

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIVES:
ISSUES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND
PERFORMANCE

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Poverty, access to quality education, unemployment... all examples of complex issues that demand attention in our society. For these problems, solutions are often forged through joint action in the form of collaborative networks. Collaborative networks are defined as “collections of government agencies, nonprofits, and for-profits that work together to provide a public good, service, or ‘value’ when a single agency is unable to create the good or service on its own (Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer, 2011, p. i158).” This dissertation examines the relationship between the collaborative design and implementation process and collaborative effectiveness. I include a comparative case study method and utilize the multiple-case replication design (Yin, 2009); specifically analyzing six cases from the Annie E. Casey Leadership in Action Program (LAP). Interviews, document analysis and an original survey are used as part of the research design.

This dissertation has two key components. First, I operationalize and expand an important evaluative tool that allows collaboratives to understand their performance at various levels and share their success and shortcomings in a rich, straightforward, and cost effective manner. This framework allows for measurement on multiple dimensions and levels, lending information on the relevance and impact of collaborative groups. Secondly, I use my findings with regard to performance to analyze the process of high, moderate, and low performing groups to determine the most important elements of successful collaboration. This research demonstrates a clear relationship between design process and effectiveness, with certain elements making positive results more likely. These are: the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation. Overall this research fills a void and makes a significant contribution to the literature and practice of collaborative networks, potentially impacting how future cross-sector collaboratives work together to produce public value and address major public problems.

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIVES: ISSUES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND
PERFORMANCE

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Littlefield boys. I love the three of you more than words can express.

Acknowledgements

This degree took me seven years to complete. Seven years that included challenging teaching and graduate assistantships, a full time job, and the birth of two busy, bouncing boys. To reach the finish line took a village... and I'm so fortunate to have such a supportive village. Thank you to Bob Grimm and Donald Kettl for their guidance and time. Thank you to my dissertation committee for their feedback and insight.

Thank you to my neighbors and friends who cooked me dinner, babysat my boys and picked me up when I was discouraged. Thank you to my mother who has been a tireless advocate and supporter in all things that I do. Our moving to Maryland was very hard for her, but she quickly rallied and visits almost every other month. In those visits she has cooked, cleaned, babysat, organized my house and helped in more ways than I can describe, all to give me a chance to write and gain some sanity. Mom, you don't hear it enough... you are so very appreciated and loved, thank you for being so amazing!

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listen. Thank you honey, I absolutely believe I could not have done this without you.

I am so lucky to have you as my friend and partner in life.

To Lucas and Wynn, thank you for the privilege of being your Mommy.

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Chapter 1: Collaboratives – An Opportunity and a Challenge

Poverty, access to quality education, unemployment—all complex issues that demand attention in our society. They have been defined these as “wicked” problems, or problems with no solutions, only temporary fixes and inefficient resolutions (Harmon and Mayor, 1986). For wicked problems, solutions must often be forged through joint action and analyses that are consistent with multiple societal interests. Increasingly collaborative networks have become the method for addressing these problems, implementing services and creating policy.

Collaborative networks are defined as “collections of government agencies, nonprofits, and for-profits that work together to provide a public good, service, or ‘value’ when a single public agency is unable to create the good or service on its own and/or the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the goods or services in the desired quantities (Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer, 2011, p. 158).” Examples of collaborative networks range from formal entities where government agencies and nonprofits have a contract to implement services to informal groups where multiple agencies from different sectors come together to address a community issue such as high poverty.

The last 30 years have seen a huge increase in the government contracting of an array of services as well as the expanded use of collaboratives for services; in fact this transition to private contracts and networks has been called one of the biggest challenges for public administration (Kettl, 2002). Collaborative network analysis has been examined in the public administration and policy literature for decades, yet many questions remain unanswered. The literature and practice are still trying to

understand whether collaboratives produce results that otherwise would not have occurred (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). A recent literature review with regard to collaboration concludes that a low level of success should be expected given the difficulty surrounding these efforts (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006).

Substantial public value is being lost due to this insufficient collaboration (Behn, 2001). Given the important issues being addressed by these groups and the significant amount of time and resources being invested, it is critical to understand how to best evaluate collaborative success and implement collaborative work. Current research does not often link theory to practice, nor has it successfully answered these questions (O’Leary and Vij, 2012). My research attempts to contribute to this knowledge gap by asking the following questions:

- *What is the relationship between design process and effectiveness? Do certain elements of the design process, such as accountability methods or strong relationships, make greater effectiveness more likely?*

This research analyzes whether changes in my independent variable, the collaborative design process, lead to changes in the dependent variable, collaborative effectiveness. I define process as a series of actions or steps taken to achieve an end. How do participants come together as a group and determine the best course of action? How do they design and implement new programs and policies? How do they make decisions and establish accountability? The process also involves the relationship side of accountability. I define accountability as a relationship in which participants and collaboratives are responsive to each other, external partners and the community as a whole for the development process, outcomes and effectiveness of that collaborative.

This work contributes to collaborative scholarship by providing an empirically grounded, theoretically based framework evaluating collaborative performance, a contribution useful for both future scholars and practitioners. Despite decades of research on collaboratives, evaluative frameworks analyzing these groups are scarce (Herranz, 2009; Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007; Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011). The result of my analyses also contributes to knowledge concerning essential elements of the process within a collaborative.

Overall this research provides guidance for collaborative design as well as evaluation, potentially impacting how future cross-sector collaboratives work together to produce public value and address major public problems.

Collaborative Networks: General Overview

In addition to the one above, there are many definitions and terms with regard

to collaborative networks. Bardach (1998) defines collaboration as “any joint activity by two or more agencies that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately” (p. 8). Some scholars prefer to use the term collaboratives (Behn, 2001) while others prefer to use the term networks. One line of research in Public Administration describes and analyzes networks as service providers. Isett et al (2011) note, “Here, networks are used to get something done, such as the service delivery networks studied by the ‘Provan school’ of scholars (Huang and Provan 2007; Isett and Provan 2005; Provan, Milward, and Isett 2002) and local collaborative governance as studied by the ‘Agranoff school’” (Agranoff 2007; Agranoff and McGuire 2001, 2003)” (p. 161). These networks are usually more formalized, including contracts or charters. Most often the term network and collaborative is used interchangeably in the literature. Overall scholars note the lack of an agreed upon definition as an important issue that prevents network scholarship from progressing and maturing (Isett et al, 2011; O’Leary and Vij, 2012).

For the purpose of this dissertation, I will use the term collaborative, utilizing the Isett et al’s definition to signal that the groups in this study are ones whose function is to collaborate in implementing their work. I will only use the term network when necessary to remain in accordance to references in the literature. I also use the term collaborative to signal my work with groups that form more voluntarily in response to public issues rather than formalized networks involving contracts or service delivery. Isett et al (2011) note the difference as thus: “Formal networks are consciously created with some sort of binding agreement for participation, whereas informal networks are more organically derived—an outgrowth of organizational

contingencies that multiple actors come together to address” (p. 162). Because formal and informal collaboratives differ greatly, this research attempts to understand better nonhierarchical, informal (or non-chartered), cross-sector collaboratives. Since these collaboratives are not bound by authority or contracts, they are faced with special challenges such as limited capacity, accountability and motivation. These important groups have been underexplored in the literature. My research will focus on these informal, voluntary collaboratives in order to fill the literature gap.

Overview of Collaborative Challenges and Introduction to Research

Kettl (2009) maintains, “Political demands for more government solutions to big problems balanced by political opposition to expanding government employment to do the job led to reliance on nongovernmental partners” (p. 5). Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) maintain there are three major trends that have contributed to the rise of networked government: The growth of outsourcing; a movement towards joined-up government service delivery or the movement to provide more integrated service delivery to citizens by better linking up government agencies; and technology making communicating and collaborating with partners across organizational boundaries infinitely better, faster and cheaper. Behn (2001) notes “in the United States, most public policies are no longer implemented by a single public agency with a single manager, but by a collaborative of public, nonprofit and for-profit organizations” (p. 72).

These groups face many challenges and areas for question. Collaboration occurs in turbulent environments where efforts of sustainability and success are affected by outside factors beyond the control of collaborative members (Bryson,

Crosby and Stone, 2006). Kontopolous (1993) describes these groups as systems of heterarchy, which differs from the top-down structure of hierarchy. The heterarchy view of collaboratives maintains that interactions within a system are driven by complicated group dynamics, complex external influences, and multiple stakeholders.

Babiak and Thibault (2009) discuss additional obstacles to effective cross-sector collaboration, including conflicting goals and missions, lack of opportunity or incentive to collaborate, inflexible policies and procedures that do not support the partnership, constrained resources, mistrust, group attitudes about each other that may not be accurate, different organizational norms and culture, and lack of support or commitment to the partnership. They also find that collaboratives were generally undermanaged with inadequate managerial structures in place to support the work. Additionally, collaboratives include members from different sectors, with different work styles, priorities, and organizational structures. García-Canal, Valdéz-Llaneza, and Ariño (2003) cite a lack of incentives to behave cooperatively and the free-rider problem as issues with multiple partnerships. Additionally, collaboratives include members from different sectors, with different work styles, priorities, and organizational structures. O'Leary and Vij (2012) note that members of these groups bring different missions, organizational cultures, methods of operation, funders and stakeholders, and degrees of power.

Overall collaboratives occur in a complex and challenging environment. Given the difficult yet necessary tasks surrounding collaboratives, it is important to understand how to measure and define their effectiveness while identifying the important components of the collaborative process that make the group most

successful.

Collaborative Effectiveness

The complexity in evaluating collaboratives leads to a difficulty in defining collaborative effectiveness. Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi (2010) noted in a recent literature review regarding network effectiveness, “To date, literature on the subject has developed in a fragmentary way. It has generally taken the form of multiple definitions of public networks and network effectiveness (pg. 528).” When conducting their review, when addressing network effectiveness they refer to “the effects, outcome, impacts and benefits that are produced by the network as a whole and that can accrue to more than just the single member organizations in terms of increasing efficiency, client satisfaction, increased legitimacy, resource acquisition, and reduced costs (Oliver 1990; Provan and Milward 2001). (pg. 529)” Their review found that much of the research simply note the level of analysis, such as community effectiveness or client level effectiveness, rather than a specific definition of effectiveness. Overall they conclude that network effectiveness includes client level effectiveness, network capacity at achieving stated goals, network stability and viability, network innovation and change, and community effectiveness.

Provan, Fish and Sydow (2007) maintain that effectiveness means different things to each network and to each sector in which a network exists. They believe the focus should be at the network level rather than at the level of individual organization members; however, who should benefit is still an important question unanswered by the literature. McGuire and Agranoff (2011) also note the differing definitions and measurement in network scholarship. They maintain, “... [T]he typical context for

networks is that they are held accountable by a stakeholder and partner constituency (Human and Provan 2000) for the satisfactory design (in some networks) and delivery of goods and services (McGuire 2002). Effectiveness can be measured by the extent to which a network achieves its goals, whatever the goal is and however it has been formulated (p. 272).” Provan and Milward (1995) define effectiveness as the degree to which clients and their families were satisfied with the treatment they received from the mental health system being studied.

Chen (2010) defines effectiveness as “a subjective judgment among partners that their collaborative has achieved what it was intended to achieve, that it worked smoothly, and that it was reasonably productive (p. 389).” For the purpose of his study he considers “three dimensions of perceived effectiveness: (1) achieving goals of service delivery, (2) improved interorganizational learning, and (3) increased partner interactions.” Agranoff (2007) argues for the broad concept of adding public value when looking at collaborative performance. He notes, “The primary concern with network performance appears to center on the question of whether collaboration adds value to the public undertaking (p. 156).” In addition, Agranoff (2007) agrees that collaboratives often include outcomes that go beyond goals, such as cooperation and learning. He argues that “networks be measured based on the subjective judgment of the actors” and that “both substantive and process elements need to be weighed (p. 157).” Agranoff defines success as adding value at the personal, organizational and network levels. For the purpose of this research, I define collaborative effectiveness as *providing value to collaborative participants*,

organizations and local communities in ways that could not have been achieved through individual agencies alone.

Agranoff and McGuire (2001) maintain that in order to understand collaboratives we must be able to measure the outcomes and effectiveness of collaboratives. They argue that the most basic issues of collaborative management are intertwined with our ability to assess effectiveness and then compare that effectiveness against some baseline with which collaboratives can be held accountable. Provan and Milward (2001) suggest, “at the broadest level of analysis, community-based networks must be judged by the contribution they make to the communities they are trying to serve (p. 416)”. Zakocs and Edwards (2006) agree that collaborative effectiveness should be judged as to whether collaboratives affect community-level changes. Since the goal of most collaboratives is to effect community level change, it follows that evaluation criteria should be at this level.

Yet measuring collaborative effectiveness at the community level is difficult for several reasons. First, these collaboratives occur in complex, turbulent environments where efforts of sustainability and success are affected by outside factors (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006). This environment is often called a complex adaptive system, which describes a series of interdependent agents where the system is unpredictable, dynamic, and entangled (Dooley, 1997; Eoyang and Berkas, 1998). This makes it difficult to attribute community level data changes to particular factors, such as the efforts and initiatives of a collaborative (McGuire and Agranoff, 2011).

Second, positive collaborative outcomes can go beyond that of simply improving community-level numbers. Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2006) argue, “the point of creating and sustaining cross-sector collaboratives ought to be the production of ‘public value’ (Moore 1995) that cannot be created by single sectors alone (p. 51).” Public value can be thought of as the equivalent of shareholder value in public management (Moore, 1995); or, what the public values and what adds value to the public sphere (Moore and Benington, 2011). It requires three processes: 1) Defining public value 2) Creating the ‘authorizing environment’ necessary to achieve the desired public value outcomes and 3) harnessing and mobilizing the resources to achieve the desired public value outcomes (Moore, 1995; Moore and Benington, 2011).

McGuire and Agranoff (2011) note that a successful process can add public value while also generating poor program outcomes. They add:

For example, when the community and all stakeholders to an issue are engaged in designing, planning, and implementing a program, and when participation, representation, and deliberation are intended to be the defining characteristics of the process, then the effectiveness of the program as measured in terms of standard indicators of performance may fall short, but meet the operating goals of the process. Indeed, network outcomes may accrue from the individual administrator, participating agency, network process, and tangible network outcome perspectives (Agranoff 2007). Such networks should not be devalued (p. 273).

Rodríguez, Langley, Béland and Denis (2007) study finds that despite being involved in a process that was destined to fail due to issues in the health care system, participants continued because “the processes themselves have some intrinsic value to the people who participated in them (p. 178)”. They note one positive outcome being that the process “socialized participants to a new language (for example, case

management, integrated networks) that might be drawn on more successfully in future discussions (p. 184)”.

This leads to the third challenge with simply using community level data to assess collaborative effectiveness. Collaboratives include multiple organizations with multiple constituents who hold a variety of interests and needs, therefore arguing for a broader level of assessment than simply community-level data. Klijn and Koppenjan (2000) argue that evaluation criteria must consider “the multi-actor, dynamic character of interaction in networks”. They maintain that simply using “the classic goal achievement method” is not appropriate for collaboratives given that actors are relatively autonomous and there is no central coordinating actor. Each participant has their own objectives and it is difficult to determine which actor’s goals should be a priority. It is even more difficult to determine which goal or actor represents the public interest.

Finally, the most practical argument against solely using community level data to evaluate collaboratives is the fact that these data are often difficult to obtain (Isett, et al. 2011, Provan and Milward, 2001) Communities often do not collect the data necessary to evaluate collaboratives due to lack of resources. Federal agencies can fill this void but at times their data is at a macro-level; thus not appropriate for community analysis with regard to collaborative performance (Provan and Milward, 1995; Provan and Milward, 2001).

The Collaborative Process

The challenges outlined above have direct impact on the design and process of community collaboratives. Gray (1989) notes collaboration as an emergent process with collective responsibility. Indeed, many scholars have noted that the process of collaboratives occurs through compromise and coordination rather than a stepwise movement from one phase to another; it is often called messy, dynamic, and interactive (Thomson and Perry, 2006; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Roberts and Bradley, 1991).

Despite this recognition, some scholars have attempted to define the process of collaboration and determine frameworks for analysis. Ring and Van de Ven (1994) model the collaborative process as cyclical rather than linear, consisting of a “repetitive sequence of negotiation, commitment, and execution stages (p. 97).” They note the emergence of personal relationships that lead to psychological contracts which in turn lead to informal understanding and commitments. Thomson and Perry (2006) stipulate five key dimensions of collaboration, including the governance dimension, or how collaborations make joint decisions and negotiate power arrangements; the administration dimension, or the administrative structure that assists the group in taking action; the autonomy dimension, or the ability of members to develop collaborative competencies and move from individual agendas to shared control; the mutuality dimension, or the process of forging mutually beneficial relationships; and the trust and reciprocity dimension, which stresses the critical component of trust necessary for collaboration. Finally, Bryson et al. (2006) present a framework that seems the most inclusive of all the points made in the literature.

They note the following as affecting the successful implementation of a collaborative: initial conditions, process dimensions, structural and governance dimensions, contingencies and constraints, outcomes, and accountability issues. They also note the overlap and relationship that exists with aspects of the initial conditions and structure with the pieces they outline in process.

Effectiveness and Process: Tying it all together

The research presented in this dissertation attempts to link collaborative process to collaborative effectiveness. I define process as a series of actions or steps taken to achieve an end. How do participants come together as a group and determine the best course of action? How do they establish accountability? What is the process used by individuals to determine a policy intervention? What is the process through which they determine the appropriate outcomes for that intervention? The process also involves the relationship side of accountability. I define accountability *as a relationship in which participants and collaboratives are responsive to each other, external partners and the community as a whole for the development process, outcomes and effectiveness of that collaborative*. O'Toole (1997) builds on findings in social capital research, noting that “leveraging horizontal ties, building on trust and encouraging the development of cooperative norms also can enhance administrative capacity, and governmental capacity more generally (p. 455 – 456).” The need for relationship building, norms established around trust and open, honest dialog are often cited as necessary ingredients to group cohesion and strong collaboratives (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Bardach, 1998; Chaskin, 2003; García-Canal et al., 2003;

Chisholm, 1989; Wohlstetter and Malloy, 2005); however, there are not many studies that look at the aspect of relationships relative to performance.

Yet processes and collaboratives are not useful unless they are deemed effective. Groups are considered to be accountable if they do what they say they will do; in other words, they create results. This difference between process and results is important, yet the distinction is often not made. A group could generate results but have an unfair process, which questions the efficacy of the result. Alternatively, a group could build an equitable process and develop a strong level of trust and relationships among members, but not be effective. Overall I will investigate the relationship between process to effectiveness, leading to my two research questions:

What is the relationship between design process and effectiveness? Do certain elements of the design process, such as accountability methods or strong relationships, make greater effectiveness more likely?

Key research definitions from above are summarized as such:

Table 1: Key Research Definitions

Key Research Definitions	
<i>Accountability</i>	A relationship in which participants and collaboratives act responsible to each other, external partners and the community as a whole for the development process, outcomes and effectiveness of that collaborative.
<i>Process</i>	A series of actions or steps taken to achieve an end, the “how” of collaboratives
<i>Collaborative effectiveness</i>	Providing value to collaborative participants, organizations and local communities in ways that could not have been achieved through individual agencies alone.

Methodology – A Qualitative Approach

This dissertation includes a qualitative approach to address the research questions presented. The analysis includes a comparative case study method and utilizes the multiple-case replication design outlined by Yin (2009); specifically, six cases from The Leadership in Action Program (LAP). LAP is a program created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, whose mission is to foster community-level collaboratives focused on one specific community issue. Launched in 2001, LAP has helped facilitate 14 collaboratives representing jurisdictions from across the country. More information about this program and the cases are presented in Chapter 2. I incorporate document analysis, interviews with select past participants and a survey for the qualitative research chapters. The data also includes the underlying theories of change proposed by each group as well as an analysis of the strategies outlined by each collaborative. I utilize cross-case synthesis and pattern matching to determine differences and similarities around process of those ranked high, moderate and low on the results framework. Additional information on methodology is discussed further on an as needed basis in future chapters.

This methodology poses some challenges. Issues of external validity are a potential challenge with any case study. While case studies are not comparable to analytical generalization in which a sample is intended to generalize to a larger universe, one can infer implications for theory through replication logic within multiple case studies. The cases I have chosen are related in that they were implemented with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and conducted with a similar framework. Yet they differ in that each group adopted the framework in

different ways. While the initial implementation framework was similar for each case, the actual execution differs in a way that provides variability of process and results. There are still concerns of course about the similarities inhibiting the generalizability of my findings, but in contrast, the similarity may benefit my ability to isolate variables in outcomes.

LAP's framework in relation to other collaboratives is another question with regard to external validity. First, there does not seem to be a normal collaborative. The literature highlights a great variety of collaboratives with no one model in common. Secondly, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has an emphasis on accountability, which begs the question as to whether the model is unique or unnatural; however, it is well documented in the nonprofit literature that funding organizations have been emphasizing greater accountability models over the past 20 years (Chaskin, 2003; Ebrahim, 2005; Morrison and Salipante, 2007). LAP includes other funders in addition to Annie E. Casey, most times investing as much or more money than Casey. These funders come from the public, nonprofit and private sectors, including agencies like the Governor's Office, the United Way, the Better Business Bureau, etc. Each collaborative has a different model of external partners and funders. In this way the LAP model is very common in the world of collaboratives. Casey serves to legitimize the initial efforts, to act as a "champion" (Wohlstetter, et al., 2005) or a "superordinate" authority (Page, 2008), but serves as only one of several of these external partners and funders. Finally, as outlined in the next chapter, several other aspects of the LAP framework mirror recommendations found in the literature. This makes the LAP model especially relevant for analysis, as

it can be broadly applicable to understanding other collaboratives attempting to affect major policy issues.

Dissertation Overview

Chapter Two details the Annie E. Casey Leadership in Action Program and the six cases presented in this research. Chapter Three examines the effectiveness and outcomes from six collaboratives using qualitative analysis. As noted above, my research questions examine the relationship between design process and greater effectiveness and whether specific elements of the design process make certain effectiveness more likely. In order to determine this, I must first establish which of the six cases were actually effective. Through a qualitative analysis of interview and survey results, this chapter attempts to look at collaborative effectiveness and outcomes from a broad perspective by adapting Provan and Milward's (2001) framework to analyze results from the community, collaborative, and individual/organizational level. This chapter concludes with an understanding of the effectiveness of each collaborative at each level and allows me to group the six collaboratives into high, moderate and low performing groups.

Chapters Four and Five analyze the processes of the high, moderate and low performing groups using case study analysis. The purpose of this research is to examine the elements of a collaborative process, and to determine the importance of these elements to the collaborative results found in the previous chapter. Because the six case studies I examine vary in performance, I am able to determine the importance of elements in the development and implementation of high and low performing

collaboratives. In addition, I compare the process elements in my research to that found in the literature. This analysis determines if high/moderate groups shared certain traits which made their success more likely, and vice versa with the low performing groups.

Chapter Six concludes my dissertation by synthesizing all of my analyses and providing implications and areas for future research given my findings. It includes contributions to the literature and lessons found for practitioners. Given the many unanswered questions around the design and implementation process of collaboratives and their relationship to collaborative outcomes, this research provides a significant contribution to this area of study. This is especially true for research around voluntary or non-chartered collaboratives. These analyses provide more methodological rigor than many previously cited analyses given the large, detailed dataset. In addition, this study uses a structured framework to evaluate process and accountability and performance, something rarely seen in the literature. The analysis of effectiveness offers an alternative way of evaluating collaboratives given the challenges surrounding community level data, something important for both practice and research.

Overall, these analyses address some of the most important issues facing cross-sector collaboratives, namely performance and process design. Bryson et al (2006) note that “few, if any, research studies have gathered data on all of these in a way that could easily guide research or help policy makers in government, business, nonprofits, the media, or communities understand when cross-sector collaborations make sense, let alone how to design and implement them.” This research has the

potential to fill this void and make a significant contribution to the literature and practice of collaborative networks, potentially impacting how future cross-sector collaboratives work together to produce public value and address major public problems.

Chapter 2: The Annie E. Casey Leadership in Action Program

In the late 1990s, the Maryland State Department of Education began to focus on early childhood education, and quickly realized it had no measure to understand the current abilities of children entering kindergarten. In 1997 the State of Maryland Department of Education created an initiative titled Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) that focused on teacher professional development. Out of this effort came the selection and implementation of a measurement tool called the Work Sampling System (WSS) that is designed to assess kindergartener's school readiness skills. The WSS evaluates 30 indicators across seven domains of learning as well as an overall composite score (Achieving School Readiness, 2002). The seven domains of learning include: Personal and social skills, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health.

The first evaluation occurred in 2001 and revealed that fewer than half of Maryland's kindergarteners had the skills necessary to succeed in school. Calvert County, Caroline County, Cecil County, St. Mary's County, and Worcester County fell below the state average and Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Dorchester County, and Prince George's County had fewer than 40% of students assessed as fully ready to learn (Achieving School Readiness, 2002). This was of immediate concern as research shows that early learning before children enter formal education is essential to later school and life success (School Readiness Baseline Information, 2001).

From this concern the Leadership in Action Program (LAP) was born. In 2001 the Annie E. Casey Foundation partnered with the Governor’s Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families and the Council for Excellence in Government to launch the initiative. The Casey Foundation funded the entire initiative and hired leadership consultants to design and implement the program. The program had two purposes: to accelerate the rate at which children enter school ready to learn in Maryland, and to increase the leadership capacity of those leaders in Maryland accountable for that result (Achieving School Readiness, 2002). Over 40 different participants met for ten months to deliberate and investigate best practices in early childhood education. The result was a report to the Subcabinet for Children, Youth and Families entitled “Achieving School Readiness: A 5-Year Action Agenda,” which detailed six goals and twenty-five strategies the group determined as most critical. The report noted, “It is our hope that you will consider this Action Agenda in your own deliberations to develop the 5-year school readiness strategic plan to be submitted to the Maryland General Assembly next February (Achieving School Readiness, pg. i, 2002).” These specific goals can be found in Appendix A.

According to Sadie¹, a long-time Casey staff member, this first LAP effort was deemed valuable and successful both by the Casey Foundation and State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick. Furthermore, the report served to highlight Baltimore City as a particular problem for the state. In this environment, two members of the Maryland State LAP approached Casey to launch a LAP program in Baltimore City. Casey agreed, with Sadie saying, “We [Casey] knew there was not likely to be funding in Baltimore and because we live in Baltimore and we care about

¹ All names in this research have been changed and quotes screened to ensure anonymity

Baltimore and the numbers were so horrible, we funded them entirely.” Thus, the first county LAP was born.

Sadie described the early days of LAP as an evolutionary process. There was no staff or infrastructure at first, but after Baltimore City they “got the sense that this was pretty good stuff.” The Casey Foundation began to invest in facilitator training and reach out to other communities about the program. They also created a more formal structure and framework for implementing each LAP group. Three years after the launch of the Baltimore City LAP, Casey expanded to two additional Maryland counties, Anne Arundel and Montgomery. These and subsequent groups enjoyed more organization and staff support than Baltimore City. The LAP framework is outlined in more detail below.

LAP Framework

The mission of LAP was to foster community-level collaboratives focused on one specific community issue. Promotional materials described the effort: “It gathers and mobilizes key leaders, managers, and residents in public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to work collaboratively in new ways. It provides training and support so that together, they can pick up the pace of change and get concrete, measurable results.” The goals of the LAP program were as follows:

- 1) LAP influences a leader’s ability to make measurable progress in fostering a condition of well-being for a targeted population.
- 2) LAP develops individual participants’ leadership competencies and commitment to aligned action and results.
- 3) LAP develops relationships and understanding among a group of leaders and facilitates collaboration, sharing and a commitment to reduce

community disparities around a condition of well-being for a targeted population.

