Engaging the Community in Theory and Action
Panelists:

• Frank Forsberg, Generation Next
• Mike Soika, Milwaukee Succeeds
• Kelli Parmley, Bridging Richmond
Session Objectives:

• Identify where community engagement is integrated within the Strive Theory of Action

• Share on-the-ground examples of community engagement from peer network members

• Learn about examples from YOU of different experiences of community engagement
What is Community?

• Individuals in the defined geographic scope who are directly affected by the quality of the education pipeline (e.g. students, parents, business and civic leaders), and therefore must be clearly understood, actively involved, and eventually satisfied by the impact of the partnership.
Community Engagement Continuum

**Transactional**

**Community Investment**

*Ex*: Public Report Card Release
- Information/Training sessions
- Awareness Campaigns
- Social Media

**Communication**: One-way partnership to community

**Sample Metrics**: Number of audiences reached; Number of reports written and distributed; Number of mediums used for media outreach

**Transitional**

**Community Involvement**

*Ex*: Community Advisory Committees
- Community Conversations
- Community Calls to Action
- Social Media (if done well)

**Communication**: Two-way mostly partnership to community

**Sample Metrics**: Active participation, turnover, and retention; # of activities to involve members; Increased accountability by decision-makers to affected groups

**Transformational**

**Community Integration**

*Ex*: Issue Specific Workgroups
- Joint decision-making
- Co-ownership of outcomes

**Communication**: Two-way
- equal partnership to community
- and community to partnership

**Sample Metrics**: Depth of engagement;
- Ownership of the Partnership and work;
- Willingness of members to take action;
- Transcending organizational interests for long-term collective interests

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Content adapted from Bowen et all, *When Suits Meet Roots*. 2010
Sample Metrics adapted from Pastor et al, *TRANSACTIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, TRANSLATIONS: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements*. 2011
Transactional Engagement

- Informing the community
- Creating awareness of the partnership
- One-way communication
- Dissemination of information
- Reach a broad audience
- Limited depth of engagement

Example: Holding a community information meeting to inform the broader community about the work of the Partnership

“Community Investment”
Ex: Public Report Card Release
Information/Training sessions
Awareness Campaigns
Social Media

Communication: One-way partnership to community

Sample Metrics: Number of audiences reached; Number of reports written and distributed; Number of mediums used for media outreach

EASE OF MEASUREMENT

PEOPLE INVOLVED
Transitional Engagement

• More active
• Involving community in the partnership
• Two-way communication; Partnership drives conversation

Example: Creating a campaign that mobilizes community members to become tutors, a strategy that data shows helps improve 3rd grade reading - a community level outcome

“Community Involvement”
Ex: Community Advisory Committees
Community Conversations
Community Calls to Action
Social Media (if done well)

Communication: Two-way mostly partnership to community

Sample Metrics: Active participation, turnover, and retention; # of activities to involve members; Increased accountability by decision-makers to affected groups
Transformational Engagement

• Deepest engagement
• Integrating the community in the problem-solving of the partnership
• Equal communication
• Limited audience

Example: Involving community experts and practitioners in collaborative action networks to use data and expertise to identify what is working and build strategies to continuously improve the work
Theory of Action: Creating Cradle to Career Proof Points

**Building**

Pillar 1: Shared Community Vision
- A cross-sector Partnership of an acceptable composition and scope organizes around a compelling need and commits to a cradle to career vision.

Pillar 2: Evidence Based Decision Making
- A data team is established and committed to identify community level outcomes, indicators, and key sub-populations by which to disaggregate local data.

Pillar 3: Collaborative Action
- The Partnership understands and commits to use data to drive decision making and to use a continuous improvement process.

Pillar 4: Investment & Sustainability
- The community is informed and engaged in the vision and work of the Partnership.
  - The anchor entity is established with two key staffing roles in place: project director and data manager.

**Emerging**

- The Partnership operates with a fully-functional leadership table, anchor entity, and support teams whose roles and responsibilities are clearly defined through an accountability structure and partnership agreement.

- The Partnership collects and disaggregates baseline data by key sub-populations for community level indicators and publicly releases in a baseline report to the community.

- The Partnership builds necessary capacity for data support ensuring regular access to data for continuous improvement.

- The Partnership prioritizes a subset of community level outcomes and indicators for initial focus and identifies champions to support Collaborative Action Networks.

**Sustaining**

- The Partnership regularly and consistently informs the broader community of the Partnership’s progress and communicates a common, consistent message across internal partners.

