came to Breakthrough, but everything is fun and hands on. I wish school was like this all the time,” reported a student.

Embedded College Focus

College-going is embedded throughout the Breakthrough program. Breakthrough participants interact daily with current college students who serve as their summer and afterschool teachers, families receive support in the college application process, and students head out on field trips to college campuses.

Guidance on the college admissions process is part of what attracts both families and students to Breakthrough. “We are not from here and I don't know how the university system works here so I was really worried about how my daughter will go to college,” expressed a mother who immigrated to the U.S. when her daughter was five years old. “Now she is in Breakthrough and I know they will help us with the process, so it is one less thing I worry about now.”

Students also appear to shift their aspirations and plans based on the contact they have with their Breakthrough teaching fellows. As an example, students shared that they wanted to attend the schools their teaching fellows went to because they respected them so much. One mother commented that her son always wanted to go to college but now he is “setting his sights higher” because his Breakthrough teaching fellow goes to Tufts and he wants to be “just like them.”

Building Community

Breakthrough intentionally builds community to support their students, teaching fellows, and families. Small cohorts offer one such way to foster close relationships. In Somerville, 50 students participate in each cohort. While students attend different schools during the school year, they participate in the same group throughout the six-year Breakthrough program. This allows students to get to know each other in a variety of ways and to develop a support network of other highly motivated, college-bound students in their community.

In addition to small cohorts, Breakthrough brings students together in daily community meetings and organizes special activities, such as Unity Day, camping, and advisory. “Breakthrough is the place I can be myself,” explained one student. “We get to know each other on a much deeper level. Like, there are all these kids who are like me, from where I am from, and I didn’t even know [them] before we came to Breakthrough.” Parents report that their children share more about their day, develop interests, and take more pride in their heritage as a result of their time with Breakthrough.

Family Support and Investment

Breakthrough also supports youth in other concrete ways. For example, Breakthrough staff will often meet with a child’s school

or accompany families to meetings if they request it. One father reported that he and his wife feel more connected now to his daughter’s school because of the translation services provided by Breakthrough staff. A mother described the advice that she was given about advocating for her daughter’s IEP, adding “they help with all my children, not only the one in the program.”

Breakthrough’s Impact

BTGB’s first summer program in Somerville shows academic and social-emotional gains for the majority of their students. Breakthrough administers the Renaissance Star assessment to students at the beginning and the end of the summer program. According to BTGB’s most recent data, on average, students’ reading comprehension grew by three months from 25 days of instruction (with 64 percent of students demonstrating improvement from the beginning of the program). One-hundred percent of students improved in science, 71 percent in math, and 70 percent in writing. In addition to academic gains, students self-reported the impact they believe the program had on their social-emotional learning. The most notable of these results include the impact students feel Breakthrough had on their critical thinking (84 percent) and perseverance (80 percent). Families are also surveyed at the end of the program. They reported that the program positively impacted their child’s academic skills, confidence, and love of learning.

Somerville is making substantial progress in improving out-of-school learning options for the city’s children, and BTGB is an important partner in this collective effort. Looking ahead, Somerville plans to continue to work closely with BTGB and the rest of its OST network to connect young people to high-quality afterschool and summer opportunities.

“THEY KNOW WHO I AM AS A PERSON”: BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS TO PREPARE OAKLAND’S YOUTH FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

Oakland’s Future Centers

Down the stairs tucked behind a “welcome” banner, an office is buzzing with activity. The walls are covered with college pennants, handwritten charts tracking which seniors have completed college and scholarship applications. Shelves full of SAT study books and college brochures line the walls. Two students work on class assignments while a counselor walks another student through an online financial aid application. The conversation switches seamlessly between Spanish and English as the counselor answers their questions and clarifies the next step. Students gather around computers and chat. “Are you going to the college fair?” “What class are you taking this summer?” they ask each other. As a student walks by the door, a counselor calls her in and asks, “Did you finish your application for the summer program?” When the answer is no, she instructs the student to sit down and start working. Another student walks in and announces he has picked his college. Cheers erupt and one of the counselors starts dancing. This is a typical morning at the Future Center based at the Oakland High School in Oakland, California.

What Are Future Centers?