- 4) Participants utilize the skills learned in LAP in their parent organization and other leadership venues.
- 5) LAP creates the capacity for leaders to have greater influence and leverage within their communities to foster a condition of well-being in the targeted population

LAP groups evolved through community members reaching out to the Casey Foundation for support around an issue such as school readiness or recidivism. There was no formal process with regards to marketing the program. Sadie noted that as they expanded they were looking for “friendly partners, which consisted of places where we had a relationship and had worked directly or we knew had an interest or were working on a results framework.” They looked for places where there was a person “with a deep anchor in that community” and willing to speak highly of the program and the Casey Foundation to build interest. They were also seeking partners that helped the LAP team and Casey understand the subtle dynamics of the community.

Once a community expressed interest, staff from Casey met with leaders from the community to determine if they were “a fit”. This process became more structured over time, with the foundation creating “site readiness criteria”. Below is an excerpt from the “Leadership in Action Program – Site Readiness Assessment Tool”, an internal program delivery document.

The Leadership Development Unit of the Casey Foundation employs a unique set of criteria to determine if LAP and a site is a good match. The criteria also serve to determine when a site is prepared to launch LAP (the criterion is tracked in both the engagement and site-readiness phases). The criterion is incorporated into a self-assessment tool for the site to determine if LAP is right for them and to identify when they are ready.

There were seven ‘headline’ criteria, which were accompanied by specific measures. They are:

1. Clearly stated result and target population
2. Data at the population level
3. Accountability partner(s) that will hold the participants accountable for results in one measurement cycle
4. A cadre of hands-on leaders – both agency and grassroots community leaders – with demonstrated skills who are prepared to dedicate themselves to turning the curve
5. Existing infrastructure that can implement the decisions made by program participants
6. Co-investment to cover the costs of implementation of the LAP program
7. Position, interest and underlying interest of leaders

After extended dialog, research into the above factors, and a commitment from the local community, the Casey Foundation decided whether to support the initiative through funding and logistical assistance. The percentage funded by the Casey Foundation varied from LAP to LAP. The Maryland statewide LAP and Baltimore City LAP was fully funded by Casey since these groups were the first collaboratives and given that Casey’s headquarters are in Baltimore; however, staff are unsure as to whether the other Maryland LAPs were funded at the same level. Once LAP sites moved out of the state, communities definitely shared in the cost. LAP budgets have varied according to the region and the issue, ranging from \$270,000 – \$500,000. Sometimes included in the budget were in-kind donations from Casey such as logistical support in the form of staff, meeting materials and location. The Annie E. Casey Foundation provided a percentage of the resources with the community was responsible for the remaining amount. Usually fundraising was the responsibility of the community partners.

Community partners invited members based on their relation to the issue of interest and the potential resources they could bring to the group. For instance, if the LAP was designed to improve early childhood education, members were invited from the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, nonprofit groups working in that field, as well as teachers and parents. A committee was formed by those community members working with Casey and tasked with generating a list of 40 – 50 appropriate members. Sadie said, “The criteria was people with authority to make decisions, easy access to those able to make decisions, etc. We were looking for balance in the sectors as well as a geographic balance. [Also] part of it was whether we could we have enough understanding of the person or the organization and interest to know if we were creating a cohort that had a high likelihood of success... nobody got eliminated because they had a reputation for being obstinate or isolated but it was important to have the knowledge and understanding as we put together a cohort.” LAP resource documents note that communities should look for participants with the “know-how, resources and willingness to take an active role in impacting the result, people like agency managers, business people, leaders of nonprofits, public officials, advocates, faith leaders, resident leaders.” Additionally they state that participants should: “have a stake in the population/result; have influence with/within an important organization or group/network (is a decision maker or can influence/has ear of decision makers); bring significant human or financial capital; hold critical or necessary knowledge/expertise; and reflect the diversity of the program population”.

Once participants were identified, they were invited by the community partners to join LAP. Letters and calls were placed to the supervisors or agency directors of members to encourage support from the top level of organizations. Membership in LAP was entirely voluntary as was attendance at scheduled meetings. Those interested came to an initial meeting where the concept and framework of LAP was presented. Not all that came to that meeting decided to continue involvement and it was not unusual to see a drop off of participants in the first few meetings.

Support staff (usually from a local outside agency paid through the LAP program) was present at every meeting to take detailed notes and document key group decisions and work commitments made by members. Each LAP collaborative met for two full days every four to six weeks for a total of ten meetings; therefore, each LAP lasted approximately one year in its most formal form. Casey funding ended after this time; however, many groups continued with varying success in raising funds and varying models for continuing their work.

While LAP groups may have had some unique characteristics, they functioned in much of the same way as other community collaboratives and followed many “best practices” suggested in the literature, including a specific framework for implementation. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) describe the leadership challenge in cross-sector collaboration as the difficulty in “aligning initial conditions, processes, structures, governance, contingencies and constraints, outcomes, and accountabilities such that good things happen in a sustained way over time.” The LAP program was built on the premise that successful collaboratives are those that not only create formal accountability structures, but also build collaborative leadership skills that

foster competencies in using data to make decisions; address issues of disparate outcomes based on class, culture and race/ethnicity; develop the ability to manage and resolve competing agendas across agencies to move work forward; and leverage relationships and resources to make and model practices or implement strategies in one's home agency (Pillsbury, 2008). These competencies are detailed further below. Program developers maintained that once these collaborative leadership skills were developed, participants' individual efforts became aligned. Sadie noted the importance of "creating the space to do the work, having the right tools to do it, having the skilled facilitator to do it, being authorized by your supervisor to do the work because its important, and people consistently showing up." To develop the competency of collaboratives to do this work, the LAP framework included four specific components, namely: A Strong Accountability Partner, A Skilled Implementation Team, Participant Accountability, and Collaborative Leadership Development. These components are described below.

Strong Accountability Partner

Before a LAP was launched, the Annie E. Casey Foundation worked with elected officials and/or top leaders in community organizations who had agreed to lend public support to the collaborative and provide accountability to the group. LAP called these individuals "accountability partners," mirroring the literature's call for an outside authority to legitimize the group and provide additional accountability (Bryson, et al., 2006; Page, 2008; Wohlstetter and Malloy, 2005; Human and Provan, 2000). Accountability partners were cross-sector groups of high-level leaders from

the public, nonprofit and private sectors. Public-sector participants at the state level have been the governor and/or key designees. At the local level, participants included mayors and their designees, council members, school superintendents, or county or city managers. Nonprofit participants included heads of large national or local foundations, the CEO of the United Way, or heads of relevant public-private governance or planning bodies. These partners identified the specific issue to be addressed by the collaborative, data indicators, and financial and logistical resources to support the collaborative. They also identified community members, inviting them to join the collaborative. Although these individuals and groups were important in motivating the work of the collaborative, they were not actually involved in the work as the collaborative remained independent from the accountability partners as it developed strategies to address the social issue and implemented community-wide initiatives related to those strategies.

Skilled Implementation Team

The model included an implementation team comprised of several individuals who took on key roles, including neutral facilitators, a project manager, and a documenter. At each meeting trained facilitators worked to build the leadership skills and capacity of the members while guiding the group from planning to implementation. Collaboratives face various issues of power with different actors occupying different roles and positions of authority (Agranoff, 2006). Facilitation is an important way for these groups to have a structured or intentional way to deal with these power imbalances and other areas of conflict (Bryson et al, 2006: Herranz,

2007). The LAP program framework sought to establish trust and diminish political barriers that impede action.

Facilitators sought to provide a structure to meetings and coached collaborative participants on specific components of leadership competencies. Their role was to manage conflict and maintain progress. The role of the project manager and documenter was to ensure that the practical needs of the collaborative were met (such as lunch and meeting space), and that all key decisions and commitments were recorded and publicly available to all collaborative participants. Together the implementation team helped the collaborative manage its relationship with the accountability partners. The implementation team also provided the tools necessary to increase individual participant accountability and to develop strong collaborative leadership skills. Like the role of the Accountability Partners, the implementation team had a neutral role, and was not actively involved in the work of the collaborative; rather they sought to create a productive environment and provide the necessary tools so all decisions and work could be conducted by the group.

Participant Accountability

Many scholars in the literature maintain that cross-sector collaborations are more likely to be successful when they have an accountability system that tracks data, processes, and results (Bryson et al., 2006; Bardach and Lesser, 1996; Page, 2004; Bardach, 1998; Linden, 2002; Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Each LAP collaborative was responsible for building an accountability system and performance measures that best suited the group. The collaborative participants co-created their own

performance management system using a set of tools, behaviors, and skills that allowed for a system of continuous assessment and improvement of efforts for ongoing management of the process (Pillsbury, 2008). These specific tracking tools were designed to promote a shared commitment to completing work related to strategies. During each session, the facilitators introduced tools that allowed members to publicly commit to specific action items throughout the course of the session. Members were given a form at the end of each session on which they were asked to brainstorm several tasks that they could complete, and how each task was related to a specific strategy. They were then asked to write down the task(s) they would complete, how they would complete it, and an estimated date for completion if applicable. Members were also asked whether they would complete the task alone or with partners. These work commitments were not required, so members could commit to however many tasks they felt they could complete, with some members making no commitments. They were given a copy of this form to keep, and submitted a copy of the form to the facilitators. All the commitments documented on the form were then entered into session notes that all group members could access. This tool was not required, but a majority of the groups used it nonetheless.

While work commitment forms provided a formal structure for volunteering to complete tasks related to the collaborative's goals, members were also encouraged by facilitators and one another to make work commitments at any point during the two-day session. Members may decide to make a work commitment in this more informal way during group discussions or strategy meetings. These commitments, along with details on how they would complete them and if they would complete

them with partners, were also documented in the session notes that were easily accessible to the individual and other LAP members. Finally, at each session members reported on the progress they made between sessions on any commitments made at the previous sessions. They were encouraged to report on commitments made through the forms, as well as any informal commitments. All progress was then documented in the notes.

Collaborative Leadership Development

Collaboratives are noted in the literature as experiencing issues of capacity as they are often undermanaged, experience inadequate managerial structures, and confront a free-rider problem among partners (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; García-Canal, et al., 2003), thus a successful collaborative should address these issues. The LAP model sought to have collaborative participants develop active listening skills, negotiation skills, and collaborative problem-solving skills so they were able to make productive decisions as a group and include the perspectives of all collaborative participants. The literature notes that collaborative leadership skills lead to stronger relationship patterns that emphasize cooperation among collaborative participants (Kickert & Koppenjan, 1997). Collaboratives are successful when participants cooperate and coordinate their work (Thomson and Perry, 2006; Huxham and Vangen, 2005); thus training collaborative participants to build open and supportive relationships should enable them to be successful in these interdependent groups.

The LAP framework includes a leadership development component that focused on the development of four leadership competencies: results-based accountability; race, class, culture; leading from the middle; and collaborative

leadership skills. The results-based accountability competency sought to build the ability to use a process to take immediate action at a scope and scale that contributed to measurable improvement in a community result (Pillsbury, 2008). The framework included tools that assisted participants in developing and using performance measures to track the effectiveness of their strategies and actions. The race, class and culture competency sought to build the ability to engage in constructive dialogue about race, class and culture that enables leaders to take action to address issues of disparities. The leading from the middle competency sought to build the ability to use leadership skills to achieve consensus, resolve conflict and competing interests while enrolling managers (and above) as well as direct reports and peers to assist in implementing strategies that work. Finally, the collaborative leadership competency introduced tools to assist in the ability to make decisions and take action together in service of a goal (Pillsbury, 2008). This included a consensus decision-making tool as well as taking and sharing individual leadership assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Facilitators spent time focusing on these specific areas of leadership development by leading capacity building exercises to strengthen these skills and by incorporating specific tools while members worked to develop and implement strategies. These competencies were discussed and practiced regularly throughout the course of each LAP.

Background on LAP Cases

This research analyzes six LAP collaboratives from different areas of the country. All but one focused on school readiness, while the sixth focused on reducing

recidivism rates. Table 2 includes a list of these cases, the year they were launched, the goal of each group and their accountability partners.

Table 2: Case Descriptions

<u>Location</u>	<u>Year Launched</u>	<u>LAP Goal</u>	<u>Accountability Partners</u>
Anne Arundel County, MD	2006	All children in Anne Arundel County enter school “fully ready” to learn.	<i>Local Management Board</i>
Baltimore City, MD	2003	All Children in Baltimore are fully prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten	Board of the Family League of Baltimore City
DeKalb County, GA	2007	All children in DeKalb County are prepared to succeed in school	United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta Early Learning Commission and DeKalb County Early Learning and School Readiness Commission
Marion County, Indiana	2008	All children in Montgomery County enter school fully ready to learn	Indiana National Governor’s Association Re-Entry Policy Work Group and the Criminal Justice Planning Council
Montgomery County, MD	2006	All children in Polk County enter school ready to learn	<i>Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families</i> (Local Management Board)
Polk County, IA	2007	All adult offenders in Marion County are successfully reintegrated into the community.	The Polk County School Readiness Accountability Partners (a public/private panel of 19 city, county and state officials, business leaders and local philanthropic leaders)

Each case includes a variety of demographic and regional differences. As part of the interview process I asked questions with regard to the community and the problem being addressed. I asked about the dynamics of the political system in place and any previous efforts that had been made to address the problem faced by the group. Below is a description of each case study along with the initial conditions faced by the group.

Maryland Cases: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Montgomery County

Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Montgomery County varied widely in their demographic and scope of the problem despite all being located in Maryland. The statewide Maryland LAP mentioned above is not included in this analysis. Upon completion, Baltimore City decided to build on the collaborative initiative and launch the first local LAP program in 2003. Anne Arundel and Montgomery County followed three years later. Each LAP included members that either knew people who had participated previously or had participated themselves in the State LAP; therefore, some participants had been exposed to the LAP framework prior to joining their LAP group. Some held positive views of their experience while others were more negative, there does not seem to be an overall trend.

Baltimore City is a diverse, urban area that had by far the lowest school readiness scores in the state of Maryland with only 26.5% percent of kindergarten students scored fully ready to learn in 2003. The state average for Maryland at that time was 55%. The school system was described as “a mess”. Yet, this also presented an opportunity that motivated community members to come together. The State Department of Education was said to be pushing early childhood. The area had received grants from the Safe and Sound Campaign and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The United Way and the Family League (Baltimore’s Local Management Board) had already started a joint effort to address early childhood. Once Casey agreed to fund the Baltimore City LAP, the Family League agreed to

serve as the group's accountability partner. At that time the role of the accountability partner was not yet developed, and the Family League saw themselves as a neutral convener. My interviews indicate confusion over their role, some called them a convener, some named them as a group in which the LAP reported to and felt accountable, while some said there was no such group serving that role.

Anne Arundel County houses the state capitol and includes both prosperous areas and areas of need. Outlying regions lack access to public transportation. The kindergarten readiness score for Anne Arundel was 68.6% of students entering fully ready to learn when LAP launched in 2006, which was one and a half points above the state average in that year. Participants described the early childhood climate as one with silos and in which previous administrators lacked interest in early childhood readiness. The previous county executive "did not have early childhood on his radar," according to one participant. The early childhood education community, predominantly licensed childcare and Head Start, had a difficult time getting support from county government and the school system. The previous director of early childhood services in the school system was described in an interview as biased against caregivers that were not authorized teachers in the school system. Members also mentioned the county did not have sufficient pre-k programs and many were skeptical at the launch of LAP around their ability to work together for a comprehensive approach.

Montgomery County is one of the wealthiest counties in the country according to median household income statistics gathered by U.S. Department of Commerce Economic and Statistical Administration U.S. Census Bureau. A suburb of

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area, it has experienced a substantial amount of recent immigration and a large increase in people at or below the poverty line over the last 10 – 15 years. When Montgomery County launched its LAP in 2006, 68.3% of kindergarten students were entering fully ready to learn. A participant described the childcare situation as including a lot of providers but fairly diffuse, meaning centers ranging from informal home-based care to private day cares spread throughout the county. The superintendent was not described as supportive of early childhood education efforts. Yet Montgomery County had a history of working together and in fact already had a group that had formed to target early childhood readiness. One participant said, “We have had a long history in Montgomery County of working towards promoting a coordinated early childhood system...” A task force was formed in the mid-1990s, which produced a report with recommendations to the County. In 1999 a large group of over 100 people led by the local management board came together and completed a community needs assessment, which included a “massive amount of work”. This initiative led to a large document with initiatives and plans for early childhood. The County Council contributed over \$1,000,000 to the plan. LAP was said to have come along at a good time to give this initiative a “shot in the arm” to reinforce their work. One member said she was hoping LAP would help them move to the next step.

Counties Outside of Maryland: DeKalb County, Georgia; Polk County, Iowa;
Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana

The next three case studies took place outside of the state of Maryland.

DeKalb County, Georgia, and Polk County, Iowa, were launched in 2007 and established the first out-of-state LAPs conducted by the Casey Foundation. While these two counties had reliable community data at the start of LAP, both Georgia and Iowa discontinued the use of their indicator down the road, leaving them with no data indicator. The Marion County (Indianapolis) Indiana LAP was launched in 2008. It represents the first time Casey funded a LAP that was not focused on early childhood as it focused on lowering recidivism rates and reintegrating adult offenders into the community. Casey chose this site as they had existing relationships with people in the community and other programs addressing recidivism. They were also interested in trying the LAP framework in a different social issue than early childhood education. The community data for this collaborative was an internal data source that experienced some issues as the LAP progressed, detailed further below.

DeKalb County is described as a very large, very diverse county in Georgia. It is a minority majority county with a high foreign-born population and part of metropolitan Atlanta. Over fifteen percent of the population is living below the poverty level. The area was described as a likely target of the federal government to locate refugees from around the world; therefore, there were existing concerns about immigrant children and “underground” childcare not registered with the state. The licensing process for pre-k is very difficult. Members noted the presence of multiple groups within the county addressing early childhood prior to the implementation of LAP. Participants described some “angst and confusion” over LAP since they had just begun the DeKalb Early Learning Commission. The Commission served as one of the Accountability Partners for the group. In addition, the United Way had

received a SPARK grant from Kellogg five years prior to LAP that also focused on early childhood initiatives. The United Way was also an Accountability Partner; however, some participants referred to them as a convener and not an Accountability Partner. Shortly after DeKalb County launched, the state of Georgia decided to abandon its use of the first grade data indicator, leaving the group with no good data to measure early childhood outcomes. This struggle continues today.

Participants described Polk County, Iowa as an increasingly diverse community, with one elementary school having such a diversity of background amongst the children that more than 26 languages are spoken within the school. Polk County also had an existing early childhood readiness group prior to LAP. One participant noted that you could go back into the early 90s and late 80s for collaborations that have been formed to address early childhood. Beginning in 2001/2002 the state of Iowa began distributing large funds, called Community Empowerment Funding, targeting early childhood initiative and school readiness. The United Way of Polk County was described as a major player in the community, serving as the convener that brought people together to formulate a plan for the Empowerment funding and later the convener for LAP. The group in Polk County developed strategies and goals for using this funding prior to LAP. In addition, Polk County had served as one of Casey's Making Connections sites, a program that includes a long-term grant for "1) promoting family economic success for parents, and 2) ensuring that children get a good start in life, succeed in the early grades of school, and are reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade."

<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/MakingConnections.aspx>

Indianapolis is the capital of Indiana and the second largest city in the Midwest after Chicago. It is largely urban and includes the highest recidivism rate in the entire state with 30.4% of offenders returning to jail within 12 months of release. One member thought the number was as high as 50 percent within a three-year period of time. Many members of this LAP discussed the fact that there were previous tensions and political difficulties existed. One member said it was a political quagmire, “like trying to get a line of elephants to dance together”. They discussed silos and issues of power. In addition, the Mayor’s office launched an initiative targeting recidivism at the same time as LAP, despite the Mayor’s office being one of the Accountability Partners for LAP. This has served as a duplicate/competing group to this day.

The six cases presented here provide a diverse and robust vehicle for understanding collaborative design and effectiveness. Representing two topic areas and three separate regions in the United States, these collaboratives allow for variance in population and approach to community work. The next chapter will explore collaborative effectiveness and understand the performance of these six groups.

Chapter 3: Examining Effectiveness and Understanding Outcomes

One of the key questions in this research and in the literature is whether collaboratives produce outcomes that otherwise would not have occurred, given the difficulty surrounding achieving tangible outcomes (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Behn, 2001; Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006; Babiak and Thibault, 2009). In order to understand collaboratives we must be able to identify the strategies and interventions conducted by the group and measure their resulting outcomes (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). McGuire and Agranoff (2007) note that collaborative outcomes must be the ultimate dependent variable, in spite of the conceptual and empirical roadblocks that presently make such an undertaking so challenging.

This chapter examines the effectiveness of these six collaboratives by adapting and expanding the Provan and Milward (2001) framework. Collaborative effectiveness is defined as providing value to collaborative participants, organizations and local communities in ways that could not have been achieved through individual agencies alone. This research evaluates effectiveness at the community, network and organization/participation levels. It analyzes both the interventions, defined as the implementation of strategies and programs, as well as outcomes of collaborative action.

My research questions ask: What is the relationship between design process and effectiveness? Do certain elements of the design process, such as accountability methods or strong relationships, make greater effectiveness more likely? In order to determine this, I must first determine which of the six cases were effective and achieved stronger outcomes. This chapter presents a framework with which to

evaluate collaborative effectiveness at the community, collaborative, and organizational/participant level. Since not all outcomes are alike, I research and present the best practices in the literature with regard to addressing the community issue at hand in order to determine the level of effectiveness achieved. The research presented in this chapter shows varied levels of effectiveness achieved by the six collaboratives and findings from these analyses allow me to group the six collaboratives into different levels of effectiveness. This chapter will conclude with an understanding of the effectiveness of each collaborative at each level. In Chapter Four and Five, I use these groups to analyze the relationship between process and collaborative outcomes, answering a key research question of whether certain processes make effectiveness more likely.

Methods and Data

Survey information, coded interviews, and supplementary document analysis provide information with regard to the planned and implemented interventions in each initiative as well as the outcomes obtained by each group. Notes taken by collaborative staff contained meeting decisions and group strategies, as well as the overall goal for each collaborative. As noted, each group had one overarching goal and was charged with creating and implementing strategies to address that goal. The notes include strategies, or plan of action, developed by each group. I use a coding system developed by the LAP research team (of which I was a part) to code the strategies and interventions on their potential impact or strength. This coding outline is documented in the Appendix B. The strategy ranking is included as a variable in this analysis.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 27 members, with three to six people from each group interviewed. I used heterogeneity sampling in order to include a wide variety of opinions and views from each collaborative. The LAP members interviewed were from the public, private, and nonprofit sector, and their opinions and involvement in the collaborative varied. To ensure a diversity of perspectives, I used data from the original collaborative, such as job title and attendance, as well as snowball sampling, where I asked those interviewed for recommendations of additional people with different perspectives to interview. During interviews I explored individuals' backgrounds and roles within their home organizations, external factors in the community affecting collaboration, the collaboration process, and outcomes generated from the group. Participants were assured anonymity and encouraged to openly discuss the benefits, challenges, successes and failures associated with the collaborative. Interviews were conducted by phone and lasted thirty to sixty minutes. Each interview was transcribed and then coded using NVivo, a qualitative research software. I then took the coded information and analyzed it for themes within and across collaborative groups to distill important information. This allowed me to draw conclusions based on patterns and similarities within and across groups. The discussion and results section includes quotes and findings based on the themes and patterns that emerged in this coding, not simply one or two comments. Interview questions are located in Appendix C.

Part of my data comes from the Results Based Leadership Collaborative at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy where I served as a research assistant for three years. My role was to assess current Casey program methods, use the

information for assessment of success/impact, and identify areas for quality improvement to enhance program design and implementation. I also collected data, outlined research methods and implemented research projects. A survey was conducted as part of a research initiative that included eight LAPs from across the country, six of which are the LAPs in my sample. Participants were contacted via email and invited to participate. In exchange for completing the survey, they were offered one chance to win a \$100 Amazon gift certificate and six chances to win a \$25 Amazon gift certificate. As part of this research team, I designed and implemented the survey where I included information sought by both the team and my dissertation research questions. Questions from the survey are listed in Appendix D. Two hundred participants from these six case studies were initially contacted and 100 people took the survey, a response rate of 49.3%. Response rates for each group varied, with DeKalb County receiving the highest at 77.3% and Montgomery County the lowest at 32.4%. A breakdown of the response rates as well as survey demographics are located in Appendix E.

A link to the survey was provided in the initial contact email. Once participants began the survey they were informed that the goal of the survey was program evaluation and being undertaken for research purposes and that their responses would be kept entirely confidential and anonymous. They proceeded to respond to various questions regarding their impressions of LAP in its infancy and later in the LAP process as well as after the first year of implementation. The survey included 135 questions; however, for the purpose of this chapter I use only the 34 questions related to my research question.

The survey data show areas for potential bias. When asked whether survey participants were satisfied with the outcome of LAP and whether they considered it a success, Anne Arundel was uniformly positive. This could indicate that their results are biased toward the positive; however, this group did enjoy an almost 60 percent response rate. Baltimore City's survey results may be skewed given the amount of time that has lapsed between participants' involvement and the survey. The Baltimore City LAP was launched in 2003 and was disbanded in 2008. This means any participant had to recall details from 4 – 10 years ago. It was apparent in interviews that at times members struggled to recall events and specifics; nevertheless, often once they began talking and responding to questions many times they were able to recall more information. Over 80% of Montgomery County survey participants are still involved in the group; therefore their results may be skewed more toward the positive given they are still involved. Other groups averaged between 50 and 60%, except Polk, who did not continue to meet as a group after the formal LAP ended. At 32.4%, this group also possesses the lowest response rate.

Collaborative Effectiveness: A Qualitative Framework

While there has been an increase in research focusing on the management of a collaborative and the components of these groups, little attention has been paid to the outcomes of the collaborative as a whole (Provan and Milward, 1995; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Zakocs and Edwards, 2006). Provan and Milward (2001) note that much of the current research surrounds how to build networks and is largely anecdotal, while studies empirically linking group factors to effectiveness are missing

altogether. They also note that while networks have become a common mechanism for the delivery of public service, “evaluating their effectiveness is extremely complex and has generally been neglected.” This complexity comes from the fact that these groups include multiple organizations with multiple constituents who hold a variety of interests and needs, therefore making assessment problematic. Provan and Milward also cite the scarcity of good comparative data that are tied to outcomes as a reason for few studies focused on effectiveness.

Provan and Milward (1995) offer one of the most thorough examinations of network effectiveness by comparing community mental health systems. The authors collect data from surveys, interviews, documents and observations of agencies within

the network system as well as outcome data from samples of clients, their families and case managers. They conclude that effective networks: are integrated and coordinated centrally through a single core agency; include external control and funding systems that are direct and cohesive; enjoy adequate resources; and include conditions of general sustainability.

Later work by Provan and

Milward (2001) offers a framework for evaluating service network effectiveness at the community, network and organization/participation levels. They argue that

Table 1 Summary of Network Evaluation Relationships

Levels of network analysis	Key stakeholder groups	Effectiveness criteria
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals and Clients Client advocacy groups Funders Politicians Regulators General public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to community Building social capital Public perceptions that problem is being solved Changes in the incidence of the probl Aggregate indicators of client well-be
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals and agents Primary funders and regulators Network administrative organization Member organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network membership growth Range of services provided Absence of service duplication Relationship strength (multiplexity) Creation and maintenance of network administrative organization (NAO) Integration/coordination of services Cost of network maintenance Member commitment to network goal
Organization/participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agents and clients Member agency board and management Agency staff Individual clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency survival Enhanced legitimacy Resource acquisition Cost of services Service access Client outcomes Minimum conflict for multiprogram agencies across multiple networks

Figure 1 Provan and Milward (2001) Summary of Network Evaluation Relationships

different views of effectiveness at each level need to be considered when researching collaborative outcomes. A summary of their suggested variables can be seen in Figure 1. This theoretical dimension is considered critical in the literature considering networks, yet there are few studies that have been able to replicate the depth of their analysis (McGuire and Agranoff, 2011) and none have adapted their work for collaboratives.

