

UWCNM Education Forum Meeting 8/11/11 Strategic Conversation Notes

First Conversation: The BBER Report has suggested six areas “designed to alleviate barriers specific to central New Mexico to enable the implementations of commonly accepted best practices.” What did you think about the recommendations from BBER Report? Strengths and Limitations? Consequences?

What is your initial reaction to the recommendations from the BBER report?

Comprehensive

Putting summary and structure to what we already know

Broad and diverse

Great concept

Coordination – the right thing.

Are we getting at the root of the problems?

Somewhat focused on early childhood. But that may be OK.

Birth to Adolescents – Not enough attention to this age.

Lack of High School piece

Emphasizes importance of whole child.

Community service – what are the other things we need?

Parental involvement is a missing link.

PARENTS

Must have Engagement with community and parents

Is there anything missing you would include?

No mention of roll of teachers

Not enough emphasis on parents/how to break the cycle

Parental involvement/Families

Some schools are better at encouraging family participation

Address problems with family participation

Discussion

Access

Navigating System

Vocational education/no alternatives to college

How to engage business?

More emphasis cultural and linguistic diversity

ESL

Early screening must be culturally/linguistically appropriate

Need more emphasis on putting resourced toward collecting data to measure impact long-term

Research institute connected to this

Large concepts need to be clarified ie: professional development

Who is doing work now? Who will carry the work? Who will lead this effort?

Resources

Lack of follow-through to middle and high school

What are the strengths of the recommendations?

Good to have local early learning organization to conduct coordination efforts

That United Way wants to take this on

Stakeholder outreach is important

National examples were helpful

Comprehensive review of what is working elsewhere

Not about curriculum, instead about preparedness and community

Recognizes the importance of parents and family structure

Recognizes importance of cross-sector relationships

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Mention of organizational structure is important but must work across the spectrum
Increasing the communication between schools and support services
Everyone owns the problem

Recognizes importance of family resource needs
Case management can help get access/good approach/need more
Holistic approach
Potential for solid safety net
Early screening is a strength
Professional development is important
Service learning is important
Focus on adolescents and community engagement
Connecting health and education

What are the limitations of the recommendations?

Health was in report, but word was never used
More definition around resources and community programs is needed
Take offense to “parents don’t value education” – they haven’t been invited to the process
More complicated than this – must work with parents
Middle school is not emphasized
Need to get business involved
Needs to partner more with disenfranchised people
Need more parental involvement
Lack of knowledge of resources available through United Way
How to move from recommendation to implementation?
Large geographical area
Case-level assessment of children
No mention of sustainability
If you intervene early, need follow through middle to high school.

What do you believe will be the consequences if the United Way adopts one or more of these recommendations?

Is there a redirection of project? Does United Way have the resources?
Is United Way prepared to re-allocate to more effective agencies?
Early childhood education follow-through would be positive – it is uneven currently
How to establish accountability?
Young children would enter school better prepared
Partnerships piece would provide more support to families, kids and schools
Will help synergize and marshal community effort
Systems model is good
We won’t be #50 anymore if we start valuing and involving community.
Can shift the paradigm through systemic support
Engage community stakeholders in making school-based decisions.

Second Conversation: The BBER Report has suggested a collective impact approach. Why is a collective approach to solving problems so difficult? What have been the barriers to collective approaches in the past? What are the hopes and fears when partnering? What are the consequences?

Why is a collective approach to solving problems so difficult?

Accountability to Goals

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Looking beyond the money

Don't know how

Don't have time/takes time and commitment

Need to be clear about expectations and goals – share workload and rolls

Have to be realistic

Getting people together is a challenge

Takes a system of constant presence

Few incentives to collaborate

Paradigm shift - working for the whole rather than single organization

Personal agendas take priority

Requires communication and cooperation to move past individual agendas

Everyone is unique and funding awards based on that unique-ness

Need more communication

Will is there/skill sets often are not (capacity)

Not everyone is listening – who comes to the table?