Oakland’s Future Centers are drop-in centers aimed at promoting college and career access for Oakland’s youth. They were created as part of the Oakland Promise, a cradle-to-career initiative launched by Mayor Schaaf in partnership with the Oakland Unified School District, East Bay College Fund, and the Oakland Public Education Fund.

Located within middle and high schools, Future Centers provide a range of services to assist students with the college and career preparation process. Currently, the Oakland High Future Center serves about half of the students in the high school, and the majority of their work is with 11th and 12th graders. Central to the Future Centers’ mission is supporting students with navigating the financial aid process of applying to college. This includes everything from filing a financial aid application to weighing aid packages and qualifying for scholarships. The Oakland High Future Center also connects students to an array of resources, including Upward Bound programs, community college summer

classes, college trips, and more. In addition, it equips students with information about both college and career options.

Why Do Future Centers Work?

While the success of Future Centers is measured by the number of students completing financial aid and Oakland Promise Scholarship applications, their real success lies in the authentic relationships staff cultivate with students. These relationships enable students to be more open about their aspirations and challenges which in turn allows counselors to better support them and ultimately help them reach the next milestone. The warm atmosphere in the Future Centers keeps students returning. One 11th grader remarked, “When I come in here it’s just like, ah, you can relax and be yourself.” Feeling known by counselors is also a big draw. “They know me, like beyond how I am doing in class, they know who I am as a person.” In a large high school the Future Centers and the counselors who staff them provide a unique opportunity for students to build close relationships with adults.

These strong relationships also allow staff to help each student determine what fit will be best for them after high school—whether that means a University of California school, an Ivy League college, or a mechanics program that will lead to a good job. In one case, a student explained that he was becoming disengaged in classes at the beginning of his sophomore year and his grades were beginning to suffer. After he received a D on a test, his Future Center counselor met with him to understand the underlying issues causing his low performance. Through this conversation, the student shared his excitement about his summer community college classes and his boredom returning to high school classes. Together they made a plan for him to take certain prerequisites the following summer, allowing him to skip 11th grade and graduate a year early after taking honors and AP classes during his senior year. “I didn’t even know it was a possibility but [my counselor] helped me figure out what was going to work for me,” he said.

Future Centers also provide a vital lifeline for students whose families are immigrants and aren’t familiar with the U.S. education system or those who will be the first in their family to go to college. “I worry about the English part of the SAT, but [my counselor] got a lot of us an app to help us practice vocabulary and she tells me about the tutoring sessions so I go and get help studying,” explained a 10th grader whose family immigrated to the U.S. three years ago. While she felt significant anxiety about the college process and school in general, she expressed that her Future Center counselor is always available and offers helpful ideas. Other students point out that their families don’t know how to apply to college, but that the Future Center

counselors make them feel comfortable asking questions—even those that might seem “silly” like what the SAT is or how to figure out what programs of study a college offers. “I wouldn’t know what to do without the Future Center,” an 11th grade student said.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, the Future Center counselors would like to reach all students in the school and employ a more proactive approach in which they would cover the nuts and bolts of the college and career process during 9th and 10th grades and then would use 11th and 12th grades to guide them on the transition to college. In particular, Future Center counselors would like to offer more programming for 12th graders on the transition to college, including independence building, time management, developing a support system, and seeking academic support. Counselors expressed, however, that they would need additional capacity to undertake this work.

In addition to the need for more staffing, counselors worry that the college focus deters some students from accessing the Future Centers. “I want the Future Centers to really be about the future. I worry that students who aren’t thinking about college don’t even come in here,” a counselor explained. Some progress has occurred on this front. For example, the Future Centers introduced a “careers” pathway as part of a senior day focused on transitioning to next steps. In addition to groups for students attending UC schools, community colleges, and private colleges, students who plan to enter the workforce directly after high school attend a session on how to choose a job with room for growth, which professions are highest paying, and how to access training programs.

“A WEB OF SUPPORT THAT WAS NOT THERE BEFORE”: TAILORING SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL SALEM STUDENTS

Salem’s Partnership with City Connects

In Salem, Massachusetts, the children’s cabinet is building a strong system of student support through a district-wide partnership with Boston-based City Connects. This partnership—now in its third year—emerged from the cabinet’s early priority to improve children’s social-emotional wellbeing. In 2011, the Salem Public Schools entered into Level 4 state status as a result of one of its elementary schools failing to demonstrate that its students were making adequate progress. Mayor Driscoll knew they needed to make meaningful changes to district practices to support children, and that those changes had to take the full range of children’s needs into account.