A decade later scholars are still calling for more research addressing the effectiveness of collaboratives (Herranz, 2009; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011). Herranz (2009) builds on Provan and Milward's (2001) work by adding a robust framework to inform network performance management. Herranz uses indicators to reflect Provan and Milward's framework but limited his variables during his analysis of three case studies due to data availability. In addition, his study did not include preexisting performance targets by which to compare the groups and their outcomes. Herranz (2009) also notes that neither his study nor Provan and Milward's include accountability as a factor, stating this as an important aspect for future work. Finally, he suggests that an analysis that connects a sequence of processes to the outcomes achieved by a network is needed for future analysis.

While an argument has been made here and in Chapter One for the importance of measuring effectiveness at multiple collaborative levels, issues remain around evaluation itself that have yet to be addressed in this discussion or in Provan and Milward's framework. Collaboratives often resist traditional evaluation given their complexity and the difficulty in linking the actions of collaboratives directly to community level outcomes, yet much of the current research does not distinguish how

best to delineate and define the many actions of collaboratives, instead grouping together all collaborative actions as performance outcomes. Baum (2001) distinguishes between interventions and the outcomes of these actions. While traditional evaluation assesses the outcomes of a program or policy based on a set of standards for improvement (Weiss, 1998), collaboratives do not fit this model for two reasons. First, the goals of community initiatives, such as affecting change in community institutions and community populations, are complex and difficult to define. Second, the strategies associated with collaboratives require broad alliances and coalitions in order to be implemented, adding to evaluation complexity (Baum, 2001). This suggests researchers should distinguish interventions separately from outcomes. Baum (2001) recommends considering the intervention's community effect, or influence on community structures, policies and practices. He also suggests looking at both short and long-term effects. Finally, he notes that community initiatives are experiments, and will be partially successful at best, yet even those that fail offer opportunities for learning; therefore, it is even more important to analyze the implementation process or interventions in addition to outcomes.

In this chapter I provide a more robust approach to implementing Provan and Milward's (2001) framework than Herranz while also considering both the interventions and outcomes of collaboratives. With six case studies and a survey, I am able to better develop dependent variables that reflect the Provan and Milward framework while also expanding the framework to include an analysis of interventions based on their potential to affect community outcomes by using best practices informed by the literature. My framework includes indicators related to the

process by which the collaborative sought to achieve outcomes, another important distinction not made in previous research. These include variables such as accountability, resource generation and membership commitment. Unlike Herranz, each case includes predetermined performance targets and strategies for implementation, taken from collaborative notes collected in the first year. I am able to analyze the strategies outlined in each case and compare actual outcomes with the overarching goal of each group. Finally, I adapt Provan and Milward's (2001) framework adjusted for a non-hierarchical, voluntary community collaborative rather than large networks whose main focus is service provision. Variables in their framework related to service provision are self-evident and thus removed, with additional variables added based on theory from the collaborative literature presented earlier.

The following analysis will utilize an outlined framework to determine the overall level of effectiveness for each of my six collaboratives and break groups into high, moderate, and low performing groups. These distinctions are noted below as I outline the framework variables. Additionally it is important to note that the three levels of analysis should not be considered equal when it comes to outcomes. Community level outcomes and interventions are the ultimate goal of a collaborative and will therefore be weighted the highest in this analysis. Collaboratives and collaborative administrators look to satisfy the community outcomes first, collaborative outcomes (and survival) second, individual/organization last (Provan and Milward, 2001); therefore, this research will consider these weights in the analysis.

Analysis Variables

My framework and each effectiveness measure are defined and detailed below. A comparison of my variables to that of Provan and Milward (2001) is located in Appendix F. The framework includes a consideration of both the interventions and outcomes related to collaborative actions. It also includes indicators related to the process by which the collaborative sought to achieve outcomes.

Community Level Evaluation

Table 3 Community Level Framework Variables

Community Level		
Variables	Data Source	Definition of Variable
Implementation of best practice community-wide initiatives	Survey and Interview	Survey questions asked whether the LAP group has or plans to implement community-wide initiatives and whether these initiatives will have a significant impact on the problem being addressed. Interviews generated a list of initiatives, and these initiatives are then compared to best practices in the literature in order to evaluate their potential for affecting community outcomes.
Implementation of new policy or legislative change	Survey and Interview	Survey questions asked whether the group was able to make changes or create new policies to better serve their community and whether those were local, state or national policy changes.
Changes in the incidence of the problem	Survey and Interview	Questions asked whether the work of LAP resulted in a positive change associated with the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn) and had a strong potential to greatly impact the problem.

Provan and Milward (2001) note, “At the broadest level of analysis, community-based networks must be judged by the contribution they make to the communities they are trying to serve (p. 416).” My framework includes three measurements at the community level: Implementation of best practice community-

wide initiatives; implementation of new policy or legislative change; and changes in the incidence of the problem. In order to change a community indicator such as child readiness and recidivism, extensive community-wide initiatives and interventions usually must result from the collaboration. The facilitators encourage members to try a strategy or program in an area, then take it to a larger scale and replicate it for the larger community.

The first measurement includes an analysis as to whether groups *implemented best practice community-wide initiatives*. The survey and interviews asked whether these groups have or plan to implement such initiatives and whether they think these initiatives will have a significant impact on the problem being addressed.

Additionally, these interventions must be worthwhile and at a level to actually affect the problem at hand. While developing the strategy coding system mentioned above, the LAP research team (of which I was a part) identified best practices in the literature with regard to childhood readiness and recidivism. A checklist was created to evaluate whether strategies followed these best practices, and these are located in Appendix B. Overall the literature notes the importance of child physical health, child mental health, parental ability, family/parent demographic characteristics, home characteristics, early education from parents, and early childcare characteristics when addressing issues in school readiness. With regard to recidivism, the literature points to the importance of addressing issues related to employment, health, housing, substance abuse, and family and community issues. I utilize this checklist when evaluating the interventions described by the participants during interviews. A high performing collaborative will have multiple initiatives related to these best practices

while a low performing group will have few if any initiatives and one or less connected to best practices.

The second variable considers whether the group *implemented new policy or legislative change*. Often policy or legislative change is an important outcome from collaborative groups if they are negatively affecting the target population. Questions were posed in the survey and interviews as to whether the group was able to make changes or create new policies to better serve their community and whether those were local, state or national policy changes. Unfortunately interviews did not include a specific question related to policy or legislative changes so we cannot determine specific changes to evaluate unless noted spontaneously by interview participants. Since this variable is community dependent, it is not essential for high performing groups; however, those groups demonstrating this outcome will be given more weight for effectiveness.

The final variable, *changes in the incidence of the problem*, relies on individual interpretation with regard to community level change, a method endorsed by scholars (Agranoff, 2007; Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000; Chen, 2010) and important given not all of my cases have community data available. I was able to ascertain through survey and interview questions whether members thought aggregate changes had occurred in the community and whether the LAP played a role in that change. High performing groups demonstrate an impact on community changes and believe their efforts contribute to community level data change. Low performing groups either do not consider or demonstrate community impact or are satisfied with efforts not intended to create higher level aggregate changes.

Collaborative Level Evaluation

Table 4 Collaborative Level Framework Variables

<i>Collaborative Level</i>		
Variable	Data Source	Definition of Variable
Membership commitment and growth	Survey and Interview	Questions asked about membership commitment in the early and later stages of the LAP. Questions around membership attrition and growth/membership post Casey funding were asked in the interviews.
Member Driven Accountability System	Survey and Interview	Questions asked whether the group employed strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments, whether this responsibility was informal or formal, and whether driven by coach facilitators or members themselves. The survey measure looks at the percent of people that said the accountability was driven by members and the percent change of this perspective from early to later in the process.
Collaborative Self-Assessment and Outcomes	Survey and Interview	Questions asked whether the resulting plan from their LAP group addressed the needs, concerns, and values of the organization they represented as well as whether they were satisfied with the current outcomes(s) of the LAP process. Interviews inquired into the level of conflict the group experienced as they decided upon strategies and the individual's overall evaluation of collaborative outcomes. The strategy impact variable includes strategies coded by impact or strength according to best practices in the literature.
Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year	Survey and Interview	Survey variables include the percent of respondents who continued to meet after the last session, and the percent who meet regularly today. Interviews asked questions around the current group and its administration. Survey and interview questions asked whether their LAP group was able to generate new and/or additional funds to continue their work, information on the different types of resources and fundraising efforts conducted by the group as well as their overall level of difficulty in acquiring funds.

Collaborative level variables consider those that related to the establishment and survival of the collaborative in order to generate and implement interventions and outcomes. My analysis looks at the establishment and strength of strategies, whether members are accountable to those strategies, and whether the group established an

administrative framework upon the completion of the Casey grant that generated new revenue for the group. Additionally I consider the level of member commitment and growth of the collaborative as a whole. During interviews I was able to ascertain whether the group struggled with membership, whether the members felt there was a higher than normal level of attrition as the group went forward, and whether the group has continued to grow after the Casey grant ended. Finally, I looked at whether participants established a structured mechanism to encourage accountability within the group as well as the overall level of accountability among members. High performing groups generated strategies connected to the best practices in the literature, included committed and accountable members, did not experience a high level of attrition as the process progressed, and established a structured group that continued to raise resources after the initial Casey grant.

Organization and Participant Level Evaluation

Table 5 Organization/Participant Level Framework Variables

Organization/Participant Level		
Variables	Data Source	Definition of Variable
Individual self-assessment of personal skills and relationships	Survey and Interview	Survey questions asked whether the participant has gained new or improved skills; better working relationships with other individuals involved in this work; participated in new initiatives or activities (independent of LAP activities); has a better understanding of this issue and the population served; made contacts that are useful to them or their sector/organization. Interview questions asked about the leadership development component in LAP and whether participants had gained new skills personally.
Increased agency outcomes	Survey and Interview	Survey and interview questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in greater community legitimacy with clients and reputation with peers and funders and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in participant's greater ability to obtain funds and acquire new resources for their individual

		agency.
Increased client outcomes for organization	Survey	Questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in increased ease of client access to services and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in higher number of services offered, quality of services and coordinating care with other agencies.

Provan and Milward (2001) maintain, “Although network- and community-level outcomes are valid ways of evaluating networks, it is important to recognize that individual agencies and their managers are still motivated partly by self-interest.” (pg. 420) Members of collaboratives must first ensure the survival of their own agencies, and being a member of a collaborative imparts costs, namely time and money. This level of analysis looks whether agencies experience increased outcomes for their organization as well as their clients. Since the Casey framework puts an emphasis on leadership development, this level also includes a variable analyzing individual self-assessment of new personal skills and relationships gained through the process. Since this level is not as critical to overall collaborative effectiveness, it is not essential for high performing groups to include positive outcomes with all of these variables; however, those groups demonstrating outcomes at the level will be given more weight for effectiveness.

Results:

Anne Arundel County: Community Level Effectiveness

Eighty-six percent of kindergarteners entered school ready to learn in 2011-2012. This was up from 51% in 2001 when the test first launched and 69% in 2006 when the Anne Arundel LAP began. Members in Anne Arundel believe their efforts have attributed to this rise, and described a long list of community-wide programs and outcomes. One of the best practices methods for increasing school readiness is to

ensure children have access to books and that parents utilize the books and read to their children. Anne Arundel has collected 15,000 – 20,000 books to distribute through various service agencies. The group created a program with all the hospitals in the county to ensure every child born in Anne Arundel is sent home with a book, a packet for parents on early learning, and a library card. This intervention promotes best practices related to increasing early education practices from parents. They were also instrumental in getting the county a Judy Center, partnerships between local school systems, local agencies, and community-based organizations for the purpose of improving young children’s school readiness. Judy Center services include quality early childhood education, health, and family support services (Achieving School Readiness, 2002). The implementation of a Judy Center cuts across multiple best practice recommendations around early childcare, child health, family characteristics and early childhood family practices.

Mark, a longtime advocate for children in Anne Arundel, noted a variety of programs resulting from the Anne Arundel LAP that are permeating different populations, “We’re working with the medical community. There’s a doctor at the Anne Arundel Medical Center who has started under the auspice of the Medical Center a Community Health Center, and we’ve worked with him to include as a part of the well baby visit developmental screening for all kids 0-5. And their population is largely Hispanic, largely low-income...” He also noted that political leaders in the county are now more aware of early childhood as an issue and the work is more at the forefront of the county agenda. Mark continued, “Now we have some initiatives going with the schools that are very promising. The county schools now have a Race

to the Top early literacy committee. The early childhood coalition is working with that committee to do things like take programs that are successful at the Judy Center and spin them out at the elementary schools. There was a parent and child program that is going on at the Judy Center that shows parents how to play with their kids, how to read with their kids. We're hoping to spin that out in the fall to three more schools." Patricia, a member of the school system, concluded, "So when you put all of that together, did it make a difference? Absolutely."

One hundred percent of survey respondents reported changes in the incidence of the problem and an increased awareness of the problem. Almost all participants noted the implementation of community-wide initiatives. Two thirds of participants reported a policy change from the LAP work and almost all report support from legislators and external constituents. Members noted in interviews positive effects of collaboration as well as engaging the school system for the first time. When describing the greatest results from the group, Patricia summarized a common theme, "I think [the effect is] two-fold. One it's truly evolved into the early childhood coalition, which is legitimately a partner with the school system. So it's taken all of the stakeholders... and everybody was doing their own thing... And now we're all working together collaboratively. Now we're all on the same page. So that piece has been invaluable."

Anne Arundel County: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

All of people interviewed in Anne Arundel were extremely positive about their relationships and the work they are doing. They mentioned very committed people still involved in the effort because they felt the work was making a significant

difference. Betty, a social service provider, said, “I don’t know what it cost us... but from my perspective, it was money well spent. Because it created something here, in this county, that has lived on. I believe will continue to live on.” The survey shows Anne Arundel with one of the highest positive changes in member commitment over the course of the LAP. Anne Arundel has continued to bring in new members and leaders have stepped up to facilitate the group. Overall those interviewed felt the accountability among the group has been high and the group embraced the use of a formal accountability system. Carol, a longtime member of the early childhood community, expressed a common sentiment, “I am very sure that [the accountability system] worked. Because we were on a mission to get things done. We knew we had to get this done.”

While some experienced frustration at the speed and breadth of the strategy process, the work in creating strategies did not include much conflict. Three quarter of respondents felt the plan addressed the needs and concern of the agency and 100% were satisfied with the outcome(s) of the LAP process. The strategies of Anne Arundel scored the highest of all groups in terms of potential impact to affect the issue of child readiness.

Half of those interviewed felt it was a struggle to create infrastructure and obtain funding once Casey and its money left, but all interviewed mentioned that the group has been able to fundraise and generate resources. Over 90% of survey respondents noted the group’s ability to garner outside resources for their work. The group has hired a part-time project manager and created a structure for continued group performance, which includes tracking commitments and a formal decision-

making process. The group is hoping to expand its role and influence in the county through a federal government early learning challenge grant called Race to the Top. Mark described its impact, “Right now we’re waiting to find out what happens with the new Race to the Top grant that Maryland got because it mandates early childhood councils in every county, and we’re assuming we’re going to morph into that.” Carol agreed, “Actually we’ve stopped doing that work [fundraising] as we’ve found that the early learning challenge money is \$40,000 in the first year, and if we get that money, then that’s going to basically allow us to continue what we’re doing and extend our strategic plan for another 5 years. We’re in our fifth year now, and we really want to do an extension of the strategic plan.”

Anne Arundel County: Organization/Participant Level Effectiveness

The feedback around the leadership development piece of the LAP model was mixed. Half of those interviewed in Anne Arundel felt their leadership skills had increased while the other half felt they had them already. Anne Arundel showed the highest survey results related to individual skill development and relationship building as almost 90% noted improvement.

Interviews and surveys were also mixed around agency impact. Two-thirds surveyed in Anne Arundel saw enhanced agency legitimacy and an increase in client outcomes due to their involvement in LAP. Half of participants noted an increase in service access and less than 40% noted organizational resource acquisition due to LAP. Several participants noted in interviews specific ways their organization had changed their strategy due to LAP. Betty said, “That whole getting kids ready for school. If I’d of said, ‘That’s our mission,’ my [employees] would have said, ‘But

what's that got to do with us?' I was like, 'Okay, well wait. Well, you work with families with little kids. Let's talk about how we can help parents have quality time with their kids, be nurturing to their children and read to them.' What a powerful thing." Patricia agreed. "[T]he school systems sometimes takes ownership of anything that smells of school, the whole readiness thing. So this was truly the first time... the school system is looking to other partners and truly saying we are partners... My bosses said you have full sanction, I don't care if you have a meeting off school property, go do it."

Baltimore City: Community Level Effectiveness

When the school readiness test was launched in 2001, only 28% of kindergarteners in Baltimore City scored ready to learn. This number was an even lower 26.5% in 2003 when the Baltimore City LAP formed. By 2006 this number had risen to 58% and in 2011-2012 73% of kindergarteners enter school ready to learn. Sarah, a member of the public sector, believed this rise is due in part to the efforts of the Baltimore City LAP. "Oh, I think that's across the board. Everybody would say [LAP's work contributed to the rise in test scores], that was the jumpstart that was needed... I think that the conditions were right but... BLAP was kind of the accelerant that [was] needed." All participants but one in Baltimore City agreed with Sarah that their efforts contributed significantly to this change in the community.

Participants described a number of successes during the approximately seven years Baltimore City LAP was at work. The group was able to garner resources though grant support that allowed for programs to increase early language acquisition.

Members created an estimated 8,000 – 10,000 literacy kits over a five-year period that they distributed to home visiting organizations as well as child care organizations to make the environment more literacy rich. This intervention promotes best practices related to increasing early education practices from parents. The group also created a Countdown to Kindergarten initiative that included both a communications strategy as well as work with schools and communities to register children for kindergarten. Kindergarten transition is noted as a best practice in the literature. The school system was an active partner who, as Sarah noted, “came through with a commitment of something like three thousand more Pre-K slots, or something incredible”, which relates to the best practice of expanding early childhood education opportunities.

Participants mentioned the group’s ability to work collectively and be on the same page rather than working in silos. They mentioned an increase in communication among agencies and with the community. In addition, participants noted the importance of going through this process together. Donna, a long-time leader in the city, noted the significance, “[The group] was really able to look at the whole process and see where there were things that were having an impact on the numbers... it shined a light on the issue, but we were also able to pick up all the baskets and look under them. In any kind of change process, people often look at the big issues, but when you really break down and look at the total process from beginning to end, you find all kinds of little details that are impeding process and impeding positive outcomes... It’s just amazing what you find out when you have the time to really go back and look at every little step.”

Baltimore City showed mixed results from the survey questions related to community level analysis. Respondents were recalling events that took place many years prior to the survey, which could have affected their answers. In addition, interpretation of survey questions could have been skewed given the Baltimore City LAP was together for many years but has since disbanded. Just over half of respondents agreed the group had implemented community-wide initiatives while two-thirds agreed the group had achieved policy changes and garnered support from legislators and external stakeholders. Almost 80 percent felt their work had achieved positive results and two-thirds felt the work would make a significant impact.

Baltimore City: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

Baltimore City participants described a high level of shared member commitment. The survey showed Baltimore City as having the highest percent increase in membership commitment over the course of LAP. Sarah noted a common theme: “We had these things that were springing up... that was just fortuitous but having the BLAP container as a place to do it, and then to have this five year plan that we were writing where we could embed a lot of strategies that folks were very interested in... that all became a way of acting on what really felt like a shared commitment. I do think that there very much was this interest in our group because [readiness scores] were really, really low... something had to be done.”

The majority of those interviewed felt that accountability was high in Baltimore. While the formal accountability tool used in other groups and described in Chapter One had not yet been developed, participants did remember making public work commitments and reporting back to the group. Donna described their process,

“Yes, [the system was helpful]. Anytime that you write something down, first of all, it’s such a simple little thing, and know you’re going to be called on it the next time you came together. Sometimes there were groups that met separately. We had little objectives under major goals, and some of the work groups got together under those objectives or big areas... then come back to the group.”

Baltimore City’s strategies were the also high with regard to effectiveness. Both Baltimore City and Anne Arundel used best practices found during the state-LAP to model their strategies. While some experienced frustration at the speed and breadth of the strategy process, the final work in creating strategies did not include much conflict. Almost 80% of respondents felt the resulting strategic plan addressed the needs of their organization. However, only slightly more than 50% were satisfied with the current outcomes of the LAP process. This number could be affected because the group no longer meets.

The Baltimore City LAP kept going for many years and has been heralded as a success within the Casey Foundation, but those interviewed within the group and within Casey are unclear at what point Casey completely pulled its funding and facilitation or when the group finally dissolved. Since this LAP occurred many years ago, many were fuzzy with regard to the timeline and discussions related to relationships were not clear as to when they were occurring. Members within Casey cannot clarify this information either. Several members mentioned that they were able to garner additional resources and that their LAP work made the collaborative attractive to additional grants and outside funding. Overall it seems that the Baltimore City group lasted for 7 or more years and was eventually integrated to

standing committees with the city, which speaks to its sustainability and collaborative success. Donna concluded, “We eventually died, but we did keep going and I think still kept up a light on that movement and looking at the steps in the process... to change the numbers.”

Baltimore City: Organization/Participant Level Effectiveness

The majority of those interviewed in Baltimore City noted improvement in the area of personal leadership development. The group rated themselves high in the survey around new personal skills and relationships with almost 80% noting improvement. Participants noted that agencies started to do their work differently, saying that they began to see LAP tools such as results based analysis come up in other meetings outside of the collaborative. Donna summarized this by saying, “[I saw] significant changes in how people conducted themselves as leaders.”

Approximately half of those surveyed implemented LAP strategies in their home agencies and half noted an increase in client outcomes due to LAP. Approximately 40% surveyed saw an increase in client legitimacy and resources due to LAP and only 20% saw an increase in services. Interviews told a different story as the majority of those interviewed noted changes in their home organization due to LAP. This change could be a result of the fact that as participants discussed their experience more memories and details came back to them despite the large time gap. Sarah noted a variety of ways her department was influenced by LAP, from institutionalizing the a national literacy program to incorporating literacy kits in all of their home visiting services and training their home visitors on early language acquisition. All but one participant mentioned new programs in their agencies and

half of those interviewed mentioned that LAP was an achievement their agency pointed to externally. One participant said, “It was one of the things we were able to point to as a success, that we kind of were heading it up in an accountability way. And it was a success not because we were able to pull the people together and continue to do it after Casey was no longer there... But to me, it was a success because it was an example of how if you use data well, you can achieve results.”

DeKalb County: Community Level Effectiveness

Unlike Maryland counties, DeKalb County does not have a community-wide data indicator with which to measure their work. The State of Georgia has changed its assessments since the launch of LAP, making previous years impossible to compare. The current assessments do not allow for a thorough evaluation of kindergarten readiness. Two-thirds of the survey respondents felt their efforts had strong potential to impact the problem of school readiness. Given the size, complexity and diversity of the county, many members in interviews were hesitant to speak with regard to community level change; yet, all members interviewed reported different stories of success. One nonprofit was able to establish a pre-k program for refugee children due to the relationships formed in LAP, which relates to the best practice of expanding early childhood education opportunities. Members noted the strong partnerships that formed between agencies in the group, including the school system and the United Way. John, new to early childhood but not DeKalb County social issues, noted, “The LAP enabled me to make contact with people in the early learning community who were willing to help. To me, that was an amazing thing...

the partnerships and developing relationships of one kind or another helped develop the agency, that was one of the main advantages of that program.” The school system was described as a minor player at the start of the LAP but became a significant partner as the group matured. Susan, a long time leader and advocate in early childhood education, told a common story: “She [the representative from the school system] became one of our biggest supporters and now the co-chair of the group is a school board person.” The LAP group also played a role in the creation of KinderCamp, which assists in the transition from pre-k to kindergarten, noted as a best practice in the literature. Susan noted, “Believe it or not, even with a bad economy, those KinderCamps are still going.” The group also worked to expand an existing program called Parents As Teachers, which provides in-home services to assist parents in early childhood development. This intervention promotes best practices related to increasing early education practices from parents. John added, “... that program was expanded and ultimately got a pretty significant grant from the state, so that program expanded exponentially.”

Survey respondents support the interviews as two-thirds agreed the group had implemented community-wide initiatives. Three-fourths reported a policy change and over 80 percent reported support from legislators and external stakeholders. Given the high response rate (over 65%) garnered in this group, the survey is a strong factor in their story.

DeKalb County: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

DeKalb participants described a small but committed group. The group membership diminished significantly over the process, from approximately 40

members to 15, yet no one interviewed thought this was a problem. A high level of commitment was described by those interviewed. Susan used a member from county government as an example, "... he was pretty funny because he'd walk in and say "I have no idea what I'm doing here, but you made me come, so I guess I'll stay for a while." He's now become a total champion of early learning for our work, and he's now being asked to serve on a bunch of committees because he is so committed." Survey results show DeKalb with a modest increase in membership commitment at approximately 6%.

The majority of those interviewed also felt accountability was high and the accountability system helped. John expressed a common theme, "I think accountability was pretty good. The process forced you to write down what you were going to do. And the first thing you did when you got back to the next meeting was tell what progress you made. A lot was done by committee. Other people were working on the same issue, so if someone was following behind, there'd be a process to self-correct between meetings. There were some people who didn't deliver... but I think the core group of 20 were pretty good about delivering what they promised."

Input around collaborative performance was mixed. No one interviewed mentioned significant conflict during the generation of strategies, instead they mentioned using the process and data to drive strategy. One member said, "[E]verybody is sort of partial to their own wants and desires and ideas, but we were able to work those out. We did have the statistics and the information we needed to make a wise decision and not just go with the passion, but look at what is the wise decision – what we have and what we need." DeKalb's strategies were mid-level in

their strength and ranked in the middle of the group. Just over half surveyed agreed the resulting plan for LAP addressed the needs of their organization; however, three quarter of survey respondents were satisfied with the outcome(s) of LAP.

DeKalb has been one of the most successful groups at generating resources to hire staff and facilitation to create an ongoing structured group. They continue to use a structured accountability system and decision-making process and continue to pay for a facilitator for their meetings. John noted, “I think the biggest thing is that money always matters... because of the collaborative, DeKalb was able to apply for the Governor’s office grant. And it’s a pretty nice size grant that included a system administrator that is able to staff the group.” The group had a visit from a team in Michigan to learn about their work involving early childhood education. This was affirmed in the survey where 90% agreed the group had garnered external resources to continue their work.

DeKalb County: Organization/Participant Level Effectiveness

Over 80% of survey respondents noted an increase in personal skills and relationships. Half of those interviewed felt their leadership skills had increased while the other half felt they had them already. John said, “I think most of the leadership exercises didn’t produce results that were worth the effort.” Another participant disagreed, “I felt like the leadership skills, the ability to resolve problems with a group and to go away with hopefully everybody having more ownership of the group because they felt more invested with it. It [benefitted me personally]. I got a lot [out of] leadership skill [building, such as] the knowledge of how a county can work together. That was pretty awesome. [How] a county of different professionals

can come together and work together. I was proud to be a part of that.” All those interviewed noted strong relationships within the group. John appreciated this aspect, saying, “[B]uilding relationships [allowed people to set aside their own agenda]... the people cared about me and cared about [the issue], I’d go out of my way to help them because I knew they’d help me.”

In terms of agency outcomes, approximately 60% of those surveyed noted an increase in agency legitimacy and client outcomes and half saw an increase in service access. The majority of those interviewed in DeKalb also mentioned that their agency visibility went up. Almost 70% noted an increase in resources for their organization. This was confirmed in interviews as two people mentioned they were able to receive grants or funding for their individual agency because of their involvement with LAP. The nonprofit member who established a new pre-k program through LAP initiatives said, “I used to go back there just to sit in the back of the room and watch [our new pre-k program], it was so impressive... It really changed lives. And would this have happened if I wasn’t a part of LAP? Maybe. Maybe I would’ve found a second wind or someone who could help me, but I think I was running out of options at that point.”