Lack consistent set of measurements

Turf protection – get out of silo

Scarcity mentality

No central coordinating entity (clearinghouse)

No consensus of “who is in charge”

What have been the barriers to collective approaches in the past?

Guarding rather than sharing resources

Territoriality and politics and regulations

Bureaucracy (MOU, contracts and agreements)

Scope needs to be defined

Time limitations

Resources not fully communicated

Need a list of existing collaborations

Limited resources

All fighting for dollars, shrink back to silos to protect

Competition for same funds

Agendas and Silos and Boundaries

Everyone has own agenda

(Mentioned multiple times in different forms)

Identifying shared outcomes

Organizational self-interest

We can't come to the table as advocates for children when we come as advocates for our own organization

Not part of daily work/agendas of defined responsibilities

Need get feedback on impact

No incentive to collaborate

Who benefits?

Community, families, children, organizations

More voices for advocacy

Those we serve

Diversity of perspectives informs work in new ways

Make work better

Less duplication of efforts and resources

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- Wiser use of resources
- More cost effective operations
- Win win approach
 - People coming together
- Change funders' perspectives

Who loses?

- Competition can have negative impact
- If a "one-size" is created, innovation is lost and clients may be left behind
- Some organizations may have to give up (own interests?)
- Lack of recognition for individual organizational contributions; fear of losing organization identity
- Everyone loses a little through compromise
- Lose some of agenda or territory
- Some voices won't get heard; maybe arts
- Those who can't get out of turf
- Those not invited to table
- Media
- Programs can be cut

What are the consequences of a collective impact approach to your organization? To our community?

- Lack of identity
- Work gets lost in project
- Compromises have to be made
- Limiting creativity
 - Lost some unique/marginal voice that might be most innovative
- More funding through collective approach (united front has a greater impact)
- Different way of distributing \$\$; those who have received funding in the past and doing good work may not receive \$\$
- Tension of collective approach
- Could benefit by putting resources into the smaller voice in a deliberate way (even if not a lot); like R&D for a corporation
- Serve more people
- Sharing professional development
- Everything messy initially; gets everyone riled up; challenge to get everything aligned
- Catch those that might fall through the gaps
- We help the whole
- Has to be honest discussion about our priorities and where can we engage in the collective
- Need to be able to show benefit to individual organizations when they "give up" (resources, time) for collective
- Funder: sees a better workforce, easier to work with a collaborative group
- Gov't: would be able to truly partner
- Community: more of a one-stop shop, linking clients to services more easily; more opportunities for service providers to partner with education
- Learning how to leverage competition
- Recognition of best practices has a positive impact
- Identifying a practice guild(?) that we can all agree on

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Final Conversation: How can the collective relationships among influential organizations support the recommendations in the BBER report? What would be the best role for the United Way in this effort? Consequences?

How can the collective relationships among influential organizations support students and educators?

Collectively, define the support; build bridges among organizations

Give power to communities to support change

Make sure parents, students are heard

Bring collective resources, wisdom, common voice and collective vision to the problem solving process; different areas of expertise can help to broaden collaboration and influence

Need to get onboard and bring others along

Identify consistent measurements

Need common definitions from diverse organizations

Universal grant application

Common data reporting systems

Influential organizations should lead direction, including political influence (act as role models)

Get influential organizations in a room and have an open dialogue and gain some consensus

Collective funding structure; pooled funding

Resources: targeted use to support recommendations

Collective direction = greater impact

Help engage cross-section of stakeholders

Come together; cooperate

Sometimes you need a neutral third party to help develop a good collective relationship

Form an association with “real teeth”

Common messaging; collective voice and power

Cultural change

Sharing information

Utilize technology at a better pace; make data drive decisions

Community schools liaisons to help facilitate relationships among service providers

Collective voices speak louder—to government, funders, public, etc.

Collaboration can shift individual entities’ perspectives; help them all rise to the occasion

What would be the best role for the United Way in a collective impact relationship?

