Perspectives from the field in Year 3: Impact and effectiveness of RTT-D collaboration

Prepared under contract to
Puget Sound Educational Service District

RTI International
1618 SW First Avenue, Suite 300
Portland, OR 97201

Contact
Jessica Robles
jrobes@rti.org
503-428-5675

Nitya Venkateswaran
nvenkateswaran@rti.org
510-665-8249

Jay Feldman
jayfeldman@rti.org
510-647-4318

April 2016
Contents

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 1

Major Findings ....................................................................................................................... 2
Partnerships Between CBOs and Schools ............................................................................... 2
Partnerships Between Districts ............................................................................................... 4
Value of Participating in the RTT-D Consortium ................................................................. 5
Sustainability of RTT-D Strategies ....................................................................................... 7
Recommendations ................................................................................................................. 8

Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 12
Focus ....................................................................................................................................... 14

Methods .................................................................................................................................. 15
Interviews and Focus Groups ............................................................................................... 15
Survey ..................................................................................................................................... 17

Structure of this Report ......................................................................................................... 21
Findings ................................................................................................................................... 22
Partnerships Between CBOs and Schools ............................................................................. 22
Partnerships Between Districts .............................................................................................. 57
Value of Participating in the RTT-D Consortium ................................................................. 60
Sustainability of RTT-D Strategies ....................................................................................... 77

Recommendations .................................................................................................................... 90
Shift from technical to adaptive challenges ......................................................................... 90
Promote and support the active use of data ....................................................................... 91
Balance power dynamics through equitable representation of stakeholders ..................... 93
Strengthen the school–CBO partnership model .................................................................. 94
Deepen the PSESD’s role as a boundary spanner ............................................................... 97
Continue regional collaboration ......................................................................................... 98
Figures

Figure 1. RTT-D commitments, projects, and Deep Dives ........................................................... 13
Figure 2. Length of partnerships between CBOs and schools (N = 40) ........................................ 22
Figure 3. Extent to which school–CBO partnerships are new (N = 40) ....................................... 23
Figure 4. Focus of partnerships between CBOs and schools (N = 37) ......................................... 25
Figure 5. Programs that respondents feel they bring to the partnerships (N = 41) ...................... 26
Figure 6. Programs that respondents feel others bring to the partnerships (N = 41) ................. 27
Figure 7. Resources that respondents feel they bring to the partnerships (N = 41) ................... 28
Figure 8. Resources that respondents feel others bring to the partnerships (N = 41) ............... 29
Figure 9. Expertise that respondents feel they bring to the partnerships (N = 41) .................... 30
Figure 10. Expertise that respondents feel others bring to the partnerships (N = 41) ............... 31
Figure 11. Settings in which school–CBO partnership programming occurs (N = 41) ............. 31
Figure 12. Frequency with which respondents communicate with partner organization (N = 41) ................................................................................................................................... 32
Figure 13. Extent to which participants feel frequency of communication is appropriate (N = 41) ................................................................................................................................... 33
Figure 14. What prevents respondents from more frequent communication (N = 9) .................. 34
Figure 15. Continuum of partnership types ..................................................................................... 38
Figure 16. Frequency with which partnerships look at data during interactions with partners (N = 40) ................................................................................................................... 41
Figure 17. Types of data that partnerships discuss and would like to discuss more within partnerships (N = 41) ............................................................................................................ 42
Figure 18. Extent to which participants feel frequency of data review within partnerships is adequate (N = 39) .............................................................................................................. 43
Figure 19. Ways in which partnerships use data (N = 41) ............................................................. 44
Figure 20. Extent to which all groups use the Racial Equity Tool (N = 97) ................................. 50
Figure 21. Average rating of statement about shared vision (N = 41) ......................................... 53
Figure 22. Average rating of statements about nature of partnerships (N = 41) ......................... 54
Figure 23. Average rating of role-alike groups (N = 83) ............................................................. 77
Figure 24. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to Foundational Projects sustainability questions (N = 118) .............................................................................................................. 79
Figure 25. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to Start Strong sustainability questions (N = 124) ............................................................................................................. 82
Figure 26. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to STEM Strong sustainability questions (N = 124) ............................................................................................................. 84
Figure 27. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to Stay Strong sustainability questions (N = 124) ............................................................................................................. 87
Tables

Table 1. Summary of interviews and focus groups................................................................. 16
Table 2. Summary of survey response rates ........................................................................ 20
Table 3. Frequency with which CBOs and school districts seek and offer feedback about project work (N = 41) ......................................................................................... 34
Table 4. Average rating of survey items about communication (N = 38) ....................... 35
Table 5. Average rating of survey items about data use and sharing (N = 41) ............... 43
Table 6. Average rating of survey statements about impact of RTT-D on partnerships (N = 105) ................................................................................................................................. 62
Table 7. Average rating of the extent to which respondents have incorporated new strategies from other groups (N = 105) ........................................................................... 63
Table 8. Average rating of survey statements about school district services (N = 81) ....... 64
Table 9. Average rating of impact of partnerships on RTT-D goals (N = 98) .................... 68
Table 10. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Foundational Project goals (N = 119) ................................................................................................................................. 69
Table 11. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Start Strong goals (N = 119) .... 70
Table 12. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on STEM Strong goals (N = 119) ................................................................................................................................. 70
Table 13. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Stay Strong goals (N = 119) .... 71
Table 14. Average rating of PSESD support (N = 105)...................................................... 76
Table 15. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Foundational Project goals (N = 38)....................................................... 79
Table 16. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 47) .... 80
Table 17. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent) ......... 81
Table 18. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Start Strong goals (N = 45) ................................................................. 82
Table 19. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 45) .... 83
Table 20. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent) ......... 84
Table 21. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish STEM Strong goals (N = 41) ................................................................. 85
Table 22. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 41) .... 85
Table 23. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent) ......... 86
Table 24. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Stay Strong goals (N = 47) ................................................................. 87
Table 25. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 41) .... 88
Table 26. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent) ......... 89
Executive Summary

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Road Map Region Race to the Top District (RTT-D) grant to the Auburn School District, Federal Way Public Schools, Highline Public Schools, Kent School District, Renton School District, Seattle Public Schools, Tukwila School District, and the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) to reduce the gaps in achievement and opportunity across the region. The groups of RTT-D are committed to strengthening early learning through 3rd grade systems, expanding awareness and exploration of education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and improving postsecondary readiness. RTT-D is driven by the principles outlined in Stanford Social Innovation Review’s 2011 “Collective Impact” article, which emphasizes the importance of “abandoning individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement.” Therefore, all seven districts are working with numerous community-based organizations (CBOs) and with the PSESD as the fiscal and management agent to ensure the most effective and innovative approaches are used to close the achievement gap.

This report takes a deeper look at partnerships occurring under RTT-D, building on the last evaluation report, which highlighted general trends and challenges that affect school–CBO partnerships, and including a focus on district-to-district partnerships. School-to-CBO partnerships and district-to-district partnerships are an integral aspect of the Collective Impact approach to close gaps in achievement and opportunity across the region. Specifically, RTT-D invested in several Deep Dive partnerships, projects in very high-poverty settings that can benefit from strong community partnerships between schools and CBOs that support students during and outside of the school day throughout the entire year. In addition, this year’s evaluation captures participants’ perspectives on the impact of RTT-D on strategy goals and recommends which particular strategies should and could be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

Data from this report came from 34 interviews or focus groups and an online survey administered to 231 people who had been identified by the PSESD as key RTT-D program implementers and stakeholders. Survey and interview data are presented by role/organization (e.g., school or district, CBO, PSESD, and RTT-D Executive Committee), and findings are presented thematically after the appropriate evaluation question.

---

Major Findings

Partnerships Between CBOs and Schools

**Evaluation Question #1: How are partnerships working?**

- New partnerships between schools and CBOs have formed under RTT-D. Slightly fewer than half of survey respondents and nearly half of interview respondents indicated partnerships between schools and CBOs were new (see Figure 3, p. 23).

- Partnerships between schools and CBOs in RTT-D are focused on closing specific opportunity and achievement gaps. RTT-D Deep Dive partnerships between CBOs and schools are focused more on literacy, parenting resources/family support, and community engagement/outreach and less on college access and retention (see Figure 4, p. 25). This may be due to the fact that most RTT-D Deep Dive partnership work is between elementary schools and CBOs, as opposed to high schools.

**Evaluation Question #2: How are districts and CBOs supporting partnerships?**

- School and CBO partners seem to understand the programs and resources their respective partners bring to the partnership. School and CBO partners’ perceptions of the resources and knowledge they each bring to the partnership are similar, suggesting that school and CBO partners may have a clear understanding of how their respective partners fill important needs (p. 26).

  - However, when asked what resources CBOs and schools thought they brought to the partnerships, significantly fewer CBOs than schools indicated that they brought “knowledge/expertise” as a resource to the partnership (see Figure 7, p. 28).

  - CBOs tend to bring deeper knowledge of the local community to school–CBO partnerships. A higher percentage of CBOs reported that they brought a stronger network in their local communities than schools did (see Figure 9, p. 30).
Evaluation Question #3: What do practices look like on the ground? To what extent have changes been made system-wide to support and sustain effective partnerships?

- School and CBO partners suggested that their frequent communication is meaningful and appropriate for managing their partnership work. School–CBO partners reported feeling satisfied with the number of times they communicate with each other and often seek feedback from each other about their partnership activity, finding such feedback useful to their work. Interview findings suggest that, when partners meet, they may troubleshoot implementation challenges with their school and CBO partners and seek feedback on how to deal with meeting deliverable deadlines (p. 32).

- Partners identified clear roles to provide coordinated services in their partnership. Each CBO provided to schools the specific programming that the school itself could not provide. Most partners did not depend on each other to provide services but provided mostly independent programming for students at the same school site (p. 37).

- School and CBO partners reported only occasionally using or analyzing data, instead looking most often at informal implementation data. School–CBO partnerships reported using anecdotal data, program implementation data (e.g., the number of students served, the number of events), and summative student outcome data (e.g., standardized test scores) in their partnership work, as opposed to formative student data (e.g., data that allow staff to monitor student learning in real time), or other outcome data. Partners would like to look at more academic outcome data (both summative and formative) than they did at the time of the survey (see Figure 17, p. 42). However, partners reported in interviews that they may have difficulty accessing data and/or may lack the appropriate measures that would capture impact of their programs on student outcomes.

- Partners reported having discussions about how to break down racial and cultural barriers to increase families’ and students’ access to opportunities and services. Most school and CBO partners suggested that they had ongoing conversations about race and equity during their Deep Dive partnership meetings and discussed how they attempted to provide services to students in the school community who are more likely underserved (p. 50).

  - The PSESD had adapted the City of Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit to develop their own Racial Equity Tool (RET) to use with educational partners, including those within RTT-D in 2013–14. Slightly more than one quarter of respondents reported that they had heard of the Racial Equity Tool, with districts reporting
using it the most out of CBOs, the PSESD, and those labeled “other” (see Figure 20, p. 50).

- While the PSESD began using the RET in their work with districts and other partners in 2013–14, there is currently no formal process to share the RET with CBOs (p. 49).

**Evaluation Question #4: What are the best practices identified by successful school–CBO partnerships?**

- **Practice 1 – Communicate frequently.** Ongoing meetings with structures and systems allowed partners to learn about each other and build relationships that fostered collaboration and better understanding about the work. Ongoing communication is a characteristic of strong, effective models of school–CBO partnership (p. 51).

- **Practice 2 – Develop shared vision and establish partner roles at the onset of the partnership.** Having a clear vision and partnership roles is also a measure of effective partnerships. Both schools and CBOs agreed that they shared with their CBO or school partner the same vision about closing the opportunity gaps. While schools agreed that they were on track to meet project outcomes with their CBO partners, CBOs seemed less sure that the partnerships would meet project outcomes (see Figure 21, p. 53).

- **Practice 3 – Secure strong leadership critical to managing partnerships and gaining buy-in.** It was effective to have a leader facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of the partnership as a core responsibility, rather than adding responsibilities to existing roles outside of the partnership. Securing a dedicated coordinator who does not serve in a concurrent role, like the school principal, to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of partnership may be critical to ensuring that a partnership is effective (p. 55).

**Partnerships Between Districts**

**Evaluation Question #1: How are district–district partnerships working?**

- Respondents reported that district–district partnerships are developing in some RTT-D project areas. Interview and focus group respondents related that districts had not worked together in the past and that efforts to collaborate or make system-wide decisions are new. However, partnerships between districts are forming in some areas in specific project areas due to their participation in RTT-D (p. 58).
Formation of partnerships between districts may require a designated facilitator and shared agreement between partners regarding partnership goals and strategies. The building of partnerships among district staff seemed to require someone designated or willing to focus these efforts, and school districts do not seem to take on responsibility for finding someone for this role currently. PSESD efforts to bring partners together in the project lead meetings and the convenings seemed to be a critical factor in helping them develop these relationships (p. 60).

Value of Participating in the RTT-D Consortium

*Evaluation Question #5: What benefits do CBOs and schools/districts attribute to being part of the RTT-D consortium?*

- Stakeholders attributed an increase in understanding of services provided to students in the region to participation in RTT-D. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to better understand the influence of RTT-D on particular aspects of working across sectors and participants’ understanding of key RTT-D issues (see Table 6, p. 62). CBOs, school districts, the PSESD, and those labeled “other” agreed that RTT-D had influenced their understanding of why opportunity gaps exist, their efforts to create equitable and inclusive relationships with families and community members, and their efforts to eliminate opportunity gaps and institutional racism.

- School districts, the PSESD, and those labeled “other” agreed that they had become more aware of the types of services and programs provided by other school districts in the region. However, school district respondents and those labeled “other” disagreed that districts had begun to collaborate with other districts to offer regionally based services (see Table 8, p. 64).

- Stakeholders attributed expansion of regional student services to participation in RTT-D. CBOs and schools have expanded their services through the Deep Dive partnership. Partners were also able to align their services more closely with school staff and create relationships with teachers, and some even developed new services or programs as a result of RTT-D partnerships (p. 64).

- Stakeholders attributed system changes in region to RTT D.
  - Changes in institutional policies and procedures. One change in policy included the creation of a common kindergarten registration date across all seven districts. Districts are also creating a data portal that allows the sharing of student-level
information between school districts to better support students who move between districts (p. 65).

- Increase in equity perspective. Findings from interviews also suggested that the equity perspective has increased across the region. Participants reported that conversations about equity have increased and some practitioners are starting to use the concepts of equity and access when making decisions (p. 66).

- Based on a greater awareness of the inequitable power structures between CBOs and school districts, the PSESD has modified the application process for school–CBO partnerships, allowing CBOs to apply as funding leads and setting up a system to provide technical assistance during the proposal process.

- In response to the feedback that more community representation was needed on the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee discussed changing their membership structure to include more community voice. Although the vote to change its membership structure did not pass, the Executive Committee did create a public comment section during their meetings to increase those perspectives in their decisionmaking.

- Respondents felt that work in RTT-D as a whole is more effective than the work of any single organization. All groups agreed that the work happening within the RTT-D partnerships and projects is more effective than the work of any one entity alone (see Table 9, p. 68).

- The majority of stakeholders believed that many RTT-D strategies had been instrumental in closing gaps and that the region should continue to focus on building capacity to address students’ personalized learning needs. In general, respondents assigned similar average ratings across all RTT-D strategies, with no particular strategy receiving substantially higher or lower ratings than another. Despite varying feedback about the perceived impact of personalized learning on RTT-D goals, respondents expressed that many personalized learning strategies would be important to sustain. The highest rated strategies are listed here. For a full breakdown, see Table 10–Table 13 (pp. 69–71).

  - Foundational Projects
    - Our region has expanded use of data to drive improvement.

  - Start Strong
    - Our region has improved kindergarten readiness and early literacy skills.

  - STEM Strong
    - Our region has increased student learning in STEM.
Stay Strong

- Students have increased participation in college and career programs in our region.
- Our region’s schools have increased enrollment in college prep and college credit-bearing courses.

Respondents appreciate support offered by the PSESD. In response to the needs of those implementing RTT-D strategies, the PSESD has offered a number of mechanisms to support partnerships in applicable areas. Survey respondents were asked to rate various aspects of support from the PSESD (see Table 14, p. 76). On average, respondents agreed with the majority of these items, indicating that on the whole, those who were aware of or had used certain support services felt positively about them.

Respondents assigned the highest average rating to the statement, “PSESD has made changes to their processes based on feedback received from the RTT-D consortium” and the lowest average rating to the statement, “Technical assistance provided by PSESD helped our organization be more effective in providing our services” (see Table 14, p. 76).

Sustainability of RTT-D Strategies

Evaluation Question #6: Which practices, structures, or programs have impacted intended outcomes and should be sustained beyond Race to the Top?

- Stakeholders believed that the region is likely to accomplish the goals of the Foundational Projects, Start Strong, and Stay Strong, but slightly less likely to accomplish the goals of STEM Strong. Survey respondents were asked to answer questions about Foundational Projects, Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong strategies. The highest rated strategies are listed here. For a full breakdown, see Table 15–Table 26 (pp. 79–89).
  
  Foundational Projects
  
  - Goal: The goal of Foundational Projects is to collaborate regionally to create intensive school–community partnerships.
    - Respondents believed the region would “probably” accomplish this goal.
  
  Region should prioritize sustaining investment in teacher and leader professional development in math, science, and English Language Learner instruction and the scaling of community–school partnerships focused on geographic areas to bridge in-
and out-of-school time to support family engagement, English Language Learners, and personalized learning.

- **Start Strong**
  - Goals: The goals of Start Strong are to improve kindergarten readiness and early literacy skills and to build leadership and instructional capacity in pre-K–3rd grade.
    - Respondents believed the region would “probably” accomplish this goal.
  - Region should prioritize sustaining implementation of a comprehensive pre-K–3rd grade approach in schools and communities.

- **STEM Strong**
  - Goal: The goal of STEM Strong is to equip teachers with standards-based tools to personalize STEM instruction.
    - Respondents believed the region would “likely not” accomplish this goal.
  - Region should prioritize sustaining implementation of Next Generation Science Standards.

- **Stay Strong**
  - Goals: The goals of Stay Strong are to increase student eligibility for and participation in college and career through rigorous coursework and college and career planning.
    - Respondents believed the region would “probably” accomplish this goal.
  - Region should prioritize providing free College Board assessments (PSAT, SAT) during the school day.