Indianapolis: Community Level Effectiveness

Indianapolis/Marion County does not publicly release recidivism data, nor is it clear who and how they collect their data. This is an issue the Indianapolis LAP struggled with from the beginning of its tenure. It is improving, with some data being made available to a nonprofit called Community Solutions. Their internal report

shows that within one year of release, 28.3% of ex-offenders in Indianapolis/Marion County were returned to prison in 2008. This number dropped to 26.5% in 2009 and 23.5% in 2010 (Community Solutions). This is significant as a recent research study conducted by the Center for Criminal Justice Research at Indiana University found that reducing the recidivism rate by one percent in Marion County results in keeping approximately 46 offenders from returning to prison, saving the state of Indiana 28,802 prison bed days and \$1.55 million (Jarjoura and Haight). By comparison, the Bureau of Labor reports that during 2007, a total of 1,180,469 persons on parole were at-risk of reincarceration in the United States. This includes persons under parole supervision on January 1 or those entering parole during the year. Of these parolees, about 16% were returned to incarceration in 2007 (US Department of Justice, 2007).

The majority of those interviewed in the Indianapolis LAP said their efforts were contributing to this decrease in recidivism. Ann, a nonprofit leader, expressed a common sentiment, saying, "I believe we did attribute to a reduction in our rate of recidivism. I think it's as much about an awareness and a conversation, having the data, having people focused on the data." Data was described as an important outcome of the group. Participants mentioned the importance of using new data, noting that the Corrections Office now shares data they never shared with community agencies before. Kimberly, a nonprofit member and long time advocate around recidivism, noted, "We've taken data to a whole other level. I mean, before this group started, we did not know the specific information about the people we were trying to serve, we do now. Now we know why they go back, what's the issue, their

education level. The community didn't have data like that before, so we take that data and manipulate strategies around what we get from the data.”

Multiple community-wide initiatives were mentioned. Over 80% of survey respondents in Indianapolis agreed the group had implemented community-wide initiatives and 70% felt their efforts would make a significant impact on the problem of recidivism. Several people pointed to success related to working with the Office of Motor Vehicles to allow ex-offenders the ability to obtain IDs, an important first step in helping ex-offenders reintegrate into the community through jobs and housing. Ann described the situation, “[T]he guy from Motor Vehicles said, “I don't understand why you all aren't doing that, that's our job, we need to do that. . .” And within a very short timeframe, he did. He figured out systems to get us those ID's quickly and so obviously, when he understood the issue he understood the problem, and he understood that it wasn't really everybody else's issue, it was his issue and his department. He was not the head guy at the MV, but pretty high up there and he went back and got it done really quickly.” Half of those interviewed pointed to a program linked to Technical Rules violations as a major success of the group. The group found that a significant number of ex-offenders are returned to prison for violations of conditions of parole, or a Technical Rule Violation. They realized many of these violations were not for crimes but minor offenses such as missing a treatment session. “I think that the technical rules violations changes had a dramatic impact on what's happening in this state.” The other half interviewed felt this program fell short. Ann agreed, saying “[The] strategy was strong, but. . . because we found this little pocket of resources, and somebody had an ability to push through and in the position to XYZ

with it, I'm not positive that was the greatest response." Survey responses also seemed mixed as 60% of survey respondents attributed a policy change to the group.

Several people contributed an increased effectiveness in the community to the fact that they are working collectively, increasing communication among agencies and creating strong relationships and networks. Almost all participants noted the relationships and collaborations that formed a significant outcome of LAP. Eric said, a long-time public employee, said, "I think the most common result was bringing everybody in the room and drive toward the same mission and still have the passion we had all the way up until the end. And building the relationships, establishing and maintaining relationships of people I never knew or only saw their names, and then once we developed relationships, it still carries on." Overall the impressions during interviews on community-level outcomes were mixed. Richard, another public sector employee, was skeptical. "Looking back to the LAP, I think the bottom line was that Marion County may not have been the best place in the world to do a LAP, I don't know that it was ready... moving Marion County is like trying to get a line of elephants to tap dance together."

Indianapolis: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

Overall input around collaborative level effectiveness was mixed. The group has brought in new members, but the issue of membership is a problem for the group as they have experienced significant conflict throughout their tenure around how and whether to add new members. This conflict was often destructive to the group, which I will detail in the Chapter Four. In addition, several people I interviewed noted that the overall level of involvement and member commitment has dropped, which is

reflected in the survey as numbers show a 6% drop in member commitment as the group progressed. Some feel it's not the same since the facilitators left, others feel the group dynamic has changed due to new members and the number of state government members leaving with the facilitators. Kimberly shared a common outlook: “[For] some, their job roles changed; some, honestly, when the facilitators left, we didn’t have anyone to police the conversation in the room and so I think some people thought, “Okay, I don’t know where this is going to go, this is probably not the best use of my time.”” Members noted the difficulty in orienting new members and getting them as invested and trained as the original core.

Accountability was described as mixed. The majority of those interviewed discussed the fact that the LAP model was created to increase accountability and have participants hold themselves accountable; however, the majority noted that overall accountability ebbed and flowed depending on the complexity of the work. Eric noted, “If I was to give a percentage? I would say initially, because it’s like a bell curve, initially not so much, then at certain times really high, and then not so much... first we got some low -hanging fruit, for lack of a better term, and then we went after some big stuff, and then some of that big stuff got bogged down because it wasn’t like the low-hanging fruit.” All those interviewed noted the accountability system was used; however, the perspective on its usefulness was mixed.

Collaborative performance feedback was moderate. No one interviewed mentioned significant conflict during the development of the strategic plan, yet only approximately half of those surveyed felt the strategies reflected the priorities of their agency. Seventy percent of those surveyed agreed they were satisfied with the

outcome(s) of the LAP process; however, their strategies were not rated as very strong given the literature around best practices.

The group has been very successful in raising funds to continue their work, especially at immediately after the Casey grant ended. They were able to hire their original facilitators for a significant period of time after the original Casey grant, the only LAP group able to do so. These facilitators trained group members to facilitate and then transitioned out of the work. The group continues to meet today and use a structured accountability system and decision-making process, but their current source of revenue is unclear.

Indianapolis: Organization/Participant Level Effectiveness

Indianapolis rated themselves very high when it came to individual self-assessment and relationships. Almost 80% of those surveyed noted improvement with new personal skills and relationships. This was confirmed in my interviews as the majority of people referenced improved leadership skills and improved relationships across agencies. Ann summarized this by saying, “Now I understand that I was involved in a very great leadership opportunity. But I don’t think I did in the beginning . . . I was brought in because I know about re-entry, and I’m a player in the re-entry community. I didn’t know personally that I was going to be given the opportunity to learn a different way to lead, a different way to motivate group work and all of that . . . I mean that’s the greatest part.”

Approximately 40% surveyed noted an increase in agency legitimacy and increased resources for their agencies. Approximately 40% of participants surveyed reported service access while almost 60% have increased client outcomes due to

LAP. Participants in interviews noted new partnerships and connections and two mentioned the creation of new programs. But overall interviews showed mixed outcomes for home organizations. Ann said, “I think the relationships I have been able to form have brought opportunities to [my organization]... I’m the president of [a volunteer organization], I feel like I’ve been able to use my knowledge of the LAP processes to sort of move that volunteer group as well... So I’m able to use some of those skills in a different area.” Alternatively, Richard felt the effort was a waste of time for him and his organization. “[I]t’s pretty apparent I never saw any results that indicated that we had any impact on the recidivism rate in Marion County, and quite frankly, part of that is some players in Marion County not willing to make some changes and not willing to take a look at what there doing. And at that stage of the game, I’ve got other things that I need to do.”

Montgomery County: Community Level Effectiveness

Eighty-one percent of kindergarteners entered Montgomery County schools ready to learn in 2011-2012. This is up from 61% in 2001 when the test first launched and 68% in 2006 when the Montgomery County LAP began. In interviews with the Montgomery LAP, no one felt the work of LAP contributed to this rise of readiness scores in the county. Few community-wide initiatives were mentioned. The group has not created community-wide programs or programs/initiatives that deal directly with children and families. Two people mentioned that the LAP developed a one-pager for parents. Tracie, a long-time member of the early childhood community, noted, “[It was] not necessarily just for kindergarten but to be better

prepared for school and life. It was Read to Me, Talk to Me, Play with Me and we translated it into five languages and have distributed throughout the county.”

The group holds two events a year around education and awareness building. Most participants noted this as the group’s most significant achievement. Legislators and people working in the field of education are invited to hear speakers or panels. Participants noted that these events were not going to bring the readiness scores up, but instead are meant to build awareness. Overall participants were happy with these events and with the relationships involved in the current group, but several interviewees noted that they would have achieved this even without LAP. One person felt LAP had actually slowed their progress as a community given the time intensive process involved in LAP and the conflict that occurred in the group. Tracie summarized this sentiment, saying “When at the end when we came up with our target areas for young children at risk I think probably all of that would have been done anyway, it’s just that we did it within the context of the LAP group... I certainly don't think they were a result of the LAP process... I think it would have happened probably earlier without LAP.”

Montgomery County survey results show a very different story with 80% of the respondents agreeing the group had implemented community-wide initiatives and the work had resulted in a positive change in the community. Seventy percent felt their work would make a significant impact. Approximately 80% of the respondents reported support from external stakeholders and 50% reported a policy change due to the work of LAP.

Montgomery County: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

Input around collaborative effectiveness was generally negative in Montgomery County. Only one person noted a high level of member commitment within the group. The majority of those interviewed noted a high attrition rate as the group progressed. Emily, a public sector member and long-time member of the early childhood community, said, “There was attrition and I was part of it. I didn’t lose it entirely but there were times I did miss or miss portions of a meeting. There were fewer people, I think we lost of the diversity of the group...” Those interviewed felt people left for different reasons, including the high demands of the group, the slow pace of the work and absence of strategy development, the incorporation of leadership building into the process, conflict and personality clashes and a feeling that they were endlessly processing and not actually moving to action. Elizabeth, a nonprofit member, expressed a common sentiment, “I think people dropped out because of the time. It was a lot of time to have to devote to it. And for people whose [involvement was] tangential to their regular job, they dropped out... it would be one thing if we were doing something... we would just be sitting around endlessly processing.”

Almost 90% of those surveyed agreed the group used a member-driven accountability system; however, the majority of those interviewed did not support this statement. Tracie expressed a widespread perspective, “I think most for most people, it was an empty exercise. I don't think it really caught on.” Elizabeth agreed, “It may have been embraced by some. I thought it was sort of tiresome.” Only one person interviewed felt accountability and follow through among the group was high.

Collaborative performance feedback was mixed. Approximately three-fourth of survey respondents agreed the resulting plan met their organizational needs and were satisfied with the outcome(s) of LAP; yet, the overwhelming majority of participants interviewed discussed collaborative performance as low. Tracie expressed a common outlook: “Everybody was very frustrated because nothing was happening. We were doing exercises that didn't seem to lead us anywhere and that we didn't feel as if we were publishing anything. It was very frustrating. We examined the kindergarten assessment scores, although, that would have been very easy to have started in the first or second of our meetings. We didn't start doing that until maybe the eighth or ninth meeting so that's when it felt like we started to at least do something that was related to what we were there for. A lot of the LAP exercises and things kind of prevented us from getting to the point where we needed to get to.” The majority of those I interviewed noted that the group struggled to develop strategies, causing the same frustration among other members. The strategies developed by the group were rated mid-level in their capacity to affect the problem.

Montgomery County has continued as a small group. Tracie noted, “Well finally after all the meetings, with the small group that was left, we established what we call our Early Childhood Congress which continues to meet still as a steering committee each year... we have no money and no staff. It's [made of] those of us who are very, very committed to child care and see the value of coordinating.” Seventy percent of those surveyed agreed the group has been able to generate resources to continue their work; however, all those interviewed said the group has struggled with funding since the Casey funding ceased. Another member said, “[W]e

put on two events a year, a legislative briefing and an educational event, and every time we think oh we're not going to be able to do this. We don't have any money.”

Montgomery County: Organizational/Participant Level Effectiveness

Montgomery County survey participants responded very positively with regard to an increase in leadership skills and relationships despite interviews showing an overall negative view around additional skills gained through the LAP process. All those interviewed in Montgomery noted an increase in relationships with some describing their ability to think more collectively and make more connections in the community.

In terms of agency outcomes, the survey results were mixed, with 60% and 70% noting an increase in agency legitimacy and client outcomes and alternatively only slightly more than one third noting an increase in resources or services. Eighty-five percent of respondents said they have implemented different strategies due to their involvement in LAP. The interviews were uniformly neutral or negative when it came to questions around the impact of LAP on participants' home organizations. Tracie noted, “My supervisor was similarly frustrated with the process... I think our distress with how things were going was communicated to [our organization]. I think the [accountability partner] was aware of it... you know it was kind of frustrating to see how we began and how we ended with just such a very, very small group.” Elizabeth expressed a similar sentiment, noting that the relationships she made would have occurred regardless of LAP. There were no specific organizational impacts noted in the interviews that support the survey results.

Polk County: Community Level Effectiveness

Like DeKalb County, Polk County does not have reliable county level data in which to measure their work. The State of Iowa has changed its assessments since the launch of LAP, making previous years impossible to compare. Participants did not mention current data as the Polk County LAP no longer meets. Those interviewed shared few results from the LAP group and no community-wide programs. Several noted that the group created brochures in multiple languages to try to increase public awareness of early childhood education in different communities. In addition, some noted that the group wanted to hold a kindergarten readiness camp in the summer, but no one could give details about how or whether it was implemented. These accomplishments were the only ones mentioned. Polk County survey responses were also uniformly negative. Only a quarter reported a policy change. One third agreed they had implemented community initiatives and the same felt that the efforts of the group had made a positive impact.

Polk County: Collaborative Level Effectiveness

The survey showed member commitment in Polk County decreased as the LAP progressed. The majority of those interviewed noted the high attrition rate as the group went on and felt it was a big problem. As in the Montgomery case, those interviewed felt people left for different reasons, including the high demands of the group and a feeling that they were endlessly processing and not actually moving to action. Barbara, a service provider, summarized this phenomenon: “People couldn’t see where it was going, so people dropped. And you could’ve had stronger players... the ones that hung in there were basically educators and daycare providers, and that

wasn't the right group that needed to be at the table at the end of the day.” Caroline, a member of the school system, agreed, “I think there were plenty of people who were still very committed to the result of better outcomes for children, but I think there was a sense of frustration that not only I had but other people too as it went on... [frustration] with the time commitment and... with the process.” There were no positive comments about group accountability and the survey shows only 40% felt the group used a member-driven accountability system. Barbara noted a common sentiment, “Maybe it was a good tool, I see it as cumbersome, and I never did it because I couldn't take on one more thing.”

Approximately one third of survey respondents were satisfied with the outcome(s) of LAP. Caroline noted, “I have to say [the outcomes were] kind of weak and maybe I'm being unfair, but I just don't really remember being wowed. Like ‘wow we came together and did this great thing and people in our community are better off.’” While the group did not discuss conflict related to creating strategies, those interviewed did not have much to say about the plan and could not remember specifics. The strategies were rated low on overall impact. Since the group did not continue, they did not raise any additional funds or create a maintenance structure for continued performance.

Polk County: Organizational/Participant Level Effectiveness

Few people in Polk County discussed individual or agency improvement due to LAP. Barbara said, “It was so convoluted, you couldn't tell if we were working on leadership skills or we were looking at data and figuring out the players and what we could do.” Only one person noted the relationships as being helpful for her and her

organization, others could not name any people they had kept in contact with after the LAP ended. Caroline did not feel her organization saw LAP as a good investment. Some described the low agency impact due to a failure of LAP, while others described it as a by-product of budget cuts in the county. “[A]s cuts and budget cuts came along, our staff began to shrink in terms of our administrative staff, and the commitments started to get more restricted in terms of how much time we could spend on community stuff and how much time we needed to spend just taking care of daily commitments. And so I think that was a problem not only for me but for a lot of people.” Polk County showed the poorest survey results in this area; however approximately 60% of those surveyed noted increased relationships and individual skills as well as an increase in client outcomes. The rest of the indicators around client outcomes averaged 40% of those surveyed noting improvement.

Discussion

Determining how best to weigh interview and survey data is challenging. For the purpose of this analysis, when presented with contradictory results between the survey and the interviews, I weigh the interviews more heavily as the potential bias I note above seems to be present in some LAP cases. This bias seems particularly present in Montgomery County, as there was a significant disconnect between Montgomery County interviews and survey results. Community level outcomes were very positive in the survey, yet the outcomes described in interviews were negligible. A large percentage was satisfied with the LAP outcome in the survey, while almost everyone that I interviewed was generally negative about group outcomes from LAP.

One explanation is that participants interviewed seem very happy with their current group and the work their group is doing now despite its low impact; therefore, they may be more inclined to report positive results in a survey. Given over 80% of Montgomery County survey participants are still involved in the group, it seems responses were skewed more toward the positive. These participants seem fine with the fact that their group is not producing community level outcomes, but instead are focusing on building awareness and assisting group members. Participants could have considered the community awareness events sponsored by the group as an indication of community level initiatives and therefore agreed with that question. It is less clear as to why survey respondents would report that their efforts were making a difference in the readiness numbers when all of the participants I interviewed disagreed with this assessment. I interviewed six people from Montgomery County with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, this diversity of the group gives support to the robustness of the results I gained from these discussions. I am inclined to give more weight to interview results over survey results as it pertains to this group.

Indianapolis and Baltimore City also present contrasts between interview findings and survey findings, though not to the degree of Montgomery County. In interviews with all six groups, I was able to ask follow-up questions and the interpretation of my questions was clear. Participants were able to point to actual outcomes rather than simply agree to statements in a survey.

Table 6 shows the results of my effectiveness evaluation by variable. A variable was determined high if multiple interviewees mentioned the variable and

evidence was seen in the survey results. A ranking of moderate was given if only two interviewees mentioned the variable and survey results were less conclusive. A low ranking was given if no one or only one person mentioned the variable and survey results were not supportive. Appendix H shows the complete data use to create the analysis in Table 6.

Table 6: Effectiveness Evaluation Analysis

Community Level

	Implementation of best practice community-wide initiatives	Implementation of new policy or legislative change	Changes in the incidence of the problem
Anne Arundel	High	Moderate	High
Baltimore City	High	Moderate	High
DeKalb	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Indianapolis	Moderate	Moderate	High
Montgomery	Low	Low	Low
Polk	Low	Low	Low

Collaborative Level

	Membership commitment and growth	Member Driven Accountability System	Collaborative Self-Assessment and Outcomes	Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year
Anne Arundel	High	High	High	High
Baltimore City	High	High	High	High
DeKalb	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
Indianapolis	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Montgomery	Low	Low	Low	Low
Polk	Low	Low	Low	Low

Organization/Participant Level

	Individual self-assessment of personal skills and relationships	Increased agency outcomes	Increased client outcomes for organization
Anne Arundel	High	Moderate	High
Baltimore City	Moderate	Low	Moderate
DeKalb	Moderate	High	High
Indianapolis	High	Low	Moderate
Montgomery	Low	Moderate	Low
Polk	Low	Low	Low

Anne Arundel was coded high in the majority of variables, with only two incidences in the moderate category. Baltimore City was high in all but one variable at the community and collaborative level, but moderate and low at the organization and participant level. Polk was categorized as low in all variables while Montgomery County was categorized as low in all but one. DeKalb County was moderate to high in all variables except at the community level with regard to changes in the incidence of the problem. Indianapolis was mostly categorized as moderate with a few variations.

The three levels of analysis should not be considered equal when it comes to outcomes, as noted earlier. Community level outcomes are the ultimate goal of a collaborative and should therefore be weighted the highest in this analysis. For the purpose of this analysis I follow Provan and Milward (2001) in considering the community outcomes first, collaborative outcomes second, individual/organizational

outcomes last. Table 7 below ranks each collaborative based on my framework analysis.

Table 6 Overall Ranking by Performance

Overall Ranking by Performance

<i>High Performing</i>	<i>Moderate Performing</i>	<i>Low Performing</i>
Anne Arundel County	DeKalb County	Montgomery County
Baltimore City	Indianapolis	Polk County

Baltimore City’s high rankings and excellent community outcomes put the city in the high performing group. DeKalb’s low performance in the community outcome puts it in the moderate performing groups. Anne Arundel was clearly high and Montgomery County and Polk were clearly lower and should be ranked low in performance. This grouping of effectiveness will serve as a starting point for my next two chapters where I will compare the processes of each LAP and see if there is a pattern among the high, moderate and low performing groups.

It is noteworthy that while some authors in the literature maintain that analyzing collaborative groups simply at the community level is not enough, the high performing groups ranked high at all three levels and the low performing groups ranked relatively low at all three levels. Analyzing each level provides clarity with regard to moderate level performing groups as the outcomes of these groups are not as clear-cut and direct. Looking at the three levels adds a richer story to the many different outcomes possible with community collaborations. Often the story and purpose of collaboratives is to affect community change, but this research demonstrates there is the possibility for outcomes at many different levels, including

with individuals and participating agencies. The work of collaborating is arduous and involves costs, and this richer story of possible outcomes can provide a motivating factor for more communities to develop and implement collaboration.

Conclusion

This chapter implements an analysis of six collaboratives at the community, collaborative and organizational/participant level using a modified and expanded version of Provan's and Milward's (2001) framework. While Provan's and Milward's framework is often referenced in the literature, few have actually utilized it in practice or used it to the level of detail as my analysis. This analysis adds to the current research on collaborative outcomes by extending and operationalizing a critical framework for analyzing outcomes. In the next two chapters I will analyze the processes, actions and relationships behind these outcomes to determine how they relate to the outcomes found here.

This research is a clear answer to the question of whether collaboratives can produce meaningful change. The high performing groups in this sample collected tens of thousands of books, increased pre-k programs for children, added substantial and meaningful programs and organizations to their communities, and became true partners working toward the same goal. In addition, they developed personal leadership skills and changed the culture and direction of individual agencies. This is a significant finding highlighting the potential for these groups. It is clear given the struggles of some of the other agencies that collaboration is not easy and not always successful, but it is possible.

Chapter 4: Examining Process – High and Moderate Performing Collaboratives

This chapter focuses on the process of collaboration, and specifically, how collaboratives organize and implement their work. The purpose of this research is to examine the elements of a collaborative process, and to determine the importance of these elements to the collaborative results found in the previous chapter. Because the six case studies I examine in the previous chapter vary in performance, I am able to determine the importance of elements in the development and implementation of high and low performing collaboratives. In addition, I compare the process elements in my research to that found in the literature. This chapter details the literature surrounding the collaborative process, provides a review of the data and an analysis of the collaborative process for the high and moderate performing collaboratives determined in the previous chapter. The next chapter analyzes the low performing collaboratives and summarizes the overall findings from the high, moderate and low collaborative process analyses.

The Collaborative Process

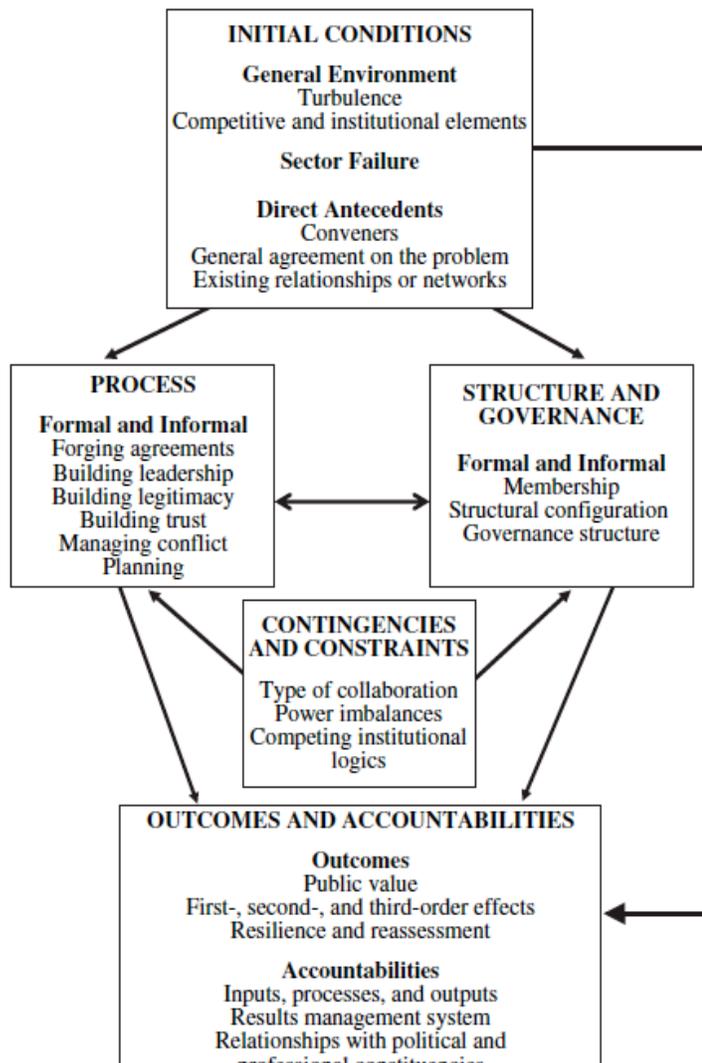
Gray and Wood (1991) define collaboration as occurring “when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain (p.146).” Groups collaborate when they agree to work together to solve an identified problem. Gray (1989) also recognizes collaboration as an emergent process with collective responsibility. Indeed, many scholars have noted that the process of

collaboratives occurs through compromise and coordination rather than a stepwise movement from one phase to another; it is often called messy, dynamic, and interactive (Thomson and Perry, 2006; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Roberts and Bradley, 1991).

The process of collaborating occurs in turbulent environments where efforts of sustainability and success are affected by outside factors beyond the control of collaborative members (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006). Most collaboratives consist of interdependent as well as independent agents in a system that is emergent rather than predetermined and where the system is unpredictable, dynamic, and without a clearly defined hierarchy (Dooley, 1997; Eoyang and Berkas, 1998). Kontopolous (1993) describes these groups as systems of heterarchy, which differs from the top-down structure of hierarchy. Heterarchy takes into account that interactions within a system are driven by complicated group dynamics, complex external influences, and multiple stakeholders.

Despite this recognition, some scholars have attempted to define the process of collaboration and determine frameworks for analysis. Ring and Van de Ven (1994) model the collaborative process as cyclical rather than linear consisting of a “repetitive sequence of negotiation, commitment, and execution stages (p. 97).” They note the emergence of personal relationships that lead to psychological contracts which in turn lead to informal understanding and commitments. Thomson and Perry (2006) stipulate five key dimensions of collaboration, including the governance dimension, or how collaborations make joint decisions and negotiate power arrangements; the administration dimension, or the administrative structure that

assists the group in taking action; the autonomy dimension, or the ability of members to develop collaborative competencies and move from individual agendas to shared control; the mutuality dimension, or the process of forging mutually beneficial relationships; and the trust and reciprocity dimension, which stresses the critical component of trust necessary for collaboration. Finally, Bryson et al. (2006) present a framework that seems the most inclusive of all the points made in the literature (see Figure 2). They note the following as affecting the successful implementation of a collaborative: initial conditions, process dimensions, structural and governance dimensions, contingencies and constraints, outcomes, and accountability issues. They also note the overlap and relationship that exists with aspects of the initial conditions and structure with the pieces they outline in process. For the purpose of this research



I base my analysis on the process as defined by Bryson et al. (2006). *Key Elements of Collaborative Process*

There is consensus in the literature around several key elements that are essential components of the collaborative process. The first

element is a convener that serves to legitimize the group while providing accountability and incentive for collaboration (Bryson, et al., 2006; Page, 2008; Wohlstetter and Malloy, 2005; Human and Provan, 2000). The presence of a convener facilitates the formation of an alliance while also establishing, legitimizing and guiding the alliance (Gray and Wood, 1991; Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen, 2001).

Groups also need the ability to forge agreements and engage in joint decision-making while building the capacity of members to collaborate. Since these groups often experience issues of collaborative capacity and confront a “free-rider” problem among partners (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; García-Canal, Valdéz-Llaneza, & Ariño, 2003), collaborative leadership skills are necessary to strengthen the existing patterns of relationships and build consensus that furthers cooperation and joint problem solving (Kickert & Koppenjan, 1997; Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001).

