

UWCNM Education Initiative Strategic Conversations Summary Report September 29, 2011

On August 11, 30 and September 9, 2011, United Way of Central New Mexico gathered community stakeholders together to provide feedback on the recommendations of the UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) *Central New Mexico Education Needs Assessment*. Each gathering included three conversations. Following are the combined key highlights from the meetings.

First Conversation: The BBER Report has suggested seven 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?

- Things we already knew, but good to see
- Broad-based and comprehensive
- Needs more strategizing before implementing
- Emphasizes importance of whole child

Is there anything missing you would include?

- Need to define priorities
- Support for collaborations (for funders and service providers)
- Missing role of teachers and parents
- Follow through to middle and high school
- Data systems

What are the strengths of the recommendations?

- Case management
- Professional development
- Engagement for older kids
- Bring together what’s already happening in the community; work that has been done
- Community-oriented

What are the limitations of the recommendations?

- Need to get more people involved: parents, business, teachers, students
- Data sharing; process for sharing data and assessments
- Implementation plan, especially regarding collaborations
- Funding

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

- Forum for collaboration
- Better collaboration: more focused funding (but beware of dropping support for other “safety net” services)
- Will help synergize and marshal community effort

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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
- Time and money to dedicate to collaborative effort (incentives to collaborate); funding has rewarded silos/competition
- Discovering who else/what other agencies/organizations need to be involved
- Scaling-up: figure out/test what works, then expand to a larger group
- Staffing/supporting the connections
- Few incentives to collaborate
- Finding time and coordinating schedules

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

- Consistent visionary leadership to help provide accountability, funding and sustainability
- Agreement on common goals/plan
- Sharing data/information
- Funding

What are your hopes?

- Healthier kids and families which will allow teachers to focus on teaching
- More cost effective all around

What are your fears?

- Long-term commitment needed
- Too many moving parts

Who Benefits?

- Community
- Those we serve

Who Loses?

- Innovation may be lost because of streamlining
- Potential loss of organizations and staff

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

- Some compromise is required
- More efficient use of resources
- Challenge to transition to more collaborative model
- Network needed to hold it together, especially over the long term

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Third 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?

- Bridges between organizations
- Bring collective resources to bear
- Common messaging: community work and priorities
- Advocacy
- Investment opportunities
- Better communication
- Identify and fund gaps
- Coordinated support—other than financial
- Equal access
- Reduce unnecessary duplication

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

- More precise funding
- Facilitator/Convener, engage ALL stakeholders
- Long-term commitment
- Leverage business support
- Infrastructure and staff to support collaboration
- Advocate for kids and families
- Work with other funders to encourage the partnerships
- Bring parties together to create vision
- Clearing House match stakeholders to resources

What are the consequences for your organization? Our community?

- Efficiencies
- Patience to see outcomes
- Increased access
- More effective outcomes