Need to be a community builder; neutral partner

Be the nexus of community; ability to convene decision makers

Provide community input to large organizations; evaluate progress in various initiatives

Ability to talk to many groups; Community buy-in

Create access and provide expertise

Give larger organizations a space to innovate or incubate and to expose stakeholders to conversations and success stories--Developing a structure for how this can happen

Be a conduit for the voices of the people receiving services

Create framework; contextualized structure

Help identify instrumental organizations

Bring outside perspective into the mix (i.e. business perspective); Collaborate with business to leverage other types of resources (knowledge, services, etc.); frame benefit to businesses other than as “social responsibility”

Developing collective focus on outcomes

Investment in data and process; funding could be helpful

Help connect agencies who can share resources (not just money)

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Effectively model the support of recommendations in the plan; how UW recipients are aligned with recommendations

Communicate expectations of collective approach (incentize with dollars)

Leverage what is already working

Need indicators/overall goals to work towards; set and state goals clearly

United Way has credibility to bring people together, to come up with visions and to de-politicize

Maintain robust central information center, e.g. website; partner with or build on work done by the Center for Nonprofit Excellence

Make agencies and community aware of programs and services

Host and coordinate best practices conversations

Make sure momentum continues

What are the consequences for your organization? Our community?

Power and size of organization: Concern that the larger organizations are not informed by the smaller

The consequence is that organizations would continue to do what they have been doing

Need to flatten the organizational structure, not increase the hierarchy

KNME: amplify the voices of other organizations; be able to tell what topics we should be talking about

Efficiency: common grant applications, consistent measurements, data reporting

Better trained workforce, less crime, less need for social services, better quality of life

Help NPOs meet their mission

Creates common language, working and focusing on the same things

If we can create a structure for this issue, then it can be applied to other issues

How do we measure the collective impact so individual organizations realize the benefits?

There may be some organizations getting funding that shouldn't if operating in silos, but we can help them "retool"

Lose some nonprofits because they may be redundant

Challenge of reality of collaborating with resources (sharing funds)

Organizations may have to broaden agendas to be more whole-community agenda and yet find a way to fit in that aligns with their own mission

Some organizations and their funding may not "fit" with the community agenda

Smaller organizations need support so that they won't be neglected; how do you use resources in a way that has more impact

Potentially do better for children and families and have more resources

Facilitate things in a way that there are no "losers"

Watch for duplication of services; more efficient use of existing resources

Confusion, turf issues and problems with those who don't want to share

Need "mapping" of the landscape; who is doing what and need to share outcomes of that mapping

Learn about each other

Identify effective programs for long-term sustainable relationships

Think deeply about marketing plans

Need patience to see the outcomes—goals in increments, 5 years, 10 years

Might let the legislature "off the hook"

Might lose resources that would go to the marginal voice/issue

Maybe public perception that money is already out there for certain focused issues, like early childhood

Very little to lose actually; very few consequences

Parental engagement; get kids engaged too

If everyone has "skin in the game," the community will benefit

Funders would have a better idea as to the effectiveness of their support.

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Other Notes/Parking Lot

Consider “PO” for early childhood (*not sure what PO is!*)

Recognize language and cultural diversity

Community support and family support essential

Operating vacuum—don’t know the details of the report

Cultural diversity—look at it from multiple perspectives

Life is full of other challenges

Search_Institute.org

Master slogan for all: use for advertising, billboards, UW campaign (example: Your child is our child.)

How would problem solving regarding education be different if we had the belief that there is abundance vs scarcity?

Would like to see discussion of services for students on the gifted end of the spectrum. What can we do to get these kids to the next level?

I would recommend looking at combining the letters D and F from the BBER recommendations. There is the potential for these areas to inform and support each other, lending purpose and definition. There are examples of this in the city. (Mike May, Amy Biehl HS Principal)

What can we learn from STRIVE?

Share contact information of all participants; allowing potential future collaborations.

Has NM First done similar work? How will the voices of the participants be relayed to the legislature; one of the largest “influential organizations”?