Third, relationship building is central to the collaborative process. Specifically, the need for norms established for trust and open dialog are often cited as necessary ingredients to group cohesion and strong collaboratives (Babiak and Thibault, 2009; Bardach, 1998; Chaskin, 2003; García-Canal, Valdéz-Llaneza, and Ariño, 2003; Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Chisholm, 1989; Wohlstetter and Malloy, 2005).

Finally, collaboratives are especially prone to issues of accountability given their voluntary, non-hierarchical nature; the different sectors, power differences and incentives of the participants; their dynamic and emergent nature; and the lack of performance data and agreement among participants about strategies and results

(Acar, Guo and Yang, 2008; Babiak and Thibault, 2009). The literature recommends an accountability structure to address these issues inherent in non-hierarchical cross-sector groups (Bryson et al., 2006; Bardach and Lesser, 1996; Page, 2004; Bardach, 1998; Linden, 2002; Babiak and Thibault, 2009).

Based on the above literature, my framework includes the following:

- External Factors
 - Competitive pressures
 - Existing Relationships or Networks
 - The establishment of an external partner(s) in which the collaborative feels accountable for performance
 - Strength of implementation team (facilitator, support staff, etc.)

- Internal Factors
 - Development of group leadership skills and forging agreements
 - Strong working relationships among collaborating participants and agencies
 - The establishment of group norms around trust and open dialog
 - Management of power imbalances and conflict within group
 - Member commitment to collaborative
 - Group accountability and establishment and successful use of an internal accountability system around performance

These are defined and outlined below.

Data

For the purpose of this chapter I am analyzing four cases from the Leadership in Action Program (LAP) detailed in Chapter Two and identified as high or moderate performers in Chapter Three. As noted in Chapter Two, LAP administrators utilize an intentional framework, much of which is mirrored by the literature above and common in collaborative practice. This framework includes external conveners, building leadership capacity of participants, attention to relationship building and a formal accountability structure. They also use facilitators, something cited as an

important way for these groups to have a structured or intentional way to deal with the issues described above (Bryson et al, 2006: Herranz, 2007). LAP facilitators assist in building leadership skills and capacity of the participants, aid in the development of strong working relationships, work to reduce conflict and power imbalances, and assist the group in making forward progress.

For the purpose of this chapter and Chapter Five, I again utilize the interviews and survey outlined in the previous chapter. I took the coded interview information and analyzed it for themes around process within and across collaborative groups to distill important information. I analyzed 20 survey questions related to process in my framework.

Methods

I developed a robust framework incorporating various elements from those noted above with a particular focus on the Bryson et al. (2006) framework. Given my extensive data set, I am able to determine how these collaboratives came together to make decisions, develop trust and handle internal conflict, address issues of accountability and performance, and more. Finally, I compare the process across the four case studies in this chapter and two case studies in Chapter Five to determine if high or low performing groups had any common themes.

Analysis Variables

My framework and results with regard to collaborative process for all six collaboratives is included in Appendix G. It includes variables from the external environment as well as the internal environment. As noted above, these groups occur

in a turbulent environment that often creates influences outside the group's control. In addition, there are many elements central to the internal environment that influences outcomes and results of collaboratives. Specific variables are described fully below.

External Variables

My analysis includes four process variables that are intended to capture the external environment. First, I look at *existing relationships* prior to the start of the collaborative. Survey and interview questions asked participants how many people in the collaborative they knew prior to the start of LAP. Additional questions focused on the early stage of LAP and whether the group experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration and whether participants enjoyed strong working relationships with one another. The second variable is related to the *competitive pressures* that existed prior to the start of the collaborative. Whether or not the group includes new partners, most collaboratives have a history of trying to solve entrenched community problems such as the ones being tackled in my case studies. Sometimes this history is positive, other times it is influenced by the competitive pressures for funding and status and the political context of a community. The interview questions focused on these issues, while the survey asked whether individuals and/or organizations within the group were ever able to step out of past history in order to start fresh. The third and fourth variable focus on aspects of the process that were intentionally included in the Casey framework. As described earlier, prior to the formation of a LAP, Casey works with partners in the community to serve as external conveners. This is also mirrored in the literature; therefore, I

create a variable to identify the *establishment of an external partner(s)* in which the collaborative feels accountable for performance. Interview questions asked whether there was a group to which they felt accountable. Interview and survey questions asked whether the LAP group felt responsible to perform well because of the support they received from this group and whether these partners were actively involved in the work of LAP. Other interview and survey questions asked how influential the conveners were in the work of the LAP and whether that influence was positive or negative. Finally, as mentioned previously, a major component of the Casey framework was the use of trained facilitators. The final external variable focuses on the *strength of implementation team*, which includes facilitators, support staff, and logistics. Interview and survey questions asked whether the facilitators were skilled in helping them make progress, acted in a neutral and unbiased manner, and improved the group's effectiveness. Additionally, survey participants were asked whether the services provided by the LAP staff (such as notes, meeting space, food, posters around the room) improved group effectiveness and whether group productivity fell once the LAP team stopped managing the group.

Internal Variables

I include six variables meant to capture the internal dynamics that affect the collaborative process. First, I include a variable to capture the *development of group leadership skills and forging agreements*. Bryson et al. (2006) note building leadership and forging agreements in their framework. The Casey framework includes an intentional leadership development component and interview questions focused on the impact of this piece. Survey and interview questions asked whether

all members had a voice in decisions and whether the group focused on shared goals rather than individual agendas.

Relationships are repeatedly cited as integral to the collaborative process. The second variable measures the *strength of working relationships* among collaborative participants and agencies. It includes interview and survey questions concerning whether the group enjoyed strong relationships with one another and whether they saw one another as partners rather than competitors. The third variable of interest identifies whether the group was able to *establish group norms for trust and open dialog*. Survey questions asked whether members trusted one another and were willing to share information, perceptions, and feedback. Interview questions looked deeper into these issues. Another important aspect of relationship development in collaboratives is the conflict and power imbalance. The fourth variable titled *management of power imbalances and conflict within group* is derived from survey and interview questions related to whether participants experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration as the process progressed and whether members effectively resolved differences of opinion and other forms of conflict.

The fifth variable evaluates the overall *member commitment* to the collaborative. Interview and survey questions looked at whether members were committed to participating in LAP. The final and sixth internal process variable looks at general group accountability and the establishment and successful use of an internal accountability system around performance. Interview questions asked about the tool introduced in the LAP process to track accountability and whether the group

adopted it or another system for accountability. I also inquired as to whether groups continued to use a system once the formal LAP process ended. Additionally, the survey asks whether members could be expected to complete their work in a timely manner.

Case Analysis

High Performing LAPs: Anne Arundel County

Carol is an Anne Arundel resident with a long history in the early childhood community. She had seen the results of the State LAP and was hopeful such an initiative could make a difference in Anne Arundel County. Historically members of the early childhood education community had difficulty working with the county government and the school system. Carol explains, “We knew that we could make a difference in getting kids ready for school, but we were having a tough time playing in a system where the childcare folks in particular were looked down upon and Head Start wasn’t given more respect.” Carol went on to describe a common theme, “I think a lot of people came in with that kind of silo/turf issues... “Collaboration means I get some of your money, but I keep mine.” I didn’t sense a strong feeling of animosity between any particular agency representatives in the room, but there were some who felt that they never got their due or share.” Another participant agreed, “We are silos. Everywhere you go.... We have siloed funding. We have siloed missions. We have siloed goals and objectives for our organization.” Survey participants agree as half of those in surveyed from Anne Arundel felt the group had experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration early in the collaborative.

Mark and Patricia noted the roots of the problem around early childhood readiness. Mark said, “It was influenced by whether or not kids were in an at-risk population, it was influenced by their preschool experience or lack of experience and the childcare they experienced... it was a really bifurcated community. There were a lot of children with advantages and a lot of children without those advantages. Although school readiness does cut across all socioeconomic levels, it was much more of a problem for those of low-income status.” Patricia got more specific. “There are pre-k programs for 4s that are based on income eligibility than anything else. They are not in every school. If you do not go to your home school, transportation’s not provided. And the population we frequently want to make a difference with has one car, or no cars, and can’t get their kids to an alternative location. We have nothing for 3s...the “at risk” kids- the socioeconomic risk, environmental factor kinds of kids- really aren’t eligible and if they don’t get into pre-k when they’re 3 then they don’t go to school until they go to school.”

Despite these challenges, all of the participants I interviewed in Anne Arundel were hopeful they could make a difference for young children in their community. Most participants interviewed encountered a mixture of new and old relationships at the start of the LAP group. A high majority in the survey and interviewed felt the early group enjoyed strong working relationships. Most members were invited by their accountability partner, the Local Management Board, yet most of those interviewed saw that group as more administrative and not a one holding authority or accountability with the LAP group. Carol noted, “We almost felt that they were just kind of administrative...they really wanted us to feel responsible to our own work

and to each other and not to them.” Mark said, “I think a lot of individuals saw their employer as the person they were most accountable to. You know, the people representing the community colleges or social services, those folks who were employed by an entity that was engaged in this issue... I felt pretty purely that we were accountable to the kids in a sense.” Survey participants differed as over 90% of those surveyed responded that the group felt responsible to their accountability partner and that this group had a positive influence on the collaborative.

The LAP experience was described as a process by all those interviewed, and in that process facilitators played a critical role. All those interviewed in Anne Arundel were positive about their facilitators and the role they played. This was true in the survey results as well. Patricia described the facilitators as the initial leaders of the group, saying, “[H]aving the facilitators take the onus of leadership, we didn’t have to look at this rag tag group and try to figure out who was going to be the leader.” Yet she and others did not feel the facilitators tried to direct the work. “They made sure everybody’s voice was heard. They knew how to draw out someone’s thought if they were sort of wandering with it. And they brought it back to the group. They kept things rolling.” Mark agreed, “They didn’t want to be seen as steering the work. I think they were very good in holding themselves back and not even indirectly dictating to the group what the outcome should be.” The facilitators were also described by all interview participants as critical to managing conflict and helping the group move forward.

Participants took note that the LAP process included a framework (described in Chapter One) in which facilitators did their work. Mark describes a common

sentiment, “It was a very interesting process. I’ve never been engaged in a process that was that structured and that intense . . . it’s a model that makes you go very slowly. And makes your group endure a fair amount of frustration. And we lost some people as a result of that. But on the plus side, we got to know each other much better than most groups working on a project of this nature. By struggling through some of those points at which the frustration was greatest, I think we achieved a level of commitment with the people that stuck with it that might not have happened with a different model.” Carol agreed, “Some of us that wanted to establish a stronger structure and move the group ahead, looking at the big pictures and developing a strategic plan, I think we were the ones who were really frustrated. . . I think in the end it was probably helpful in bringing the group together.”

Part of the process is a leadership development component, a piece that received mixed reviews from participants. Mark stated, “I thought at points there was a lot of tension between the leadership development component and the actual work on behalf of children. . . You’d be short-circuited on the work that was leading to taking action on behalf of kids by having to in a structured way go back and talk about the Myers-Briggs stuff. . . and that’s just as an example.” Members echoed this in other statements as many participants felt the time spent on developing leadership skills would have been better spent on community development. Others found it beneficial for their own skill develop as well as group cohesion. Patricia said, “I think I’ve become a better leader. . . I just think it’s an invaluable process.”

Despite this element’s mixed reviews, the specific tools introduced through this element were often cited as critical to the work. The two methods most cited

were around results based accountability tools that were introduced as well as a consensus decision-making model. The results-based accountability piece introduces methods for developing and using performance measures to track the effectiveness of strategies and actions. “[W]e really try to talk about and work on results-based evaluations in everything we do. That was probably one of the most important things about the model that stuck.” The consensus decision-making tool requires all members to agree to a proposal made in the group before moving on. Members signal their agreement or disagreement with their thumbs up, down or sideways. Those not in agreement discuss why they disagree as well as what steps would bring them to agreement. Carol noted, “The consensus building process was wonderful. That was a little trying at times too, but we really, really worked hard at building consensus and our outcomes, our decisions, were better for it. And we still use our thumbs to decide to this day... if anyone is not happy, we try to figure out what it takes to bring their thumb up. That was a good process.” Mark added, “[T]he consensus model of course could be wildly frustrating... on balance and in retrospect, I’d have to say it was probably good. One of the things it prevented was leaving people behind. People who, if we worked on a majority rule basis, would’ve felt overruled too often and bailed on the process. So that was certainly one of the benefits about it... we still [use] consensus.” All of those interviewed cited the consensus decision-making model in their interviews and was often cited as a means for dealing with conflict. Patricia added, “[I]n the long run... everyone was speaking the common language and people got to air their concern or grievance. So it really was a nice way of doing it instead of people just sitting there blaming.”

When asked about conflict, Carol responded, “I mean conflict is a part of life, you don’t always agree on everything. But we didn’t have conflicts that weren’t easily resolved with our consensus building. [If] we hit a point where we hadn’t come to consensus, we would table it and bring it up the next month. And there was never the kind of conflict that was ugly and divisive. It was conflict that took us to a better evolution.” No one interviewed in Anne Arundel felt there was a high level of conflict. The survey showed over 90% of survey participants felt the group effectively resolved conflict. Mark shared a common sentiment, “[T]his size group working on a complex issue, I’d say there was not a high level of conflict. First of all, we started simply by the selection of a group with a consensus view felt this was a very important issue. And it was a group also I think that had a fairly good perception of the issue. And so, you know, there weren’t philosophical questions regarding the importance of this, nor were their wildly divergent views of what the problem was. It was more about inquiring into the details and lower levels of conflict.” Several people mentioned one participant who often caused conflict during the meetings as well as difficult conversations. Carol noted, “[T]here was occasionally a tone of hostility from him which was tough for the group to work through, but they did work through it.” Patricia agreed, “There were kind of undercurrents and grumblings for a little while because people are people.” She added, “There were times where people may have been intimidated. There was one time I was extremely intimidated by someone... I think the facilitator could read my body language and watch what was happening... he took me aside and said, “What could you have done differently?”

And he guided me through it because it was just a really awkward situation for me... and it really did help me grow.”

Members in Anne Arundel County overwhelmingly discussed the strong working relationships within the group. This was affirmed in the survey as over 90% of participants noted strong working relationships. Those interviewed noted the group’s willingness to be open and share information. The majority of the group discussed getting to know each other across traditional boundaries. Carol summarized, “[At] the launch meeting and the next meeting there was a lot of bonding and getting to know each other and what they did. Within the first month, people from infants and toddlers were going to the DSS office and talking about what infants and toddlers had to offer. The library folks were working with the childcare folks, and the joint efforts that were being made were just really cool, and they developed really quickly. And those bonds are still in place.” Patricia added, “I don’t even know that trust is the best word as much as respect. There were people with areas of expertise that I really didn’t know anything about. I feel like I’ve learned a lot from them. And I don’t think that a lot of people in the room knew a lot about [my area]... So that was also very nice.” Several people mentioned how working across boundaries has brought new partners to the table, such as the schools system. Carol noted, “I mean even to the point within the organizations, like the public school system...now they’re a very strong partner. [Name removed] and some other people from the public school system who had been in the LAP had always been very good partners, but it hadn’t ever permeated through the school system and up through the superintendent’s office. But now the superintendent knows what we do.”

The ideas around respect, positive working relationships, and breaking out of previous ways of working came up repeatedly. Carol said, “[E]veryone had just been so busy in their little silos before that no one knew what was available to them. And it just wasn’t the way the work had been done in the past. You did it the way someone had told you it was done and had always done it. They were discovering so many benefits from the collaboration...” All members interviewed in Anne Arundel discussed a high level of trust within the group. Mark noted this level of trust by saying, “Talking about race for example was difficult. The trust [had] developed to the point where that was doable.” The survey shows variables around trust and open dialog at 75% and 92%.

Anne Arundel members also adopted the formal accountability system (outlined in Chapter One) and continue to use it today. The majority of those interviewed felt this was a valuable exercise in helping group accountability. Anne Arundel participants reported a high level of accountability within the group in the interviews. When asked about the level of accountability, Mark responded, “In a word it was pretty good. We’d all sign up for what we anticipated being able to do between the sessions, and for the most part, people followed through.” Carol agrees, “I’m not going to say it’s perfect, because it wasn’t. But I think on the whole, the people who took on the larger tasks accomplished them successfully, not always necessarily by the first deadline that they set for themselves. But if you missed, or deadlines weren’t hit, there was a second effort made and tasks were accomplished. We had some tough times, people with personal issues. People who were pulled off

track in situations that couldn't be helped, but they got back on. We had some really good level of commitment in this group.”

High Performing LAPs: Baltimore City

“Is this good enough? Is this what we want for the children and families of Baltimore City?” “[We] came to the conclusion that, despite all the stuff that was happening at the state level, unless something was done in Baltimore City, the city scores would continue to hold back the state scores.” These statements by Donna and Sarah summarized the motivation behind forming the first local LAP group in 2003. As noted in the previous chapter, only 26.5% of kindergarteners in Baltimore City came to kindergarten in 2003 ready to learn. Donna noted “that data is a huge motivator for groups of people to work for change.”

The overall numbers presented a significant challenge for the group. Donna summarized early thinking as the group came to fruition, “Well, the school system was a mess, all of the data was bad. At that point we knew that in order to make the change we were talking about, this wasn't something the school system could do. This needed to be a cross-agency, a cross-sector process. A whole lot of different groups of people needed to come together to make any kind of meaningful change.” Members described tensions among some of these groups. One participant noted, “I recall the turf battle was primarily between the Baltimore City Public Schools, early childhood folks and Head Start... all of which were represented in the group... I don't remember it being a huge issue, but I definitely remember some of the meetings and some of that tension being present.” Donna agreed, “Of course it's always there... But I don't remember that it was a huge thing.” Nina, a nonprofit leader, felt

the tension was more pronounced, “Everyone comes to the table with their own agenda because everyone in the room had some part to play in the community to achieve their strategic objectives for their organization.” She described a situation where the group did not take advantage of an opportunity because of what she considered political reasons. She believed members of the group were concerned around credit for the project going elsewhere. “And that bothered me, because...when we walk in the room, you let go to your agenda, and the child and the parent are supposed to be what we are focusing on. And that didn’t always happen.”

Approximately one-third of those taking the survey agreed there were competitive pressures within the Baltimore City LAP. All survey respondents felt the group had experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration early in the collaborative.

Baltimore City’s accountability partner was the board of the Family League of Baltimore City. Only one person I interviewed thought they made a difference in accountability, while others either thought that the relationship was unclear or that there was no such group. Sarah noted that since this was the first local LAP this role had not yet been well defined. Some described the Family League’s role as the convener rather than someone in which the group reported to or felt accountable. More than one person mentioned the leadership of Nancy Grasmick, the Maryland Superintendent of Schools at the time and not someone officially affiliated with the Baltimore City LAP. Survey results show three-quarters of those surveyed responded that the group felt responsible to their accountability partner and two-thirds felt this group had a positive influence on the collaborative.

Like participants in Anne Arundel County, facilitation played a prominent role within the Baltimore City LAP. Donna shared a common response, “[The affect of the facilitators was] huge, huge. You have to have the right facilitator. If you don’t have the right facilitator, forget it... Their role is just so key and so multi-dimensional because their role has to be knowledgeable about the process, knowledgeable about the issue, knowledgeable about group dynamics. They have to be so skilled.” This was true in the survey results as well as all responses were positive with regard to the implementation team.

Members also felt the facilitators helped them get through conflict. Donna discussed the influence of one particular facilitator. “Not everybody agrees with me because she will call you on your shit in a minute, and people don’t like that. She doesn’t do it in a way that publically humiliates you, but you know she sees what you’re doing, and you might have been doing this stuff for years. She’ll help you if you let her, to get past it and grow and develop in ways you didn’t think you had the ability to do. She helps to lower those barriers, those defensive barriers, that you have personally and built as part of your role in a public agency.” The LAP had one member in particular that caused a good deal of conflict; however, those interviewed noted that facilitators and other group members managed the situation. Donna added, “Because we had skilled facilitators, they were always able to handle that conflict in a way that it could be resolved.” Almost 90 percent of members surveyed in Baltimore City felt the conflict was managed well in their group.

Sarah highlights an example of the intersection between facilitation and conflict management when she described a particularly difficult conversion related to

strategy development. “Do we just adopt the five goals that came out of the state plan and then work from those or should we... add a sixth goal which was much more a reflection about what people felt about Baltimore City schools at the time? The sixth goal was about the schools being ready to receive these kids because the concern was if we were successful in doing all this terrific [work] to prepare families and young children to go into Kindergarten... the school system was so screwed up it would undo any good that might have been done.” She described tentativeness around entering this debate, “Can we really talk honestly about the school system?” Member of the school system were present in these conversations. Sarah attributed the facilitation and setting of LAP in allowing that conversation to happen. “I’m not sure where [else] those conversations would happen... it was an appropriate conversation because we were talking about our goals and if we’re going to work with the MLAP goals, were they sufficient for what folks felt [were] the important issues in Baltimore City. But then the actual [act] having of the conversation and getting to a point where we could make a decision about adding the sixth goal, I think that only happened because we had really good facilitators... they facilitated the conversation happening in such a way that the group arrived at a decision.” And that decision was to add the sixth goal.

Members in the Baltimore City LAP did not have as many structured leadership tools introduced as later LAPs; however, like Anne Arundel participants they used the consensus tool for decision-making both during and after formal facilitation. Sarah said, “And [consensus] based decision-making stuck. And that was one that seeped into the other ways of doing business amongst our group because a

lot of these people were meeting in other capacities and other places and I know that this notion [of consensus based] decision-making got carried out.”

Members of the Baltimore City group did not have as formal of an accountability system, but participants reported in interviews that they captured commitments and report back on them at the next session. The group continued to use this system once formal facilitation ended. Members in the Baltimore City LAP reported a high level of accountability within the group. Almost 80% of survey participants noted that members could be trusted to complete commitments. Sarah noted, “My impression was that the group was pretty accountable... I was amazed at... how seriously people took the process... People stepped up to do their part in making [it] happen.”

Participants interviewed from Baltimore City overwhelmingly discussed the strong working relationships. This was affirmed in the survey as over 100% of participants noted strong working relationships and 100% noted trust in the group. Donna summarized a common sentiment, “[P]eople began to see and believe that you can get things done if you come together and you’re willing to trust and to share. Trust is a big issue in public agencies because they get beat up so much. If you let somebody know that you screwed up, oh my god, you’re front page of the newspaper. So it’s really hard to trust, but I think trust was built. Maybe not at the agency level, but between individuals, people were able to form working relationships and work together.” Sarah agreed, “People really did come to appreciate one another... that group [had] the sense that we actually could do things...there really was a lot of activity that started to happen as a result of the LAP work and that was very

encouraging. [W]hen I think back on it, it wasn't like a process without its bumps on the road but it actually is one of the few endeavors that I think many of us felt that we were a part of that actually materialized into something."

Moderate Performing LAPs: DeKalb County

"The thing about the group in DeKalb is they have a history of working together, but not a lot of turf battles. It was more, what is this new thing? How is this going to help us? Who are these people from Maryland or wherever they were from? What is this?" Susan described initial confusion as the DeKalb County LAP came together. "We had just started the DeKalb Early Learning Commission and we weren't really sure what that would be like, and we weren't very happy with LAP coming in at the same time as we were trying to get this other group off the ground, but they were seen as an accountability partner. This meeting, I can remember it was pretty horrible... The people who discussed LAP were way too vague and way too theoretical. And people were confused about how this was different from the DeKalb Early Learning Commission we had just set up like 3 weeks before. So I remember there was some angst and some real initial confusion, but the ones coordinating it decided that it would probably just be temporary and we'd just forge ahead."

Participants interviewed described the need for additional pre-k programs as well as more parents as teacher programs. All noted the fact that DeKalb is a very diverse county with a high refugee population. Members noted concern that children from these diverse backgrounds were not receiving the appropriate care and early learning. John noted, "There were a lot of preschools around, a lot of pre-ks, but none that administered to refugee kids with unique issues and problems." Yet

DeKalb County members had a history of working together, at least for those in government. Susan said, “We’re very insidious. Everybody knows everybody pretty much. Maybe one or two new people, but I don’t think so. I think everyone in the room had familiarity with everyone else except the people from LAP.” None of the participants interviewed felt there were turf battles or previous negative working relationships. The survey was consistent with this view as only half of participants felt the group had an issue with past history and all respondents noted strong relationships early in the process. John felt there were not enough nonprofits in the room. “[I]t was a combination of state agency people, United Way people, people who ran preschools and had an interest there, [there was] only [one] agency that represented an ethnic minority or came to this from the vantage point of an interest group.”

DeKalb County’s accountability partner was listed as the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta Early Learning Commission and DeKalb County Early Learning and School Readiness Commission, though often in my interviews participants would only cite one or the other. The majority of those I interviewed felt they made a difference for the group in terms of effectiveness. John said, “We were reported to them regularly... To the extent that we came up with a plan and we took it to the DeKalb Early Learning Commission, which was made up of people throughout the government, we broadened the interest in the topic and the support for it. So in that extent it was valuable to have access to those groups.” No one had negative comments about this relationship. This was true in the survey as well given almost 80% of those surveyed said there was an external group in which they felt

accountable and almost 70% felt this group had a positive influence on the collaborative.

Another group considered positive to the work in DeKalb County was the facilitators. John noted, “The program was financed for 14 months and then people decided they wanted to keep it going but we had no money. We tried it without the facilitators, and it didn’t work very well. We got a free facilitator for a while who wasn’t very good, so we went back to paying for facilitators. That was really important to have someone outside the group who had no vested interest but who knew how to facilitate meetings, it turned out to be pretty important.” Susan agreed, “Once we started going and having meetings, the facilitation team was excellent... they were absolutely superb. I think everyone would say that.” This was true in the survey results as well. When asked whether the coach facilitators were skilled in helping them make progress and whether they improved group effectiveness, close to 90 percent surveyed in the DeKalb LAP agreed with both statements.

All of the participants interviewed mentioned the distinct process surrounding the LAP framework. Susan said, “I think we grew to really like it because it gave some structure to meetings when you’re really pushing people to get something done... [but others] couldn’t take it... The process... and not moving into action.” She described how some people left because they felt the work was moving too slow. “I really value the relationships and exchange of ideas and things that happened informally through LAP that people couldn’t really seem to put their hands on.” She noted two success stories of people who came into the group skeptically but ended up being active, contributing members. John on the other hand was frustrated at the

rigidity of parts of the process. He believed that deciding on the work and programs was flexible, yet that the goal itself was not. He pointed out that the goal focused on immediate outcomes, while improving early learning outcomes requires starting with prenatal care. “We struggled for a long time with the goal. Do we just ignore the goal and come up with the best programs we could for pre-k children or do we try to really affect the outcome the mission was affecting? [The process] could’ve been improved by having a more realistic one that was consistent with our mission. It could’ve been improved by rallying us to alter the goal, which wasn’t an option for us.”

Like other groups, feedback around the leadership component was mixed. John said, “I think most of the leadership exercises didn’t produce results that were worth the effort... I didn’t learn anything there I hadn’t known already. Other people learned a lot of stuff because they were younger and didn’t have management training.” Others I interviewed disagreed, with one citing that as one of the most important pieces of the process. All participants mentioned the consensus decision-making tool and noted they still use the system today. Those interviewed felt it was important for hearing everyone’s viewpoint. Over 90% of DeKalb County survey respondents agreed all voices were heard in the process. Susan noted, “They’d make people who weren’t happy talk about it instead of just stewing.” John discussed the challenges with process, “It drove me crazy. The LAP process, the goal was to bring everybody on board. The goal was to have everybody agree. If you had anyone with a thumb down, you’d stop the process and figure out what their objections were and try to overcome their objections. It... was a good way of getting people on board, but it was a very slow process. I’m a Type A person, and I see what the problem is, figure

out solutions, get the answer, and move on. This was the opposite of that. And I tell you, it was valuable in that regard, it improved relationships, you got everybody on board so when you have a program everyone is willing to participate, but it was a painful process.”