**Recommendations**

**Shift from technical to adaptive challenges**

Interview and survey results indicated that RTT-D was very effective in implementing practices that required technical changes. Technical challenges, while they may be very complex and critically important, have known solutions that can be implemented through current practice or structure. Adaptive challenges, however, require learning among stakeholders in order to change the way they do business. The PSESD and consortium should continue to explicitly leverage the technical changes, which may be very complex and critically important but have known solutions that can be implemented through current practice or structure, to create adaptive change, which can only be addressed through changes in people’s priorities, beliefs, and habits (p. 90).
**Promote and support the active use of data**

Data availability and use were consistent challenges faced by CBOs, schools, and the PSESD. In order to have adaptive discussions with practitioners and stakeholders, the right data need to be available at the right time. Interview respondents believed that the right data often were not available when they needed to make decisions, or that they did not have access to that data. Having that data would allow for continuous improvement conversations about the practice, an adaptive conversation (p. 91).

**Balance power dynamics through equitable representation of stakeholders**

In response to feedback from stakeholders about the lack of diverse representation in the Executive Committee and an inequitable funding process that gave districts and not CBOs control of the partnership funding, PSESD attempted to change both of these structures to balance the power dynamics, specifically creating a public comment section during the Executive Committee meetings to increase sharing of diverse community perspectives. A next step by the consortium may be to see how well known this change is and the extent that community members feel comfortable using the opportunity. While the structure has been created, it is still important to determine if the community can and does access the opportunity and to understand what supports they may still need, if any (p. 93).

**Strengthen the school–CBO partnership model**

In the 2015 Nature and Quality of Partnerships Evaluation Report, RTI recommended that RTT-D develop system-wide supports for authentic school–CBO partnerships. PSESD and Consortium members have begun to develop a model of Authentic School–Community Partnerships that systematically identifies best practices in order to strengthen partnership structures. In this report, we have identified best practices in the field that can deepen this model (p. 94).

- **Secure a strong leader to facilitate the partnership.** The coordination of an effective partnership between the school and CBOs takes extensive follow-through and continuous communication with all partners. Securing a dedicated coordinator to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of the partnership may be critical to ensuring that a partnership is effective. The partnership facilitator would then be responsible for **facilitating ongoing and frequent communication, developing shared vision, and establishing partner roles and responsibilities.**

- **Conduct a needs assessment** at the beginning of the partnership.

---

• Select organizations with which to partner based upon the needs assessment.

• **Support development of collaborative services.** In many partnerships, each CBO provides their own programs and services without requiring other CBOs or school staff to be a part of those efforts. While not all CBOs or schools require intimate participation in each other’s products or services, support is needed for CBOs and schools, or CBOs and CBOs, to develop mutual goals or activities that allow for greater alignment to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

• **Clarify the role of the district in authentic school–CBO partnerships.** Districts can play a vital role in establishing and supporting school–CBO partnerships. Even if districts may not be positioned to take on the day-to-day site coordination of a school–CBO partnership, districts can provide technical assistance, particularly in areas such as data use, to ensure that schools and their partners conduct appropriate needs assessments, ensure that new partners are included in partnerships, eliminate structural barriers, and support partnership development.

**Deepen the PSESD’s role as a boundary spanner**

Part of the PSESD’s role as the backbone support provider is that of a boundary spanner working to develop trust between groups that do not have a strong history of working together. Respondents were positive about the support provided by the PSESD. They specifically liked the role-aliike convenings and the regional perspective that the PSESD brought to the work, and they noted that the learning community convenings have improved over time. To further develop their role, PSESD could

• **Expand its outreach and communication,** as many survey respondents, particularly CBO respondents, indicated that they did not know of the supports offered by the PSESD;

• **Continue to push for and support conversations about equity;** and

• **Continue to engage in authentic conversations with all stakeholders and support their conversations with one another,** as the consortium has intentionally raised the voice of the community and now can further encourage and support conversations between all stakeholder groups (p. 96).

**Continue regional collaboration**

Both the PSESD and the Executive Committee staff suggest that some district staff are sharing resources with each other and some are starting to feel comfortable calling their counterpart in another district for assistance (p. 98).
• Continuing to build these regional relationships requires someone designated or willing to focus on this work. PSESD efforts to bring partners together in the project lead meetings and the convenings seemed to be a critical factor in developing these relationships and should continue.

• While opportunities to come together may be crucial to forge relationships between staff, actual collaboration may only happen if partners agree on what they want to accomplish and the appropriate strategies to get there. A focus of convenings should be to highlight areas that require regional collaboration in order to best support equitable outcomes for students.
Introduction

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Road Map Region Race to the Top District (RTT-D) grant to the Auburn School District, Federal Way Public Schools, Highline Public Schools, Kent School District, Renton School District, Seattle Public Schools, Tukwila School District, and the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) to reduce the gaps in achievement and opportunity across the region. The groups of RTT-D are committed to strengthening early learning through 3rd grade systems, expanding awareness and exploration of education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and improving postsecondary readiness. RTT-D is driven by the principles outlined in Stanford Social Innovation Review’s 2011 “Collective Impact” article, which emphasizes the importance of “abandoning individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement.” Therefore, all seven districts are working with numerous community-based organizations (CBOs) and with the PSESD as the fiscal and management agent to ensure the most effective and innovative approaches are used to close the achievement gap.

The RTT-D grant comprises 12 projects that span from pre-K through college and career, including three “Deep Dives” (see Figure 1). The projects and commitments are housed under four primary categories—Foundational Projects, Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong.

---

4 “Deep Dives” are projects in very high-poverty settings that can benefit from strong community partnerships that support students during and outside of the school day throughout the entire year.
5 Commitments are plans that go beyond the minimum federal requirements of an RTT-D grant. The commitments include providing all high-needs elementary students with a summer reading plan; implementing Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core; doubling the number of students taking algebra by 8th grade; helping all 8th grade students complete the High School and Beyond Plan; and creating and supporting robust teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation.
**Figure 1. RTT-D commitments, projects, and Deep Dives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>START STRONG</th>
<th>STAY STRONG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cradle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elementary school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundational Projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 6: Robust teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1: Establish an investment fund for teaching and leading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2: Develop a regional data portal and data sharing agreements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Dive 3: Set up an investment fund to develop additional community–school partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start Strong</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 1: Summer reading program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 3: Adopt a robust pre-K–3rd approach system-wide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Dive 1: Develop intensive school and community partnerships to turn around academic performance in high-needs elementary schools (Kent Hill Partnership)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Dive 2: Develop intensive school and community partnerships to turn around academic performance in high-needs elementary schools (White Center Partnership)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEM Strong</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 2: Common Core implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 3: Next Generation Science Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 4: Expand the effective use of digital STEM tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 5: Create a regional system for career awareness and exploration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stay Strong: Achieve College and Career Readiness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 4: Double completion of algebra or higher in 8th grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment 5: Fully integrate the High School and Beyond Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 6: Create an integrated system of middle- and high-school advising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 7: Adopt the College Board College and Career Readiness Pathway</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 8: Create an investment fund for College and Career Ready course selection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SOURCE: Figure 1 was adapted from The Road Map District Consortium’s proposal: Start Strong/STEM Strong/Stay Strong Plan, p. 6, and the most recent Projects and Performance Measures internal document.*
Focus

The first year’s evaluation report (2014–15) focused on the nature and quality of partnerships, which have always been considered a critical piece of RTT-D work in the spirit of collective impact. In addition to the partnerships report, RTI produced a social network analysis that was part of the survey administered during the first year of the evaluation and an outcomes report, which summarized key quantitative outcomes for each project, highlighting areas in which gaps were closing, remaining the same, or widening. The PSESD, district partners, and CBO partners found the partnerships report particularly valuable in providing formative feedback that they could use to make pertinent programmatic changes. Therefore, after discussions with the PSESD about the focus for the second year of the evaluation, RTI and the PSESD agreed that RTI would take a more in-depth look at partnerships occurring under RTT-D, expanding the scope to conduct a deeper analysis of the specific practices that contribute to effective partnerships between CBOs and schools. In addition, this year’s evaluation captured participants’ perspectives on the impact of RTT-D on strategy goals and recommended particular strategies that should and could be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

This report builds on the 2015 evaluation report, which highlighted general trends and challenges in building partnerships between CBOs and school districts, but also looks more deeply at two particular Deep Dive 3 partnerships (Investment Fund to Develop Additional Community–School partnerships). The two Deep Dive partnerships were selected because they not only provided varied services to meet students’ needs but because CBOs in these partnerships also built strong relationships with each other through this process. In this report, RTI illuminates partnership strategies across the region and draws out best practices associated with positive outcomes.

---


7 Deep Dive 3 funds are invested in partnerships between CBOs and schools to provide students with intensive and appropriate interventions that complement in- and out-of-school time with RTT-D high-needs schools.
Methods

In close collaboration with the PSESD, RTI designed a second-year evaluation that would solicit in-depth feedback about partnerships from representatives from two Deep Dive 3 partnerships, the project leads at the PSESD, and members of the RTT-D Executive Committee (see Interviews and focus groups section below) as well as solicit feedback from a larger group of individuals than the targeted interviews and focus groups would allow (see Survey section below). After revisiting the first-year reports and considering priorities for the second year, RTI developed a new set of guiding questions that would guide the data collection process:

1. How are school–CBO partnerships and district–district partnerships working?
2. How are districts and CBOs supporting these partnerships?
3. What do practices look like on the ground? To what extent have changes been made system-wide to support and sustain effective partnerships?
4. What are the best practices identified by school–CBO and district–district partnerships?
5. What benefits do CBOs and schools/districts attribute to being a part of the RTT-D consortium?
6. Which practices, structures, or programs have impacted intended outcomes and should be sustained beyond Race to the Top?

The evaluation data presented in this report reflect feedback about the partnerships as they have functioned since the grant began implementation in 2012.

Interviews and Focus Groups

The evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups from November 2015 through February 2016. In general, the interviews and focus groups were designed to collect information on the following constructs, although the protocol was tailored depending on the role of the interviewee(s):

- Project background and goals
- Partnership activities, roles, and responsibilities
- Communication structure
• Data use and decisionmaking
• Partnership dynamics: challenges and successes
• Support for partnerships
• Feedback on school–CBO and district–district partnerships
• Focus on racial equity
• Capacity and resources
• Impact/consortium effectiveness
• Lessons learned

A total of 34 interviews and focus groups were held with CBOs, school and school district representatives, project leads from the PSESD, and members of the RTT-D Executive Committee (Table 1). CBOs and school or district representatives interviewed for this report were individuals specifically involved with two Deep Dive 3 partnerships that took place during the 2013–2015 school years. These partnerships were funded in the first round of Deep Dive 3 funding. School or district representatives included both school principals and school-/central office-based partnership coordinators. The interviews were conducted in person or on the phone. Individual interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and focus groups lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. RTI conducted individual interviews primarily with participants representing their respective CBO or school. However, because some staff from a particular CBO worked closely together in the Deep Dive project, RTI interviewed those staff together in small two-person focus groups. Due to scheduling considerations, RTI also interviewed district representatives associated with one Deep Dive in a single two-person focus group. The evaluation team took verbatim notes while conducting the interviews and focus groups.

Table 1. Summary of interviews and focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization type</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or district</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSESD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 The PSESD altered the process for applying, selecting, and developing school–CBO partnerships as part of second round of funding for the Deep Dive 3 Investment Fund partnerships. Therefore, the findings from this report do not reflect those process changes, and some issues or barriers to school–CBO partnerships highlighted in this report may have already been addressed by these alterations. The findings in this report may also not reflect the dynamics and characteristics of the new partnerships that may have resulted from those changes.
**Interview and focus group analysis**

The evaluation team analyzed the interview and focus group notes through both a deductive and an inductive process. Interview and focus group notes were uploaded to NVIVO, a qualitative software. The team developed a coding tree based on the interview constructs listed above and inductively through an initial discussion of themes and potential findings. First, each transcript was coded according to their role (CBO, school/district, PSESD, or Executive Committee member). Concepts in the coding tree that drove the analytical analysis included

- Type of partnership (e.g., school–CBO, district–district)
- RTT-D strategy (e.g., Foundational Projects, Start Strong, etc.)
- Activities (e.g., communication, data use, discussion of racial equity, family engagement)
- Influences on RTT-D work (e.g., capacity, culture, shared vision, support from PSESD, support from district, etc.)
- Type of influence (e.g., help, hindrance)
- Outcomes of RTT-D work (e.g., opportunity gaps, achievement gaps, systems change, deeper understanding of partners, deeper understanding of equity).

Each transcript was coded according to the coding tree. After the coding process, the team generated patterns and explanations to explain the processes and outcomes. RTI used the query function in NVIVO to generate explanations and relationships between processes, outcomes, and influences. Queries allowed the team to search for specific words or themes within the interview data to see how many times respondents highlighted particular concepts. The frequency of these words or themes highlighted patterns in the data. For example, to understand the support practitioners had to analyze and understand data, the team conducted a search for all the data that were coded with “data use,” “support from PSESD,” and “help.” These references were used to further investigate how PSESD supported CBOs, schools, and districts with data analysis and use. Findings were reported when the team had at least three sources to triangulate the finding. When findings represented only one perspective (e.g., PSESD staff or Executive Committee members), RTI noted these perspectives in the explanation of findings.

**Survey**

To get a thorough understanding of best practices for partnerships between CBOs and schools, RTI conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with a smaller subset of the
partnerships within RTT-D (two of the three Deep Dive 3 partnerships). Therefore, in an effort to get the feedback of a much wider group of RTT-D stakeholders than interviews or focus groups would allow, RTI developed an online survey that included a common set of questions that were asked of everyone and which contained an additional set of detailed questions about partnerships for those who had been identified as being involved in partnerships funded by RTT-D.

**Common concepts**

- Organizational characteristics
- Impact of RTT-D on respondents’ organizations
- Feedback to the PSESD on effectiveness of grant management
- Overall effectiveness of select RTT-D grant projects within
  - Foundational Projects
  - Start Strong
  - STEM Strong
  - Stay Strong
- Sustainability and success of RTT-D strategies
  - Foundational Projects
  - Start Strong
  - STEM Strong
  - Stay Strong

**Additional concepts about partnerships**

- Characteristics of school district and CBO partners
- Partnership description
- Communication with partners
  - Using data
  - Outcomes
- Inclusion and impact
The general survey was administered to all individual members of school districts, the PSESD, and the Executive Committee. While not as deeply engaged in managing partnerships on the ground, these participants had taken a strong leadership role in making changes to the RTT-D grant to strengthen partnerships in response to the Year 1 Nature and Quality of Partnerships Evaluation Report. As RTI conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups with a much smaller subset of RTT-D stakeholders, it was critical to ensure that everyone, regardless of their position, had the opportunity to provide feedback about aspects of RTT-D work. The survey with additional partnership questions was administered to individual members of CBOs, school districts, and the PSESD who had been identified by the PSESD as being familiar with or involved directly in partnership work. The survey was open from January through March 2016 and was sent to a total of 231 individuals across both surveys (see Table 2 for detailed response rate information).

Survey analysis
Surveys were analyzed using SPSS. It should be noted that the intention behind the survey with additional partnership questions was to get feedback not only about partnerships between CBOs and school districts but also about partnerships between districts and partnerships between CBOs themselves. We received 41 responses describing partnerships that occur between CBOs and schools (a school–CBO partnership). Unfortunately, the response rates for partnerships that were between two districts (a district–district partnership) or partnerships that were between two CBOs (a CBO–CBO partnership) were too low to include in this report. Therefore, only data for partnerships between CBOs and schools are included in the partnership survey results. Feedback about partnerships between districts comes from select items on the survey as well as interview and focus group data. For the common set of questions asked of all respondents, results were combined and presented by organization type (e.g., CBO, school district, the PSESD, or “other”). For Likert-scale survey questions with scales such as strongly agree to strongly disagree, results are presented as averages by organization to most accurately reflect overall responses within and between groups. Overall averages were calculated using individual responses and are not averages of averages.

9 RTT-D is overseen by an Executive Committee made up of nine elected individuals. The Executive Committee includes three district management leader representatives, two at-large community partner representatives, three union leadership representatives, and one representative from the PSESD.
### Table 2. Summary of survey response rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization type</th>
<th>Number of completed surveys</th>
<th>Percent completed surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or district</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSESD</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Institutional Partners</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** The survey was sent to most participants in January 2016. However, an additional 26 participants were invited 3 weeks before the survey closed. Response rates for the additional participants were low. The response rates for the original participants were 43% for CBOs, 64% for school and district, 71% for other institutional partners, and no change for the PSESD or the Executive Committee.
Structure of this Report

Formative findings are presented thematically after the corresponding evaluation question based on the analysis of the interview, focus group, and survey data. Neither organizations nor individuals are named in the report, but findings are presented by organization (i.e., CBO, PSESD) and, when applicable, the respondent’s role (i.e., school leader or CBO staff).
Findings

Partnerships Between CBOs and Schools

This section explores the partnerships between CBOs and schools as part of two Deep Dive 3 projects through interview and survey results. It describes how partnerships work and what partnerships between CBOs and schools look like and highlights common challenges and successes in collaborating to close achievement and opportunity gaps in the region.

*Evaluation Question #1: How are school–CBO partnerships working?*

New partnerships between schools-and CBOs have formed under RTT-D.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how long they had partnered with their CBO or school partner (Figure 2). Approximately half of survey respondents indicated they had partnered with their CBO or school partner for at least 6 months to 2 years. Approximately 45 percent of survey respondents indicated that their partnerships had functioned at least 2 years, with 18 percent of those respondents indicating a relationship that had lasted 5 or more years.

![Figure 2. Length of partnerships between CBOs and schools (N = 40)](image)

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Partnership survey respondents were asked to indicate the ways in which their partnership activities were different from those they may have been involved in before RTT-D (Figure 3). The most frequently cited difference was that the RTT-D partnership projects were “operating on a larger scale” (48%), closely followed by the assertion that groups were
“working with new partners” (43%). Only 12 percent of partnership survey respondents indicated that the work was “no different than a project/activity our organization has done before.” In sum, a high percentage of respondents cited ways in which the partnerships were different than previous efforts to partner, indicating that respondents felt that RTT-D work is not the status quo.

Figure 3. Extent to which school–CBO partnerships are new (N = 40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project/activity is operating on a larger scale.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are working with new partners.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a completely new project/activity that our organization has not done before.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our project is in a new location.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are working with a different population of students or parents.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No different than a project/activity our organization has done before.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Results from interview and focus groups indicated that new partnerships started as a result of the Deep Dive investment fund. Both schools participating in the Deep Dive 3 partnerships partnered with eight new CBOs with which they have never partnered. Of the 14 CBOs that partnered with either school in the Deep Dives we interviewed, eight CBOs were new partners and six were existing partners.

Schools selected CBO partners to be part of Deep Dive through two different processes. In one school, the school community came together the year before the Deep Dive to conduct a needs assessment of academic and extracurricular areas in which CBOs could fill the gaps. Families and community members were part of this process. In another school, CBOs in areas surrounding the school were convened and asked to participate in the Deep Dive. District leaders asked partners to propose what they could contribute to the school.