A presentation by City Connects founder Mary Walsh at the By All Means Fall 2016 convening inspired cabinet leadership to form a partnership that would bring the City Connects model to all of Salem’s preK-8th grade schools. Mary Walsh was a professor of education at Boston College in the 1990s working with the Boston Public Schools to improve outcomes for children when she came to a realization: if she wanted to change children’s trajectories, she needed a new strategy. She and her colleagues saw that many of the students in these schools, the majority of whom were poor, had multiple unmet needs that interfered with their learning and success, but schools did not have the capacity to address their needs. These children were also less likely to have opportunities to explore interests or develop their talents than children from more affluent families.

This recognition led Walsh to launch City Connects, a school-based model of delivering comprehensive supports and services. What makes City Connects unique is its deep understanding of each child’s abilities and challenges across a range of domains, coupled with a hands-on approach to providing personalized

supports and resources. In the words of Joan Wasser Gish, director of strategic initiatives, their goal is to provide “the right resources, to the right child, at the right time, over time.”

The Model

In practice, this goal involves a child-by-child approach to providing individual supports. When City Connects partners with a new community, it first conducts an assessment of community needs and an inventory of resources. It then places a master’s-level site coordinator, who is essential to the model, into each school that will implement City Connects. While City Connects is grounded in data, what differentiates it from other data-driven approaches is the human element in creating a deep understanding of the needs of each child. The coordinators meet with every teacher—in what is called a whole class review—to identify the specific needs and strengths of each child across four domains, including academic, social-emotional, health, and family. Using this information, the coordinator determines a level of need (there are four different tiers) for each child and a set of services and supports that would benefit her or him.

Based on this assessment, information on students' prior academic achievement, and other relevant information such as whether a student has an IEP or is an English Language Learner, the coordinator identifies a tailored plan of specific services and supports for each child—or what we refer to as a Success Plan. When a student is identified as having a higher level of need, that assessment triggers an individual student review with a student support team who create a more comprehensive plan for services.

Coordinators match students with both school-based services—extra tutoring in reading, for example, through a partnership with a local university, or social-skills support for small groups of children—and out-of-school supports, such as a connection to an after-school provider. The coordinators are responsible for building and maintaining relationships with a wide array of service providers and for ensuring the services are actually received. While each school or district hires the coordinators, City Connects provides initial and ongoing training and closely supports their work.

City Connects has grown from a handful of schools in Boston to dozens of schools in multiple cities. It originally served only elementary school students, but has expanded to include middle school students as well. As of 2018, City Connects was serving students in approximately 100 schools across the country.⁴³ While City Connects generally serves just some of the schools in a given district, its partnership with Salem Public Schools brings its model for the first time to every preK-8th grade school in a district.

City Connects in Action

Through City Connects, Salem Public Schools has implemented a systematic, prevention-focused approach, seeking to address children's needs before they escalate into a crisis and tailor supports and opportunities for every student. "In the past, we've always been, as most schools are, sort of that squeaky wheel gets the oil kind of a thing. So, kids who are acting out got attention, and there are plenty of other kids who needed attention but didn't get it, because it just wasn't that obvious. So, now, we are looking at every kid more deeply and that's positive," described a cabinet member.

Today, for example, if a teacher in one of the Salem preK-8th grade schools notices a child needs a winter coat, is struggling to make friends, or has an undeveloped aptitude for drawing, the first people she reaches out to are the City Connects coordinators in her school. These coordinators fill a unique support function for teachers, students, and even the administration. Their responsibilities are diverse, encompassing functions of teachers, social workers, data analysts, and case managers. "My goal has been to really give every student that I encounter one face at school who they feel they have a connection to," described one coordinator.

As part of their multifaceted role, coordinators host ongoing lunch groups with children who need extra support, connect families with afterschool programs and kids with in-school tutors, find backpacks or clothes for kids who need them, and teach multi-week lessons to foster students' social and emotional wellbeing in individual classrooms.

