

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEAD TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM LEARNING COMMUNITY

SESSION 4 NEWSLETTER

What's Inside?



General Overview

A high-level summary of content discussed during the learning sessions, as well as connections made among participants



Small Group Conversations

Challenges, strategies and questions to consider that were shared during small group discussions



Office Hours

Additional ideas and support for individual teams offered by our guest lecturer, specifically related to project goals with a focus on equity



Resources

Links to further information and support





GENERAL OVERVIEW

In Session 4, we had the opportunity to **welcome Nebraska** as a grantee and learn about its work. We also revisited the **Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA)** as a common lens to support planning and decision-making regarding the implementation of goals, strategies, and policies related to each of the different grantees' projects. Over the course of Sessions 1, 2, and 3, our team utilized the framework to guide the discussion and reflection questions in each session. During Session 4, we made an explicit connection to the REIA framework, the intent of the grants, and the use of the framework as a resource to think about collaboration, partnership, and sustainability. We then revisited information introduced by our guest lecturer Paul Schmitz about collective impact and the collaboration spectrum before spending time in small group discussions. During Paul's lecture, he shared with us the varying types of impact and collaboration, ultimately illustrating the importance of collective impact. The following is a summary of the different types, as well as a diagram of the collaboration spectrum.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

ISOLATED IMPACT

There are some great initiatives and programs but no coordination between them. Typically, the result is duplication of efforts and the inability to compare and monitor progress at scale. There is also a lack of resource sharing and a scarcity mindset.

TRADITIONAL COLLABORATION

There is an agreement about the common "issue." Usually, the focus is on those with the most power and privilege already, resulting in work groups that lack accountability.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

All system actors are working toward the same goal and aim to measure the same things. There is cross-sector alignment that includes voices that are traditionally not in decision-making roles. Also, initiatives and programs actively coordinate, share lessons learned, and are responsive to others.

THE COLLABORATION SPECTRUM

Adapted from the Tamarack Institute

COMPETE	COEXIST	COMMUNICATE	COOPERATE	COORDINATE	COLLABORATE	INTEGRATE
Competition for resources, partners, and attention	No systematic connection between initiatives or programs	Interagency information sharing and networking	Informal and as needed interaction across specific activities or projects	Organizations systematically adjust and align work with one another	Longer term interaction based on shared mission, goals, and resources	Fully integrated program, planning, and funding



SMALL GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Participants spent time in role-like groups responding to questions focused on partnerships, equity, and evaluation. Participants documented their responses to each question. Summarized here are the participants' responses, organized as challenges, strategies, and questions.

How do we sustain the momentum of our work through building partnerships?

CHALLENGES

- Assuring partners that we're not duplicating efforts
- Choosing partners and identifying what pieces of work they are best positioned to take on
- Ensuring accountability with partners, which can be difficult when we are working with different agencies
- Overcoming a feeling of scarcity, which can hamper partnerships



STRATEGIES

- Establish relationships prior to beginning the project work.
- Strengthen relationships by identifying specific tasks for each partner in order to move the work forward.
- Have Principal Investigators for the grant serve as role models for others who are not following through on tasks to support accountability. Reporting on the progress of the strategies will be helpful.
- Provide clear expectations and acknowledge and showcase partners' work and accomplishments. Celebrate the work.
- Spend time networking, utilizing the social capital of the grantee team, and identify whom to go to for what.
- Provide information and resources to partners as needed, and provide access to conversations about policy and funding for all partners.
- Recognize that scaling is a means of improving efficiency, and shift mindsets to recognize that implementation of high-quality teacher preparation is expensive.
- Organize the coalition of partners. Identify which partners will meet monthly and which partners will join quarterly meetings, and have partners hold one another accountable for participating in meetings.
- Identify and revisit a shared vision.
- Create a platform to communicate regularly to tackle challenges and issues.
- Identify shared goals for the partnership, to keep the partnership momentum going.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do we scale up project work from smaller or more local projects in a sustainable way?
- How do we hold other partners accountable?
- In regard to resource sharing, how do we transition from a scarcity mentality to an abundance mentality?

What are leading practices for networks to help address inequities, injustice, and/or power dynamics as we change systems? What opportunities exist to advance equity at each choice point?

CHALLENGES

- The COVID-19 pandemic and the use of Zoom have created a lack of access for engagement. We have to make sure we hear all voices, particularly those in geographically remote or rural communities.