In both cases, school or district leaders leveraged their existing knowledge of or relationships with specific CBOs to bring most partners to their school to support students’ academic and social emotional needs. For example, in one of the Deep Dive 3 partnerships, the school leader had prior experiences partnering with a few of the CBOs before becoming a principal at a Deep Dive 3 school. While the particular school–CBO partnerships were new, the principal was familiar with these CBOs’ programs. To elaborate, once the school community
assessed arts education as a need to be filled through this partnership, the school leader contacted a CBO that had arts-infused programming. This partner explained, “We did similar work at a previous school—same curriculum in fact.” In the other Deep Dive partnership, the district leadership had prior relationships with some CBOs, but these CBOs had not partnered specifically with the Deep Dive 3 school. One partner explained, “We had a partnership for years with school district. The superintendent contacted the executive director and we had a part in completing the application [for the Deep Dive 3] to be considered. We filled out our part on what we could provide and then, when they were selected, we were part of the partnership.”

**Partnerships between schools and CBOs in RTT-D are focused on closing specific opportunity and achievement gaps.**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what area of the achievement or opportunity gaps the partnerships were working on addressing together (Figure 4). At least half of respondents indicated that they were focusing on “parenting resources/family support” (62%), “literacy” (57%), and “community engagement/outreach” (50%). Based on survey results, it appears as though RTT-D Deep Dive partnerships between CBOs and school districts focus least on “college readiness and access” (14%) and “college retention” (2%), which is likely due in large part to the fact that many partnerships funded by RTT-D, which were those surveyed, are between CBOs and elementary schools.
During interviews, school and CBO partners in the Deep Dive partnerships suggested that they addressed many areas of the achievement and opportunity gaps in their partnerships with schools. Both partnerships addressed student mental health needs, academic support, and enrichment in literacy through after-school programs and parent/community engagement. One partnership also addressed student wellness needs, parenting resources, and early childhood development. The other partnership addressed STEM and arts enrichment. Similar to survey findings, interview respondents did not indicate that they addressed college readiness or retention, but these Deep Dive partnerships took place in elementary schools, not middle or high schools. Most of these services occurred after the school day. However, the youth mental health services and supports for classroom teachers occurred during the school day.
**Evaluation Question #2: How are districts and CBOs supporting these partnerships?**

School and CBO partners seem to understand the programs and resources their respective partners bring to the partnership.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of programs they felt they brought to the partnerships (Figure 5). Nearly three-quarters of schools felt that they brought “student in-school programs,” “family engagement or enrichment,” or “teacher professional development” (71% for each). Over half of CBOs felt they brought “family engagement or enrichment” (60%) or “student after-school programs” (56%).

Figure 5. Programs that respondents feel they bring to the partnerships (N = 41)

![Bar chart showing programs respondents feel they bring to partnerships](image)

**NOTES:** These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Respondents were asked to then indicate what type of program(s) they felt *their CBO or school partner* brought to the partnership (Figure 6). For the most part, responses were very much in line with organizations’ perceptions of what they were able to bring to the partnership (see Figure 5); that is, CBOs felt that school districts brought “student in-school programs” (100%), “teacher professional development” (100%), and “family engagement or enrichment” (71%). One difference is that slightly fewer school respondents felt that CBOs brought “student after-school programs” than CBOs thought they brought (48% versus 56%, respectively).
Respondents were asked to indicate the types of resources they felt they brought to partnerships (Figure 7). The highest number of schools indicated that they brought “facilities/space,” “staff,” and “PD/Training” (82% for each). In contrast, the fewest school respondents felt they brought “in-kind donations” (47%). On average, fewer CBO respondents indicated that they brought particular resources than school respondents. One exception is for “in-kind donations”: 56 percent of CBOs indicated that they brought in-kind donations as resources, which is nine percentage points higher than for school respondents.
Next, respondents were asked to indicate the types of resources they felt *their CBO or school partner* brought to the partnership (Figure 8). The highest proportion of CBOs felt that their school partners brought “facilities/space” (76%), “staff” (68%), and “program participants (youth and/or parents)” (68%). The highest proportion of school respondents felt that CBOs brought “knowledge/expertise” and “staff” (82% for both), even though only 32% of CBOs indicated they felt they brought “knowledge/expertise” to the partnerships (32%, see Figure 7).
CBOs tend to bring deeper knowledge of the local community to school–CBO partnerships.

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of knowledge or expertise they felt they brought to the partnerships (Figure 9). Over three-quarters of CBOs felt that they brought knowledge or expertise in the form of “strong network in the local community” (84%), “best practices in the field” (80%), “cultural and/or linguistic knowledge” (76%), and “student and family relationships” (76%). In contrast, only 32 percent of CBOs felt that they brought instructional capacity.” Eighty-two percent of schools indicated that they brought knowledge or expertise in the form of “best practices in the field” and “analyzing data.” Only 53 percent of schools felt they brought a “strong network in the local community.”
Figure 9. Expertise that respondents feel they bring to the partnerships (N = 41)

![Bar chart showing expertise brought by CBOs and schools](chart)

**NOTES:** These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate what knowledge or expertise their CBO or school partner brought to the partnership (Figure 10). In general, CBOs reported that their school partners brought more types of expertise to the partnerships than schools reported for CBOs (i.e., “instructional capacity,” “best practices in the field,” “collecting data,” and “analyzing data”). More CBO respondents felt that schools brought a “strong network in the local community” than schools reported about themselves (64% and 53%, respectively).
Figure 10. Expertise that respondents feel others bring to the partnerships (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>What schools think CBOs bring</th>
<th>What CBOs think schools bring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and/or linguistic knowledge</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong network in the local community</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional capacity</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices in the field</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and family relationships</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting data</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Respondents were asked to name the primary setting(s) in which partnership programming generally occurred (Figure 11). According to both CBOs and schools, the majority of programming occurs at the school site (86%), followed by a CBO site (45%), and housing developments (31%). This finding is in line with the findings from Figure 7 and Figure 8, which indicated that schools are the primary providers of facilities/space.

Figure 11. Settings in which school–CBO partnership programming occurs (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School site</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO site</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing development</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community center</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s home</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBO = community-based organization.
NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.
**Evaluation Question #3: What do practices look like on the ground? To what extent have changes been made system-wide to support and sustain effective partnerships?**

In this section, we will explain how partners worked together. This will include Deep Dive interviews and partnership survey questions about how often partners meet and what they communicate about, as well as how often they look at data and what they do with the data. The section includes descriptions of the nature and importance of people’s roles in the partnership. Data from the Deep Dive interview questions will allow us to explain how partners worked together to figure out their roles and responsibilities and also how the partnership was coordinated.

**School and CBO partners suggested that their frequent communication is meaningful and appropriate for managing their partnership work.**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they communicated with their CBO or school partner (Figure 12), and then to indicate whether that level of interaction felt appropriate given project needs (Figure 13). In general, schools reported that they communicated with CBOs once a week (38%), and another 38 percent were equally divided between “more than once a week” and “once a month” (19% each). In contrast, CBOs reported that they communicated with schools slightly less, with equal numbers reporting “two times a month” and “once a month” (39% each).

**Figure 12. Frequency with which respondents communicate with partner organization (N = 41)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>CBOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two times a month</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every quarter</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.
Despite the range in the frequency with which CBOs and schools reported communicating with one another, approximately three-quarters of schools and CBOs indicated that the number of times they communicated was appropriate (75% and 74%, respectively). CBOs were slightly more likely to feel that they needed to communicate more with their school partners than the schools felt they needed to communicate with CBOs (26% versus 19%, respectively).

**Figure 13. Extent to which participants feel frequency of communication is appropriate (N = 41)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Schools with CBOs</th>
<th>CBOs with schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I think the number of times we communicate is appropriate.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I think we need to communicate more.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I think we need to communicate less.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBOs = community-based organizations.

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Respondents who indicated that they felt they needed to communicate more with CBO or school partners were asked what prevented them from communicating more with their partner (Figure 14). Of those who responded to this question, 44 percent indicated it was because their own organization lacked time, followed by 33 percent who indicated it was because their partner organization lacked time.
To provide a sense of the nature of feedback between CBOs and schools, survey respondents were asked how frequently they sought feedback from their partner organization and how frequently they offered feedback to their partner organization (Table 3). On average, over three-quarters of both schools and CBOs reported that they offered feedback “sometimes.” In general, schools indicated they sought feedback from CBOs slightly more than CBOs indicated they sought feedback from schools. Specifically, all school respondents reported seeking feedback at least “sometimes,” whereas 83 percent of CBOs reported seeking feedback at least “sometimes.” Seventeen percent of CBOs reported they “rarely” or “never” sought feedback from schools. Similarly, schools indicated they offered feedback to CBOs slightly more than CBOs indicated they offered feedback to schools. Ninety-three percent of schools offered feedback at least “sometimes,” while 82 percent of CBOs offered feedback at least “sometimes.”

Table 3. Frequency with which CBOs and school districts seek and offer feedback about project work (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seek feedback</th>
<th>Offer feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools from CBOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBOs = community-based organizations.
Note. These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.
Partnership survey respondents were asked a series of general questions about communication with their CBO or school partner (Table 4). For all but one item (“Our organization can make decisions about day-to-day project responsibilities without feedback or input from our partners”), schools assigned higher average ratings for the statements about communication with CBOs than the CBOs assigned to communication with schools. It should be noted that the item “Our partner organization gives us ideas or information that is not always relevant to our organization’s project activities” is a negatively worded item, meaning that a higher average rating is actually less desirable. Specifically, both CBOs and schools assigned this statement an average rating of approximately 2.4 (or disagree), indicating that both felt that their partner organizations did in fact give ideas that were relevant to project activities.

The biggest discrepancy between the two groups was for the item “Our organizations can make decisions about day-to-day project responsibilities without feedback or input from our partners.” Specifically, CBOs agreed that they could make decisions without feedback from schools (average rating of 3.2), while schools disagreed that they could make decisions without feedback from CBOs (average rating of 2.7). This finding mirrors the finding from Table 3, which shows that schools seek feedback from CBOs slightly more than CBOs do from schools.

### Table 4. Average rating of survey items about communication (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1</th>
<th>What CBOs feel about schools</th>
<th>What schools feel about CBOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our organization can make decisions about day-to-day project responsibilities without feedback or input from our partners.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our partner organization gives us ideas or information that is not always relevant to our organization’s project activities.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings between program partners are efficient and a good use of time.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After meetings with my partner, I feel like I have a good understanding of my next steps/action plan.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

**Deep Dive partnerships developed strong communication and accountability systems.**

CBO partners and school and central office staff met often in these partnerships, and partners generally felt that they had enough communication with each other to run a successful partnership. Partners in the Deep Dive 3 sites reported meeting formally about once a month, at least at the beginning of the Deep Dive partnership. One Deep Dive partnership met less frequently as the partnership progressed. The topics and purpose of those meetings...
seemed to vary. Both Deep Dive partners suggested that meetings were often used as opportunities to solve problems they were facing in implementing their programs. Because some partners and programs at the school were new, partners would help troubleshoot implementation challenges, such as finding space at the school to conduct the program and helping align practices between school-based staff and CBO staff. Partners would also troubleshoot barriers to meeting deliverables, such as low enrollment. Partners also suggested that they talked about students being served and sought assistance with different issues that arose in their interactions with students.

In addition to problem solving, partners also used meetings as an opportunity to update each other about what was occurring in their programs. One Deep Dive partnership had a formal process for tracking and updating on the deliverables. Conversations also centered on equity and how the school and CBOs were meeting the needs of families and students at the school. These conversations are elaborated on later in the chapter. Toward the end of the year, the conversations turned to how programs would be sustained after the grant funding ended.

One partnership also put aside time for intentional community building, because, even though partners had heard of some of the CBOs, they had not worked together at the same school before or interacted much. Community-building activities included talking about the vision of the partnership and what they wanted to achieve.

In addition to these formal meetings where all partners convened, some CBO partners also communicated informally in person, by e-mail or phone with school staff in order to implement their programs. At least a third of the CBOs reported requiring regular communication with school staff to better implement their services because some relationships and services were new services by CBOs or had not been implemented in that school setting before. For example, one CBO required regular communication with school staff to coordinate the implementation of their school-day program. They maintained close contact with the school staff at the early phase of the partnership. For example, one CBO partner explained, “I felt like I was there more than once a month, constant dialogue, really strengthened the work.” Furthermore, some CBO services required ongoing discussions with the school principal about particular students receiving interventions. One school principal explained, “I definitely interacted most with [mental health CBO], [after-school CBO], and [intervention CBO]. More than those monthly meetings.” This principal highlighted that the conversations were focused on “interactions around individual kids.”

In one Deep Dive 3 partnership, monthly meetings were reserved for program or executive directors, not on-the-ground implementers of the CBO. In the other partnership, both on-the-ground implementers and executive staff from some of the CBOs would attend the monthly meetings because executive level staff also implemented the programs. In order to
include more executive CBO staff in the partnership work if they were not part of the monthly partnership meetings, this Deep Dive partnership also organized quarterly convenings for the executive CBO staff to share the Deep Dive 3 work at that school site.

However, in both Deep Dive partnerships, teachers and parents were not included as formal members of the partnership, and meetings occurred during the school day when teachers were in the classroom. Yet CBO partners interacted with teachers during the implementation of the programs and services offered through the partnerships. Interactions with teachers to implement CBO programs are explained in more detail in the section on partnership best practices, which describes how the principal facilitated relationships between CBOs and teachers.

Meetings were facilitated by designated partnership coordination staff. In one Deep Dive partnership, the district partnership manager, the school principal, and the assigned CBO site coordinator facilitated these meetings. The district partnership manager acted as the de facto site coordinator of the Deep Dive partnership. In another partnership, the full-time Deep Dive site coordinator cofacilitated the monthly meetings with a rotating CBO partner.

**Partners identified clear roles to provide coordinated services in their partnership.**

CBO staff working in the Deep Dive partnership mostly worked independently of other CBOs in the partnership to achieve the goal of providing “intensive student-level interventions that bridge in-school and out-of-school time” (PSESD website). Each CBO provided schools with their specific programming, which the school itself could not provide. Most partners did not necessarily depend on each other to provide services but provided mostly independent programming at the same school site for students. For example, in one Deep Dive partnership, one CBO provided early learning services in students’ homes, another provided mental health services during the school day, another ran a wellness program during the summer, and another CBO provided an after-school program to students at their local housing development. One partner explained, “It was not cohesive work. It was funding different pieces of work.” However, three CBO partners in one Deep Dive began to work together more collaboratively as the partnership went on. Examples of those partners working together are explained below.

Because CBOs were mostly independent in the services they provided, each CBO reported understanding their roles in the partnership at the start of the partnership and not needing to go through a process to determine which activities a partner would take on. A CBO partner

---

10 RTI’s interview protocols did not explore how teachers participated in the Deep Dive 3 partnership activities, nor did RTI include teachers as part of the Deep Dive interview sample. Therefore, RTI cannot elaborate on to what extent teachers were knowledgeable about the Deep Dive partnerships taking place at their school.

11 https://www.psesd.org/
explained why there was no process to determine roles and responsibilities: “It seemed clear from beginning. The group brought together had different areas of specialty… It wasn’t a question of who would do what. We were there for a particular reason. Clear what our own roles were in our own programs. No stepping on anyone’s toes.”

Because of the independent nature of the services provided by CBOs to the school, RTI considers the partnerships in the Deep Dives as mostly reflecting “coordinated partnerships” on the partnership continuum (Figure 15), with some partners moving further on the spectrum to “collaborative partnerships.”

**Figure 15. Continuum of partnership types**

![Diagram of partnership types](Artifact PE.01)

Adapted from Hora & Millar, 2011

Researchers analyzing organizational partnerships suggest that partnerships start at one end of the continuum and continue to grow as time elapses. Because half of Deep Dive 3 CBO partners were new, and approximately 45 percent of school–CBO partnerships reported in the surveys were less than 2 years old, the consortium may expect not to experience more

---

developed partnerships. In contrast, CBO partners working together in one Deep Dive who reflect some of the features of collaborative partnerships had worked at the school for 2 years before the Deep Dive grant and had previous relationships with the school and each other. The section on the value of participating in the RTT-D consortium partnerships explores how partners may be moving toward deeper collaboration than where they started due to the relationships built through their experiences serving students as part of the Deep Dive 3 partnerships.

While most partners did not directly work together on programming, all partners interviewed from the Deep Dive 3 partnerships suggested that each CBO and school partner shared the same commitment in improving students’ academic and social well-being through the Deep Dive partnership. One partner explained that despite CBO and school partners focusing on different activities, CBO and school partners had the same goals: “Everyone was there for kids and families…. Goals were all the same, just in different focuses. We do want to reduce the gap, we do want to see them achieve, just tweaking how we do it.”

Some coordination among CBOs occurred to manage the logistics of implementing their programs. CBOs that provided similar types of services outlined their specific programs at the beginning of the partnership in order to ensure that they did not duplicate services. This occurred in both Deep Dive partnerships. For example, two mental health providers in one Deep Dive partnership had conversations during the planning of the Deep Dive to ensure that they did not provide the same service. Instead, one mental health provider served students and the other served families. CBOs also coordinated the location in which they implemented their respective programs because there were some issues with having space for all CBOs at the school.

However, as mentioned above, three CBOs in one Deep Dive partnership did not operate completely independent of each other and reflected the features of collaborative partnerships. Two of the three CBOs had worked in this school for at least 2 years, and the other CBO was a new partner to the school but also provided after-school enrichment for students. Specifically, these three CBOs collaborated to streamline the student enrollment process to make it easier for families to register their students. By joining forces and combining resources, these CBOs were also able to include teachers in the after-school program and worked alongside teachers to provide academic support to students.

CBOs in both Deep Dive 3 partnerships all engaged in school parent-involvement activities. CBOs attended the parent involvement events to interact with families and therefore were all present at the same event. A principal of a partnership school commented on how parent-involvement events were unique compared to other partnership activities: “Closest to what we got to all being together and it was people running booths to reach out to the families at
the school.” In one school, CBO partners also discussed and aligned their parent involvement in order for families to have, as one CBO partner mentioned, a more “holistic” experience. Both sets of partners emphasized that these events were the only ones where they integrated with most of the other CBOs in the partnership.