- Partners take action to improve the community level outcomes/indicators, including but not limited to redefining their existing work and supporting the implementation of action plans.

- The Partnership connects a narrative of the on-the-ground work of the collaborative action networks to the community level outcomes/indicators they are working to impact in the annual release of the report card. The Partnership establishes standardized processes for releasing report card data and collaborative action narrative on an annual basis.

- The Partnership builds capacity for data support ensuring regular access to data for continuous improvement.

**Systems Change**

- The Partnership evolves through transitions of leadership and needed capacity, and demonstrates shared accountability for impacting community level outcomes/indicators. Attribution of success and recognition of challenges is communicated effectively.

- The Partnership annually releases a report card on community level outcomes/indicators, disaggregated by sub-populations and continuously refines community level outcomes and indicators to improve accuracy & validity.

- The Partnership puts in place a comprehensive data system that enables the collection, connection, storage and analysis of local data for continuous improvement.

- The Partnership continues to develop new or engage existing networks around priority outcomes/indicators.

- Collaborative Action Networks are supported by the Partnership to use a continuous improvement process to regularly update charters and action plans.

**Proof Point: 60% of Indicators Trending in the Right Direction**

- Necessary stakeholders align, mobilize time, talent, and treasure towards improving overall community level outcomes/indicators and eliminating locally defined disparities in student achievement. The community is engaged and mobilized to take action to improve community level outcomes/indicators.

- The Partnership aligns/realigns policy priorities and moves forward a collective advocacy agenda to change local, state, or national policy to improve community level outcomes/indicators and eliminate locally defined disparities in student achievement.

- The Partnership engages in continual alignment of community and financial resources around the improvement of community level outcomes/indicators and influences necessary policies to enable and sustain that improvement.

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**Theory of Action: Creating Cradle to Career Proof Points**

**Implementing the Theory of Action**

The Theory of Action is based on StriveTogether’s Framework for Building Cradle to Career Civic Infrastructure. The Theory of Action consists of five Gateways: Exploring, Emerging, Sustaining, Systems Change, and Proof Point. Within each of the five Gateways, there are a series of quality benchmarks that are key steps in developing and sustaining a Partnership.

The Theory of Action is built on four principles that underpin the implementation of the quality benchmarks among the four pillars and across the Gateways. Partnerships implementing the Theory of Action demonstrate a commitment to these four principles:

1. **Engage the Community**
   - The community is engaged in the work of the Partnership. Partnerships inform, intentionally convene and actively mobilize the community to improve community-level outcomes.

2. **Focus on Eliminating Local-Defined Disparities**
   - Inequalities in student achievement are defined by each Partnership using local data and context. Partnerships make intentional efforts to eliminate disparities in achievement.

3. **Develop a Culture of Continuous Improvement**
   - The work of the Partnership focuses on the use of local data as a tool to identify areas for improvement and to ensure Partners invest in what works.

4. **Build upon Existing Assets**
   - The Partnership builds on existing resources in the community and aligns resources to maximize impact.

**GATEWAYS:**

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**Building Approaches**

- **Theory of Action:** The Theory of Action is based on StriveTogether’s Framework for Building Cradle to Career Civic Infrastructure. It consists of five Gateways: Exploring, Emerging, Sustaining, Systems Change, and Proof Point. Each Gateway has a series of quality benchmarks that are key steps in developing and sustaining a Partnership.

- **Implementation Principles:** The Theory of Action is built on four principles that underpin the implementation of the quality benchmarks among the four pillars and across the Gateways. These principles include engaging the community, focusing on eliminating local-defined disparities, developing a culture of continuous improvement, and building upon existing assets.

- **Gateways Descriptions:**
  - **Exploring:** The Partnership selects community level outcomes to be held accountable for improving.
  - **Emerging:** The Partnership selects core indicators for the community level outcomes.
  - **Sustaining:** The Partnership collects and disaggregates baseline data by key subpopulations for core indicators.
  - **Systems Change:** The Partnership has in place the necessary capacity to support the daily management of the partnership, data needs, facilitation, communication and engagement of the community.

- **Proof Points:** The Partnership mobilizes the community to improve community level outcomes.

- **Building Approaches:**
  - Partners continue to actively engage in the Partnership despite changes in leadership.
  - Partners demonstrate shared accountability for improving community level outcomes.
  - Partners effectively communicate attribution of success and recognition of challenges.

- **Systems Change Approaches:**
  - The Partnership enables student-level academic and non-academic data to be shared appropriately across partners in a timely manner to enable continuous improvement to improve outcomes.

