

Leadership Table:

The Leadership Table is a group of cross-sector CEO-level members of the organizations participating in direction setting of the partnership. This group is charged with setting the overall strategy for the partnership, committing organizational/institutional resources, and breaking down political or organizational barriers that inhibit the system from working effectively. In the beginning stage, it's crucial that the leadership table include leaders from the K-12, higher education, philanthropy and business sectors. We would expect, as the partnership matures, that this group would evolve to include representation from all of the major sectors of the community, including: early childhood, non-profit, civic, faith-based and community sectors and include individuals that can greatly enable or inhibit the work of the partnership. The leadership group can either clear barriers in achieving the partnership vision or make them. Identifying the right players is integral in creating momentum for the work early on and in keeping these players at the table for the long haul.

• How to Use this Resource:

The purpose of this resource is to provide a guide for partnership staff in addressing common challenges when identifying and engaging leadership. It provides questions to consider to ensure the right leaders are engaged and the role of these leaders is clear when beginning to build a Leadership Table.

• Audience: core staff of a partnership.**• Resource organization:** the resource is organized topically regarding questions for a partnership to consider as they engage and sustain leaders.

- Identifying the Right Leaders
- Sustaining Leader Engagement

• Additional Resource:

For more information on building a leadership table, view the [Building an Accountability Structure Toolkit](#)

Identifying the Right Leaders

Are all of the necessary partnership sectors represented on the leadership table including early childhood, K-12 school district(s), higher education, community-based organizations, philanthropy, civic/government and business?

YES

Go to next question.

NO

Emerging gateway requirement: While a partnership should be planning the engagement of leadership from all sectors listed above, leadership from the K-12 school district(s), philanthropy, business and higher education will be required to advance from the exploring gateway.

Systems Change requirement: In order to reach systems change, or a shift in decision-making throughout a community, all sectors represented in the partnership should be represented in the leadership table. However, this is something that can take time and may require careful strategic planning on the part of the partnership staff.

Additional resource: The **leadership matrix** may help the partnership in identifying potential leaders.

Have you identified the leaders of key sectors that are contextual to your community that need to be on board for achieve systemic change?

YES

Additional question: Besides the sectors identified by the TOA, are there additional leaders within your community that could clear a path or stand in the way of the work?

Additional question: Are there other sector representatives that could help diversify the leadership table?

NO

Potential Task: Use the **leadership matrix** to identify influential leaders from sectors not yet represented.

Potential Task: Build an outreach strategy to engage sectors leaders identified in the task above.

Additional resource: you may want to review the **key sector motivations** regardless of where they may be in the outreach process as it provides guidance on potential messaging and strategies by sector.

Are executive / c-level partners (i.e. those with formal influence, power or authority) at the table?

YES

NO

Potential Task: Analyze the commitment partners have made in terms of time, staff and interest.

Additional question: Based on the commitment identified, are the partners being utilized fully in various roles throughout the accountability structure?

Additional resource: The **leadership matrix** may help in identifying potential leaders with influence, power and authority both formal (e.g. CEO or superintendent) and informal (e.g. community leader).

Are community leaders (e.g. parent leaders, community advocates or faith-based) that could either mobilize or block the work of the partnership at the table?

YES

NO

Additional question: Has care been taken to ensure meetings are accessible (e.g. orientation, translation services if necessary, time and location considerations)?

Additional question: Are there additional leaders who could be engaged to increase the diversity of leadership representation?

Additional question: Has care been taken to ensure meetings are accessible (e.g. orientation, translation services if necessary, time and location considerations)?

Additional resource: The **leadership matrix** may help in identifying potential community leaders with informal influence, power and authority.

Sustaining Leader Engagement

Do members of the leadership table understand their role within the work of the partnership and, subsequently, feel engaged?

YES

Additional question: Are the roles and responsibilities clear for leadership members?

- **If no (additional resource):** **Example roles and responsibilities** from another partnership could provide a place to start in improving clarity.

Additional question: Are leaders committed to these roles and responsibilities?

- **If no (potential task):** Work closely with leaders to draft roles and responsibilities leaders are willing to commit to while still achieving the partnership mission.

NO

Additional resource: The **leadership in action** slides provide an overview of the various capacities (i.e. individually, organizationally and collectively) leaders can support the work of the partnership.

Potential Task: Facilitate and document a conversation on leadership roles and responsibilities (this **example** may help spark initial planning).

Are members of the leadership table using their role as an individual (e.g. promoting the partnership, advocating for data use, etc.) to build awareness and align work throughout the community?

YES

Additional question: Are these individual efforts having impact in the building awareness and alignment of community organizations and individuals towards the partnership?

- **If no (additional resource):** The **building the case toolkit** can be a good place to start in developing more effective partnership messaging.

NO

Additional resource: The **leadership in action** slides provide examples of what individual action could look like over time.

Potential Task: Consider having leaders identify what various roles they as individuals play in the community (e.g. board member, volunteer, etc.) outside of their traditional organizational role. This may help leaders identify additional sectors and places they can build in advocacy and support for the partnership (the **communicating value** resource can provide a guide for leaders advocating in various sectors as an individual).

Are members of the leadership table using their role as an organizational leader to align their organizational work towards partnership outcomes, policies and practices?

YES

NO

Additional question: Have these organizational shifts created sustainable policy change for meaningful and substantial alignment (e.g. behavior, resource allocation, etc.)?

- **If no (potential task):** Consider an evaluation of potential institutional / organizational policies that could be put in place to achieve substantial alignment.

Systems Change requirement: Systems change entails a meaningful shift for individuals in how decisions are made and policies and practices are implemented. Therefore, leaders changing how their own organization supports educational outcomes is crucial.

Additional resource: The **leadership in action** slides provide examples of what organizational action could look like over time.

Potential Task: Have the partnership staff identify potential champions to act as a model for organizational change.

Are members of the leadership table working collectively to support the community such as advocating for change and evidence-based practice?

YES

NO

Additional question: Have these collective practice and advocacy changes created sustainable policy change for meaningful and substantial alignment (e.g. behavior, resource allocation, etc.)?

- **If no (potential task):** Consider an evaluation of policies which the leadership table could advocate for that could be put in place to achieve substantial and sustainable change.

Systems Change requirement: Systems change entails a collective change in how decisions are made and policies and practices are implemented based on evidence. Therefore, leaders working together to advocate for change in educational outcomes is crucial.

Additional resource: The **leadership in action** slides provide examples of what organizational action could look like over time.