District partnership staff played some role in supporting these partnerships. In one partnership, the district staff were involved in the logistics and implementation of the partnership. A central office staff member in the role of district partnerships manager was a de facto site coordinator, and another was in charge of facilitating the family engagement nights required by the grant. De facto site coordination included organizing and facilitating the partnership meetings, especially at the beginning of the partnership, as well as supporting the logistics, such as the data-sharing memoranda of understanding and invoicing procedures. In the other Deep Dive partnership, the district-level staff hired to support school–CBO partnerships were in transition and therefore the new person was new to the role. The principal communicated with his or her own supervisor and the new district partnership staff for help troubleshooting issues, but the district staff was not heavily involved in leading aspects of the work as in the other partnership.

**School and CBO partners reported only occasionally using or analyzing data and looked most often at implementation data.**

Partnership survey respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which partnerships looked at data during interactions with one another (Figure 16). The majority of respondents from CBOs and schools reported that they looked at data “occasionally/sometimes” (63% and 56%, respectively). Nearly equal percentages of CBOs and schools reported that they “almost never” look at data with their partner (21% and 19%, respectively).
To provide a sense of the types of data CBOs and schools discussed during their interactions, partnership survey respondents were asked to select the types of data they had already discussed with partners as well as the types of data they would like to discuss more with partners (Figure 17). The types of data most frequently discussed during partnership interactions include “program implementation data (i.e., program attendance, number of program hours)” (73%), “informal feedback from staff, parents, or students about program” (60%), and “summative student achievement data” (55%). Partnerships reported that they discussed “survey data/feedback from parents” and “survey data/feedback from students” the least, indicating that it is possible some partnerships do not have access to or the capacity to administer surveys to parents and students (30% and 28%, respectively). The majority of respondents reported that while they already discuss program implementation data during interactions with partners, they would also like to look at program implementation more (55%). A high percentage of respondents also indicated that they would like to look at more informal feedback: “other student outcome data,” “formative student achievement data,” and “survey data/feedback from students” (47% for each).
School and CBO partners suggested the desire to examine student outcome data more often in their partnership.

Figure 17. Types of data that partnerships discuss and would like to discuss more within partnerships (N = 41)

Next, partnership survey respondents were asked whether the frequency with which they reviewed data in partnerships was adequate (Figure 18). The majority of school respondents reported that they thought they should look at data more often with their CBO partners (60%). While nearly 46 percent of CBOs felt that the frequency of data review with school partners was adequate, approximately 42 percent of CBOs indicated that they felt they should look at data more often. Thirteen percent of CBOs reported that they had never seen data related to partnership work during interactions with their school partner.
Partnership survey respondents were then asked two questions about the nature of data use and sharing (Table 5). On average, both groups disagreed that their organization made decisions about program strategies based on the data they had and disagreed that their organizations had a process for sharing data with each other in a timely manner.

Table 5. Average rating of survey items about data use and sharing (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What CBOs say about school partner</th>
<th>What schools say about CBO partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our organizations make decisions about program strategies based on the data that we have</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organizations have a process for sharing data with each other in a timely manner</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, to better understand how partnerships use data, partnership survey respondents were asked to highlight all of the ways they used data within their partnerships (Figure 19). Partnerships indicated that the top three ways they used data included to “make tweaks to program structure” (67%), “make decisions about overall program strategy” (60%), and “assign students to interventions or services” (52%).
Figure 19. Ways in which partnerships use data (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make tweaks to program structure</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions about overall program strategy</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign students to interventions or services</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess student progress</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make changes to training provided</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

School–CBO partnerships reported using anecdotal data, program implementation data, and summative student outcome data in their partnership work as opposed to formative student data or other outcome data. Similar to the survey data, interviews with partners in the two Deep Dive 3 partnerships suggest that partners rarely looked at school outcome or student achievement data to track how effective the partnership had been as a whole in increasing student achievement upon completion of the partnership. In these school–CBO partnerships, each CBO partner at the school tracked their own data about their programs and some looked at student outcome data to measure effectiveness, while the school tracked students’ standardized test scores.

School staff from one Deep Dive partnership analyzed data on their own to determine the impact of their program by comparing students who participated in services offered by the Deep Dive and students who did not. Yet, these data were not shared during the monthly meetings with CBO partners. Only staff from one CBO partner who assisted the school with data analysis and tracking reported seeing these achievement gains, as well as one district partnership staff member. Another Deep Dive partnership examined student achievement data a little more often during the school year than the other. This partnership convened partners twice a year, at which time they shared achievement data. However, it was unclear whether partners reported seeing achievement gains or how this data sharing was used to make decisions about program activities.

When student outcome data were available and shared, program partners often used those data to assign students to programs or interventions and to monitor the effectiveness of their own programs instead of tracking effectiveness of all the programs in the partnership in closing achievement gaps. For example, one CBO used standardized test data and teachers’
recommendations to place students in an academically focused after-school program. However, while the CBO analyzed student data quarterly with teachers, this CBO representative struggled to identify meaningful assessments to monitor students’ ongoing achievement in their programs. As a result, this CBO began to monitor their program with a formative literacy assessment used by teachers, and they considered this data source useful. However, this assessment was only implemented later in the school year. This CBO representative explained,

We started tracking [students at the] beginning and end of the trimester. [We] started late in the game and a small sampling of students. [It] was useful though. [CBO staff] did that measuring and it helped them to know what it was they were shooting for. It shouldn’t be left to the teachers. The reality is the touch points are happening by a lot of non-teachers and that needs to be facilitated. [Staff person] brought that idea, [of having] the pre and post assessments. Having this [assessment] earlier on would have been huge.

Another CBO used their own standards-based assessments to track student achievement in relation to the professional development support provided by the CBO to teachers in a specific curriculum area. One CBO did not track student academic outcomes but did track social-emotional outcomes by administering the Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes to their students before and after students participated in their program.13

Other CBO partners in the school–CBO partnership did not use student achievement data to monitor their programs but, instead, partners tracked their own data related to their deliverables, such as how many students they were serving or whether they had met their activity goals. For example, one CBO partner explained that they collected data on “how often we saw each kid, parent contacts, and referrals. Didn’t have other data other than which families were in services.” Implementation data that tracked whether CBOs met their activity deliverables were discussed to some extent in the partnership meetings. For example, one partnership had a work plan with each deliverable outlined for each partnership and the status of implementation. They discussed these work plans during their monthly meetings. Examples of these deliverables were clearly outlined, such as the number of students they proposed to serve proposed serving (e.g., caseload of 10 students, attendance at after-school programs), how often a certain service was delivered (e.g., once a week or eight times a school year), or how many hours of professional development a CBO would provide. Other deliverables were less specific but were still activity based (e.g., support math and literacy

13 The Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes, developed by the National Institute for Out of School Time, measures youth’s experiences in after-school programs, youth’s sense of competence, and youth’s future planning and expectations.
Neither Deep Dive partnership systematically gathered family or student data on the effectiveness of or satisfaction with the CBO services or programs in the partnership as a whole, even though one partnership gathered feedback from families and community during the needs assessment. However, one partnership intentionally had conversations with families from a specific ethnic community because students from that community began to drop out of the after-school program after they had enrolled at the beginning of the semester. One CBO hired specifically to build relationships with a particular ethnic community helped facilitate those conversations. According to CBO partner reports, families that attended this meeting shared that their understanding of the purpose of the after-school program was for students to complete homework, and therefore families were confused that their students came home from the program with homework still to complete. CBO partners shared with families that the purpose of the after-school program was to provide academic assistance and enrichment. As a result of the informal feedback collected at that meeting on families’ perceptions and needs, CBOs providing the after-school program added morning programming to assist students with their homework.

The limited data that were collected systematically from parents and families about activities in the Deep Dive partnership took place during parent-involvement events. However, a smaller group of individual CBO partners reported that they collected feedback from their families or students about specific CBO services to understand how students are experiencing their programs and to report on their program outcomes. For example, one CBO worked with an external evaluators to collect student surveys, while another CBO reported that they conducted parent-engagement nights and collected feedback about their programs from families and parents during that event.

**School and CBO partners may require support accessing data and also with collecting and compiling data appropriate to analyzing their school–CBO partnerships.**

Feedback from interviews and open-ended survey responses suggest a few reasons for not looking at partnership student achievement data across the partnership or as part of their individual CBO tracking. Open-ended survey responses from CBO and school partners emphasize that access to data is a critical need. First, adequate data may not be available for use. For example, from interviews of school and CBO partners in the Deep Dive, one partnership reported challenges with collecting and compiling the data. For this partnership, the district database lacked the infrastructure to compile multiple types of data from the various CBO partners to create reports in aggregate form. Instead, the school was supposed to use a CBO’s database to track interventions and outcomes, but the primary contact at this CBO...
did not have the time to repeatedly follow up with the CBO partners to support their completion of the data reports that the coordinator would later put in the database. Second, due to student confidentiality protection laws (e.g., FERPA), access to student-level data presented a challenge for one partnership. Finally, standardized tests only occur at the end of the year, and that data cannot be used formatively during the school year.

In addition to these challenges, interview findings suggest that looking at student achievement data may not be appropriate for these types of partnerships. Some CBOs’ programs may not affect achievement immediately but down the line, and therefore student outcome data may not be appropriate to analyze the impact of their programs. For example, one mental health provider in the Deep Dive suggested that the academic impact of small group therapy on student achievement may not be immediately reflected. Instead, this CBO tracked immediate improvements in behavior or other social-emotional indicators identified by their therapists. One district leader explained that they were only required to report on “the standardized test results and the number of parents who attended engagement events, and account for services provided.” Instead, this leader would have liked to include other measures, such as discipline or behavior, because they partnered with CBOs that did not specifically focus on academic supports. This district leader explained, “We do the whole child.” Furthermore, tracking program recipients to student achievement data may be a challenge because some students received multiple services.

Beyond whether data was available or appropriate to use, partners experience challenges in adequately measuring the effectiveness of their programs. One school–CBO partnership in the Deep Dive did not have the time to develop these appropriate outcome measures for the partnership. Proposed outcomes for the partnership were determined before the grant started (like other Deep Dive partnerships), but this was before the scopes of work for some partners were clearly established. One school leader explained, “We are required to have our partners selected at the grant time, and I think that put a lot of pressure that we had to have partners named versus concepts and thoughts, and I feel like that was part of the pressure why some partnerships were not laid out as cleanly. There was a sense of urgency, to have the name and dollar amounts and outcomes before we were awarded the grant.” This principal wished that they had more time to “sit down and solidify” the outcomes for the partnership and what would be used to track the different CBOs’ scopes of work.14 CBO and school responses from the partnership survey also emphasize the need for accurate measures to track their strategies. One partner explained, “We are trying to develop practical measures that can be used by leaders to monitor quality of professional learning.”

14 According to PSESD staff, CBO and school partners had more time in Round 2 than in Round 1 of funding for Deep Dive 3. PSESD also provided partners with more support to define and develop the project scope after the initial partner selection process.
School, district, and CBO staff in each Deep Dive partnership reported varied experiences in the support provided by the district central office and/or PSESD staff. One Deep Dive 3 school leader suggested that he/she received some support and suggestions from both the district central office and PSESD staff in some capacity. Furthermore, a site coordinator also used PSESD project tracking tools to track implementation outcomes of projects. However, in the other Deep Dive partnership, the school district partnership staff was unable to facilitate the data-sharing practices among the CBO partners because their staff lacked time to manage CBO partners so closely and did not receive support from the PSESD to troubleshoot or address their barriers. Nor did they receive assistance in making sure that the data they decided to use to measure progress were appropriate based on their programs and services provided by the Deep Dive. Both Deep Dive partnerships suggest that the PSESD could play a greater role in helping partners either have or develop the correct measures to determine effectiveness of their existing programs, newly developing CBO programs or services, or those tailored specifically to their school. Central office staff explained how support from the PSESD may have alleviated some of their difficulties, “Coming from them the ESD it’s a little more powerful, what are the barriers to providing the info? That would have been helpful. I understand this is happening and let’s address the barriers.”

Despite challenges with accessing or tracking student outcome data to specific partnerships, all partners used some sort of measure to track their programs, even though only a few used student outcome measures. However, partnerships lacked ways to measure their partnership beyond the impact on student achievement. During one of the monthly partnership meetings, partners were shown what models of effective partnerships look like, and roles and responsibilities of partners to create an effective partnership were described. Expectations for certain activities, such as ongoing communication and data analysis, were also conveyed in the Deep Dive application as criteria for partnership structures. However, CBOs and schools in the Deep Dive were not given the tools or structures to measure effective collaboration or relationship and trust building across the various partners and school community. PSESD staff in charge of supporting the Deep Dive partnerships elaborated on this void in the analysis of the effectiveness of partnerships, “So much of it [data] is focused around student growth and student achievement, not necessarily on partnerships themselves. How mindsets have changed around partnerships? That would have been a great thing to know before we started.”

Artifact PE.01

15 Despite this lack of tools or measures to systematically track and analyze whether partners had effective collaborations, RTI reports on a few outcomes of the partnership in the section on the value of participating in the RTT-D consortium, as well as best practices in the section explaining findings that answer evaluation question number 4. RTI used research-based concepts of effective partnerships to highlight emerging themes that arose out of our qualitative analysis.
Some school and CBO partners were aware of the PSESD’s Racial Equity Tool, despite the short time frame the tool has been in use.

In an effort to become an “Anti-Racist, Multi-Cultural Organization,” the PSESD developed the Equity in Education department to work with regional partners to close the achievement and opportunity gaps. While the efforts extend beyond just the RTT-D consortium, the PSESD had adapted the City of Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit to develop their own Racial Equity Tool (RET) to use with educational partners, including those within RTT-D in 2013–14. The RET enables groups to develop and review policies, practices, and programs, all with a focus on enhancing racial equity.

Respondents to both the partnership and the general survey were asked about the extent to which they used PSESD’s Racial Equity Tool (Figure 20). In general, slightly more than one quarter of respondents reported that they had heard of the Racial Equity Tool (32% of school districts, 10% of those labeled “other,” and 23% total across groups). CBOs reported that most respondents in their group had heard of the Racial Equity Tool but did not use it (41%), and a slightly smaller group of CBOs indicated that they did not use the Racial Equity Tool but did use something similar (36%). School districts, on the other hand, had the highest percentage of respondents who indicated they used the Racial Equity Tool (32%), while 26% said they did not use the Racial Equity Tool but had heard of it. It should be noted that while the PSESD began using the RET in their work with districts and other partners in 2013–14, there is currently no formal process to share the RET with CBOs, which would explain why fewer CBOs are aware of the RET. Approximately 40 percent of the group labeled “other” indicated they had not heard of the Racial Equity Tool; this is not surprising given that those in the “other” group are generally not as involved in the day-to-day work of RTT-D as CBOs and school districts.

16 Source: https://www.psesd.org/services/equity-inclusion/
Partners reported having discussions about how to break down racial and cultural barriers to increase families’ and students’ access to opportunities and services.

Most school and CBO partners suggested that they had ongoing conversations about race and equity during their Deep Dive partnership meetings and discussed how they attempted to provide services to students in the school community who are more likely underserved. CBO partners reported having conversations about the demographics of the students they served, their cultural and racial backgrounds, and how to break down barriers that prevented certain communities or families from accessing services, such as lack of resources (e.g., transportation for students) or cultural barriers between some families and certain unfamiliar services or activities (e.g., mental health services or swimming). A few CBO respondents reported that conversations about the demographics of the school influenced CBO staff to think about the capacity they had to serve specific demographics. CBOs reported considering their capacity to hire interpreters or staff speaking a specific language in order to serve specific families, or whether staff in their CBOs racially or ethnically mirrored the populations they were serving at the school. These topics arose frequently during partnership conversations.

However, some CBO staff and school partners did not report having discussions about the opportunity or achievement gaps. Nor was the RET used to discuss partnership approaches.
or practices that may perpetuate inequities in either Deep Dive Partnership. One CBO staff member elaborated, “We were all clear on context but didn’t have any specific conversations on using a social justice approach.” Some CBO partners seemed to be aware of the RET, one partner suggested that the RET was used when developing the Deep Dive application, and another suggested that they used the tool in his/her particular CBO.

Yet most CBO partners seemed to clearly understand that the purpose of the grant was to close achievement and opportunity gaps. CBO partners explained the approach in the partnership was to provide “wrap-around” services or additional programs that would provide a “targeted approach” to meet students’ needs in the specific school communities. One CBO partner explained, “[I] understood the idea that it was an equity grant, trying to make changes in that way and [provide] wrap around support services and reduce the achievement gap.” Because partners reported reading the Deep Dive proposal, which describes each school’s standardized test scores, CBO partners may have had clear understanding about performance levels at the schools before coming into the grant and may have understood how the partnership sought to close specific gaps.

**Evaluation Question #4: What are the best practices identified by successful school–CBO partnerships?**

This section presents practices from our interview and open-ended survey responses that seem to be effective in establishing and maintaining school–CBO partnerships, highlighting the broader themes that make partnerships effective and providing suggestions for how to implement those day to day. RTI used frameworks to analyze and assess school–CBO partnerships to both examine the practices and make recommendations on which practices were effective.

**Practice 1: Communicate frequently**

Ongoing meetings with structures and systems allowed partners to learn about each other and build relationships that foster collaboration and better understanding about the work. Ongoing communication is a characteristic of strong, effective models of school–CBO partnership.18 Findings from the Deep Dive interviews and survey results suggest that partners should meet regularly according to project needs. These meetings may be weekly, monthly, and/or quarterly.

For example, CBO partners and school leadership in the Deep Dive met monthly in formal meetings and also communicated informally as needed. CBO partners, school leaders, and

---

related partnership staff attended these meetings. One partner commented on the importance of regular communication, “It’s easy for a partner to become siloed in our work. Being able to connect to share feedback, for example is really helpful. Need structures in place to facilitate those conversations, that partnership building.” One survey response highlighted how meetings can build relationships, “Once we began this practice, our work started coming together, and we began to see real progress. The more we meet, the better we understand each other, the more trust we build, and the more we are able to accomplish.”

Even though formal Deep Dive partnership meetings occurred once a month, partners received regular communication about the partnership through e-mail reminding them of the deliverables and other school and partner events.

Partners in the Deep Dive 3 partnerships also suggested that they developed a deeper understanding of the students that they were serving as a result of ongoing communication, with which they could hear about their students and multiple needs (i.e., academic and social) through multiple partners. As explained in the section on partnership communication, partners shared updates about their programs, such as how many students they had served and the issues and successes they had with implementation. They also discussed individual students and families that they served. In one partnership, sharing of projects was more ad hoc, while in another partnership, partners looked at the partnership work plan to track whether the CBOs and school were meeting their deliverables. One partner explained that together partners formed a “multifaceted vision of each child,” especially because each program tracked students’ academic and social outcomes differently and could understand their students from different perspectives.

In addition, responses from open-ended survey questions emphasized that this communication should be face to face, when possible. One partner elaborated on the benefits of face-to-face communication, “Face-to-face discussion seems to work best as it helps prevent misunderstandings and allows for quick clarifications when a misunderstanding occurs.”