- **Proof Points: Communities are in Systems Change and see indicators improving.**

**StriveTogether**
Community Engagement in the Exploring Gateway

- Representation in accountability structure
- Informing community about the Partnership through ‘call to action’ and ‘messages’
Community Engagement in the Emerging Gateway

- Release of a baseline report
- Prioritizing community level outcomes
- Capacity to engage the community effectively
Community Engagement in the Sustaining Gateway

• Regularly and consistently informing community

• Collaborative action feedback loop

• Mobilizing community to improve outcomes
Community Engagement in the Systems Change Gateway

- Collectively accountable for outcomes

- Communication of Partnership

- Alignment of community around outcomes

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## Theory of Action: Creating Cradle to Career Proof Points

### Implementing the Theory of Action

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The Theory of Action is built on four principles that underpin the implementation of the quality benchmarks among the four pillars and across the Gateways. Partnerships implementing the Theory of Action demonstrate a commitment to these four principles:

1. **Engage the Community**
   - The community is engaged in the work of the Partnership. Partnerships inform, intentionally convene and actively mobilize the community to improve community level outcomes.

2. **Focus on Outcomes, Not Simply Defined Disparities**
   - Inequalities in student achievement are defined by each Partnership using local data and context. Partnerships make intentional efforts to eliminate disparities in achievement.

3. **Develop a Culture of Continuous Improvement**
   - The work of the Partnership focuses on the use of local data as a tool to identify areas for improvement and to ensure partners invest in what works.

4. **Build upon Existing Assets**
   - The Partnership builds on existing resources in the community and aligns resources to maximize impact.

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EXPERIENCE FROM THE NETWORK:
Creating a Compelling Need & Sense of Urgency
Where all the women are strong, the men are good looking and the children are above average
Compelling Need and Sense of Urgency

11th Grade Math Proficiency
Minneapolis and St. Paul

Test Scores Measured as %

- White, 53.8
- Children of Color, 22.08
Compelling Need and Sense of Urgency

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency
Minneapolis and St. Paul

- White: 88.8%
- Children of Color: 64.2%
Our Unique Challenge
More than 500 identifiable public and private initiatives focused on closing gaps

Initiatives focused on many different priorities

Even initiatives focused on the same priorities often measure success differently

Few ways to identify and learn from success and failure across organizational and other boundaries
# Generation Next Leadership Council

## Schools & Government
- MPS & SPPS Superintendents
- St. Paul and MPLS Mayors
- St. Paul and Mpls Federation of Teachers
- Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

## Community-Based Organizations & Programs
- African American Leadership Forum
- Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
- MN Minority Education Partnership

## Business
- General Mills
- Health Partners
- Cargill and 3M
- Target Corporation
- MN Chamber of Commerce
- Minnesota Business Partnership

## Higher Education
- University of Minnesota
- Augsburg College
- MN State Colleges and Universities
- St. Paul College

## Philanthropy
- Greater Twin Cities United Way
- The McKnight Foundation
- The Bush Foundation
- Northwest Area Foundation
- The St. Paul Foundation
- The Minneapolis Foundation
Strategic Framework

VISION
Children of all socio-economic backgrounds are well prepared for success in the 21st century

MISSION
Dramatically accelerate educational achievement of all children from early childhood through early career through an aligned partnership of community stakeholders

GOALS
- Every child is ready for kindergarten
- Every child meets key benchmarks for 3rd grade reading success
- Every child meets key benchmarks for 8th grade math success
- Every child graduates from high school
- Every child completes post secondary education
Generation Next Organization Chart

PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES
Northside Achievement Zone
St. Paul Promise Neighborhood

DATA
EARLY LITERACY NETWORK

DATA
COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS NETWORK

Parents

KIDS

Schools

Community

PARENTS

STUDENTS

PRACTITIONERS
EXPERIENCE FROM THE NETWORK:
Engaging around the Baseline Report
Engaging Around Milestone Report

- Published Milestone Report
- Dozen & Counting Community Forums
- Audience Specific Call To Action
- Two Way Communication
- Communication & Outreach Committee
How you can help

We urge you to join the communitywide effort and help build the sense of urgency around improving the educational outcomes for children in our city.

There is something every one of us can do to help. We offer a few suggestions in the following section.

- As a parent
- As a teacher or school leader
- As a volunteer

- As a business owner
- As a church member or church leader
- As a policymaker

- As an organization
- As funder
- As a taxpayer
As a Parent...