STRATEGIES

- Revisit our commitments about how to address inequities, and remind ourselves about those not present in our discussions.
- Ask students what they need and provide choices of resources to students, as an inclusive approach.
- Recognize that best practices need to be implemented locally. Scaling up may not mean replicating, and individualization costs.
- Acknowledge the differences in language, practices, systems, and curriculum in working with children ages 0–3 and 3–5, students in grades K–12, and those in higher education.
- Establish a common language to be able to listen and communicate with one another. Consider the example of early care and education language versus language used in education for pre-K through grade 12.
- Utilize course equivalencies as a powerful way to address inequities or injustices and power dynamics—for example, a Spanish composition course for native Spanish speakers that would be equivalent to the English 101 requirement for an associate’s degree.



What are ways to evaluate this kind of collective work? How do we determine success? How can evaluation techniques inform ongoing adaptive management and foster the behaviors we need to catalyze the full potential of a networked systems change effort?

CHALLENGES

- Identifying the benchmarks for success can be challenging. Depending on what the focus is, many factors can create a bottleneck that can then create additional challenges in identifying success. For example, principals don't want to hire teachers who aren't able to teach grades 1–5 (when their licensure is for pre-K and kindergarten), the praxis exams are a barrier (test anxiety, etc.) and create a bottleneck.

STRATEGIES

- Evaluate our work using critical and theoretical frameworks and methodologies, with a focus on centering the voices of underrepresented people in our work.
- Incorporate ongoing project feedback loops with partners.
- Plan to have communities of practices or symposiums where our work is presented. Then we can track the level of engagement and attendees.
- Create a portal or forum for regular meetings that provide the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the progress of each project. Project teams need the space to explicitly describe their work.



OFFICE HOURS

Team Hawai'i attended office hours with Paul Schmitz and had a rich dialogue about the complexity of the early childhood workforce, economic models, and systematic change. Team Hawai'i emphasized the team's focus on equity and excellence, elevating the early care and education workforce, and trying to figure out ways to really impact the compensation and financing systems in the state—an issue that the entire early childhood field grapples with. The United States' current economic model doesn't support living wages for the early childhood workforce.



“The challenge is always that the compensation issue is so difficult, because it runs against a cost issue and there's . . . We haven't figured out, I think, that Build Back Better would have helped. Right? But without that, we don't have an economic model that works anywhere. I just literally am working in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, which couldn't be more different than Hawai'i in climate or cost of living or anything else. Right? It's a small rural community in the middle of Wisconsin that has a very low cost of living. And even there, people in childcare can't afford to make it there.”

– Paul Schmitz

The state of Hawai'i currently has an executive office of early learning, which helped build the case for public pre-K and resulted in a small public pre-K program. Conversations about expansion to a mixed delivery system are happening; however, there is a lack of clarity on how it will get done and what the actual cost will be. The Hawai'i team proposed the question about how to grow system leaders who can propel the work forward within the executive office and across the state to better serve families and communities. Paul Schmitz reiterated from his prerecorded presentation that clear strategy drives clear commitment:

“When leaders have a very clear road map of what they’re trying to do and solve for, it’s much easier to step up. The more aspirational or vague the goals are, or small the goals are, the easier it is for people to be passive and just keep doing what they’re doing.”

– Paul Schmitz



When describing the system to be built, it is easy to provide vague strategies—for example, **“Our top strategy is to improve the quality and accessibility of childcare.”** However, more specificity about the system’s goal provides the space for people to figure out what it would take to achieve it—for example, **“We’re going to ensure that the income of the average childcare worker in Hawai’i goes up from \$28,000 to \$44,000 a year, and we’re going to increase the workforce by 2,000 more workers.”** The statement is very specific, and now people must figure out how to increase workers’ average income from \$28,000 to \$44,000.

Established, clear strategies set the stage for collaboration. In leadership, collaboration skills are essential; however, building trust is an essential component and takes time.

“A leader’s ability to understand trust as something that’s not a given, but something that you build, develop, maintain actively, is key to the ability to collaborate effectively. The process itself can build and demonstrate those values, in a way that it becomes baked into how we do our work.”

– Paul Schmitz

Building trust, creating a culture and having accountability are foundational components to move the work forward.

“We’re talking about quantitative goals, the buy-in process. You need people to see the value, the culture, and they need to own it.”

– Hawai’i team member



RESOURCES

- [Making Meetings Work](#)
- [The Water of Systems Change](#)
- [Systems Change: A Guide to What It Is and How To Do It](#)
- [Core Principles to Support Anti-Racism in Collective Impact](#)
- [Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change](#)
- [A Learning Agenda for Collective Impact](#)

YEAR 1 IN REVIEW

The following are links to the pre work and newsletter for each session, as well as an updated learning community participant list.

- **Session 1:** [Exploring racial inequities in the early childhood system through racial equity impact analysis](#)
- **Session 2:** [Policies and practices that support higher education](#)
- **Session 3:** [Broader policy and systems change efforts in early childhood](#)
- **Session 4:** [Ensuring sustainability, and accountability](#)
- [Learning Community Participants](#)