Systems and structures in these meetings can facilitate such communication. Open-ended survey responses and findings from the Deep Dive partnerships suggest that meeting agendas and meeting minutes should be developed for each meeting. Both interview and survey respondents suggest that agendas should be sent ahead of time, should have purpose and outcomes, and should be informed by everyone’s needs. Meeting minutes should be sent after the meeting to hold people “accountable from one meeting to the next.” To illustrate, one partnership’s meeting minutes tracked the “to-do list” of each partner and the due dates, notes from each section of the agenda, updates on the partner activities, information for the following meeting, and general announcements.”
Open-ended survey respondents also highlighted the importance of using protocols or norms that support communication and decisionmaking. However, respondents did not elaborate on what these protocols or norms look like. A CBO partner explained that these structures may minimize miscommunication.

To ensure that partners showed up at each meeting, the site coordinator from a Deep Dive partnership sent frequent reminder e-mails about meetings. Partners also had specific roles in these meetings to increase accountability. For example, each partner cofacilitated and took notes at the meetings.

**Practice 2: Develop shared vision and establish partner roles at the onset of the partnership**

Having a clear vision and partner roles is also a measure of effective partnerships. Through interviews, RTI found a few practices that allow school–CBO partners to develop this understanding.

Partnership survey respondents were asked to report the extent to which organizations in the partnerships had a shared understanding and vision about how to reduce opportunity gaps and whether they felt they were on track to meet project outcomes (Figure 21). Both groups agreed that they shared the same vision about closing the opportunity gaps with their CBO or school partner. While schools agreed that they were on track to meet project outcomes (average rating of 3.1), CBOs seemed less sure that the partnerships would meet project outcomes (average rating of 2.9, or disagree).

**Figure 21. Average rating of statement about shared vision (N = 41)**

Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What CBOs reported about their partnership with a school</th>
<th>What schools reported about their partnership with a CBO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our organizations have a shared understanding and vision about how to reduce the opportunity gap</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our partnership is on track to meet or has met our project outcomes</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBOs = community-based organizations.

NOTES: These survey results include only those respondents who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.
To better understand how partnership survey respondents feel about the dynamics within their partnerships, a set of questions asked about the nature of respondents’ interactions with their partner organization (Figure 22). Schools assigned an average rating of 3.9 (or agree, close to strongly agree) to the statement “I understand my partners’ concerns and needs,” while CBOs assigned this statement an average rating of 3.3 (or agree), indicating that schools feel confident they understand the concerns and needs of their CBO partners, but CBOs feel slightly less confident that they understand the concerns and needs of the school partners. CBOs assigned an average rating of 3.1 (or agree) to the statement “my partner acknowledges and responds to my organization’s concerns/needs,” indicating that CBOs feel their school partners acknowledge and respond to their needs as CBOs. However, schools assigned an average rating of 2.9 (or disagree, close to agree) to this statement, indicating that schools feel less strongly that CBOs acknowledge and respond to their needs as schools. Both CBOs and schools assigned an average rating of 3.1 (or agree) to the statement, “I am comfortable bringing up issues of power and privilege in discussions with my partner organization.”

Figure 22. Average rating of statements about nature of partnerships (N = 41)
Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1

Evidence from the partners in the Deep Dive suggests that they had clear understanding of how their partners contributed to meeting students’ academic and social needs. Partners also had a shared commitment to meeting those needs. Both of these elements suggest a strong partnership. Two specific practices seemed to foster this clarity. First, each partner reported reading the partnership proposal and having a clear understanding of their role in relation to
others prior to the partnership starting. Second, in addition to a thorough review of the proposal, one partnership went through a specific needs assessment process prior to the Deep Dive partnership that matched school needs with partner services.

Other tools that may support the building of shared vision and understanding of roles are tracking tools or materials to support the work of the partnership. CBO and school partners emphasized these tools in both open-ended survey responses and Deep Dive interviews. One Deep Dive partnership brought documentation of work plans to meetings in order to highlight project status and achievement, as opposed to more anecdotal sharing. The coordinator combined these work plans to document where partners were in each project and to highlight whether deliverables were being met and any challenges with their projects. As elaborated on in the section on partnerships’ data use and analysis practices, the work plan used by one partnership only included project deliverables (i.e., number of students served or number of hours of program) and not specific results from student outcome data. In this particular work plan, project partners highlighted progress, next steps, and challenges with implementation (e.g., services being rescheduled or postponed due to staffing). One open-ended survey response suggested why these tools were important. This partner from a school-CBO partnership suggested that materials that keep the partners informed about the activities “guide” the ‘thinking’ of the partners.

While these structures created opportunities to build a common understanding and purpose, one CBO partner suggested that CBOs should have opportunities to build relationships outside of the meetings. In the Deep Dive partnership interviews, this partner suggested that shadowing other CBO partners to see their work “hands on,” in order to “see what their role looked like.” would add to deeper understanding of partner roles.

Beyond developing understanding of partner roles and vision, one Deep Dive 3 partnership also developed a shared vision of responsibilities partners had to the partnership as a group. According to both school and CBO partners, this agreement added to the cohesiveness and accountability that partners felt to one another and emphasized a shared commitment to the work. These partners developed group norms for how they wanted to work together and an agreement outlining what it meant to be an effective partner (e.g., attend monthly meetings, promote use of data) instead of norms about how they would communicate.

**Practice 3: Secure strong leadership critical to managing partnerships and gaining buy-in**

Having a leader to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of the partnership as a core responsibility, as opposed to adding responsibilities to existing roles outside of the partnership, emerged as an effective practice. Based on findings from interviews and focus groups, the coordination of an effective partnership between the school and CBOs takes
extensive follow-through and continuous communication with all partners. This level of effort may not be possible for someone who is only able to dedicate a small portion of their time to such a role.

Evidence from a Deep Dive partnership that had a full-time coordinator suggested that the coordinator ensured that ongoing communication and building of shared vision occurred by holding partners accountable for attending the meetings by sending multiple reminders; facilitating structured meetings with the agendas and structured conversations about work plans; supporting partners to follow through on documentation, data collection, and analysis; and ensuring ongoing communication with partners about other school staff and events. With approximately eight partners as part of the Deep Dive, follow-up activities could take extensive time that staff with other responsibilities may not have.

The coordinator was also able to support implementation of programs by acting as a liaison between the principal and school staff because school staff are busy with their own day-to-day responsibilities and may not have time to communicate with CBO partners. One partner commented that the coordinator acted as the “voice” of the partnership. Because this particular coordinator was a full-time staff person based at the school, the coordinator built relationships with students and teachers and was able to share that knowledge with CBO partners, many of whom were new to the school.

Partners in the Deep Dive explained the importance of securing a coordinator that managed these day-to-day relationships. The principal can typically fall into the role. Despite a principal’s support of the partnership, without a day-to-day facilitator, communication and additional partnership activities can fall through the cracks. One principal explained the importance and distinction between the principal and partnership coordinator role, “Principals are key but the gap when the first coordinator and when [site coordinator] came in [month] we did not have a partnership meeting. I was spinning my wheels; it’s a huge amount of work. And once [coordinator] came on we made up that time.” One partner explained, “It feels like there is a principal who is doing a full-time principal job and also coordinating a project like this. Both are full-time jobs.”

Adding this responsibility to a CBO partner’s existing responsibilities may not be effective either. When this occurred in one site, the partner had little success in directing other partners because this partner had his/her own responsibilities to attend to. Assigning these functions to someone at the district central office may not be effective either. District central office staff in the Deep Dive, who had more involvement in the partnership, still had minimal influence on holding partners accountable for deliverables or coordinating and supporting implementation of programs. One school partner also explained that district staff may not be appropriate because understanding and facilitating a partnership “is so school specific.”
Securing strong advocates of partnerships among school leadership is another effective practice. While the principal may not best serve in that role of the day-to-day management of the partnership, principals still seem to play a critical role. Interview findings suggest that the school principal played an important role as an advocate and communicator of the Deep Dive partnership to school staff. In both Deep Dive sites, the principal acted as an intermediary between the school staff and CBOs, particularly around getting teacher buy-in and coordinating with teachers, as a few programs took place during the school day and required some teacher participation. Further, because teachers did not attend the partnership meetings, they were not deeply informed about the programs and services CBO partners provided. For example, one CBO provided mental health services to students during the school day, and another provided artist residencies for classroom teachers. Coordination of both required school principals to be intermediaries between the CBO and teachers because both CBOs were new to the school and were providing services or programs that were also new to the school. To establish the artist residencies, the school principal provided the CBO with potential teachers who might be interested in implementing that program in their classroom. In these cases, the principal helped facilitate conversations with the teachers because some teachers were not familiar with the artist residency program. One CBO partner explained how the principal played an intermediary role, “The administrator went to teachers and said ‘meet with [CBO X], they are good, this is what they can do for you.’” Strong advocacy of the programs by the principal seemed key for building buy-in for the mental health services. One partner mentioned, “The principal was really the strongest point for advocating how important mental health services are. It trickled down from there.”

Therefore, securing a dedicated coordinator who does not serve in a concurrent role, as the school principal does, to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of partnership may be critical to ensuring that a partnership is effective. Securing leadership that also advocates for programs and secures buy-in among staff is also critical for partnerships so that school staff and CBO partners can work together when needed to ensure that students receive critical services.

**Partnerships Between Districts**

This section describes what district–district partnerships look like and the challenges and successes in collaborating to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

*Evaluation Question #1: How are district–district partnerships working?*

Some districts were able to form relationships with other districts in specific areas, while some were not. In general, interviewees were less sure that district–district partnerships were
as prevalent as many had hoped but explained that relationships were developing. Partnerships are more likely to occur when someone is in charge of facilitating the partnership as well as when partners can agree on mutual goals or areas of work.

Findings in this section mainly reflect perspectives of PSESD staff and members of the RTT Executive Committee, three of whom who currently work in the Race to the Top districts.19

Respondents reported that district–district partnerships are developing in some RTT-D project areas.

School districts in the South King County region have worked together to create system-wide changes in policy and practices in order to close achievement and opportunity gaps. These changes are elaborated on in the section on the value of participating in the RTT-D consortium. However, interview and focus group respondents related that districts had not worked together in the past and that efforts to collaborate or make system-wide decisions are new. This section explores district–district relationships and what helps or hinders these partnerships.

Interview and focus group findings suggest that partnerships between districts are forming in some areas in specific project areas due to their participation in RTT-D. Both PSESD and Executive Committee staff suggest that some district staff are sharing resources with each other and some are starting to feel comfortable calling their counterpart in another district for assistance. One Executive Committee member mentioned a specific example from his/her district about how district staff are learning about resources through RTT-D project meetings with other district staff. He/she explained,

Because of the work with RTT and the regional meetings—our science lead has relationships with vendors learned about from other districts… and has allowed her to bring engineering in classroom. And if [she had] not gone to the regional meeting, she wouldn’t know that exists. So [it’s a] little opportunity but in the big scheme of things, these help us with the work.

One PSESD staff member reported about a district that came to value PSESD efforts to bring district staff together and share about their work. This staff member reported, “One district that usually doesn’t want to network asked if we’re having that [convening] again.”

Further, some PSESD staff reported that district representatives are beginning to share practices and/or strategic plans in relation to their RTT-D work and perhaps are finding new ways to collaborate. In some areas, these exchanges have led to the development of collaborative activity among district staff. In particular, district staff working on blended learning

19 The evaluation scope of work did not include interviewing central office staff leaders in the seven Race to the Top Districts outside of those leaders in charge of school–CBO partnerships.
initiatives are reported to be collaborating on the delivery of a blended learning symposium in the region, with sessions led by different districts. One representative from the PSESD explained the evolution of district participation in these meetings and how staff may be finding greater ways to collaborate. He/she explained, “The first couple of years this [was] another meeting we need to go to. But this last year, the leads are taking ownership and bringing problems of practice protocols. There seems to be ownership of work coming together.” Additional evidence that district staff may be taking on ownership of the collaborative work are PSESD staff reports that district staff are attempting to form their own professional learning communities or are reported to be eager to continue meeting in role-alike groups, in which the PSESD convened district staff in similar roles, as a result of the RTT-D work.

While some district partnerships have not been formed immediately, partnerships may be formed in the future. Districts may be poised to share best practices or strategies that they are using to close achievement gaps. For example, one Executive Committee member suggested, “It’s good [to be] on the Executive Committee to learn what other districts are doing—if [district] is a leader in early learning, then we can learn from them and know how to do it better, do it jointly, etc. Sharing of successful programs has been a good benefit to this cooperative effort.” In one case, this type of informal collaboration is starting to occur. Staff from one district with a stronger infrastructure to address particular student learning needs are beginning to mentor another district whose work is emerging in that area.

In addition, one district superintendent reported that superintendents are embarking on more collaboration as a result of participating in the RTT-D work. Even though superintendents in the RTT-D region have turned over, they have met across the region since the grant started, and one superintendent explained they are requesting additional meetings together to discuss RTT-D and related district plans and goals. One member of the Executive Committee stated, “Right now this group wants to work together more than ever. More than ever since [the] start [of] RTT-D. So they are becoming more collaborative and [becoming] more [of] a learning community and [want to] keep it in place when it’s over.”

---

20 Identifying and discussing a problem of practice is part of the “Instructional Rounds” process described by City, Elizabeth A., Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel. Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. A “problem of practice” is defined as an instructional problem that practitioners hope to solve in order to improve student learning through an inquiry process. In this process, practitioners collect and bring data about the problem and talk through with their colleagues next steps to address improvements.
Formation of partnerships between districts may require a designated facilitator and shared agreement between partners regarding partnership goals and strategies.

Building partnerships among district staff seemed to require someone designated or willing to focus these efforts, and school districts currently do not seem to take responsibility for finding someone for this role. PSESD efforts to bring partners together in the project lead meetings and the convenings seemed to be a critical factor in these relationships developing. One partnership director in a school district explained that the most beneficial part of the ESD convenings were the role-alike groups. This partner highlighted this need and the PSESD’s role, “We don’t get space and time to work with people who have similar challenges- a critical friends group or a problem of practice structure colleague in like [roles]… I need to talk to people who know how to navigate a political sphere and a government system.” Without a designated facilitator, another effort to create a professional learning community among a couple of districts failed. One PSESD staff member explained, “Both districts would have loved to have done it but the leadership was a hot potato. No one took it. No one driving or championing that work. That’s a big piece of it.” One member of the Executive Committee stated, “I really don’t know. I know the districts were working together (the superintendents) but I don’t know how quickly this could have happened without the money. The money has been a tremendous benefit—might have been 20, 30, 409 years down the road to be where we are now.”

While opportunities to come together may be crucial to forge relationships between staff, actual collaboration may only happen if partners agree on what they want to accomplish and the appropriate strategies to get there. Some respondents suggested that agreement across districts may be difficult for two reasons. First, districts have their own strategic plans and priorities and might not want to collaborate in order to meet their own objectives. One partner suggested that districts still have not built shared commitment on the goals that their neighboring districts have, and an attempt to create a regional goal in one project area backfired. Second, districts are also competing for money from the grant and must use it to demonstrate successful outcomes. Some respondents also suggested that efforts to work together may be hindered because districts are held accountable for demonstrating outcomes. However, these staff members did not elaborate on why competition hindered collaboration. Some participants suggested that the culture of competition existed before the grant, and in some ways that culture was augmented by the structure of RTT-D by having a district apply for funds.

Value of Participating in the RTT-D Consortium

This section explains how schools, CBOs, and districts have become more aware of their partners in the region due to their participation in the Race to the Top work and how this
awareness has led to the expansion of services that partners perceive has allowed them to close achievement and opportunity gaps. The section also explains changes to regional systems and structures as a result of the work of RTT-D and the impact of Race to the Top strategies in closing achievement and opportunity gaps. Findings from interviews allow elaboration on why some strategies may have not been as effective as others.

**Evaluation Question #5: What benefit do CBOs and schools/districts attribute to being a part of the RTT-D consortium?**

**Stakeholders attributed an increase in understanding of services provided to students in the region to participation in RTT-D.**

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to better clarify the influence of RTT-D on particular aspects of working across sectors and participants’ understanding of key RTT-D issues (Table 6). Respondents from all groups agreed (total average rating of 3.1) with three of the five statements. Specifically, groups agreed that RTT-D had influenced their understanding of why opportunity gaps exist, their efforts to create equitable and inclusive relationships with families and community members, and their efforts to eliminate opportunity gaps and institutional racism. In general, the PESD assigned the highest average ratings to all five statements, followed by CBOs, and then school districts. On average, CBOs reported that participating in the RTT-D consortium had positively impacted their organizations slightly more than school districts across all items. It should be noted that a high proportion of CBOs reported that their organizations “already knew” much of the information or “already did” many of the actions outlined in Table 6 (range of 36% to 50% versus a range of 7% to 25% for school districts).

The statements with the lowest average ratings across groups included “Because of participating in the RTT-D consortium, my organization has learned how to work with small CBOs” (overall average rating of 2.9 or disagree; average rating of 2.5 from those labeled “other”) and “Because of participating in the RTT-D consortium, my organization has learned how to work with ethnically based CBOs” (overall average rating of 2.9 or disagree; average rating of 2.6 from those labeled “other” and 2.8 from school districts).
Table 6. Average rating of survey statements about impact of RTT-D on partnerships (N = 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Because of participating in the Race to the Top consortium my organization has...</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>School district</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a better understanding of how to work with small CBOs (Avg. Rating)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization already understood this (%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a better understanding of how to work with ethnically based CBOs (Avg. Rating)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization already understood this (%)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a better understanding of why opportunity gaps exist (Avg. Rating)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization already knew or did this (%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taken steps to create inclusive and equitable relationships with families and community members (Avg. Rating)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization already knew or did this (%)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taken steps to eliminate opportunity gaps and institutional racism (Avg. Rating)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization already knew or did this (%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their organization had incorporated new strategies that they had learned from other groups as part of their RTT-D work to eliminate opportunity gaps (Table 7). The groups that reported incorporating the most strategies from one another include the PSESD incorporating strategies from other members of the PSESD and the PSESD incorporating strategies from CBOs. Specifically, the PSESD assigned the highest average rating across all groups of 3.6 (or agree) to integrating new strategies from other members of the PSESD. Respondents from the PSESD assigned the next overall highest rating to learning from CBOs (average rating of 3.4 or agree). In contrast, however, CBOs and districts disagreed that they had learned new strategies from the PSESD (average ratings of 2.6 and 2.9, respectively).
Table 7.  Average rating of the extent to which respondents have incorporated new strategies from other groups (N = 105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization learned from</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSESD</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

An interview from the Deep Dive partner also suggests that CBO and school partners are becoming more aware of each other and services available in the region. Awareness of other CBOs has led some CBOs to refer their students and families to other CBOs in the region or community. For example, a CBO that provided mental health services referred their clients to programs provided by another CBO at the nearby housing community. This CBO partner suggested this is important because their students and families face multiple needs, not just one, and being able to refer their families and students to more services is a huge benefit to their clients. Second, CBOs have established relationships with one another as a result of the Deep Dive partnership, which may or may not have led to future partnerships. One partnership has already grown out of informal conversations between a mental health provider and an arts-based nonprofit, leading to the development of an arts-based therapy approach during the Deep Dive. For example, two different CBOs the same school attended meetings about Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) for students because they served the same types of students through the Deep Dive partnership. Because they were in the same meetings in MTSS and the Deep Dive, they had opportunities to talk about the students they were serving. Through these informal conversations, one CBO suggested that it laid the groundwork for more formal partnerships in the future between the two CBOs. Another CBO partner explained the benefits of their newly formed relationships with CBOs, “Some of us made relationships as a result that it’s now easier for me to call up certain orgs and know who to reach and talk to about things and services.”