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What you can do to help:

- Provide a variety of reading materials in your home and read regularly to your children
- **Work with your child’s teacher** to find out what more can be done to ensure that your child is reading at grade level and if they are not at grade level – what can be done to catch them up
- Make sure your child comes to school ready to learn by having a **proper breakfast** beforehand
- Find out how your child’s school is rated on the DPI School Report Card ([http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov](http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov)), and **work with the school** to seek improvements, if warranted
- Make sure your children **attend school regularly**. Consider this: a child that attends school 90% of the time will miss nearly a month of school. (180 school days X 10% = 18 days in a 20 day school month)
- Make sure your child has a pediatrician or family doctor and **make sure he/she gets routine checkups and proper immunizations**
- Talk to your children about the importance of postsecondary education or training
What you can do to help:

- Work with parents to ensure they are partners with you in helping children learn to read so that you can be effective in helping students meet proficiency standards across all grade levels.
- If you are an experienced teacher, consider becoming a mentor or a coach for a teacher newer to the profession.
- Join a professional learning community to share your knowledge and expertise with others.
- Find out how your school is rated on the DPI School Report Card and work with the school to seek improvements, if warranted.

Where you can go for help:

- Find out how your school is rated on the DPI School Report Card ([http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov](http://reportcards.dpi.wi.gov)), and work with the school to seek...
Two Way Conversation

What can I do?

- Be an involved MPS parent, community member
- Share info and findings
- Be a community connector and cheerleader for our kids
- Leverage connections to solve problems in MKE
- Talk to parents, students, teachers, coaches out at their schools to find out what their issues are and what they'd be willing to do about it—specifically around recreation and athletics' facilities
- Support the state's investment in parents and guide their choice
- Make investment in culturally competent school curriculum
- Pay taxes to support good schools
Two Way Conversation

What can my child's school do?

- Share what is working well for them
- Hold community meetings in MPS buildings, expose people to MPS
- Tell positive stories to press
- Involve parents and students in priority setting
- Encourage (not scare) staff, parents, and students to engage
- Select quality caring staff
- Build a sense of investment in the community
- Compensate equitably for excellent work
- Create more volunteer opportunities for parents who work during the day
- Parent education classes

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Two Way Conversation

What can our community do?

- Visit mps schools, tutor kids, volunteer, tell positive stories, show positive images
- Businesses should adopt schools, teach kids the skills they need in project-based learning to meet their workforce gap
- Talk to each other, clarify the priorities, gather in groups to talk about why something should be done, research what, and plan the power strategy for how
- Offer investment in good workers
- Attract good managers
- Building beautiful schools with green space and healthy environments
- Commit one another to regular school attendance
Accountability Structure

Executive Committee
- Policy & Strategy

Community Leadership Council
- Champion Vision
- Affirm Direction
- Advocate for What Works
- Promote Organizational Results
  (Meets Quarterly)

Operations Team
- Provide recommendations for process and strategy
- Drive implementation and oversight of the Networks, committees and support teams

Network Leaders
Outreach & Communications
Data Team
Policy & Strategy

School Readiness
Third Grade Reading
College & Career Readiness
Community & Social Support

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Cradle to Career
Outreach & Communication Team

- Media Folks + Community Reps
- Refine the Message
- Identify Partners
- Identify Venues
- Parent VOC – What You Can Do?
EXPERIENCE FROM THE NETWORK:
Resetting Engagement around the Middle Years
Bridging Richmond: Engaging Around the Middle Years

• Clarified Engagement Goals with a Local Expert (TMI http://tmiconsultinginc.com/):

  1. Provide Information
  2. Build Relationships and Trust
  3. Invite Community Members to Express Views
  4. Create a Diverse Space to Learn
  5. Offer Opportunities for Input into Decisions
Bridging Richmond: Engaging Around the Middle Years

• Staging Three Regional Summits to:
  3. Invite Community Members to Express Views
  4. Create a Diverse Space to Learn

• Regional Stakeholders
  – K-12 Administrators
  – Teachers/Counselors/Non-Profits
  – Education Researchers
  – Family and Youth
Bridging Richmond: Engaging Around the Middle Years

- Identify Regional Themes that Combine Community Voice with an Evidence-base
- Demonstrate Quality Facilitation and Legitimize Convening
- Build Commitment to a Middle Years Action Network
Lessons Learned:

• Engagement should have a purpose
• Setting clear expectations
• Targeting sectors of the community
• Engaging youth/parents
We want to hear from YOU!

Questions? Other Examples?