Collective Impact Organizations

A call to action to help start or accelerate an early learning transformation

Collective impact organizations can play a key role in coordinating early learning champions within a community, making a case for change, and providing the technical and advocacy support necessary to catalyze and accelerate a community's early learning transformation.

Below are a few actions you can take on your early learning transformation journey.

Short-term Actions

Assess your readiness to drive a collective impact initiative or act as a backbone organization:

- **This article from the Stanford Social Innovation Review** may help to understand the common characteristics of effective collective impact initiatives.
- Consider connecting with collective impact organizations that focus on early learning in other communities to learn from their work.

Review the current state of early learning in your community:

- Review third grade reading student achievement results in your city to better understand current performance, trajectory, and achievement gaps that may exist.
- Identify bright spots or key campuses/school districts that are outperforming expectations.
- Review the **Conditions for Early Learning Success self-assessment tool** to understand the capabilities and resources necessary to start and sustain an early learning transformation.
- Consider taking the self-assessment from the perspective of your local school system. Use this to better understand potential areas where you are well positioned to provide needed support.
- Encourage your local school district to take the **self-assessment**.

Identify key organizations and potential champions for early learning work:

- Identify the school system(s) that the community can rally around.
- Identify funders investing in or interested in supporting early learning across the business and philanthropic communities.
- Identify strategic partners that are well-positioned to provide support to establish the conditions for success across your community.
- Identify key stakeholders that can influence policymakers.

Connect with key decision-makers representing these stakeholder groups:

- Use the self-assessment as a basis for conversation with decision makers at local school systems. Collaboratively identify areas of need and discuss ways you may be able to provide support (e.g., data analysis support, advocating for effective policy). In particular, focus on understanding if there is a clear goal in place for improving early literacy.
- Connect with potential funders, community champions, influential policy advocates, and strategic partners to understand their interest in improving early literacy outcomes and how they might be able to support local school systems to establish the conditions for success.

Longer-term Efforts

Establish a clear long-term vision for improving early literacy outcomes in your community, and make a sustained commitment.

- Establish a vision and goals that align with or inform local school system goals around third grade reading.
- Ensure goals represent the interests of multiple stakeholders.
- Ensure goals include ambitious targets against which progress can be tracked consistently.
- Ensure goals are oriented around long-term improvement which stakeholders are committed to achieving despite obstacles.
- Identify priority strategies to focus on based on potential impact, capacity to implement, and alignment from school system leaders and funders.

Establish structures to coordinate activities between stakeholders and support a plan to achieve your early literacy vision:

- Consistently track progress against early literacy measures.
- Consider acting as, or bringing in, a strategic partner to support achieving the vision.
- Establish a leadership body of community leaders to coordinate fundraising and advocacy efforts to provide school systems with the support necessary to achieve the vision.
- Amplify the voices of community champions who support early learning by providing them with consistent messages to publicize, updates on progress, and awareness of needs that they may be able to address. In particular, support the voices of those champions who have the ability to influence policymakers, as this advocacy support is critical to districts.