One member of the Executive Committee suggested that participation on the committee has resulted in developing a better understanding of the region-wide needs in order to make decisions that best meet those needs, as opposed to operating from his/her own district perspective. This member suggested that, because the committee must make decisions based on the benefit of students in the region as opposed to a particularly district’s priorities, these conversations have resulted in a “regional mindset” and a recommitment to the RTT-D goals.
School districts, the PSESD, and those labeled “other” were asked questions about school district services in an effort to better understand the impact of RTT-D on partnerships between districts (Table 8). All three groups agreed (total average rating of 3.1) that they had become more aware of the types of services and programs provided by other school districts in the region. School district respondents and those labeled “other” disagreed that districts had begun to collaborate with other districts to offer regionally based services (average rating of 2.7 and 2.5, respectively). While organizations report that they are more aware of other districts’ services and programs, survey respondents also note that there is room to enhance district–district collaboration.

Table 8. Average rating of survey statements about school district services (N = 81)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more aware of the types of services and programs provided by other school districts in the RTT-D region.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our district has begun to collaborate with other districts to offer regionally based services.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: This question was asked only of school districts, the PSESD, and those labeled “other.” These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Stakeholders attributed expansion of regional student services to participation in RTT-D.

CBOs and schools have expanded their services through the Deep Dive partnership, which may allow for better ability to close achievement and opportunity gaps. For example, some existing partnerships expanded their services through the Deep Dive by increasing the number of students served. Two mental health providers were able to serve more students in their school as a result of the Deep Dive than they could have by themselves. Three CBOs worked collaboratively to streamline the after-school program and combine resources. Through this process, all CBOs were able to increase the number of students that were served in the after-school program to serving approximately a third of the school.

Partners were also able to align their services more closely with school staff and create relationships with teachers through this specific Deep Dive project. Using the same example from above regarding the streamlining of an after-school program, the pooled resources allowed these CBOs to include teachers in the after-school program. As a result, both school day teachers and CBO staff provided academic support to students instead of solely CBO staff. Similarly, through the Deep Dive project, a CBO was able to better align their after-school program with what students were taught during the school day by connecting lesson plans and other classroom materials to the after-school curriculum.
Some CBOs also developed new services or programs as a result of the Deep Dive, which increased their ability to meet students’ needs in a school setting. For example, prior to the Deep Dive, a CBO that provides mental health services normally would see students outside of the school day through district referrals. But, through the Deep Dive, this CBO placed a mental health therapist in the school, which was a first for their CBO. Through this experience, this CBO developed a new school-based program that they are planning to extend to other schools in the community. This new school-based program would not have been developed without their experience in the Deep Dive.

**Stakeholders attributed system changes in region to RTT-D.**

The RTT-D region has experienced some system-wide changes. Some of these changes are system-wide policy changes to structures or addition of new technology tools that may increase students’ immediate access to opportunities. In addition to these changes, interview findings suggest that practitioners in the region are also making changes in values and beliefs. These changes in mindset may also lead to shifts in practice over time that affect achievement and opportunity gaps.

**Changes in institutional policies and procedures**

Some of the changes in policies or tools include the creation of a system-wide common kindergarten registration date across all seven districts. Districts are also creating a data portal which allows the sharing of student-level information between school districts to better support students who move between districts. One respondent highlighted the potential of the data portal, “If moving between districts, soon as that kid leaves a district we have to wait 3-6 weeks to get info. We can now do that in a matter of days. Hope to do that in a matter of hours.” The region has also increased access to more rigorous courses, and college and career supports (such as the College Bound Scholarship) as well as increased the number of students taking SAT tests.\(^{21}\)

In another system-wide change, districts are institutionalizing positions in the district to work on specific RTT-D strategies. Some districts have already created new staff positions to support the initiatives in RTT-D. Project leads reported that each district has hired early learning staff to support early learning initiatives. In addition, four of the seven districts have hired staff to support blended learning/personalized learning efforts in their districts. These new positions perhaps reflect a change in district priorities to formally close gaps by focusing on these strategies. One district superintendent said that, prior to RTT-D, districts were less

focused on early learning, but now there are increased partnerships with early learning providers and use of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WAKIDs) assessment.

**Increase in equity perspective**

Beyond these system-wide changes due to specific RTT-D work, findings from interviews also suggested that the equity perspective has increased across the region. Participants reported that conversations about equity have increased and some practitioners are starting to use the concepts of equity and access when making decisions. For example, one Executive Committee member reported that district superintendents in the region have commented that having PSESD lead equity conversations has allowed districts in the region to also have those conversations. For example, the Deep Dive grant application asks districts to be explicit that the work focuses on achieving educational equity. In one district, a partnership director explained that that focus has increased conversations in their district office. This impact in the district was also replicated at the school level. The school principal in the same district suggested that conversations among school staff have also increased. The principal explained, “Because of Deep Dive 3, [it has been a] catalyst for increases in conversations as a staff around those topics.” One Executive Committee member suggested that this increase may be region wide, “I also don’t think that equity, racial equity, would be as present in the conversation.”

Equity has also been used as a lens to make decisions in some cases. One Executive Committee member from a district explained, “In some cases, I don’t think that we would realize the problem is as big as it is in ELL [English language learners] if we hadn’t looked at it with the lens that RTT has made us look at it.” Conversations within the Executive Committee are also focused on using equity as a decisionmaking lens in their sustainability discussions. One member explained that they are not thinking about taking on new projects but instead using an “equity lens” to refine existing projects and strategies.

One way that the region has used equity to rethink their practices is PSESD’s focus on strategies that better include communities in an equitable way. Specifically, the PSESD made changes in the process of funding Deep Dive projects due to the greater awareness of the inequitable power structures and relationships between CBOs and school districts. First, the PSESD provided technical assistance support to central offices to increase their understanding of how to partner authentically with smaller or ethnically based CBOs. This change also allowed CBOs to lead proposals, as opposed to just school districts. Some Executive Committee members have suggested this shift will lead to the region being positioned to serve students in the region. One member explained, “They [CBOs] have such great ideas and working in tandem, and some of these CBOs are a two-man operation, to bridge the gap and help with the ELL issues, between the school and community, and different cultural communities in the district. It’s such a huge need and that wouldn’t have the opportunity with
RTT-D and the thought to include CBOs. It probably wouldn’t have happened if CBOs hadn’t spoken up last year and been given a bigger voice.”

A finding from RTI’s 2015 Nature and Quality of Partnerships Evaluation Report was that the Executive Committee should include more community voice. The Executive Committee attempted to change their membership by adding an additional member from the community. Currently there are only two community representatives on the Executive Committee, while there are three district representatives and three union representatives. The Executive Committee attempted to also increase community perspectives in the Race to the Top consortium to balance out the unequal power dynamics between district representatives and community members. After extensive conversations, that proposal was unsuccessful and did not pass. Because this was unsuccessful but the committee was still committed to increasing community voice, the committee decided to create a public comment section during their meetings to increase those perspectives in their decisionmaking. Without changing the Memorandum of Understanding or bylaws related to the overall governance structure of RTT-D, they will allow the public 3 minutes per person to speak during the committee meetings; however, as of November 2015, this feature had not been used. In addition, the community representatives can send an alternate if they are absent from the meeting, a practice that was not previously allowed.

During the current interviews, sentiments were shared about concerns that teachers are being burdened with too many changes and initiatives due to Race the Top. On the other hand, another member shared a different perspective, “The statement that teachers have the most at stake is odd because we’re talking about parents and community and, frankly, people who are representatives who have the least success in our schools.”

Multiple Executive Committee members remarked that relationships with CBOs have increased or improved due to RTT-D work partly because the RTT-D “incentivized districts to make partnerships.” Respondents suggested that districts’ understanding or value of CBOs may have also improved. One Executive Committee explained that, through the last round of Deep Dive project applications, CBOs brought innovative strategies to the table that may positively affect students and families. This member explained the shift, “It’s ‘We’re the school district and know how to educate kids and what do you [CBO] know?’ But they [CBOs] know a lot.” One district staff suggested that the technical assistance (TA) provided by the PSESD to support districts allowed for deepening understanding of family engagement and how to partner authentically with communities. This district staff member explained, “The TA [from PSESD] was excellent. We changed my perspective on family engagement. It was broadened and improved.” Other members emphasized that, even though improvements have been made, more work needs to be done in partnering authentically with CBOs. One member highlighted that changes in structures to fund partnerships and create authentic relationships are a “start” for the region.
Impact of select RTT-D strategies on opportunity and achievement gaps

As a result of participating and partnering with other organizations in the RTT-D consortium, stakeholders suggest that achievement and opportunity gaps in the region may be closing. Interview data from PSESD staff and members of the Executive Committee that represent stakeholders from the seven Race to the Top districts explain why some gaps were easier to close than others.

Respondents felt that work in RTT-D as a whole is more effective than the work of any single organization.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that what organizations are trying to accomplish together under RTT-D would be difficult for any single entity to accomplish by itself (Table 9). All groups assigned this statement an average rating of at least 3.2 (or agree), highlighting that each group feels that the work of RTT-D as a whole could be more effective than the work of any one entity. Respondents from PSESD assigned this statement the highest average rating of 3.7, and CBOs and school districts assigned the lowest average rating across groups of 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What our organizations are trying to accomplish together with the RTT-D grant would be difficult for any single organization/district/school to accomplish by itself.</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

The majority of stakeholders believed that many RTT-D strategies had been instrumental in closing gaps and that the region should continue to focus on building capacity to address students’ personalized learning needs.

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the impact of RTT-D strategies on select strategies that are part of Foundational Projects (Table 10), Start Strong (Table 10), STEM Strong (Table 12), and Stay Strong (Table 13). In general, respondents assigned similar average ratings across all RTT-D strategies, with no particular strategy receiving substantially higher or lower ratings than another (range of 2.6, disagree, to 3.3, agree). However, the majority of the items with the lowest ratings include goals having to do with the capacity and the personalization of instruction or support services. Examples of the lowest rated items across strategies included disagreement that RTT-D strategies had helped increase capacity to personalize instruction, that school–community partnerships better support personalized learning (Foundational Projects, Table 10), that they had provided K–8 teachers the tools to
personalize instruction (STEM Strong, Table 12), and that the region had increased systems capacity to offer strong counseling and advising systems (Stay Strong, Table 13). It should be noted that, while these example items did receive lower ratings (total average ratings between 2.6 and 2.9), the total average scores are on the lower end of the disagreement scale and trending toward agreement. These findings, coupled with select questions about the sustainability of personalized learning strategies (e.g., the region considered “investing in teacher and leader professional development in math, science, and English Language Learner instruction” high on the list of strategies to sustain, Table 16), indicate that compared to other items, respondents may be less confident about the immediate impact of personalized learning strategies but do feel that several of the personalized learning strategies are progressing well and that they are worth sustaining. Reports from PSESD staff indicate that five of the seven districts have institutionalized district staff positions solely to focus on blended/personalized learning, which is a clear indicator that districts recognize and are addressing the need to build capacity to address students’ personalized learning needs.

Table 10 shows that respondents across all groups reported disagreement (average ratings of 2.9 or disagree, close to agree) for four of the six Foundational Project strategies, indicating that respondents did not feel that RTT-D strategies had assisted the region in achieving Foundational Project goals. Respondents did agree that RTT-D strategies had helped the region expand the use of data to drive improvement (total average rating of 3.1 or agree) and had helped school–community partnerships better support family engagement (total average rating of 3.0 or agree).

### Table 10. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Foundational Project goals (N = 119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since implementing Race to the Top strategies...</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>our region has expanded use of data to drive improvement.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers and principals in our region have improved their capacity to implement personalized learning in high-needs schools, particularly in the areas of math, science, and English Language Learner instruction.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school–community partnerships in our region better support family engagement.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school–community partnerships in our region better support personalized learning.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school–community partnerships in our region better support English Language Learners.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is increased capacity in our region to personalize learning for students.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.
Table 11 shows that respondents across all groups agreed that RTT-D strategies had helped the region improve kindergarten readiness and early literacy skills (average rating of 3.3) and improved instructional core in early literacy (average rating of 3.1).

**Table 11. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Start Strong goals (N = 119)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since implementing Race to the Top strategies...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region has improved kindergarten readiness and early literacy skills.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region has improved instructional core in early literacy.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Table 12 shows that respondents across all groups agreed that RTT-D strategies had increased student learning in STEM (average rating of 3.1) but disagreed that K–8 teachers in high-needs schools in the region are equipped with standards-based tools to personalize instruction (average rating of 2.6). The group labeled “other” and CBOs disagreed most strongly with the impact of RTT-D strategies on the latter, with average ratings of 1.0 (or strongly disagree) and 2.4, respectively.

**Table 12. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on STEM Strong goals (N = 119)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since implementing Race to the Top strategies...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–8 teachers in high-needs schools in the region are equipped with standards-based tools to personalize instruction.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region has increased student learning in STEM.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Respondents across all groups generally agreed that RTT-D strategies had positively affected four of the five Stay Strong goals (Table 13). Respondents disagreed that RTT-D strategies had helped the region increase systems capacity to offer strong counseling and advising systems (total average rating of 2.8) but, as highlighted in Table 25 in the sustainability section, respondents also felt that providing college and career advising for students was an important strategy to sustain beyond the life of the grant. Respondents felt most positively about the impact of RTT-D strategies on increased participation in college and career programs as well as the increased enrollment in college prep and credit-bearing courses (total average rating of 3.2 for each).
Table 13. Average rating of impact of RTT-D strategies on Stay Strong goals (N = 119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since implementing Race to the Top strategies...</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>students have increased participation in college and career programs in our region.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students in our region have increased eligibility in college and career.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region schools have increased enrollment in college prep and college credit-bearing courses.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region has increased systems capacity to offer rigorous courses.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our region has increased systems capacity to offer strong counseling and advising systems.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school-CBO partnership.

**District leadership or staff turnover may have impacted implementation of certain RTT-D strategies.**

Some respondents suggested that a few RTT-D strategies were not successful because of the turnover in different districts. For example, six of the seven superintendents in the RTT-D region have turned over during the grant period. Other district staff have also experienced turnover, which slows work significantly. For example, one project encountered turnover in the district staff working on project 5, which focuses on creating a regional system for career awareness and exploration. However, these staff did not elaborate on how this turnover hindered their project. Another project lead explained that a deliverable written into the RTT-D grant application was not met because that deliverable required conversations among the district leaders to change assessments that the school district used. However, due to the high superintendent turnover, the project conversation was hard to get off the ground.

Turnover not only affects capacity and knowledge needed to address RTT-D work, but, with superintendent transitions in particular, districts can also shift strategic plans. Therefore districts’ priorities and the RTT-D work may no longer be aligned where they once were. In the section describing how district–district partnerships are working, we explained that lack of alignment can hinder agreement among districts to support specific RTT-D work. In this case, lack of alignment may explain why some projects have had less impact because districts may have focused their attention on other priorities and cannot fully attend to RTT-D projects. One project lead suggested that most of his/her work with districts includes “twisting people’s arms as compliance” as opposed to districts deeply engaging in the work. In contrast, one project lead suggested that the success of a project was due to the tight alignment between RTT-D, their district strategic plan, and the culture that was already established in
school buildings. This staff member explained, “We have one district that, if [the district had] not built the culture between teachers and principals, it [project] would not have happened.”

**RTT-D strategies that required technical changes rather than adaptive changes may have had more success in closing opportunity and achievement gaps in RTT-D.**

Even when projects are in alignment with district priorities, the degree of change required among practitioners to implement some of the RTT-D strategies may also explain why some strategies were more successful than others. Some projects may only require changes in policies or one-time procedures at a district central office level to fully implement the strategies, while the success of others seemed to require major changes in day-to-day practice. One project lead explained that the work to expand access to standardized tests was more of a “technical change” as opposed to shifting people’s day-to-day behavior (or what is referred to as “adaptive change”). This staff person explained “I feel like the College Board stuff…I feel like it was fairly easy. When I say easy, people follow the rules, stuff happened the first time really well. If stuff happens the first time really well I think it’s easy.” Another successful technical change was getting students signed up for the College Bound Scholarship. A project lead explained that success in that area “requires few but critical moves” to increase the rates of students signing up for the scholarship. An increase in the sign-up rate then may lead to an increase in high school graduation rates.

In some cases, technical strategies and practices were already clearly outlined and staff merely had to follow the appropriate steps. As one PSESD staff member suggested, some projects were more successful because there was “not much strategizing, just had to execute.” Another PSESD staff member explained that success in the Stay Strong work benefited from a partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools that provided a step-by-step plan that districts could use to implement strategies to increase rigorous course-taking among students. Similarly, increasing access to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses was also a success for the region.

However, these staff members suggested that strategies where practitioners need to change their daily behavior—adaptive changes—have seen less success in the existing time frame. These may include implementing digital learning tools in the classroom, new STEM practices, or changing school counselors’ daily practice. One staff person framed this challenge as one of “adult learning.” These respondents suggest that it takes longer for people to change

---

22 Technical challenges, while they may be very complex and critically important, have known solutions that can be implemented through current practice or structure. Adaptive challenges, however, “can only be addressed through changes in people’s priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties” ([The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World](https://www.harvard.edu/hbs) by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky (2009). Harvard University Press: Boston, MA).

23 Equal Opportunity Schools is a nonprofit based in Seattle, Washington, that works with schools and districts to increase high school students’ access to rigorous courses. [http://eoschools.org/](http://eoschools.org/).
their practice and “get comfortable” with doing things a new way. In other cases, it was assumed that because trainings were offered to staff, that staff would automatically incorporate those practices in their behavior. One Executive Committee member explained, “We offer trainings on how to use data, but do teachers know how to adjust instruction based on that data? That’s what I would say, in many ways we have strengthened what the system already does in a mediocre manner but I don’t know if we have addressed the gaps that are results of practice.” Union representatives on the Executive Committee suggested that teachers in the region are already bombarded with multiple initiatives in addition to RTT-D and may be burnt out.