They forge deep relationships with community partners and know which to go to for what need—whether that’s a theater program for a budding actor or a new backpack for a child who can’t afford one.

According to one cabinet member, City Connects has reshaped the district’s approach to student support. “City Connects has had a huge impact in... institutionalizing whole child support... making that someone’s job to think about. I think it’s helping to shift the mindset that kids’ success is more than academics,” the cabinet member said. Another cabinet member added, “Now we’re beginning to see a web of support that was not there before.” The impact of City Connects is, in the words of one school district official, “tremendous.” She says that the “conversations we can have now around supporting kids are different—more focused, more organized.” She described a situation in which a child was having issues with fighting in school. In the past, she said, they would not have had a structure in place to address the issue comprehensively. Now, the school was able to marshal a full set of resources to support the child as well as his mother.

City Connects also benefits students with disabilities by facilitating access to a range of appropriate supports, such as out-of-school programming. As a cabinet member explained, “An out-of-school program for a student with autism, either afterschool care if they may have some behaviors or even some kind of adaptive out-of-school fun stuff, those things are sort of secrets sometimes. And folks in the community may know about it. It’s strictly a word of mouth thing, and I know that City Connects has helped by identifying those resources, and now, folks know where to go in the

community, and who might be able to service a student that during the day is in a program for kids with social-emotional disabilities.”

Evidence of Success

City Connects is one of the few comprehensive support models with definitive research showing its positive impact. A separate research branch of the organization collects and analyzes longitudinal data on student outcomes and has found clear evidence of the benefits of the City Connects model. Using a comparison-school methodology, researchers found that students in City Connects schools experienced greater academic growth than their peers in non-City Connects schools.⁴⁴ Students who experienced the City Connects intervention in elementary school continue to show benefits into middle and even high school, with lower rates of chronic absenteeism and dropout than their peers.⁴⁵

While moving the needle on long-term student outcomes will take time, City Connects is already making a tangible impact on Salem’s students, families, teachers, and community partners by connecting children with hundreds of supports, services, and enrichment activities during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Salem leaders have made rapid progress in implementing City Connect across the district’s preK-8th grade schools and are building on their early successes during the current academic year. By designing a coordinated system of supports and opportunities, Salem is working to ensure that each child can grow, learn, and thrive. In the future, Salem hopes to adapt the model for the district’s high school students.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

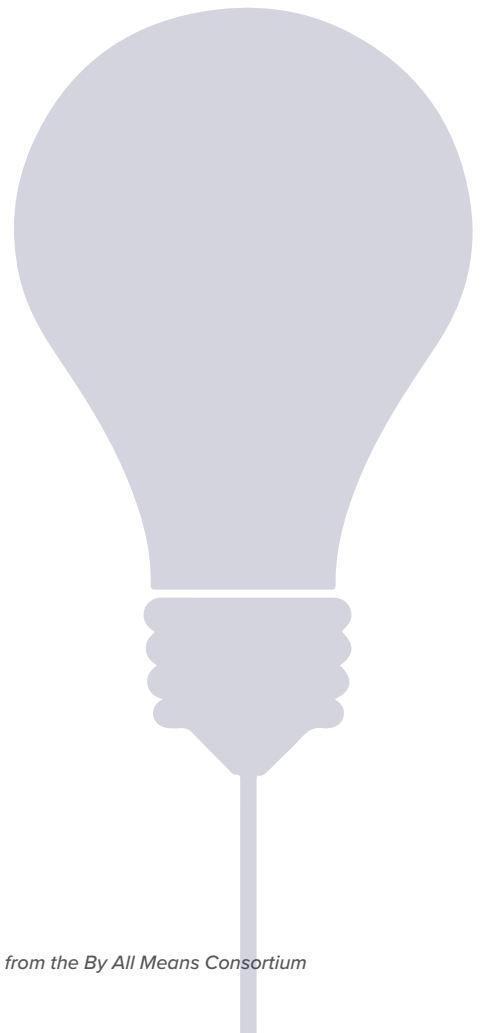
Sustaining complex, multi-year work takes a deep commitment and perseverance through multiple challenges. There will inevitably be turnover in leadership and key staff roles. School districts will struggle with funding, academic outcomes, and teacher contracts. Communities will face political and financial crises and ingrained patterns of behavior and prejudice. All of these have occurred in BAM communities over the past three years, despite a selection process that sought out stable leadership and finances.