Despite the pain he endured with the process, John noted an absence of conflict with the group. “I think there were differing opinions periodically. I disagreed with the group a bunch of times, but nothing critical and nothing that wasn’t solved by bending a program to make a person happy. The objections weren’t enough to stop us from moving ahead. I don’t think there was ever a time where the process [broke down] because of a difference of opinion.” Survey respondents agreed as almost 90% felt conflict was effectively managed in the group and only 25% of respondents felt turf relations existed later in the process that inhibited collaboration. Above all, John appreciated the relationships formed in the group. “The LAP enabled me to make contact with people in the early learning community who were willing to help... I think that summed up the value of the process, at least for me. When you’re with people once a month, you get to know them pretty well. I’m pretty shy and quiet, but in that environment, you can’t help but get to know people and get to know who can trust and who delivers on what they say and who was willing to step beyond their own narrow self interest and help you out. So I got to know people in the county who cared about early learning in a really close way and as a result I developed some really strong working relationships... It was the partnerships and developing relationships of one kind or another that helped develop [my] agency, but that was, to me, one of the main advantages of that program.”

Members interviewed in DeKalb had only positive things to say about relationships, with comments ranging from discussing strong working relationships, to building relationships with others on the same page, to getting to know one another across traditional boundaries. Several members in DeKalb commented on the group being very open and willing to share information. One member expressed a common theme: “I think there was trust there. I think that probably over time... we all got a lot more open. I’m fairly quiet, and there was a librarian there and she was fairly quiet but toward the end we both were interjecting all the time.” Over 80% of survey respondents agreed there was trust and openness in the DeKalb group. Interview participants also mentioned the fact that everyone worked together to solve the same problem, a fact that was satisfying given it had not been happening in the past. The majority of DeKalb County participants discussed a high level of commitment within the group and high accountability. Over 80% of survey respondents agreed there was a high level of member commitment and 75% agreed there was a high level of accountability around commitments.

This high level of accountability was often attributed to the formal accountability system of writing down commitments, a tool still used today. John said, “I think accountability was pretty good. The process forced you to write down what you were going to do. And the first thing you did when you got back to the next meeting was tell what progress you made. I think it was helpful. I think it was totally appropriate, that sort of accountability.” Susan agreed, “It was really helpful. The other thing the group kept was the check-in. If you didn’t have anything to check-in, it was a semi-competition to see how much they’d be able to put on the sheet. The

group was a little competitive, in fun... The group really took it seriously, but there was some peer pressure to follow through.”

Moderate Performing LAPs: Indianapolis

“Honestly, I thought it was the same old thing that we’d been involved with in so many meetings and hence the reason why I didn’t want to be initially involved, because I just didn’t want and couldn’t afford the time away to talk about the same thing I’d been talking about for years or heard talked about for years. So, my initial impression in all honesty is that this was just another one of those meetings that I really wished I hadn’t wasted my time in.” Eric gave a common sentiment with regard to his outlook in joining the Indianapolis LAP. Kimberly said about her outlook, “I was hopeful, but I was skeptical at the same time because I thought, what is this going to be about, is it going to be on the table? I was hopeful just because of the accountability partners, and I thought okay, you know, at least we have someone who can actually institute change, but at the same time, a lot of the people around the table I knew, and had known forever, and so I thought, okay, how are we really going to do anything different?”

Participants described issues of politics, with one interviewee calling Indianapolis a “political quagmire.” Over 75% of survey participants felt the group experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration. Politics between local and state government was noted as an issue. Ann notes that the Mayor’s office wanted its “own identity” despite being a minor funder of LAP. She goes on, “There was confusion and probably some negativity with our city’s administration and the LAP group. At that time our city was also

launching its Re-entry Initiative... so they were sort of working parallel to each other. I was invited into that group as well, and it was called the Mayor's Re-entry Task Force. So, it was really confusing to be sitting in two different rooms with similar players. There was probably a handful of us, six to eight of us, involved in both groups. We kept saying, "Why are we doing this; why do we have two groups going on simultaneously?" It was evident there was a conflict and that continued for almost the whole life cycle of our LAP." The survey showed only slightly more than half felt the group was able step out of past history and start fresh. Finally, the problem of recidivism was a difficult and complex one as well. Kimberly noted, "Well, our county, our city has the highest recidivism for the whole state. You can put three other [Indiana] counties together, and you still don't have the same recidivism rate as we do. So, about 50% of the people that go in to prison go back within a three-year period of time. That's a huge number and so that's why that topic was picked for area."

Indianapolis's accountability partner was listed as the Indiana National Governor's Association Re-Entry Policy Work Group and the Criminal Justice Planning Council, but participants usually referred to them as the Governor, Mayor, and Commissioner of Corrections. The majority I interviewed said there was a formal reporting relationship with this group. Members' account of this relationship was mixed, ranging from helpful to neutral to insufficient. Eric noted, "I think it does make a difference because if you have someone like the Governor and the Mayor there just waiting for you to report out, you kind of take that a little more seriously than if you're just doing it 'to do it.'" Ann disagreed, "[Involvement was] pretty

weak. Our Accountability Partners did not stay engaged very well to the extent that whoever was there representative went back and told them what's going on... I think there were times that if they had used their influence... then things would have moved faster, or might have moved because clearly they have the ability to impact things." Survey results with regard to questions about accountability partners ranked among the worst of all six groups. Only about half of survey respondents felt the group had an external group to which they felt responsible and only approximately 65% felt they had a positive influence on the work of the group.

On the other hand, all participants interviewed in the Indianapolis LAP found their facilitators essential to the group success. Individuals felt it was helpful to have a facilitator and that they were a positive impact on the process, often crediting them for helping the group move forward and allowing the group to have difficult conversations. Ann expressed a common sentiment, "Our coach facilitators were awesome. Frankly, we'd have probably never gotten off first base had we not had them to coach us through some of the conversations because everyone in the room's mindset is working hierarchical." She noted that at times many in the room wondered whether they could challenge the Department of Corrections given many had a funding relationship with the agency. "If I say this, will that reflect badly on [my organization], will our contract be in jeopardy?" She believed the facilitators were able to guide those conversations and "understand the story beneath the story", which in turn allowed needed conversations to occur. Kimberly agreed. When asked about the facilitators' impact on the process she responded, "Oh, everything. I mean, if we wouldn't have had them... everyone in that room was too passionate about that topic

to have a conversation all their own, so we needed a whole different set of tools. As aggravating as it may have been sometimes, because you're just wanting to say what you had to say, we needed those tools to be able to have a competent conversation about change. You know, if someone's saying, "Hey, this needs to be changed in probation," and I run the Probation Department, then I'm going to take offense. But if the tools are used and you have a facilitator saying, "Hold on a minute," it enabled us to have difficult conversations that would have never happened without them being in the room." Survey results were equally positive. When asked whether the coach facilitators were skilled in helping them make progress and whether they improved group effectiveness, close to 90 percent in Indianapolis agreed with both statements.

Indianapolis members also felt the facilitators were essential in helping to manage dominant personalities and traditional power dynamics. Several members in the Indianapolis LAP mentioned one instance in particular when a facilitator successfully neutralized a very powerful member of the community trying to dominate the process. "I think one of the struggles we had in Marion County for years is that dominant personalities would take over a meeting and then everyone would be frustrated. But with the coach facilitators... they don't care who the Mayor's representative is, they don't care who the Governor sent. Everybody's treated equal... one of the judges got on his little bandstand and in a very polite and cordial way, they ended up putting him in his place and reminding him that he's not there to validate the meeting. He left that afternoon and never came back. But you know what, everybody in the meeting was okay with it because if not, he was going to continue to be showcasing. So, I think the facilitators did a really good job at

getting us focused and staying on track.” Ann told the same story. “I can just remember [a Judge] got neutralized pretty quickly, effectively. I remember sitting there going, “Wow,” because it was early on and the Judge was espousing, ‘this is my court’, and he was very vocal and used to getting the floor, and when he was talking, no one else was supposed to. [The facilitator] was just really effective in kind of talking him down a little bit, asking him some questions and asking him if we could call him by whatever his first name was. One of the big powers of LAP is... for us all to have voices and for our voices all to be equal in conversations... [This situation] showed the other 39 of us that we had a voice, [which] was important because we were all sitting there, just letting him dominate conversation, letting him guide the discussion of where he wanted to take the direction of it... because [that was] our hierarchal, normal mode of operation . . . Who’s going to interrupt the judge?”

More than any other group, Indianapolis members were positive about the leadership component of LAP. Eric said, “I think Myers Brigg clearly helped me when I was realizing who an introvert was and all the other roles that we got scored on... that helped me in time adjust to some of those issues on the table. [It helped me] know how that person could be as they present out... It’s not necessarily they don’t want to be involved, they just don’t talk very much.” Ann felt she was given the tools to lead and develop groups in a different way. Members in Indianapolis also used the formal accountability system and continue to use it today. Eric found the system helpful. “I used to take my copy of the paperwork and come back and put it on my desk, because if I didn’t put it on my desk or I put it in my briefcase or I put it in a folder, then I forgot about it because I’d get busy doing my stuff. So, having that

form in front of me, I got more work for the group done that way than I ever did any other way.” Ann agreed, “[The group] embraced it and we still use it. [It was helpful in terms of accountability] because if you make those action commitments, and if keep them in front of you, it’s like your “to-do” list . . . I personally would always just bring mine and stick it right on my computer so I would know what I said I would do.” Overall however members in Indianapolis reported a mixed degree of accountability, with some members saying it was high and some members saying it was mixed. Sixty-five percent of Indianapolis survey respondents felt members could be counted on to complete their commitments.

Like other groups, members of Indianapolis valued the consensus decision-making model and continue to use it today. “I think what I liked most about that, is that it made it so that everybody’s included, everybody had the opportunity to be heard, and the ones that were maybe a little more shy or introverted, it almost pulled them out and makes them either, “Put your thumb up and you’re buying in, I agree,” or if you don’t, “Here’s your chance to say something and get it fixed.” I thought that was very effective; that worked really, really well.” Eric agreed, “I think it was a great way to make decisions. If you have the time to discuss [issues], we change other people’s mind when you lay your cards on the table.” The survey was less positive as only approximately 60% of respondents felt the group ensured everyone’s voice was heard in decisions and 65% felt members focused on shared goals rather than individual agendas.

While interview participants were positive about their decision-making process, many noted that making these decisions included conflict. Almost two-

thirds of the respondents felt conflict was adequately managed, yet two-thirds of respondents felt even later in LAP there were issues of turf that inhibited relationships. Those I interviewed repeatedly mentioned conflict with regards to decisions around membership. Some group members wanted to keep the group closed while others wanted to open it up to more members of the community. Kimberly recalled, “We had knock-down, dragged-out arguments, over half the people would want one person and half the people wouldn’t want one person. I mean I run an organization . . . I sat here for two hours while you all have argued about this . . . it just was so ridiculous to me. And that’s why I feel like membership is a big issue in making sure that this is all effective.” She argued that new members did not understand the process or history of the work, so often they would suggest ideas that had already been vetted and rejected by the group. She went on, “I think they felt on the outs a little bit maybe. We spent a lot of time discussing things we already discussed and explaining why we already did it, and then there would be conflict about why did we do that? And so there was constant conflict. In the beginning there may have been a little bit of debate here and there, but not like I saw as time went on. That’s why a lot of people kind of fell off as far as being a part of the group over time, because it gets frustrating when you have the same conversation over and over and over again. As you add new members, and yes, you do need to add new members, but at the same time I think we added too many.”

Ann also described the struggle, but from a different perspective. “[There was] this perception that LAP was elitist... our LAP members really took membership conversations to a totally higher level than I was ever really comfortable

with. There was a real almost closed mindset. [Some said] ‘I don’t understand why we need to bring more people in; we won’t be able to teach them all these news skills.’ Then there was this other cadre of folks that would say, ‘I don’t understand why would we want to keep people out; I don’t understand why if they have interest in re-entry and helping us with the work, and God knows there’s enough work to do, and there’s already enough people who say, I don’t have enough time to invest in our strategies, why we would we want to keep people out’. But we spent an inordinate amount of time on every conversation on who could and couldn’t be on the LAP... So this whole concept of being elitist and not understanding what LAP meant and it being closed and invitation only, was somewhat disruptive. It was disruptive in the community because, “Oh, you were in LAP, well I wasn’t invited.” So, that whole concept of being an elitist group that somehow ‘I was in the club and others were out of the club,’ was fracturing.”

Despite this conflict, the majority of those interviewed described strong relationships among group members. Kimberly noted, “I think the relationships were good... I think we all made valuable relationships, some were stronger than others. I don’t think that the differences in the debates, or whatever you want to call it... impacted our relationships with one another for the most part.” Ann expanded, “I think there were those that were coming because they were being told to come and in that group, trust never really probably manifested. But then with those that were bought into the process who were doing the work between the work, which is the real work, who were doing the action commitments and forming other relationships outside of LAP because of the new opportunities. Those trust relationships I think

went through the roof. I have some of those, and I would never have had that opportunity had I not been part of LAP. And they would not have known me as personally or as deeply nor my skill set, nor where my passion lies had they not experienced [LAP]. So, opportunities for me personally in the profession and for my organization are still materializing as a result of the relationships that I formed in LAP.” Eric agreed, “I made some good friends there, and I also knew that not only in my group, but in the whole group, that I can just pick up the phone or send an email if I needed because now because I was making connections, and usually everybody was on the same page and wanted the same goal. So you got some of the stuff done rather quickly. You got a lot of stuff done behind the scenes that I felt that LAP didn’t get credit for... I mean I still email them or call them and say, “I need help here, and you help me with this?” Or they call me, “Could you check on this for me?” And I don’t think we had this, I know we didn’t have that before [LAP].” Three-fourths of those surveyed felt the group enjoyed strong working relationships.

Overall Eric and the majority of those interviewed admitted their initial skepticism around LAP changed as the process went on. “I can’t say it was like lightning-strike change, but over the course of time I began to see the work and realized that we were actually getting some progress made, which made it exciting to go to these meetings in the initial stage because you can actually see results being formed. You can see where you’re actually making a difference and in this business that’s what we want to do, we want to make a difference.” Kimberly’s outlook changed as well. “We have a stronger relationship with criminal justice partners... you know we live on different sides of the world. They lock them up, we try to help

them, and so sometimes it's hard to see the other person's side. I think the group brought us closer together... it's kind of like we were on different softball teams, and now we know we play on the same team.”

Conclusion

Members of the high and moderate performing collaboratives shared a variety of tools and elements when implementing their work, but also faced unique challenges. The following chapter will examine the process of low performing groups then synthesize the data from Chapter 4 and 5 to understand whether this case analysis can lend insight into best practices of cross-sector collaboration.

Chapter 5: Examining Process – Low Performing Collaboratives

Chapter 5 continues the case analysis with regard to the two low performing collaboratives, Montgomery County Maryland and Polk County Iowa. The following section will analyze the data presented here and Chapter 4. Finally, this chapter will present findings and conclude my examination of the relationship between collaborative design process and effectiveness.

Case Analysis

Montgomery County

“I was really excited [when LAP started]. I was really hoping that the LAP process would expand what we've been trying to do in early childhood for many years as... early childhood services are very fragmented. We have programs funded by the County but we also have lots and lots of private-sector programs for childcare. We have a lot of private non-profits, we have the school system, we have health programs so this to me was an opportunity to pull all those early childhood stakeholders and begin working in the direction of improving, promoting, coordinating and eventually getting funding for early childhood services.” Like all of those I interviewed in Montgomery County, Tracie expressed optimism at the start of LAP. Montgomery County had what was described as a positive history of working together around early childhood education. Efforts around collaboration began in the mid-1990s. Tracie expanded, “We have had a long history in Montgomery County of working towards promoting a coordinated early childhood system. This was something that was in a

vision in many people's mind; recognizing that we really need it to work together in order to best serve young children.”

Because of these earlier efforts, the group was mostly established at the start of LAP. Participants noted that while there were some new people, most of them were either new to the County or new to early childhood education. Opinions around previous working relationships differed some, but most noted a positive history. Tracie said, “The old people, we all had very positive feelings about each other, about the County, about early childhood. We sort of had a general hope for where we're going. I think we were very much of the same mind and I think we welcomed having new people at the table. I think we all felt that we needed to expand and we wanted to expand to the broader community. I think it was positive, very positive.” Emily noted some turf issues within the group. “I think there was a lot of work that had been done and had been ongoing – and it hasn't stopped. We still have some structures in place... But you know I would say that there was competition among the nonprofit providers related to funding which is normal. There was turf there, and I also think there was some possibly feelings you know of judgments related to quality related to some of the people who were present. I think that was also there.” In addition, the overall external environment, such as the Superintendent's office, the Board of Education, and the County Council in Montgomery County was described as very politically charged.

Montgomery County's accountability partner was the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families. This seemed clear to all the participants I interviewed, yet the feedback I received around their influence varied.

Emily said, “I think they definitely were conveners. I think they were also supposed to be an important connection to the LAP process, to Casey and sort of what this was all about... I think that they shared a sense that we were accountable to each other and that there was a sense of expectation for the group as a whole. And I guess the Collaboration Council definitely helped with keeping us on task and with a sense of what our expectations were and what we agreed to. In that kind of accountability, they were a part of that. But to be honest... I think there’s a general sense to our community that we have accountability to our community as a whole.” Tracie felt the Collaboration Council took responsibility for keeping accountability, and added, “I think it was very helpful and there was really no other agency that could have done that. They had the time and the ability to devote staff to it.” Members of the Collaboration Council were also part of the LAP. Survey results were uniformly positive, with 90% of respondents feeling the accountability partner was a positive influence on the LAP.

Montgomery County LAP members had a decidedly different view with regard to their facilitators. The feedback was uniformly negative with members describing them as unskilled and getting in the way of good work. The majority interviewed said that the facilitators were more interested in going through a process versus listening to the needs of the group. Elizabeth expressed a common sentiment, “Well I found them rather irritating and just so focused on their process and not good at listening to what was going on in the County. I think a number of us felt that they were more in the way rather than facilitating good work. It was frustrating and I think a whole lot of people dropped out over the course of year who might have stayed.”

The idea that the facilitators stuck to a structure/process/agenda at the expense of the group came up repeatedly. Tracie agreed, “I would have to say, quite frankly, that the facilitators were phenomenally unskilled... we were interested in moving early childhood forward. They were interested in the structure they had for their leadership and action programs... The facilitators or, I don't know, the accountability partner, they should have looked at where the group was and took it from there as opposed to imposing the LAP structure on a group which in many ways was a pre-existing group.” Survey respondents in Montgomery County were also negative with only 50% of survey respondents saying the facilitators helped them make progress and made the group more effective. This was by far the lowest score among the six cases.

This negative experience with the facilitators influenced participants' opinions about the leadership development piece of LAP. Tracie explained, “They wanted to get through their LAP exercises, which I don't have a problem with. You know, I think the results based accountability is a really great example. I've [had a lot of experience with that concept]. It was not explained at all to our group yet each at each of our sessions, we were supposed to talk about results based accountability. Some people who hadn't had it were terribly confused about what they were talking about. What RBA was... it was like a foreign language to them. Even to the very end, I'm quite sure that a lot of people never bought into it; never understood that particular point.” She goes on, “Almost all us it had done Myers-Briggs before. I love Myers-Briggs. I did it in the early 80s and I think most of the people there were very familiar with Myers-Briggs. There was really no reason to spend several days on Myers-Briggs. That was a real waste of time for our group as fun as it was, it was not

getting us anywhere.” Elizabeth agreed, “[The facilitators] were running through their routine but it didn’t seem to haven't any flexibility to what you wanted to talk about or sort of where we were in the County... I don’t think that they explained [the tools] or made them useful tools. [For example,] RBA [results based accountability], I didn’t feel that that people bought into that and that was disappointing as it could've been a good tool.” Several members said there was a tension between the leadership development piece and the need to do direct work on behalf of the goal.

Few members mentioned specific tools utilized by the group to enhance consensus or group collaboration. Montgomery County did not embrace a formal accountability system. Elizabeth said, ‘It may have been embraced by some. I thought it was sort of tiresome.’ Tracie agree, “Some people sometimes were very proud to be able to report back that they had this great idea, they followed up on it, and they did it; however, that was occasional. I think for most people, it was an empty exercise. I don't think it really caught on.” Overall members of Montgomery County reported lower overall accountability during interviews.

Members noted a high level of conflict in the group and felt that facilitators did a poor job of managing it. Tracie gave an example, “[One member] was constantly talking over the facilitators. She was very confrontational and hostile in virtually every conversation and then she would quickly leave and come back the next session and start the whole thing over again. It was frankly some of the most bizarre behavior I’ve ever seen in a group situation like that. Some members of our group, including myself, really wanted to do something immediately and the facilitators really put us off. They really wouldn’t do anything. It was very

destructive to the group confidence and the group's coming together. It came at a critical time when we should have been jelling in terms of trust and relationships and all of those things." Another member, noting the same conflict, said, "I felt we lost some valuable members because that [conflict] went on, and I think no one quite knew how to stop it." Elizabeth, like all members I interviewed, also noted a general sense of conflict among members. "There certainly was conflict within the group. There were people who had their one issue and by God we were going to talk about their one issue type thing, [which] I think slowed us down."

This high level of conflict seemed to translate into poorer relationships than other groups in the sample. Only one person interviewed mentioned positive aspects of the group's relationships or a high level of trust. The same person was the only one interviewed who cited group commitment as a strength. The majority of members mentioned less commitment over time within the group and a high level of attrition. Tracie said, "I think those of us who knew each other well and had worked with each other over the many years continued to have those relationships. If you look at the attendance information, you'll see that we started with over 40 people and ended up with about 10... it was very clear that people who didn't have this as a part of their job description weren't completely committed to it... The process did not engage any new partners. There were no new people that continued on to the end."

Low Performing LAPs: Polk County

"Des Moines has had a long history around coming together around children at risk. You could go back into the early 90s, late 80s for collaborations that have come together." Caroline described some of Polk County's previous collaborations.

“The state came up with some funding called Empowerment... funding that was pumped into the community to use for programs and strategies for early childhood. And the United Way in our community was the convening group that brought people together to develop the empowerment plan. So basically we had the funding and we had to develop strategies and goals for how we were going to use it, whether it was for family support, early childhood education, or training for childcare providers, and there were a whole bunch of different strategies that were a part of that empowerment process. That was going on before LAP came in.”

The participants interviewed noted there were new people at the table in addition to the original empowerment group. Caroline said, “There were certainly the folks that have been working on it before, different groups of people in the sense that you have a paid professional who works at United Way or me working for the school system, it’s sort of our daytime job to work on strategies and programs and that kind of thing. What we had been missing [in the empowerment committee] I think was the voice of neighborhood people, community folks, parents, people for whom this was not their full time profession. There certainly were people coming to LAP who fit into that second group.” Some Polk LAP participants discussed issues of silos and turf battles, but generally described previous efforts as collaborative. Participants noted that the United Way had a significant role in the community in distributing both government and private funds. Many of the agencies in the room seemed to have a resource relationship with the United Way. The survey showed that almost 80% of Polk respondents felt the group experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration and only approximately 35% felt the group

was able to move away from past history and start fresh. On the other hand, almost 90% felt there were strong early working relationships. The majority of those interviewed noted a feeling of optimism at the start of LAP, but also a hesitation given the heavy time commitment of two days every six weeks. “I think one thing I remember about the commitment was it seemed really huge. I [recall] thinking, can I take this time out of my schedule to devote to this?” Barbara agreed, “[There were] a lot of meetings. You can’t do that many with people these days.”

Polk County’s accountability partner was the Polk County School Readiness Accountability Partners, a public/private panel of 19 city, county and state officials, business leaders and local philanthropic leaders. Responses around their influence varied, with some confused as to who served as the accountability partner. “It was definitely the stakeholders group. I know they came a couple of times during the year to find out how we were proceeding and what we had in place already. So they came, I know they were at the first meeting, and I think they came somewhere in the middle, and they came again at the end. And I believe that the facilitators also met with them during their visits here and talked to them about the progress. I think it probably helped us refocus because it was really easy when every organization wants their community to be served, and I think it helped us refocus on “OK, what is the major goal here? The goal is to get children ready for kindergarten, and not necessarily what you want for your organization.” So I think for the stakeholders to come periodically and to hear comments from the stakeholders, like the facilitators would sometimes say the stakeholders said this or that, I think it would help with refocusing.” Caroline on the other hand did not mention the stakeholder group as she thought the United

Way acted as convener, but thought the group felt accountable to the Casey Foundation. “I guess we all thought it was Casey because they were providing the funding.” Only 50% of those surveyed in Polk felt their collaborative was responsible to an external group; however, over 80% of those surveyed felt their accountability partner had a positive influence on the collaborative.

Polk County participants were also mixed in their evaluation of the facilitators. Survey results were positive with 80% of respondents noting the facilitators helped them make progress and made the group more effective. Rachel, from the public sector and relatively new to the community, was also positive. “They tried very hard to stay neutral all the time, to have us lead with our ideas. They were very good at redirecting us whenever we were getting off track and reminding us of what our focus needed to be. I remember there would be arguments sometimes amongst the participants about what we needed to do, and the facilitators were really good at bringing us back and paraphrasing that and making sure we were all working toward the same goal.” Yet many people in Polk expressed similar concerns around the process as Montgomery County participants. Caroline expressed a common sentiment, “I think the challenge for the facilitators is they were coming in from the outside of the community, they don’t know the dynamics in the community, and sometimes that’s good because they aren’t part of the dynamics. But I think some people got frustrated that we had to keep going over the same stuff.” All facilitators in LAP were usually from outside the community; however Polk and Montgomery were the only two groups to make note of this disconnect. Barbara agreed, “[T]hey were excellent, but they wouldn’t deviate from their training, [they needed] to make

adjustments because [they were] losing the group. And they tried to put it on us because people weren't coming, but people weren't coming because the process Casey used was so cumbersome... I can't spend my days processing my behavior and how that was going to converse with the group because I've got better things to do with my time."

Most members I interviewed expressed similar concern over the process. Barbara said, "It was so convoluted, you couldn't tell if we were working on leadership skills or were we looking at data and figuring out the players and what we could do... they lost a lot of people because the process was so cumbersome up front." Caroline agreed, "I think there was a sense that you could get too bogged down in the process and feeling like you're not ever getting to the content. [T]here were people in the group who just hated group process and they'd be rolling their eyes and be like, 'Oh no, we don't have to do another activity do we?'" Rachel was more optimistic. "[The model] was very flexible. There was a lot of group work, so you really got to know what other people were thinking. I mean it was two full days in a row every month, so you really got to talk to the other people who were participating and got to understand where they were coming from with their needs for the community they were serving." When asked about the leadership component, she replied, "Sometimes I think it helped. I know for me it really made a big impact on me because since I was new not only to my job but to the state of Iowa, it really gave me an opportunity to become a leader within that group and community activity... The problem is when you have a bunch of leaders in a room with their own agendas,

it can be hard to get to what's going to be good for the whole group whether than what do I want to see out of this.”

Several members within Polk County mentioned an issue with people having their own agendas as well as other issues related to power dynamics. Rachel noted, “There was a core group that you could count on being at very single meeting, who were really dedicated to the project and sometimes it meant things were very harmonious because everyone wanted to do something to help the preparation for kindergarten, but every organization had their own agenda and they really wanted the school readiness to fit into their agenda for what they wanted to accomplish at their own organization.” Caroline felt there were outside influences at work as well. “I think United Way [is] such a strong force in the community, and I think there were a lot of provisions that were already made behind the scenes. So you were participating in this process that was supposed to be democratic and everyone was supposed to have a voice, but it seemed like there were decisions that had already been made.” In particular she felt senior people in the Casey Foundation were exerting influence on the group, noting that some funding decisions for certain groups were made during the LAP process even though the decision wasn't made by the LAP group. Caroline also expressed a common sentiment about the power dynamics of the group itself. “I think you had those sort of professionals that were in the role of ‘We do this for a living and we know what we're doing. And we're pretty uncomfortable with neighborhood people who don't have the same kind of educational background that we do.’ I think those voices are important, but I don't think they were always honored and heard. I think we had some very powerful people who kind of pushed the

process.”