**Existing district infrastructure to support RTT-D implementation may have resulted in some strategies being easier to implement than others.**

Some districts had existing infrastructure and did not need to start from scratch to implement some Race to the Top strategies. For example, one district representative on the Executive Committee explained how RTT-D strategies were easy to implement due to the district’s prior work, “The district has always offered free PSAT and SAT exams but now with RTT-D we can offer those exams twice.” Another Executive Committee member elaborated that the region itself already had infrastructure for some of the work. He/she explained, “I think the region infrastructure was more developed to take on that [Stay Strong] work -there were a college access network of providers willing to help, there was the DREAM project has good traction in the region they could implement the counselor assistance, they had traction already, it wasn’t that big of a leap to go further with that.” An Executive Committee member suggested that what was easily implemented were activities that the district already did well but, through RTT-D, districts added an “equity lens” to the work in order to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

In contrast, some projects were “starting before ground zero,” as one PSESD project lead suggested. This project lead suggested that the grant application assumed that the region had the buy-in, capacity, and infrastructure to hit the ground running, but that was not the case in some projects. One PSESD staff member explained the difficulty in implementing the changing role in school counselors because of the “big assumption that all school principals and counselors were on board about that role, and for some people, it’s based on their personal preference, but we don’t want that for our students. Those are the things that are shifts.”

**Lack of data available to understand impact of certain strategies may have influenced the ability to change course on RTT-D strategies.**

The type of data available to understand implementation and impact of RTT-D strategies were not always available, possibly due to the fact that some strategies did not require many changes while others were started from scratch. Data to measure the quick, technical
changes were more readily available than data to measure the more adaptive changes that may take longer to affect academic outcomes. The different data available to measure impact and the preference for quantitative data over qualitative data may have also shaped whether or not projects were successful because lack of accurate measures and data to analyze the impact of programs restricted the ability to change course in a strategy or drop a strategy and transition to another one.

In some projects, the data used to measure change were inadequate or not available. One district representative from the Executive Committee suggested that changes in teacher practice take time and may not be demonstrable immediately in student achievement outcomes. Further, measuring changes in teacher practice is also difficult. For example, Foundational Projects project leads found it difficult to measure the impact of teacher professional development because observations of teacher practice could not be a data point due to concerns that observation data may be used to evaluate teacher practice, and this may violate a school district’s union contract. Many projects did not have the data needed to demonstrate that a project was on track or working or to make decisions about what needed to happen next in order to get on track. One Executive Committee member commented on the struggle for the Executive Committee to make decisions about projects without the appropriate data, “The turnaround time from implementation is slow. To get good data takes time and that cycle seems to be slower than our decision cycle. That’s a struggle. I think it’s getting better as we go along.” In contrast, other projects had measures to capture success and impact because those successes were easily quantifiable, such as the number of students taking AP and IB courses, PSAT and SAT enrollment, and increase in graduation rates.

One way that RTT-D may better understand adaptive challenges and the challenges in measuring teacher practice is by incorporating data from teachers into the RTT-D work. RTI did not include the collection of data from teachers as part of the effort to understand the effects, impacts, and challenges of implementing RTT-D strategies because teacher-level data collection was beyond the scope of the current evaluation. Teacher unions are represented on the Executive Committee, and teachers provide their input on decisions made in the RTT-D investment funds by sitting on the scoring panel. Each school district also has its own process for gathering feedback from principals, teachers, and school staff. While teacher perspectives may be included in the planning and funding or RTT-D projects, RTI is unclear about other structures to systematically include teacher voice or perspectives in the RTT-D work in how the projects are implemented on the ground. For example, in the Deep Dive 3 partnerships, teachers were not included in the monthly partnership meetings. One CBO staff member commented on the need to hear teachers’ perspectives on the partnership to know how the partnership was working, “Teachers also weren’t at the table (just after-school providers). That’s a huge gap.” An Executive Committee member from a school district also highlighted that teacher and student perspectives were necessary to understand
the success of the grant because many of the strategies would not produce outcomes immediately. This member explained, “We’re not going to see test scores move for a while, so [we] need interim progress measures. Stories are helpful along with data… I think they both go together. The voices of teachers and the voice of students.” Another Executive Committee member from a district emphasized the need to create additional structures for teacher perspectives in addition to the teacher union representation on the committee.

**PSESD project support seemed to be helpful with implementing RTT-D strategies.**

In response to the needs of those implementing RTT-D strategies, the PSESD has offered a number of mechanisms to support partnerships in applicable areas. For example, in response to feedback from CBO and school partnerships, the PSESD hired a TA provider to support partnerships in areas they had identified for improvement. Further, the PSESD established role-alike groups, which bring together counterparts from different districts to share challenges and lessons learned. Respondents were asked four survey items about PSESD in an effort to understand how respondents felt about aspects of PSESD support.

Survey respondents were asked to rate various aspects of support from the PSESD (Table 14). On average, respondents agreed with three of the four statements, indicating that on the whole, those who were aware of or had used certain support services felt positively about them. For example, groups assigned the highest average rating of 3.6 (or agree) to the statement, “PSESD has made changes to their processes based on feedback received from the RTT-D consortium.” CBOs felt most positively about this statement, with an average rating of 4.1 (or strongly agree). Respondents who had received technical assistance provided by the PSESD assigned the related statement an average rating of 2.8 (or disagree); with CBOs assigning the technical assistance statement the lowest average rating of 2.6.

Respondents were also asked to indicate if they had been unaware of a particular support service or aspect of PSESD work (also Table 14). On average, the highest percentage of the group labeled “other” indicated that they were not aware of many of PSESD’s services (range of 43% to 50%). However, because the group labeled “other” consists of individuals who may not be as deeply involved in the day-to-day RTT-D work, it makes sense that they may know the least about PSESD’s services. CBOs were the next group with a higher percentage of respondents who indicated they were unaware of PSESD’s services (range of 33% to 48%). In contrast, school districts were most likely to be aware of PSESD’s services, with a much smaller percentage of respondents indicating that they were unaware of or had never used them (range of 11% to 30%).
Table 14. Average rating of PSESD support (N = 105)
Scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSESD RTT-D staff are accessible and responsive when my organization faces challenges.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not contact PSESD when we face challenges. (%)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSESD has made changes to their processes based on feedback received from the RTT-D consortium.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not aware of the feedback given to PSESD. (%)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance provided by PSESD helped our organization be more effective in providing our services.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not aware of technical assistance available from PSESD. (%)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information presented at the PSESD convenings is directly applicable to my work.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not aware of the PSESD convenings. (%)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Most CBO partners considered the PSESD role-alike groups helpful for learning about other partners (total average rating of 3.4 or agree, Figure 23). Some school–CBO partners in the Deep Dive partnerships also considered the convenings useful because they could learn about other partnerships. But all Deep Dive participants suggested that the time given to form and deliver services as part of the Deep Dive was too short for many reasons. One, partners suggest that time was too limited for planning for selecting partners and choosing the focus and for outlining the processes for partnering—for example, how they will communicate or share data. Partners also have to learn about each other and what types of services they provide. Second, partners also suggested that 18 months is too short of a time to see changes in academic achievement. Third, CBOs suggested that it is unfair to provide services for 18 months and then take those services away from students and communities that have the most need: “…it seems a disservice to create new program and energize families and then leave. It’s disservice to families.”
Sustainability of RTT-D Strategies

In this section, we will unpack each strategy of RTT-D, perspectives on the effectiveness of each strategy, and whether they should be sustained.

*Evaluation Question #6: Which practices, structures, or programs have impacted intended outcomes and should be sustained beyond Race to the Top?*

In order to understand how respondents view the progress of RTT-D practices, structures, or programs, and which should be sustained beyond the life of the grant, respondents were asked to answer questions about Foundational Projects, Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong strategies. Respondents were first asked to indicate whether they felt they had sufficient knowledge of each strategy to ensure that only those who felt they had sufficient information to respond to detailed questions under each strategy responded. The survey results in this section are structured in the same format under each strategy. First we present the percentage of group respondents who felt they could respond to the strategy questions well, then we present a table indicating the extent to which they feel the region is on track to accomplish particular goals, then we present a table indicating which strategies respondents feel should be sustained. Finally, if respondents did not feel certain strategies should be sustained, we present a table indicating the reasons why each should not.
Stakeholders believed that the region is likely to accomplish the goals of the Foundational Projects, Start Strong, and Stay Strong, but slightly less likely to accomplish the goals of STEM Strong.

In general, respondents who had familiarity with each strategy, and thus expected to complete each section, completed the Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong sections. Therefore, results for each of the four groups—CBOs, Districts, PSESD, and those labeled “other”—are presented. However, significantly fewer CBOs indicated they could respond to questions about Foundational Projects than expected (only 25%, Figure 24). It was expected that nearly every CBO respondent would be able to speak to Foundational Projects, as Deep Dives and partnership work are an integral part of this strategy. However, it may be that CBOs who indicated they did not have sufficient knowledge to respond do not identify themselves as part of “Foundational Project” work. Therefore, due to the low response rate, responses for CBOs under Foundational Projects are not presented, but their results are represented in the overall total in Table 15. Responses for CBOs are included under Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong because the number of CBOs who reported having enough knowledge to respond met or exceeded the expected number. It should be noted that response rates for every other group were sufficient to include in this report, and the figures presented below include the total number of survey responses, not just those who were expected to complete each section (Figure 24, Figure 25, Figure 26, Figure 27).

**Foundational Projects**

Figure 24 shows the number of respondents, by organizational type, who believed that they could respond to questions about Foundational Projects.
Figure 24. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to Foundational Projects sustainability questions (N = 118)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Due to the low response rate, results for CBOs are not presented in disaggregated form in the Foundational Projects section. However, their responses are included in the overall totals.

Of the three Foundational Projects strategies, respondents indicated that the region was most on track to “collaborate regionally to create intensive school–community partnerships” (total average rating of 3.0, or agree, Table 15), with the PSESD feeling most positively overall (average rating of 3.1) and the group labeled “other” feeling least positively (average rating of 2.8 or disagree). Respondents felt less confident that the region was on track to “collaborate regionally to increase district capacity to personalize learning for all students” (total average rating of 2.7, or disagree).

Table 15. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Foundational Project goals (N = 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate regionally to increase district capacity to personalize learning for all students</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate regionally to create intensive school–community partnerships</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate regionally to support teachers and principals</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Due to the low response rate, results for CBOs are not presented in disaggregated form in the Foundational Projects section. However, their responses are included in the overall totals.
When asked the extent to which the Foundational Projects strategies should be sustained, respondents indicated that three of the four strategies were “a high priority” and that each strategy was “high on the list of strategies to sustain” (minimum average rating of 4.0, Table 16). Respondents felt the greatest priority should be placed on sustaining the investment in teacher and leader professional development in math, science, and English Language Learner instruction and on scaling community–school partnerships focused on geographic areas to bridge in-and out-of-school time (total average rating of 4.4 each). While, on average, respondents felt that the creation of a data portal was a “low priority” and there were other strategies to sustain first (total average rating of 3.8), the PSESD felt that the data portal was “high on the list of strategies to sustain” (average rating of 4.4), with districts feeling slightly less strongly that the data portal should be sustained (average rating of 3.7).

Table 16. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investing in teacher and leader professional development in math, science, and English Language Learner instruction (examples: job-embedded professional learning for teachers and principals in math, departmentalization of math and science in elementary schools, principal leadership to support English Language Learner instruction, teacher residency programs)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaling community–school partnerships focused on geographic areas to bridge in- and out-of-school time to support family engagement, English Language Learners, and personalized learning</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a data portal to securely transfer data across districts to support our mobile student population</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Washington’s Common Core standards, assessment and evaluation systems</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership. Due to the low response rate, results for CBOs are not presented in disaggregated form in the Foundational Project section. However, their responses are included in the overall totals.

Respondents who indicated that any strategy was a “low priority” or “not a priority” were asked to indicate why a strategy should not be sustained (Table 17). For those who indicated that sustaining the creation of a data portal was a low priority (an average rating of 3.0 or below), nearly half of respondents felt that “logistics make it challenging to sustain” (46%), followed by the concern that there was not enough capacity or resources to sustain it (31%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investing in teacher and leader professional development in math, science and English Language Learner instruction (examples: job-embedded professional learning for teachers and principals in math, departmentalization of math and science in elementary schools, principal leadership to support English Language Learner instruction, teacher residency programs) (N = 4)</td>
<td>25 25 0 0 25 100 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaling community-school partnerships focused on geographic areas to bridge in- and out-of-school time to support family engagement, English Language Learners, and personalized learning (N = 4)</td>
<td>0 25 25 0 50 0 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a data portal to securely transfer data across districts to support our mobile student population (N = 13)</td>
<td>23 8 46 15 31 8 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Washington’s Common Core standards, assessment and evaluation systems.</td>
<td>25 0 17 25 17 67 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Only respondents who answered “A low priority – there are other strategies we should sustain first” or “Not a priority—we should not sustain this” were asked to indicate why they did not feel the strategies were sustainable. Therefore, Ns for these questions will be small. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

**Start Strong**

Figure 25 shows the number of respondents, by organizational type, who believed that they could respond to questions about Start Strong projects.
On average, respondents from each group felt that the region would “probably” accomplish the goals of Start Strong, which are to improve kindergarten readiness and early literacy skills and to build leadership and instructional capacity in pre-K–3rd grade (Table 18). District respondents felt most positively about the accomplishment of Start Strong goals (average rating of 3.4), while CBOs and those labeled “other” assigned an average rating of 3.0.

Table 18. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Start Strong goals (N = 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are definitely on track to accomplish this goal = 4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will probably accomplish this goal = 3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are not likely to accomplish this goal = 2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will definitely not accomplish this goal = 1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

When asked the extent to which the Start Strong strategies should be sustained, respondents indicated that two of the three strategies were “a high priority” and that each strategy was “high on the list of strategies to sustain” (minimum average rating of 4.0, Table 19). Respondents felt the greatest priority should be placed on sustaining the implementation of a
comprehensive pre-K–3rd grade approach in schools and communities (total average rating of 4.7), followed closely by the implementation of a common kindergarten readiness assessment (total average rating of 4.2). Respondents felt that leading regional summer reading campaigns was a “low priority,” and there were other strategies to sustain first (total average rating of 3.7).

Table 19. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a comprehensive pre-K–3rd grade approach in schools and communities</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a common kindergarten readiness assessment</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading regional summer reading campaigns</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Respondents who indicated that any strategy was a “low priority” or “not a priority” were asked to indicate why a strategy should not be sustained (Table 20). For those who indicated that leading regional summer reading campaigns was a low priority (the lowest rated of the three Start Strong strategies), over one quarter of respondents felt that summer reading campaigns were “not the right strategy,” that there was “not enough buy-in,” and that the strategy would be “sustained but separate from PSESD funding” (29% each).
Table 20. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Not the right strategy for the goal</th>
<th>Costs too much to sustain</th>
<th>Logistics make it challenging to sustain</th>
<th>Not enough buy-in to sustain</th>
<th>Not enough capacity, resources, support to sustain</th>
<th>This strategy has or will be sustained but separate from PSESD planning</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a comprehensive pre-K–3rd grade approach in schools and communities (N = 2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a common kindergarten readiness assessment (N = 5)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading regional summer reading campaigns (N = 17)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Only respondents who answered “A low priority—there are other strategies we should sustain first” or “Not a priority—we should not sustain this” were asked to indicate why they did not feel the strategies were sustainable. Therefore, Ns for these questions will be small. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

**STEM Strong**

Figure 26 shows the number of respondents, by organizational type, who believed that they could respond to questions about STEM Strong projects.

**Figure 26. Percent of survey respondents who can respond to STEM Strong sustainability questions (N = 124)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I think I can answer for some or all of the strategies in the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I am not familiar enough with this work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CBO | District | PSESD | Other | Total |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.
On average, respondents from each group felt that the region was “not likely to accomplish” the goal of STEM Strong, which is to equip teachers with standards-based tools to personalize STEM instruction (Table 21). CBOs and the group labeled “other” felt least positively about the accomplishment of the STEM Strong goal, with average ratings of 2.4 and 2.5, respectively.

Table 21. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish STEM Strong goals (N = 41)

Scale: We are definitely on track to accomplish this goal = 4; We will probably accomplish this goal = 3; We are not likely to accomplish this goal = 2; We will definitely not accomplish this goal = 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal of STEM Strong is to equip teachers with standards-based tools to personalize STEM instruction.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

When asked the extent to which the STEM Strong strategies should be sustained, respondents indicated that two of the three strategies were “a high priority” and that each strategy was “high on the list of strategies to sustain” (minimum average rating of 4.0, Table 22). Respondents felt the greatest priority should be placed on sustaining the implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (total average rating of 4.4), followed by the implementation of digital tools in the classroom (total average rating of 4.0). Respondents felt that building an online system to connect students with local employers for work-based learning was a “low priority,” and there were other strategies to sustain first (total average rating of 3.8).

Table 22. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 41)

Scale: An absolute priority—we should sustain this = 5; A high priority—this strategy is high on the list of strategies to sustain = 4; A low priority—there are other strategies we should sustain first = 3; Not a priority—we should not sustain this = 2; Not happening in our region, but should = 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing digital tools in the classroom</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Next Generation Science Standards</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building an online system to connect students with local employers for work-based learning</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Respondents who indicated that any strategy was a “low priority” or “not a priority” were asked to indicate why a strategy should not be sustained (Table 23). For those who indicated that building an online system to connect students with employers for work-based learning
was a low priority (the lowest rated of the three STEM Strong strategies), nearly half of respondents felt that there was “not enough capacity” to build an online system (43%), followed by 29 percent of respondents who felt that there was “not enough buy-in.”

Table 23. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Not the right strategy for the goal</th>
<th>Costs too much to sustain</th>
<th>Logistics make it challenging to sustain</th>
<th>Not enough buy-in</th>
<th>Not enough capacity, resources, support to sustain</th>
<th>This strategy has or will be sustained but separate from PSESD planning</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing digital tools in the classroom (N = 13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Next Generation Science Standards (N = 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building an online system to connect students with local employers for work-based learning (N = 14)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Only respondents who answered “A low priority – there are other strategies we should sustain first” or “Not a priority—we should not sustain this” were asked to indicate why they did not feel the strategies were sustainable. Therefore, Ns for these questions will be small. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.