There are, of course, no quick fixes or simple solutions for much of this work, but there are useful lessons that can help communities overcome challenges. In our first report, *Building City-Wide Systems of Opportunity for Children*, we outline a set of enabling factors that facilitate the early stages of collaborative action. Our ongoing partnership with BAM communities and embedded research effort have also yielded important takeaways about what it takes to sustain momentum and support this work over time. These lessons include the following:

- The By All Means approach has worked to improve how communities support children’s development and wellbeing. Participating communities have all established children’s cabinets, seen sustained involvement from mayors and other leaders, developed new cross-sector partnerships, raised funds, and increased services and supports for children.
- Building trust and creating strong relationships are critical to the pace and the long-term success of change. Communities need to devote attention and time to relationship-building in order to make lasting progress.
- Public demand is essential to sustain these efforts over time, and children’s cabinets are an important mechanism for creating this public will. Without a broad-based understanding of the importance of cross-sector collaboration, commitment to it, and new expectations about what *all* children deserve, the collective work will flounder when leaders change or finances are tight.
- Issues of race and class, as well as disability, need to be at the center of the work and explicitly addressed by leadership and through authentic community engagement.
- Mayoral leadership continues to be key for a number of reasons: bringing agency heads and community leaders to the table, maintaining the effort as a top priority, highlighting successes, and finding resources.
- Partnerships at all levels are critical for executing new systems of support. External partnerships can accelerate the pace of change, and internal partnerships are essential for integrating across sectors.
- Staffing support can take different forms, but it is essential that there are funded positions whose job descriptions entail carrying the work forward.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

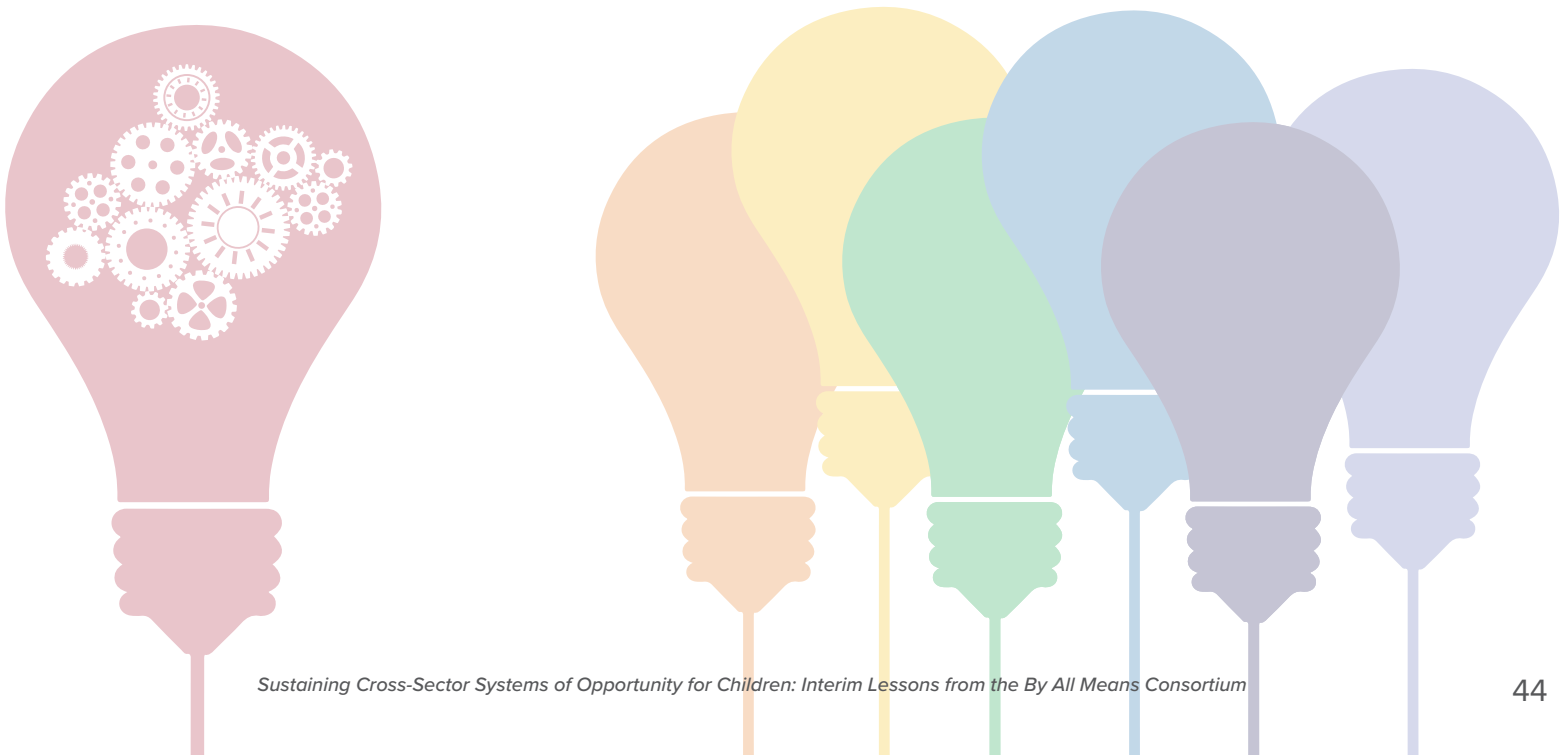
- Effective use of data is important at every stage of this process, from identifying needs to defining and tracking metrics of progress to providing integrated services and supports. Using data well requires capacity building at all levels.
- Children’s cabinets benefit from participating in networks of communities that provide opportunities to come together in regular convenings over time, cross-community support, structured learning, and best practices.
- Finding funding to carry out a bold vision is a major challenge, but there are proven strategies for generating revenue to support this work. Successful communities use multiple funding strategies and recognize that fully funding the effort takes time.
- Personalizing a navigation system for individuals through an enhanced system of child development and education does not happen automatically. Communities need to design ways to ensure all children have personalized plans that meet their needs and develop their abilities.