Polk County only had one person mention positive aspects of the group’s relationships. Like the others I interviewed, Barbara did not make any lasting connections through the process. “[If] I run into those people now I try to say ‘hey how are you’ if I remember them. But probably not much more than that.” Caroline noted the lack trust in the group. “I think when you were talking earlier about factors that made a difference, I think trust is a real big one. I think there was probably a lack of trust on a lot of different levels that we were never able to break through. There were parts of it, and alliances and trust between certain people and certain groups, but there was always this cloud of distrust too.” No one from Polk cited group commitment as a strength and members mentioned less commitment over time within the group. Polk scored among the lowest of all cases with regards to these survey variables as well.

This low commitment seemed to impact participants’ responses around accountability. Barbara, “I never filled out those forms because they were too cumbersome and I couldn’t add another thing to my plate. We always got these sheets at the end of the day about what our actions were but you know, I was too burned out to do it.” Rachel noted a mix of accountability, “There was variation. I would say that probably half of the things you hoped to accomplish in the month actually happened. You give yourself high goals, but then when you get back to your office and you’ve missed two days of emails and phone calls and meetings and you know you catch up on all of that, the time goes by very quickly and you know you

can't actually get to all of that because your other work gets in the way in the meantime.”

Overall all members interviewed in Polk were either negative or seemed to have difficulty in recalling specifics. Caroline summarized it best when asked to recall specific strategies and results. “Well you know, that’s the funny part [that I can’t recall]. I’m thinking of all those meetings where we talked about early childhood and we spent a lot of time talking about a summer program and how we were going to do that... but I just don’t really remember being wowed. Like “wow we came together and did this great thing and people in our community are better off.”

Results from Process Analysis

Many common themes around collaborative process emerged among the six collaboratives analyzed. When analyzing high, moderate, and low performing groups, the following elements emerged as important to the process of successful collaboration: the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation.

Accountability System

High and moderate performing collaboratives all used a formal accountability system with which to track commitments made by group members. While this formal accountability system was introduced by the facilitators, all four of these collaboratives used this system after the formal LAP sessions ended, demonstrating its importance to the group. The two high performing collaboratives and one mid-

performing, DeKalb, reported a high level of accountability within the group, while Indianapolis reported a moderate level.

The two low performing collaboratives did not make use of a formal accountability system. Members did not see its value and found it to be something imposed on them rather than a tool to use for effectiveness. These groups also reported lower levels of commitment in the group and accountability. Overall members resented the tools introduced by the facilitators and did not see their worth, which seems to have lead to their resistance to using a formal accountability system. Members reported in interviews and the survey a high level of commitment to the group and the initiative early in the process; therefore, I would not equate this resistance to the tool as due to low commitment.

Decision-making Process

A structured process of shared decision-making and consensus building was mentioned repeatedly in the high and mid-performing collaboratives. All mentioned that the groups have continued to use this as a mechanism for making decisions once the formal LAP ended. This method was not mentioned in the low performing collaboratives. Instead these members complained that LAP process was too time consuming and involved too much talk and not enough action. Both groups in interviews reported optimism and commitment at the start of LAP and enjoyed high survey ratings around early relationships; therefore, it does not seem that their resistance to a consensus model resulted from lower relationships.

Relationship Building

The two high performing collaboratives overwhelmingly discussed the strong working relationships built in the group that crossed traditional boundaries. One mid-performing group, DeKalb County, was also positive about relationships though not as effusive as the high performing groups. A lack of members and lower membership commitment was also an issue in DeKalb. Indianapolis, also a mid-performing group, was more mixed, with half of the participants commenting positively on relationships. The two high performing LAPs and one mid-performing LAP, DeKalb, all discussed a high level of trust within the group despite issues of power and conflict.

The low performing collaboratives rarely mentioned strong relationships; instead, they discussed members having their own agenda. Members interviewed in Polk did not have any lasting relationships. The majority of members in both groups said there was a lack of trust among those in the collaborative.

Power and Conflict

All of the collaboratives experienced conflict, but the type and duration of that conflict seems critical to the collaborative success. Both high performing collaboratives were able to deal with conflict either through their decision-making process or through facilitation. DeKalb County, a mid-performing group, had no negative comments on conflict; members felt their facilitators and their use of data helped manage any potential conflict.

Indianapolis, a mid-performing collaborative, had significant conflict about membership that lasts to this day. Montgomery County, a low-performing LAP, overwhelmingly discussed conflict in their group. They mentioned issues of power

and control and the inability of facilitators to manage the conflict. This was noted as destructive to the group and something they struggled with during the majority of LAP. Polk County noted issues of powerful influences both internally and externally. Some felt decisions were being made outside the room. These dynamics led to a debilitating lack of trust and motivation in the group.

Facilitation

Facilitation was a critical factor in the success of the LAP. Groups generally felt strongly as to whether their facilitator was a help or hindrance to the process. The success of a facilitator does not seem to be due to facilitator experience given each LAP had a facilitator that had been in a prior LAP with different outcomes. For example, Montgomery County, a low-performing LAP, had a facilitator that had previously facilitated in Baltimore City, a high-performing LAP. Polk County, another low-performing LAP, had a facilitator that had been a participant and leader in Baltimore City as well as a facilitator in Anne Arundel, a high-performing LAP. The other facilitator in Polk went on to facilitate in Indianapolis where he/she was very successful. DeKalb County had the least experienced facilitators; however, they received unanimous positive feedback about their skill and role in the process.

All of the high and mid-performing collaboratives found their facilitators essential to the group success, citing them for managing conflict and power and increasing overall group effectiveness. The two low performing groups were either mixed or very negative toward facilitation. Montgomery County felt they were more in the way of progress and were incapable of managing conflict in the room.

Additional Findings

The majority of my findings support the recommendations in the literature. One variable that did not have as much effect as expected is that of the convener. Survey results had a positive view of their role, but interviews did not show this group playing a significant role in the collaborative. Instead, many members said they were accountable to one another or the community. It does seem these groups were important in bringing the collaborative together and lending legitimacy to the effort; however, it also seems that collaboratives are able to hold themselves accountable without the use of an external group to increase accountability.

While this analysis supported the recommendation of capacity building to develop the ability to engage in joint decision-making, there was less support for the development of general leadership skills. Participants interviewed were very mixed as to whether this was a beneficial element or a hindrance. Overall this seems to demonstrate that some skill building for advancing the process is necessary but other more individualized skilled building is not. For example, exercises that assist group development and conflict resolution, such as decision-making tools, accountability and collaborative leadership skills, were ones the groups continued to use after the formal LAPs ended. But exercises like taking personality assessments led many participants to feel they were wasting time that could be spent on community development.

Interestingly, this research shows little to no tension among the sectors. Repeated interview and survey results showed conflicts that arose were not due to sector differences but due to but more to personality clashes or specific ideas on how the group should function. Not once in my interview discussions did people mention

conflict due to sector differences; instead, members disagreed when asked directly if this was an issue. This was a surprising finding given the different cultures present in public, nonprofit, and business organizations. It also runs counter to some research in the field (Bryson, Crosby and Stone, 2006; Herranz, 2007).

Conclusion

When looking at collaboratives based on performance, the high performing groups share several common factors, specifically the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation. This type of qualitative analysis makes it difficult to ascertain the specific relationships among these factors; however, it seems the presence of power and conflict were influential as to whether groups were able to have strong relationships and develop a shared decision-making process. These factors all seem to be related to strong accountability and the use of a formal accountability system. It is unclear in this analysis as to why the low-performing groups did not adapt well to facilitation; however, one thing both groups had in common was that they were part of a collaborative that included members from previous groups. Members in both groups noted that facilitators did not recognize previous efforts or specific issues related to their community. This is one theory as to why facilitation may not have proved as effective in these groups.

My overall research findings are supported by a previous quantitative analysis I conducted with Julia O'Brien (2012), which examined the collaborative process across eight separate collaboratives, and used both semi-structured interviews and a quantitative path analysis to determine the effect of process on results. These

analyses found that facilitators are important to group development as well as individual development and both were related to results in the path analysis. In addition, the path analysis showed that managing power and conflict is important to relationship building, which in turn is important to the decision-making process. These are key elements in the process of collaboratives as they lead to participant accountability, which in turn leads to results, or the establishment of strategies and an improvement in the problem being addressed.

This research is one of the few in the literature to link elements of the collaborative process to results. Previous literature discusses process in either a theoretical way or based on individual case studies, but this approach allows me to analyze processes based on multiple cases known to achieve results. Given the scarce research on process in general these findings have significant implications for both practitioners and scholars, as Chapter Six will discuss in detail.

Chapter 6: Lessons for Design and Evaluation of Collaboratives

My research questions ask: What is the relationship between design process and effectiveness? Do certain elements of the design process, such as accountability methods or strong relationships, make greater effectiveness more likely? I analyze the process through which cross-sector collaboratives design and implement their work, including how they organize themselves, build relationships, and become accountable for outcomes and performance.

Overall collaboratives occur in a complex and challenging environment. Given the difficult yet necessary tasks surrounding collaboratives, it is important to understand how to measure and define their levels of effectiveness while identifying the important components of the collaborative process that make the group most successful. This research analyzes whether changes in my independent variable, the collaborative design process, lead to changes in the dependent variable, collaborative effectiveness. I define process as a series of actions or steps taken to achieve an end. How do participants come together as a group and determine the best course of action? How do they design and implement new programs and policies? How do they make decisions and establish accountability? The process also involves the relationship side of accountability. I define accountability as a relationship in which participants and collaboratives are responsive to each other, external partners and the community as a whole for the development process, outcomes and effectiveness of that collaborative.

Yet processes and collaboratives are not useful unless they are deemed effective. The literature contains multiple definitions of effectiveness (Turrini,

Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011) with some maintaining that effectiveness means different things to different groups (Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007). Increasingly scholars maintain that effectiveness be analyzed at the community, collaborative and client/organizational level and include a focus on increased perceived effectiveness or value at each level as well as the achievement of stated goals (Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011; Agranoff, 2007; Provan and Milward, 2001). Given the nature of collaboratives, the idea of effectiveness should be outcomes and results that could not have been produced by just one member or agency alone (Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010, Agranoff, 2007). I define collaborative effectiveness as providing value to collaborative participants, organizations and local communities in ways that could not have been achieved through individual agencies alone.

The literature notes the scarce information on the process and work of collaboratives. There is limited work with regard to the overall design process broadly (Wohlstetter, Smith, Malloy; 2005); instead, studies often focus on internal aspects such as building trust and leadership rather than the design of the work and functioning of the group (Hays, Hays, DeVille, and Mulhall, 2000). Given the expense of monetary and human resources, knowledge around the design and implementation of collaboratives is essential. Collaborative work places unique demands on participants, requiring special capacity and knowledge. Since the work is influenced by the skills and attitudes of members as well as their ability to create and implement programs and policies to address community issues, many groups seek outside (and costly) technical assistance, such as with the cases in this research

(Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen, 2001). Additionally, the question of effectiveness is one still discussed in the literature; therefore, there is no agreed upon technique for evaluating effectiveness and groups struggle with demonstrating impact.

In order to link process and effectiveness, I first develop an evaluative framework in order to determine collaborative effectiveness. Then utilizing survey and interview data, I am able to determine there is a relationship between design process and effectiveness, specific elements are highlighted and explained below. Overall, this research impacts the literature and the field in two ways: 1) Extending and operationalizing a framework for collaborative evaluation; 2) Determining critical elements within the collaborative process to increase effectiveness.

An Evaluation Framework

Collaboratives often resist traditional evaluation given their complexity and the difficulty in linking the actions of collaboratives directly to community level outcomes, yet much of the current research does not distinguish how best to delineate and define the many actions of collaboratives (Zakocs and Edwards, 2006; Provan and Milward, 2001; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). Many scholars and practitioners agree that collaborative effectiveness should be judged as to whether collaboratives produce community-level outcomes; however, establishing a link between collaborative action and community-level change is extremely difficult for several reasons. First, these collaboratives occur in complex, turbulent environments where efforts of sustainability and success are affected by outside factors (Bryson, Crosby

and Stone, 2006). Second, positive collaborative outcomes can go beyond that of simply improving community-level numbers. Collaboratives can at times generate public value while producing poor program outcomes (McGuire and Agranoff, 2011). Third, collaboratives include multiple organizations with multiple constituents who hold a variety of interests and needs, therefore arguing for a broader level of assessment than simply community-level outcomes but outcomes important to the different agencies involved. Finally, the most practical argument against solely using community level data to evaluate collaboratives is the fact that these data are often difficult to obtain. Even if data is available, finding funding for evaluations and qualified staff is another hurdle facing collaborative groups.

My research analyzes multiple dimensions and multiple network levels by adapting Provan and Milward's (2001) framework. This framework evaluates collaboratives at the community, network and organization/participation levels and includes criteria and outcomes from various stakeholders. I develop variables that reflect the Provan and Milward framework while also expanding the framework to include an analysis of interventions based on their potential to affect community outcomes. I use best practices informed by the literature to determine this potential. My framework includes indicators related to the process by which the collaborative sought to achieve outcomes, another important distinction not made in previous research. These include variables such as accountability, resource generation and membership commitment. I also analyze the strategies outlined in each collaborative and compare actual outcomes with the overarching goal of each group. Finally, I adapt Provan and Milward's (2001) framework adjusted for a non-hierarchical,

voluntary community collaborative rather than large networks whose main focus is service provision. My framework variables are outlined below.

Framework Variables	Data Source	Definition of Variable
<i>Community Level</i>		
Implementation of best practice community-wide initiatives	Survey and Interview	<p>Survey questions asked whether the LAP group has or plans to implement community-wide initiatives and whether these initiatives will have a significant impact on the problem being addressed. Interviews generated a list of initiatives, and these initiatives are then compared to best practices in the literature in order to evaluate their potential for affecting community outcomes.</p>
Implementation of new policy or legislative change	Survey and Interview	<p>Survey questions asked whether the group was able to make changes or create new policies to better serve their community and whether those were local, state or national policy changes.</p>
Changes in the incidence of the problem	Survey and Interview	<p>Questions asked whether the work of LAP resulted in a positive change associated with the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn) and had a strong potential to greatly impact the problem.</p>
<i>Collaborative Level</i>		
Membership commitment and growth	Survey and Interview	<p>Questions asked about membership commitment in the early and later stages of the LAP. Questions around membership attrition and growth/membership post Casey funding were asked in the interviews.</p>
Member Driven Accountability System	Survey and Interview	<p>Questions asked whether the group employed strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments, whether this responsibility was informal or formal, and whether driven by coach facilitators or members themselves. The survey measure looks at the percent of people that said the accountability was driven by members and the percent change of this perspective from early to later in the process.</p>

Collaborative Self-Assessment and Outcomes	Survey and Interview	<p>Questions asked whether the resulting plan from their LAP group addressed the needs, concerns, and values of the organization they represented as well as whether they were satisfied with the current outcomes(s) of the LAP process. Interviews inquired into the level of conflict the group experienced as they decided upon strategies and the individual's overall evaluation of collaborative outcomes. The strategy impact variable includes strategies coded by impact or strength according to best practices in the literature. Survey variables include the percent of respondents who continued to meet after the last session, and the percent who meet regularly today. Interviews asked questions around the current group and its administration. Survey and interview questions asked whether their LAP group was able to generate new and/or additional funds to continue their work, information on the different types of resources and fundraising efforts conducted by the group as well as their overall level of difficulty in acquiring funds.</p>
Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year	Survey and Interview	

Organization/Participant Level

Individual self-assessment of personal skills and relationships	Survey and Interview	<p>Survey questions asked whether the participant has gained new or improved skills; better working relationships with other individuals involved in this work; participated in new initiatives or activities (independent of LAP activities); has a better understanding of this issue and the population served; made contacts that are useful to them or their sector/organization. Interview questions asked about the leadership development component in LAP and whether participants had gained new skills personally. Survey and interview questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in greater community legitimacy with clients and reputation with peers and funders and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in participant's greater ability to obtain funds and acquire new resources for their individual agency.</p>
Increased agency outcomes	Survey and Interview	

Increased client outcomes
for organization

Survey

Questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in increased ease of client access to services and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in higher number of services offered, quality of services and coordinating care with other agencies.

Using this framework, the collaboratives analyzed distinguish themselves in high, moderate and low performing groups. It is noteworthy that the high performing groups rank high at all three levels and the low performing groups rank relatively low at all three levels. Analyzing each level provides clarity with regard to moderate level performing groups as the outcomes of these groups are not as clear-cut and direct.

The two high performing groups, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City, performed well at all three levels. Both groups implemented community-wide projects that mirrored best practices in the literature while also seeing improvement in county-level data related to child readiness scores. At the collaborative level both groups showed strong levels of membership commitment, accountability and continued to raise funds and attract members even after Casey funding was finished. Both groups reported increased skills among individual members and increased outcomes for organizations in the collaborative. The two moderate performing groups, DeKalb County and Indianapolis, were less successful at implementing county level programs that mirrored best practices. Their strategies, when compared to the literature, were not as robust as the high performing groups. Indianapolis showed a decrease in membership commitment over time. The two lowest groups, Polk and Montgomery, performed poorly at almost all levels. These groups were

unable to create community-wide initiatives and experienced high attrition of members over time. The groups were not able to secure funding after the completion of the Casey grant and overall accountability and self-assessment were low.

This research is a clear answer to the question of whether collaboratives can produce meaningful change. The framework highlights high performing groups that collected tens of thousands of books, increased pre-k programs for children, added substantial and meaningful programs and organizations to their communities, and became true partners working toward the same goal. Anne Arundel experienced a 17% rise in test scores. They have collected 15,000 – 20,000 books to distribute through various service agencies. Every baby born in a county hospital is sent home with a book and information on early childhood education. They were instrumental in getting the county a Judy Center, which promotes partnerships between local school systems, local agencies, and community-based organizations for the purpose of improving young children's school readiness. Baltimore City has seen test scores rise by 55%. The group was able to garner resources through grant support that allowed for programs to increase early language acquisition. Members created an estimated 8,000 – 10,000 literacy kits over a five-year period that they then distributed to home visiting organizations as well as child care organizations. They created a Countdown to Kindergarten initiative and worked to significantly increase Pre-K slots in the city.

Looking at the collaborative and organization/participation adds a richer story to the many different outcomes possible with community collaborations. By analyzing the individual and organizational levels we see that group members in these

collaboratives developed personal leadership skills and changed the culture and direction of individual agencies. Anne Arundel described the relationships formed through the collaborative as a significant outcome of the initiative. It mentions the school system coming to the table for the first time as true partners. Their group has now become the county's official Race to the Top team, an indication of the important role they play in the county. DeKalb County has been extremely successful at garnering resources after the Casey grant ended. Members in Indianapolis herald a new culture of data generation and use because of LAP. They also note an increased ability to work collectively and break down silos as well as increased personal leadership skills. Baltimore City members noted that agencies started to do their work differently, saying that they began to see LAP tools such as results based accountability come up in other meetings outside of the collaborative. Often the story and purpose of collaboratives is to affect community change, but this research demonstrates outcomes in the community as well as with individuals and participating agencies.

The framework variables presented are straightforward and easily replicated by other institutions seeking to evaluate their collaborative, providing value to the planning and implementation of groups directing and participating in community collaboratives. Collaboratives and the organizations within them are consistently being asked to demonstrate effectiveness (Sowa, 2009); however, this is difficult given they occur in multi-dimensional environments where various organizations and efforts are going on at the same time. Quantitative analysis is costly, time-consuming and difficult to demonstrate a clear link between the work of the collaborative and

community-level quantitative outcome. The evaluative approach outlined here using qualitative data to understand dimensions at the community, collaborative and organizational level is one useful to practitioners and funders in the field. The use of the evaluative framework proposed here will capture success seen at the collaborative and individual/agency level rather than just the community value. This provides a richer picture of collaborative groups. The work of collaborating is arduous and involves costs, and this richer story of outcomes can provide a motivating factor for more communities to develop and implement a collaborative. This is a significant finding highlighting the potential for these groups. It is clear given the struggles of some of the other agencies that collaboration is not easy and not always successful, but it is possible.

Overall this research contributes to collaborative scholarship by providing an empirically grounded, theoretically based framework evaluating collaborative performance useful for both future scholars and practitioners. It expands existing theory and operationalizes Provan and Milward's framework. This work offers a step toward a more robust framework to evaluate all collaboratives broadly at various levels of analysis. Despite decades of research on collaboratives, evaluative frameworks analyzing these groups are scarce (Herranz, 2009; Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007; Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010; McGuire and Agranoff, 2011). This research contributes to scholarship by advancing an existing framework to include more variables related to effectiveness and allow for greater applicability to a variety of collaborative forms, including previously neglected informal, non-hierarchical groups such as the ones analyzed here. The findings in this analysis

illustrate the framework's usability and potential. Additionally, this work builds out indicators at the network level, something scarce in the literature (Provan, Fish and Sydow, 2007; Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi, 2010). In fact, Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini, and Nasi (2010) noted in their recent literature review little attention has been paid to the issue of overall network effectiveness and its determinants and that identifying an indicator of effectiveness at a network level might lead to a major advance in network effectiveness theory.

Process Elements for Effectiveness

The second major impact of this research is the contribution to knowledge concerning essential elements of process within a collaborative. McGuire and Agranoff (2011) note that not enough is known about how networks overcome inertia and deliver results, or how they can become more effective at their roles. Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2006) conduct the most comprehensive review of process where they create a series of propositions based on a thorough literature review. This research affirms some of these propositions and challenges others. Based on their analysis as well as my own literature review, I include the following elements in my analysis of collaborative process:

- External Factors
 - Competitive pressures
 - Existing Relationships or Networks
 - The establishment of an external partner(s) in which the collaborative feels accountable for performance
 - Strength of implementation team (facilitator, support staff, etc.)
- Internal Factors
 - Development of group leadership skills and forging agreements
 - Strong working relationships among collaborating participants and agencies

- The establishment of group norms around trust and open dialog
- Management of power imbalances and conflict within group
- Member commitment to collaborative
- Group accountability and establishment and successful use of an internal accountability system for performance

Of these, I found when analyzing high, moderate, and low performing groups, the following elements emerged as the most important to the process of successful collaboration: the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation.

Accountability System

While there is much literature devoted to the issue of accountability within collaboratives, only a few researchers discuss specific methods for dealing with the issue of personal accountability and its relationship to effectiveness. Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2006) propose, “collaborations are more likely to be successfully when they have an accountability system that tracks inputs, processes and outcomes.” Page (2004) also mentions the importance of a tracking system related to results.

My research shows that high and moderate performing collaboratives all used a formal accountability system with which to track commitments made by group members. These groups created specific tracking tools to promote a shared commitment for completing work related to strategies. At the end of each session, members were given a commitment form on which they wrote a task or tasks that they planned to complete before the next session, how each task is related to a specific strategy, how they plan to complete it, and an estimated date for completion. All the commitments documented on the form were then entered into session notes that all group members could access. Members could also make a work commitment

in a more informal way during group discussions or strategy meetings. These commitments, along with details on how they planned to complete them and if they planned to complete them with partners, were also documented in the session notes that were easily accessible to the individual and other LAP members. Finally, at each session members reported their progress on the commitments made at the previous sessions. All progress was then documented in the notes. High and moderate performing groups valued this tool as a part of their success and reported a high level of accountability among members. The low performing collaboratives did not make use of this or any other formal accountability system and reported lower levels of commitment in the group and accountability.

This is a tangible and important finding for collaborative implementation. Often voluntary cross-sector collaboratives are hesitant to have conversations about accountability because they are in a group made of peers and not subordinates. Yet this research demonstrates that these groups should not only discuss accountability but also create a system in which they hold one another accountable. This research indicates that groups must create accountability not just to the community or external partner, but to each other. Members recorded and reported on their actions in notes and in meetings; in other words, to their peers. This transparent commitment made members more likely to follow through with their actions, subsequently members got more done. Given the nature of collaboratives as non-hierarchical entities, understanding how to successfully generate peer accountability and realizing the importance of it is a critical finding. This is a tangible tool that can be used by collaboratives of all types and area of focus.

Decision-making Process

A structured process of shared decision-making and consensus building is an important tool used in the high and mid-performing collaboratives. The consensus decision-making tool requires all members to agree to a proposal made in the group before moving on. Members in these groups have continued to use this as a mechanism for making decisions once the formal LAP ended. This method was not mentioned in the low performing collaboratives. Instead these members complained that the LAP process was too time-consuming and involved too much talk and not enough action.

Most of the literature mentions decision-making broadly, noting how groups make decisions will affect their process. Crosby, Bryson and Stone (2006) simply propose that “Formal and informal governing mechanisms are likely to influence collaboration effectiveness (p. 49).” McGuire and Agranoff (2011) discuss the issue of “overprocessing” as an operational limitation with networks, citing the balance between process versus action with regard to network momentum. They discuss the need for effective decision-making to combat this issue. This research argues for a specific type and method of decision-making as it relates to collaborative success. Each high and mid-performing group used a consensus decision-making tool in which members indicated their agreement by a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. Those with a thumbs-down were brought into the process and the group deliberated until each member had a thumbs-up. Facilitators focused on encouraging members to make proposals and practice interest based negotiation in order to build consensus. As noted in a previous LAP evaluation, “This technique kept ideas on the table without

stopping the work of the group. It prevented circular talk and helped leaders hold each other and themselves accountable for thinking critically, finding solutions, and being willing to move forward on a shared agenda. When it worked, it created a tangible example of public buy-in and acknowledged the essentially political nature of collaboration. (CITE)”

While members of the high and mid-performing groups often found this frustrating, members of each group repeatedly mentioned it as important to their success since it allowed for all members to buy into an initiative and collaborate on a strategy. This is another specific recommendation that can be implemented during the design process of a collaborative.

Relationship Building

Members of the two high performing collaboratives overwhelmingly discussed the strong working relationships and a high level of trust that crossed traditional boundaries. The low performing collaborative members rarely mentioned strong relationships; instead, they discussed members a lack of trust. Trust and strong working relationships are cited frequently in the literature, and this research supports the importance of both elements within a collaborative. Crosby, Bryson and Stone (2006) propose, “Cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when trust-building activities (such as nurturing cross-sectoral and cross-cultural understanding) are continuous (p. 48).” LAPs took time out of their work to engage in a variety of relationship building activities to build trust and encourage work between agencies and sectors. A lack of members and lower membership commitment was one reason that kept one of the mid-performing LAPs from becoming a high performing LAP.

While some interviewed saw this as time away from valuable work, it is clear that those groups that had the highest indicators of relationships were the most successful. Collaboratives in the field should take into account activities that both track and develop relationships in order to be most successful.

Power and Conflict

All of the collaboratives experienced conflict, but the type and duration of that conflict was critical to collaborative success. Both high performing collaboratives were able to deal with conflict either through their decision-making process or through facilitation. The presence of long-term conflict was a significant barrier to the Indianapolis LAP, keeping it from becoming a high-performing group. Low performing groups repeatedly mentioned the issue of power and conflict and its destructive influence on the group.

Like trust, power and conflict are mentioned frequently in the literature, yet there is little written on how to deal with power and conflict. McGuire and Agranoff (2011) note power asymmetries as one of the main operational limitations to networks. Bryson, Crosby and Stone propose, “because conflict is common in partnerships, cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when partners use resources and tactics to equalize power and manage conflict effectively (p. 48).” My research shows that the high performing LAPs all used the same tactic to manage and equalize power, namely facilitation.

Facilitation

Facilitation was a critical factor in the success of the LAP. All of the high and mid-performing collaboratives found their facilitators essential to the group success,

citing them for managing conflict and power and increasing overall group effectiveness. Facilitators also kept groups on task, used tools to help them create strategies and working goals, and helped increase urgency and momentum. The two low performing groups were either mixed in their opinion toward facilitation or very negative toward facilitation.