Stay Strong

Figure 27 shows the number of respondents, by organizational type, who believed that they could respond to questions about Stay Strong projects.
On average, respondents from CBOs, districts, and the PSESD felt that the region would “probably accomplish” the goals of Stay Strong, which are to increase student eligibility for and participation in college and career (Table 24). Respondents from the PSESD felt most confident that the Stay Strong goals would be accomplished (average rating of 3.3). The group labeled “other,” however, was the only group to indicate that the region was “not likely to accomplish this goal” (average rating of 2.5).

**Table 24. Average rating of the extent to which survey respondents feel region is on track to accomplish Stay Strong goals (N = 47)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goals of Stay Strong are to increase student eligibility for and participation in college and career through rigorous coursework and college and career planning.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

When asked the extent to which the Stay Strong strategies should be sustained, respondents indicated that all four strategies were “a high priority” and that each strategy was “high on the list of strategies to sustain” (minimum average rating of 4.2, Table 25). Respondents felt
the greatest priority should be placed on sustaining providing free College Board assessments (total average rating of 4.6), followed closely by providing college and career advising for students (total average rating of 4.5).

Table 25. Average rating of the extent to which strategies should be prioritized (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>CBO</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>PSESD</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing college and career advising for students</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding rigorous college prep course offerings (AP, IB)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing free College Board assessments (PSAT, SAT) during the school day</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and support for school counselors</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: These survey results include all respondents, not just those who indicated they were part of a school–CBO partnership.

Respondents who indicated that any strategy was a “low priority” or “not a priority” were asked to indicate why a strategy should not be sustained (Table 26). For the lowest rated strategy of expanding rigorous college prep course offerings, half of respondents felt that it was “not the right strategy for the goal,” that there was “not enough capacity,” and that this strategy “has or will be sustained but separate from PSESD planning.”
Table 26. Reasons why respondents feel strategies cannot be sustained (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Not the right strategy for the goal</th>
<th>Costs too much to sustain</th>
<th>Logistics make it challenging to sustain</th>
<th>Not enough buy-in to sustain</th>
<th>Not enough capacity, resources, support to sustain</th>
<th>This strategy has or will be sustained but separate from PSESD planning</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing college and career advising for students (N = 1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding rigorous college prep course offerings (AP, IB) (N = 4)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing free College Board assessments (PSAT, SAT) during the school day (N = 1)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and support for school counselors (N = 4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Only respondents who answered “A low priority – there are other strategies we should sustain first” or “Not a priority—we should not sustain this” were asked to indicate why they did not feel the strategies were sustainable. Therefore, Ns for these questions will be small. Respondents could check more than one answer; therefore, percentages will not sum to 100.
Recommendations

Shift from technical to adaptive challenges

Interview and survey results indicated that RTT-D was very effective in implementing practices that required technical changes. Technical challenges, while they may be very complex and critically important, have known solutions that can be implemented through current practice or structure. Aligning all kindergarten programs in the region to start registration at the same time, providing access to all students to take the SATs, or changing the funding structure for partnerships between schools and CBOS are challenging but have clear solutions. Adaptive challenges, however, “can only be addressed through changes in people’s priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties” (7). Adaptive challenges require learning among stakeholders in order to change the way they do business.

PSESD and the consortium have been leveraging the technical changes to create adaptive change and should continue to explicitly do so. For example, the development and introduction into practice of the Racial Equity Tool is an example of how technical changes are leading to adaptive ones. Although the tool is just beginning to be more widely used, its goal is to help people to develop an equity perspective to their work, and early indications through our interviews indicate that people are beginning to develop an equity mindset.

Likewise, PSESD’s change in how they funded school–CBO partnerships is a technical change, but hiring two firms to work as a technical assistance team to support and assist districts in applying for the funding is an example of how the consortium is attempting to support districts in making adaptive changes.

Continue to support adaptive change in personalized learning strategies

Another key finding related to the issue of adaptive and technical changes is the varying perspectives on the status of and desire to sustain strategies related to personalized learning. For example, when asked to estimate the impact of RTT-D strategies on Foundational Projects, Start Strong, STEM Strong, and Stay Strong goals, respondents reported feeling slightly less sure about the impact of items related to efforts to personalize learning when compared with other strategies (see Table 10–Table 13). However, when asked to indicate which strategies should be sustained beyond the life of the grant (Table 16, Table 19, Table 22, and Table 25), respondents indicated strategies related to personalized learning efforts were “high

---

on the list of strategies to sustain.” At its core, personalized learning is an adaptive change, meaning that the ability to personalize instruction for students with different needs may require changes in behavior at numerous levels in the school system (e.g., at the teacher, classroom, school, district, and policy levels). Adaptive changes are more complex to implement than technical changes and therefore may take longer to understand and perfect. This complexity may explain why participants are not as sure of personalized learning efforts under RTT-D but still acknowledge how critical these strategies are in successfully serving students.

Interview findings suggest that perhaps districts, schools, and CBOs may be working toward making adaptive changes. School districts have created blended/personalized learning staff positions, perhaps to address the district’s capacity to implement personalized learning strategies. CBO partners also highlighted that, through their monthly Deep Dive partnership meetings with other CBO partners and school leaders, partners have begun to develop an understanding of the “whole child.” However, these Deep Dive partnerships are few, and according to interview respondents, neither teachers, other school staff, nor families were part of those meetings.

In response to these findings, we suggest that the consortium consider expanding the involvement of stakeholders in applicable personalized learning strategies, particularly within the contexts of school–CBO partnerships, in light of the fact that adaptive changes require the involvement and investment of stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, and parents to understand students’ learning needs. School-CBO partnerships are a key mechanism of the RTT-D strategies to personalize learning in order to close opportunity and achievement gaps. Conversations including stakeholders may help to increase the capacity of school–CBO partnerships to address personalized learning. The consortium may consider leveraging current efforts of school districts in the Road Map Region to build authentic relationships between parents and schools (i.e., parent leadership institutes or academies, parent engagement curriculum) to include CBO partners in those conversations in order to build deeper relationships within these stakeholders groups, to disseminate personalized learning best practices and lessons learned, and so that all partners are working toward meeting students’ various academic and nonacademic needs.

**Promote and support the active use of data**

Data availability and use were consistent challenges faced by CBOs, schools, and the PSESD. In order to have adaptive discussions with practitioners and stakeholders, the right data must be available at the right time. In a majority of our interviews, respondents believed that the right data often were not available when they needed to make decisions, or that they did not have access to that data. For example, data are collected about the amount of time
students spend on digital tools. Data are also collected about whether or not teachers attend professional development to incorporate tools in their classroom. However, staff do not have data available to assess whether teacher practice has changed as a result of their professional development experience. Having that data would allow for continuous improvement conversations about the practice, an adaptive conversation. These conversations are necessary in order to change (or sustain) practice—how are our students performing? Why are they performing at this level? What do we need to do in order to support our students in performing at higher levels?

School–CBO partnerships reported using anecdotal data, program implementation data, and summative student outcome data in their partnership work as opposed to formative student data or other outcome data. Partners would like to look at more academic outcome data (both summative and formative) than they did at the time of the survey. Interviews suggested that partners struggled with creating interim outcome measures that were not academic outcomes but that could allow course corrections or assessments about whether their services are on track. In order to do so, partnerships need increased data availability, a focus on student data, a focus on shared outcomes, and means to measure the effectiveness of how they are working together as a partnership.

- **Focus on student data:** One of the struggles highlighted in this report is how schools and CBOs can use data to inform their partnership. There are multiple reasons for this challenge: knowing what data is best to use, having minimal time to collect and analyze data, and the requirement to focus on summative data in order to report outcomes to the funder. To the extent possible, the PSESD could focus its grant requirements on formative rather than summative data. Instead of asking for summative data to show the results of the partnerships, the next time the PSESD is able to fund partnerships, they could ask for partners (1) to show increases in formative data assessment and (2) to describe how they used formative data to inform program changes. The focus on formative data provides more emphasis on helping people to understand the power of data, how to use it, and how to make changes due to it. The PSESD can also support sites by helping them select formative assessments, possibly assessments that teachers already use in their classrooms to assess student learning, or youth development assessments that CBOs use to measure student engagement, that can be seen as a proxy for end-of-year test data.

In their current role of supporting partnerships, the PSESD could identify measures that have worked well in order to develop a toolkit for future partnerships. For example, the engagement survey introduced by a CBO and discussed earlier in this
paper is an example of a measure that PSESD could provide partnerships as an example to use or modify. Likewise, PSESD could identify measures that partnerships could use to measure the way they work together.

We also suggest that teachers work more closely with CBOs in building a set of formative measures to assess student academic performance. For example, an after-school tutoring program does not need to reinvent new assessments. Instead, teachers could share the assessments they find most valuable, and CBOs could use those assessments in their tutoring work. Or perhaps an easier solution is for teachers to consistently share their own classroom assessment data on those students who are in the after-school tutoring in order to inform the after-school tutors if they are making progress.

- **Focus on shared outcomes**: One key finding identified in this report is that organizations use different measures to determine their effectiveness. This is likely because of the type of partnerships that are forming. Those partnerships that are on the coordination end of the partnership spectrum would not have overlapping goals, as each organization is really doing their own piece of the puzzle. It is only when organizations begin to share goals and to share activities with one another that their goals would be similar and would be held to common measures.

- **Focus on the effectiveness of the partnership**: While a focus on student data is most important, RTI also believes that partnerships could also measure how effective the partnership is working. By asking partners to collect and discuss data on how they are working together, partnerships will be able to deepen. It may be that a PSESD or district lead (in a boundary spanner role) could facilitate the conversations about how they are working together.

**Balance power dynamics through equitable representation of stakeholders**

In the 2015 Nature and Quality of Partnerships Evaluation Report, RTI noted that stakeholders highlighted the lack of community representation in the Executive Committee and that funding is given to districts and not directly to CBOs. Both structures were written into the funded proposal in this manner and, while groups have expressed interest in changing these dynamics, making structural changes has proven to be difficult. In response to the needs of those implementing RTT-D strategies, the PSESD has offered a number of mechanisms to support partnerships in applicable areas. Survey results indicated that respondents
believed that the PSESD has made changes to their processes based on feedback received from the RTT-D consortium. Interview results indicated specifically that the changes to the process for applying, selecting, and developing school–CBO partnerships as part of second round of funding for the Deep Dive 3 Investment Fund encouraged more equity in access and power and reduced barriers to CBO involvement.

The Executive Committee discussed changing their membership structure to include more community voice. Although the vote to change its membership structure did not pass, the Executive Committee did create a public comment section during their meetings to increase those perspectives in their decisionmaking. In addition, the community representatives can send an alternate if they are absent from the meeting, a practice that was not previously allowed (and is not allowed for other membership groups). A next step may be to check to see how well known this change is and the extent that community members feel comfortable using the opportunity. While the structure has been created, it is still important to determine if the community can and does access the opportunity and to understand what supports they may still need, if any.

**Strengthen the school–CBO partnership model**

In the 2015 report, RTI recommended that RTT-D develop system-wide supports for authentic CBO–school district partnerships. Stakeholders have had conversations focused on what they might need to support authentic school–CBO district partnerships across the region, as the ways that school districts select, work with, and support relationships. The PSESD and consortium members have begun to develop a model of Authentic School–Community Partnerships that systematically identifies best practices in order to strengthen partnership structures.

In this report, we have identified best practices in the field that can deepen this model.

- **Secure a strong leader to facilitate the partnership**: Based on findings from interviews and focus groups, the coordination of an effective partnership between the school and CBOs takes extensive follow-through and continuous communication with all partners. Securing a dedicated coordinator who does not serve in a concurrent role, as the school principal does, to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of partnership may be critical to ensuring that a partnership is effective. Securing strong leadership is critical to managing partnerships and gaining buy-in. Having a leader to facilitate the day-to-day relationships and implementation of the partnership as a core responsibility, as opposed to adding responsibilities to existing
roles outside of the partnership, emerged as an effective practice. We suggest the creation of a specific role or set of responsibilities for a person or organization to bridge the gap between institutions, roles or responsibilities organizational learning theory calls **boundary spanners**. To create authentic partnerships between the two groups may require a specific type of organization or individual who would be able to bridge both types of institution (school district and CBO), to effectively coordinate roles and activities, communicate vision, and build shared understanding of what to measure and how. Boundary spanners should have deep knowledge of the work done by the institutions between which they sit because they use that understanding to facilitate the partnership in different ways. They translate information from one organization or institution in ways that people at the other institution understand. The partnership facilitator would then be responsible for helping to develop the following best practices within the partnership:

- **Facilitate ongoing and frequent communication**: Ongoing meetings with structures and systems allows partners to learn about each other and build relationships that foster collaboration and better understanding about the work. Effective models of school–community partners consider ongoing communication to be evidence of strong partnerships.

- **Develop shared vision and establish partner roles**: Having a clear vision and partnership roles is also a measure of effective partnerships.

- **Develop a shared vision of partner responsibilities**: According to both school and CBO partners, developing an agreement of the responsibilities each partner has to the project and to the other members of the partnership added to the cohesiveness and accountability that partners felt to one another and emphasized a shared commitment to the work.

- **Conduct a needs assessment**: At the beginning of a partnership, it is important to conduct a needs assessment that includes the voices of all the stakeholders at the school. The assessment can be conducted by the school, or a CBO, or a combination of both (but note that schools may have difficulty reaching particular families). Because CBOs reported bringing to their partnerships deeper knowledge and connections to the local community, including CBOs as part of this process may be recommended.

- **Select the right organizations with which to partner**: Organizations should be chosen based upon the needs assessment, not just because of past relationships with the school. The process needs to be open and
transparent. The Year 1 report discussed many of the barriers that challenge partnerships between small, ethnically based CBOs and schools. Because these organizations often provide vital services, working to eliminate barriers to their inclusion in a partnership model is necessary.

- **Support development of collaborative services:** In many of the current partnerships, each CBO provided schools with their specific programming, which the school itself could not provide. Most partners did not necessarily depend on each other to provide services but provided mostly independent programming at the same school site for students. CBOs that provided similar types of services outlined their specific programs at the beginning of the partnership in order to ensure that they did not duplicate services. Current relationships suggest that partners are coordinating with each other, providing help, and sharing suggestions or feedback to others to help CBOs with their problems. However, each CBO provides their own programs and services without requiring other CBOs or school staff to be a part of those efforts, for the most part. Participation in the Deep Dive shows some evidence of interdependence. Partners in the one Deep Dive coordinated and streamlined the implementation of the after-school program; and resources used from one CBO allowed all CBOs to include teachers as staff and also increased the number of students served. Through this process, one CBO began to use a classroom formative assessment as part of their services. These relationships emerged as a byproduct and not an intentional focus of the Deep Dive. While not all CBOs or schools require intimate participation in each other’s products or services, support is needed for CBOs and schools or CBOs and CBOs to develop mutual goals or activities that allow for greater alignment to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

- **Clarify the role of the district in authentic school–CBO partnerships:** Specific roles must be highlighted that the district can provide to support authentic partnerships. Even if districts may not be positioned to take on the day-to-day site coordination of a school–CBO partnership, districts can provide technical assistance to ensure that schools and their partners conduct appropriate needs assessment, ensure that new partners are included in partnerships (not deciding which members are allowed but instead ensuring that the process is open and transparent), eliminate structural barriers (such as how PSESD changed the way they funded the partnerships, or supporting organizations that might not have the infrastructure to interact in ways that schools expect, such
as invoicing), and support partnership development through technical assistance, particularly in areas such as data use.

Deepen the PSESD’s role as a boundary spanner

Part of PSESD’s role as the backbone support provider is that of a boundary spanner, as described above, working to develop trust between groups that do not have a strong history of working together. Respondents were generally positive about the support provided by the PSESD. Respondents specifically liked the role-alike convenings and the regional perspective that the PSESD brought to the work, and they noted that the learning community convenings have improved over time. Respondents believed that the changes to the funding structure of the partnership model was an important step toward equity and removing barriers to CBO involvement. However, to further develop their role, PSESD could

- **Expand its outreach and communication**: Many survey respondents, but particularly CBO respondents, indicated that they did not know of the supports offered by the PSESD, the convenings hosted by the PSESD, or changes made to the project by the PSESD.

- **Provide assistance where they identify a need**: As a boundary spanner, the PSESD is in position to identify needs across multiple groups and then to respond to those needs by working with the groups to address them. For example, an identified need is for CBO and school partnerships to use data to inform their work together, as discussed above.

- **Continue to push for and support conversations about equity**: While the efforts extend beyond just the RTT-D consortium, the PSESD had adapted the City of Seattle’s Racial Equity Toolkit to develop their own Racial Equity Tool to use with educational partners, including those within RTT-D in 2013–14. While the PSESD began using the RET in their work with districts and other partners in 2013–14, there is currently no formal process to share the RET with CBOs. Further, findings from interviews also suggested that an equity perspective has increased across the region. Feedback on the tool was positive, so continuing to use it with districts and reaching out to CBOs is a way to continue holding equity at the center of the work.

- **Continue to engage in authentic conversations with all stakeholders and support their conversations with one another**: Perhaps most importantly, in the PSESD’s role as a boundary spanner, they
have supported the consortium with increasing the voices of CBOs and families within the RTT-D work, which is highly recommended. Some stakeholders also called for an increase in student and teacher voice. RTI recommends that the consortium bring all stakeholder groups to the table, more often, to more explicitly discuss how they value one another and how they can work together to ensure the best and most equitable schools for the children in their region. In many communities, the voices of community members and the voices of teachers are often seen as at odds. The consortium has intentionally raised the voice of the community and now can further encourage and support conversations between all stakeholder groups. Doing so may also increase the region’s capacity to personalize learning opportunity for students because stakeholders can deepen their understanding of students’ needs from various perspectives and use that understanding to further personalize supports.

Continue regional collaboration

Findings showed that partnerships between districts are forming in some areas in specific project areas due to their participation in RTT-D. Both PSESD and Executive Committee staff suggest that some district staff are sharing resources with each other and some are starting to feel comfortable calling their counterpart in another district for assistance. Many key changes that have occurred in RTT-D have been regional, such as the creation of a system-wide common kindergarten registration date across all seven districts. Further, beyond these system-wide changes due to specific RTT-D work, findings from interviews also suggested that an equity perspective has increased across the region. Respondents also believed that they had become more aware of the types of services and programs provided by others in the region and had begun to collaborate with other districts to offer regionally based services.

- To continue to build these regional relationships requires someone designated or willing to focus on this work. PSESD efforts to bring partners together in the project lead meetings and the convenings seemed to be a critical factor in these relationships developing and should continue.

- While opportunities to come together may be crucial to forge relationships between staff, actual collaboration may only happen if partners agree on what they want to accomplish and the appropriate strategies to
get there. A focus of convenings should be to highlight areas that require regional collaboration in order to best support equitable outcomes for students.