CONCLUSION

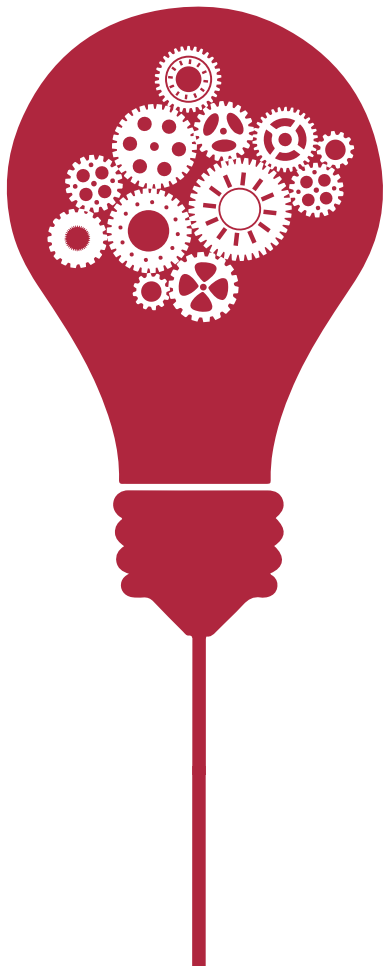
As the members of the BAM consortium continue to strengthen their efforts and the number of children’s cabinets across the country grows, it is clear that a movement is building to take a new approach to educating and supporting all our children. Communities’ appetite for working together across sectors to help children thrive remains strong. Nearly all the cities that began in By All Means are still involved today, with the committed participation of mayors, superintendents, and other cabinet members. Enough other communities have asked to join that EdRedesign has added one new city and a statewide partnership to the consortium. The new **Local Children’s Cabinet Network**, jointly launched in 2019 by EdRedesign, the Children’s Funding Project, and the Forum for Youth Investment, represents dozens of other communities from across the country who share the same broad goals.

In order to drive and further amplify this movement, communities must embrace both adaptive and technical solutions that tackle the myriad challenges related to collaborative action. Shifting long-standing practices and mindsets is difficult but necessary if we are to change the trajectories of vulnerable children and give them what they need to grow, learn, and thrive. BAM communities’ persistence through these challenges shows what is possible with a combination of commitment, investment, and structural change.



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