The influence or recommendation of the use of facilitation is hardly found in the literature. With LAP, having a trained facilitator who was external to the group proved the most commonly cited reason for effectiveness. All of the findings above relate to the work of the facilitator. Facilitators helped group members manage conflict, mitigate power, have difficult conversations, create strategies, design and implement an accountability system, use consensus decision-making, develop trust and relationships, and more. Hiring facilitators is very costly for a group; therefore, it is something many groups dismiss. One member of a mid-performing LAP noted that after the Casey grant ended they tried working without facilitation, but realized quickly it was essential. They then spent money from a very tight budget to hire a facilitator for the group. Findings from this research indicate that groups should strongly consider a trained, neutral facilitator in order to increase their effectiveness. This research indicates that facilitation is a critical component as it affects all the other process elements necessary for group effectiveness.

Additional Findings

Several of my findings do not support recommendations in the literature. The most surprising is the lack of support in the research on the effect of the convener, or

accountability partner. This outside authority is meant to legitimize the group and provide additional accountability.

Accountability partners are cross-sector groups of high-level leaders from the public, nonprofit and private sectors. These partners identify the specific issue to be addressed by the collaborative, data indicators, and financial and logistical resources to support the collaborative. They also invite individuals to join the collaborative and provide motivation and accountability as the group progresses. These groups are not meant to be involved in the work as the collaborative remains independent from the accountability partners as it develops strategies to address the social issue and implements community-wide initiatives related to those strategies.

Survey results had a positive view of accountability partners, but interviews did not show this group playing a significant role in the collaborative. Instead, many members said they were accountable to one another or the community rather than an external convener. It does seem these groups were important in bringing the collaborative together and lending legitimacy to the effort; however, it also seems that collaboratives are able to hold themselves accountable without the use of an external group to increase accountability. This research indicates that peer accountability was critical to increasing collaborative effectiveness. This runs directly counter to literature arguing that convening organizations are essential to group accountability (Bryson, et al., 2006; Page, 2008; Wohlstetter and Malloy, 2005; Human and Provan, 2000).

Secondly, while this analysis supports the recommendation of capacity building to develop the ability to engage in joint decision-making, there was less

evidence with regard to the development of general leadership skills. Participants interviewed were very mixed as to whether this was a beneficial element or a hindrance. Overall demonstrates that some skill building for advancing the process is necessary but other more individualized skill building is not. For example, exercises that assist group development and conflict resolution, such as decision-making tools, accountability and collaborative leadership skills, were ones the groups continued to use after the formal LAPs ended. But exercises like taking personality assessments led many participants to feel they were wasting time that could be spent on community development.

Third, this research shows little to no tension among the sectors. Repeated interview and survey results show conflicts that arose were not due to sector differences but due more to personality clashes or specific ideas on how the group should function. Not once in my interview discussions was there mention of conflict due to sector differences; instead, members disagreed when asked directly if this was an issue. This was a surprising finding given the different cultures present in public, nonprofit, and business organizations. It also runs counter to research in the field (Acar, Guo and Yang, 2008; Babiak and Thibault, 2009). Bryson, Crosby and Stone maintain that competing institutional logics are likely within cross-sector collaborations and may significantly influence the extent to which collaborations can agree on essential elements of process, structure, governance, and desired outcomes. My research does not support this assertion.

Finally, there seems to be no connection between the status of relationships or networks prior to the start of LAP and collaborative effectiveness. Some of the cases

analyzed had strong relationships before the collaborative came together and some did not. All groups mentioned the presence of prior relations that hindered initial collaboration, with Baltimore City being the most significant and DeKalb being the least. Yet the high performing groups were able to move past these issues to become successful. Overall this research indicates that despite conditions in the community that may hinder collaboration, such as poor relationships among agencies, cross-sector differences, and the lack of a strong convener, collaboratives can utilize the design elements above to overcome these challenges and become effective.

Implications for Practitioners

This work has several implications for practitioners in the field with regard to collaborative design and implementation. When designing a collaborative, leaders should consider the following:

- **External partners:** This research suggests external partners are important for convening members and providing legitimacy to the work. These partners can also be critical later in the process once groups have developed policy proposals as they can assist in the implementation of the work. Good external partners act as champions for the group, easing the way when they encounter bumps in the road.
- **Member selection:** In order to be successful at using the tools mentioned here, such as facilitation and an accountability system, members must be open to working with one another, often in a different way than in the past since previous efforts have been unsuccessful. Good facilitation will push members

to look beyond traditional solutions and approaches while trying to mitigate conflict and power imbalances. If members are too committed to the previous way of working or unwilling to work collaboratively, the group will suffer conflict and progress will be impeded.

- **Member capacity and commitment:** Previous work and individual leadership capacity should influence the design of the collaborative. This should be taken into account when selecting a facilitator in order to match his or her skills with the needs of the group. Attention to member commitment and group development is also critical to the process.
- **Infrastructure:** Collaboratives should strongly consider the use of a facilitator to help manage conflict, address power imbalances and assist with group momentum. They should also consider the resources and tools available to manage group logistics. Tasks such as scheduling and note-taking are time consuming but critical; therefore, agreements should be made beforehand with regard to these responsibilities.
- **Accountability and Decision-Making:** Once a group has been launched, early conversations should focus on how best to track and encourage accountability and how groups will make decisions. This will improve efficiency and reduce conflict.
- **Evaluation:** Early in the process groups should consider how they will evaluate their work, rather than waiting until after the work has occurred. Creating an evaluation system, setting performance targets, identifying data, etc. will allow the group to create more impactful strategies and show

progress at an early stage of the work. This keeps moral high and momentum going while also providing legitimacy for the work and perhaps additional funding opportunities. Groups should consider both quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation, starting with the framework I present here.

Implications for Research

This research demonstrates several implications for the field of networks and collaboratives and points to areas for further research.

Performance Framework: I've presented a grounded and expanded evaluative tool with regard to collaborative performance at various levels. Further research should utilize this framework to deepen the literature on its usefulness.

- **Process Elements:** Further research should be conducted with regard to the elements found in this analysis, namely: the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation. Additional work should look at different models and level of impact of each of these elements while also furthering our knowledge of collaborative process generally.
- **Facilitation:** My analysis highlighted facilitation as particularly important to the collaborative process, a recommendation often not found in the literature. Further research should expand on these findings and understand the role of a facilitator and the important qualities and conditions necessary for effective facilitation.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates a clear relationship between design process and effectiveness, with certain elements making positive results more likely. I've introduced an important evaluative tool that allows collaboratives to understand their performance at various levels and share their success and shortcomings in a rich, straightforward, and cost effective manner. This research allows for measurement on multiple dimensions and levels, lending information on the relevance and impact of collaborative groups. Further research should investigate this framework to deepen the literature on its usefulness.

Most importantly, this research shows specific elements essential to the collaborative process: the use of an accountability system, decision-making process, relationship building, and facilitation. Practitioners should strongly consider these elements when designing and budgeting for collaborative efforts. Further research should look at different models and level of impact of each of these elements while also furthering our knowledge of collaborative process generally.

Bryson et al (2006) note that very few research studies have gathered data in a way to guide research around collaboratives or help policy makers in government, business, nonprofits or communities understand how to design and implement them. The data in this analysis includes all sectors usually involved in a collaborative, versus those studies written from the government perspective, and includes groups that are voluntary and non-hierarchical versus more formal, contracted groups. Overall this research fills a void and makes a significant contribution to the literature and practice of collaborative networks, potentially impacting how future cross-sector

collaboratives work together to produce public value and address major public problems.

Appendices

Appendix A:

AN ACTION AGENDA FOR MARYLAND

To achieve real improvements in the school readiness of our youngest children requires a plan that: (1) coordinates the patchwork of existing quality efforts and builds upon them; (2) is based on best and proven practices, such as those described above; (3) recognizes and addresses the fundamental root causes that contribute to the current ill-preparation of many of our children, as noted earlier in this report; and (4) is ambitious in its scope, while still realistic in its expectations.

The members of the Leadership in Action Program have spent the past several months developing such a plan. To reach our target of 75% of kindergartners assessed as fully ready in the 2006-07 school year, the members of the LAP propose the implementation of a 5-Year Action Agenda that focuses on achieving 6 goals, through the implementation of 25 strategies:

- 1) All children, birth through age 5, will have access to quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of families, including full day options. Strategies include immediately targeting at-risk 4 year-olds for entry into a quality early care and education program, building a more coordinated and expansive system of early care and education to serve more families, and providing needed incentives to attract and retain quality staff in early care and education programs.
- 2) Parents of young children will succeed in their role as their child's first teacher. Strategies focus on giving parents information, support and training about school readiness and tools they can use to implement school readiness activities with their child in the home, expanding parent-to-parent support opportunities, and empowering parents to better advocate for their children and participate as partners in program and policy development.
- 3) Children, birth through age 5, and their families, will receive necessary income support benefits and health and mental health care to ensure they arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies. Strategies focus on improving access to the range of health and mental health services and income support programs needed by pregnant women and families with young children, with a particular focus on addressing substance abuse and childhood lead poisoning – two devastating problems with widespread implications for school readiness.

- 4) All early care and education staff will be appropriately trained in promoting and understanding school readiness. Strategies include implementing a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing the school readiness skills of early care and education providers, and increasing the number of degreed professionals working in the field.
- 5) All Maryland citizens will understand the value of quality early care and education as the means to achieve school readiness. Strategies focus on implementing a widespread public engagement campaign to improve the understanding of the importance of school readiness.
- 6) Maryland will have an infrastructure that promotes, sufficiently funds, and holds accountable its school readiness efforts. Strategies focus on institutionalizing policymaking, funding and accountability to support Maryland's Action Agenda to achieve improvements in school readiness.

Appendix B: Strategy Coding

Coding for LAP Strategies and Goals

Based on Evidence-Based Assumptions Behind School Readiness

For the purpose of this research, a strategy is defined as the following:

A strategy is a coherent set of actions to improve results. It is a clear, concise statement of what works to do better, to make a measurable difference. Strategies represent an overarching approach that has the power to reach a stated goal/result. Strategies are the means, method or “the how.” Each strategy will have a set of actions that must be taken to fully implement the strategy.

For each LAP strategy/goal, use the following scoring method:

1. Read strategy carefully.
2. Go into notes to find more details about the strategy and what actions were taken related to the strategy. There may be information in the notes that seems related to a strategy but that isn’t specifically stated as related to the strategy. For example, if the strategy is ‘Transition to kindergarten’ and then in another part of the notes you see someone discussing working on providing rosters to teachers the summer before kindergarten, but it’s not specified that that is related to the strategy, you can consider that it is. So, if there is something in the notes that appears to be related to the strategy but isn’t specified that it’s related, consider it as related.
3. Look for relation to specific *methods*. Use the broad strategy as it’s discussed in the notes, and any other actions that seem to have been important and broad and also related to the stated strategy. Count number of specific *methods* that are related to the strategy (regardless of categories).
 - a. If there is an *explicit* relationship to any of the *methods*, the strategy is coded as Direct and receives a ‘2’.
 - i. Do not count a method if it seems like it could be related, but you’re not sure, or if the relationship to the method is indirect in any way.
 - ii. The strategy may be related to a specific method that seems like it wouldn’t actually have a large impact. But, try not to let your personal judgment influence your coding. If there is a relationship to a method, whatever the method is, it counts. Try not to be influenced by the impact of an individual method or strategy.
 - iii. To have a specific relationship to a method, it should be very clear how the strategy directly impacts the result. If you cannot say how the strategy directly impacts the result, then it probably isn’t specifically related to a method.
 - b. If there is no *explicit* relationship to any of the *methods* then the strategy is indirect and receives a ‘1’.

- i. The strategy may be directly related to a Category (ex: Parental education), but isn't related to any specific methods within the category. If that is the case then it is still only *indirect*. There **MUST** be a specific relationship to a method for the strategy to be direct.
- c. If it's related to neither, then it's nothing and receives a '0'.

To determine if strategy is directly related to an evidence-based strategy, use the chart below.

Evidence- Based Strategy	Method
Child Physical Health	
	Improve access to immunizations
	Promote regular well-child visits and/or developmental screening and assessments
	Provide support for children with special needs. For example: pediatric monitoring, home visits, taking child to development centers and support group meetings for parents
	Reduce risks of low birth weight and infant mortality
	Promote good prenatal care – especially for 1 st time moms and low-income moms
	Promote home-visits from RNs to address prenatal care, maternal life-course management, healthy home environment, etc.
	Promoting parental education (ex. <i>My Baby U</i> videos on infant care and health-related issues)
	Promoting good nutrition (ex. Breastfeeding, No solids before 4 months, no cow’s milk)
	Improving access to WIC
	Reducing child injuries (ex: providing car seats, smoke detectors)
	Reducing lead poisoning risk
	Improving dental health (ex: oral health screening, access to dental care)
	Improving services for mentally or physically disabled children
Child Mental Health	
	Develop and support services that recognize/address/treat infant and toddler mental health problems
	Develop and support services that recognize/address/treat child abuse and/or neglect
	Implement programs to help parents and caregivers teach children to regulate, express, and recognize emotions in self and others
	Implement programs to promote healthy relationships between children and non-parental caregivers including secure and attached relationships between parent and child
	Implement programs to promote social stimulation (ex. Relationships with peers, caregivers, learning social norms, etc.)
Parental Ability (non-education related)	
	Implement programs to address and improve parents’ psychological health
	Implement programs to promote positive parenting attitudes and promote healthy parent-child relationship (cuddling, playing, hugging), encourage them to be nurturing and help them understand the importance of the parent-child relationship
	Provide maternal support through improved social networks
	Provide maternal support through job training and/or education
	Improve specific parenting skills (ex: promoting routines, talking to children, giving chores, discipline etc)
Family/Parent Demographic Characteristics	
	Address parental and caregiver unemployment
	Address substance abuse in parents and caregivers
	Provide support to foster care and adoptive parents
	Improve family/parent experiences with criminal justice system
	Provide education and support around domestic violence
	Provide support for non-married families (single parents,

Reducing Recidivism Best Practices from the Literature	
Evidence- Based Strategy	Method
Employment	
	Provide employment-related training while still in prison
	Provide work release job programs in prison
	Address transportation issues related to employment
	Provide case-managed placement programs which allow for frequent contact with case managers
	Allow for post-prison job training programs that not only improve individuals' job skills but also to improve job readiness, provide case management for other services, place former prisoners in jobs, and continue to work with them for a follow-up period.
	Provide programs that focus on assistance finding legitimate, full-time and consistent employment
	Create/utilize programs to work with employers to change their perspective on hiring ex-offenders.
	Create or build on neighborhood-based networks of workforce development partners and local businesses that will target the preparation and employment of parolees.
Health	
	Implement programs to identify and treat mental disorders while in prison
	Implement programs to identify and treat physical disorders while in prison
	Assist ex-offenders in finding access to comprehensive health care
	Implement programs to begin identifying access to health care and services prior to being released
	Provide programs that allow ex-offenders the ability to continue the care needed upon release, including discharge planning and preparation for addressing health care needs upon release
	Ensure the availability of treatment centers in the community for ex-offenders
	Work with community agencies to ensure the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners with mental disorders
	Work with community agencies to ensure the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners with physical disorders
Housing	
	Provide access to affordable, stable housing options that will aid the transition back to the community
	Provide support for family members/partners providing

Reducing Recidivism Best Practices from the Literature	
Evidence- Based Strategy	Method
	housing to former inmates
	Provide special access for persons with mental illness
	Work with community agencies to ensure the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners into community related to safe, affordable and stable
	Help ex-offenders plan for and deal with the first 24-48 hours (where to go immediately after leaving prison, where to eat, sleep, etc).
	Provide case-managed placement programs which allow for frequent contact with case managers
Substance Abuse	
	Provide drug treatment programs while in prison
	Provide cognitive behavioral therapy programs and/or therapeutic communities while in prison
	Provide drug treatment programs upon release
	Provide cognitive behavioral therapy programs and/or therapeutic communities upon release
	Ensure the availability of treatment centers in the community for ex-offenders
	Work with community agencies to ensure the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners with substance abuse problems
	Provide programs that tailor to an individual's need and level of risk, are integrated across all stages of the justice system, and linked to drug treatment aftercare in the community
	Provide case-managed placement programs which allow for frequent contact with case managers
Family and Community Issues	
	Allow for community contact during prison sentence, for example allow them to get driver's licenses while still in prison.
	Facilitate community contact upon release and engage local organizations in assisting ex-offenders. Assist ex-offenders in finding community resources
	Allow for families and community organizations to maintain and establish connections while in prison.
	Work with community agencies to ensure programs in place during prison continue upon release; community agencies should be notified and kept up to date on prisoner release information
	Develop coalitions of resident leaders who will oversee the reentry efforts and provide accountability for community and offender obligations.

Reducing Recidivism Best Practices from the Literature	
Evidence- Based Strategy	Method
	Provide programs that address changes in motivation and lifestyle away from criminal activity to positive engagement in the community
	Engage local community-based organizations that can learn how to help family members support the parolee
	Provide parolees opportunities to participate in community service and demonstrate that they can be community assets rather than simply neighborhood liabilities.
General recommendations	
	Provide programs that create a personalized plan to assess the risks of recidivism tailored for that individual
	Provide programs that prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
	Provide programs that allow for targeted interventions to individual needs.
	Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs.
	Structure 40–70 percent of high-risk offenders’ time for 3–9 months.
	Provide programs that increase ways for positive reinforcement
	Offer peer mentorship programs.
	Program or strategy measures relevant processes/practices.
	Program or strategy provides measurement feedback.
	Programs that help offenders prepare forms for identification
	Increase quality of case management/parole officers.
	Address increasing parole violation rates using locally based strategies

Appendix C: Participant Interview Questions

Participant Background Questions:

- What was your role when you joined LAP (what sector?)? How was it that you came to join?
- Which session did you join?
- What was your initial outlook on joining – hopeful, positive, skeptical? Did you feel this was something different or something you and/or your community had tried before?

External Factors Concerning Process

- Can you describe the problem within your community (i.e. early childhood or recidivism)? What was the working environment like for you and other members – meaning the political environment, capacity to address the problem, anything else external that affected the work.
 - o What were members' initial working relationships like, did you know each other from the start? Were there past tensions and turf battles? What was the level of competition with one another for resources?
- Were you aware of an accountability partner? How would you describe the group's relationship with the accountability partners? Did it help or hinder the process? Did the group feel responsible to the accountability partners?
 - o What is your assessment of the accountability partners themselves... did they embrace their role and use it effectively? Did they provide adequate resources and support?
- What is your impression of the LAP Implementation team, meaning the facilitators and support staff? Were they neutral? Did they improve your overall effectiveness?
 - o How would you describe the process in terms of rigidity?
 - o Was it top down or bottom up?
 - o What influence did Casey have on the process?
- Am I missing anything from the external factors...

Internal Factors Concerning Process

- Was there initial group agreement around the urgency of the problem? Around the approach to the problem? Did you share similar philosophies around the work?
- How would you describe the process by which you formed work groups and generate strategies? Was the group open to establishing clear goals and strategies? How well did you use data to support your decisions?

- How would you describe your commitment to the problem over time? To the LAP process? To building their leadership capacity? To the work?
- How well did the group deal with conflict? Did they consider all points of view or were there dominate members driving decision making? How did the group manage power imbalances within the group?
- Did you see any conflict among members of different sectors? Did one sector dominate over others? Did the group attempt to ensure the members were diverse and representative of the community and the problem?
- What level of trust existed in the group? Would you say you saw each other as partners or competitors? Did this change over time?
- How strong were the relationships as the LAP progressed? How willing were participants to share information and feedback with one another? Did they focus on shared goals or individual agendas?
- How was the support from the members' home agencies? Did you have a sense as to whether the right people were in the room? Were the members and their home agencies willing to dedicate the appropriate amount of resources necessary for success? (e.g., staff, time, funding, supplies)
- What was the level of peer accountability? How motivated were participants to complete their commitments? Did they embrace the accountability system introduced? Was the system they adopted more formal or informal? By the end of LAP was it working, and if so, was it driven by the CFs or the members themselves? What is your overall assessment of the accountability system used in the LAP?
- What tools were the most powerful? What stuck?
- In terms of the members that left the LAP, do you have a sense of why they left the group? In other words, was there a common frustration among this group or was it more individual reasons?

Results

- Was the group able to establish concrete performance measures and strategies? What is your overall assessment of these strategies? Meaning their strength and potential to turn the curve.
- What is your assessment on the progress around these strategies? Member commitment to the strategies?

- How effective was the group at leveraging external resources and support? Did they acquire new resources to support their work?
- What happened to your group once the facilitators/implementation team left? Did you and/or the group continue to meet? How effective were those meetings?
- What is your sense of the overall results generated from the LAP? Did you see any progress toward:
 - o Implementation of community wide initiatives?
 - o Service integration among the agencies?
 - o Decrease in cost to the community?
 - o Changes in the incidence of the problem?
 - o Changes in perception by the community?
- What changes did you experience as a participant? Additional leadership qualities?
- What changes did your organization experience due to LAP:
 - Enhanced legitimacy?
 - Enhanced resources for agency?
 - Implementation of new strategies due to LAP?
 - Increase in client outcomes and service access?
- Did you turn a curve? If not, why or why not? Will the group turn a curve?
- Do you have any additional feedback you wish the research team to know about your experience?
- Who else should I talk to in order to understand the group's process and results? I'm interested in talking to a variety of perspectives, positive and negative.

Appendix D: Survey

1/25/12

Qualtrics Survey Software

Intro and Routing

Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to take our survey. Your input is very valuable to us! Your responses are completely anonymous and will not be attached to your name or any identifying information. For this survey to be most useful, it is important that we gain accurate feedback, so please be completely forthcoming with your opinion.

This survey attempts to understand more about your LAP experience through time. We will ask you to place yourself at different points in time and reflect on your experience. Depending on when you joined LAP, we will then ask the same questions in the following section, but from your perspective later in LAP. Finally, in the last section we will ask questions related to general LAP evaluation. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

At the conclusion of the survey you will be directed to a new web page where you can enter your name to win an Amazon gift certificate. We will draw one name to win a \$100 gift certificate and six names to win a \$25 gift certificate. The information collected will be for the drawing only and will not be connected to your survey answers, ensuring all of your answers are completely anonymous.

Routing Qs

In which LAP did you participate?

- Anne Arundel County, Maryland LAP
- Baltimore City, Maryland LAP
- DeKalb County, Georgia LAP
- Elkhart, Indiana LAP
- Indianapolis, Indiana LAP
- Montgomery County, Maryland LAP
- Polk County, Iowa LAP
- US Virgin Islands LAP

What year did you join LAP?

At which Session did you join LAP?

- Launch
- Session 1
- Session 2
- Session 3
- Session 4
- Session 5
- Session 6
- Session 7
- Session 8
- Session 9
- Post Session 9

Which best describes your agency? Please select all that apply.

- Faith-based organization
- Nonprofit
- Business
- School district or local school
- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
- University
- Other

What is the approximate total number of full-time equivalent employees in your agency/organization?

- Under 25
- 25 - 100
- 100 – 250
- 250 – 1000
- 1000 or more

Please select the categories that best describe your role with the organization you represent(ed) in LAP (check all that apply):

- Direct service provider
- Manager/Team Leader
- Administrator
- Collaboration project staff
- Teacher / School personnel
- Elected official
- Law enforcement personnel
- Judge / Magistrate / Court personnel
- Business person
- Representative of a faith-based organization
- Researcher
- Volunteer
- Concerned community member
- Primary Caregiver (parent, guardian, kin, etc) of service recipient
- Person receiving services
- Other

Beginning of LAP

When answering the following questions, please think back to the beginning stage of the LAP process, particularly Launch through Session 4.

Consider your relationship to the members of your LAP group prior to your first meeting. Approximately how many members did you already know from interactions outside of LAP?

No one
 1 - 3
 3 - 6
 6 - 10
 10 - 15
 15 or more

These relationships were due to previous interactions through (please check all that apply):

- Work
- Community Service
- Personal
- Other
- Not applicable

Please think back to the beginning stages of the LAP process, particularly Launch through Session 4.

When discussing the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn), in the beginning members of my LAP group...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
agreed this was an urgent need in our community.	<input type="radio"/>						
could not agree on an approach to the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
had similar philosophies around the work.	<input type="radio"/>						
did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the different interests of involved stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>						
shared a strong commitment to implementing strategies to address the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration.	<input type="radio"/>						

Think about the way you felt as a member of LAP in the beginning of the process, particularly Launch through Session 4. Rate the extent to which the following words or phrases describe how you felt while participating in LAP:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Part of a team	<input type="radio"/>						
Influential	<input type="radio"/>						
Effective	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to participating in LAP	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to complete my commitments	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to collaborate with other members	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to implementing the strategies and goals generated by the LAP group	<input type="radio"/>						

Consider your relationships with your fellow LAP members in the beginning of the LAP process, particularly Launch through Session 4. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about those relationships.

Members of our LAP group...

	Strongly	Somewhat	Slightly	Slightly	Somewhat	Strongly
	<input type="radio"/>					

	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	N/A
did not trust one another.	<input type="radio"/>						
respected different opinions.	<input type="radio"/>						
focused on shared goals rather than individual agendas.	<input type="radio"/>						
valued contributions from one sector (such as government or nonprofit) over others.	<input type="radio"/>						
ensured all interests were represented in the LAP group's membership.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
did not ensure all members had a voice in decisions.	<input type="radio"/>						
were willing to share information, perceptions, and feedback.	<input type="radio"/>						
were not willing to devote the necessary resources (e.g., staff, time, funding, supplies) toward achieving LAP goals.	<input type="radio"/>						
saw one another as competitors, not as partners.	<input type="radio"/>						
effectively resolved differences of opinion and other forms of conflict.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
could be expected to complete their work in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>						
enjoyed strong working relationships with one another.	<input type="radio"/>						
were at the appropriate authority level within their agency to enact change.	<input type="radio"/>						

Consider your LAP groups' ability to complete tasks and make progress in the beginning of the LAP process, particularly Launch through Session 4. Think about whether your group employed strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments. Choose the statement most accurate for your LAP group.

Accountability was...

- Nonexistent: Members were not accountable for their work.
- Informal: Individuals held themselves accountable for their work.
- Informal: Members encouraged one another to be accountable for their work but in an informal way.
- Informal: Coach facilitators encouraged accountability but in an informal way.
- Formal, but driven by the Coach Facilitators: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability but it was mainly driven by the Coach Facilitators/LAP Implementation Team.
- Formal, but driven by the members themselves: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability that was embraced and driven by the members themselves.

Comments related to the questions above:

Later in LAP

When answering the following questions, please think back to the *later* stage of the LAP process, **particularly Session 5 through Session 9.**

When discussing the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn) later in the process, members of my LAP group...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
agreed this was an urgent need in our community.	<input type="radio"/>						
had similar philosophies around the work.	<input type="radio"/>						
did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the different interests of involved stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>						
experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration.	<input type="radio"/>						
shared a strong commitment to implementing strategies to address the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
agreed on specific goals and strategies to address the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
developed a clear plan for implementing our different strategies.	<input type="radio"/>						

The following relates to the way you felt as a member of LAP later in the process, particularly Session 5 through Session 9. Rate the extent to which the following words or phrase describe how you felt while participating in LAP:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Part of a team	<input type="radio"/>						
Influential	<input type="radio"/>						
Effective	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to participating in LAP	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to complete my commitments	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to collaborate with other members	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to implementing the strategies and goals generated by the LAP group	<input type="radio"/>						

Consider your relationships with your fellow LAP members later in your LAP experience, particularly Session 5 through Session 9. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about those relationships.

Members of our LAP group...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
did not trust one another.	<input type="radio"/>						
respected different opinions.	<input type="radio"/>						
focused on shared goals rather than individual agendas.	<input type="radio"/>						
valued contributions from one sector (such as government or nonprofit) over others.	<input type="radio"/>						
ensured all interests were represented in the LAP group's membership.	<input type="radio"/>						
did not ensure all members had a voice in decisions.	<input type="radio"/>						
were willing to share information, perceptions, and	<input type="radio"/>						

feedback were not willing to devote the necessary resources (e.g., staff, time, funding, supplies) toward achieving LAP goals.	<input type="radio"/>						
saw one another as competitors, not as partners.	<input type="radio"/>						
effectively resolved differences of opinion and other forms of conflict.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
could be expected to complete their work in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>						
enjoyed strong working relationships with one another.	<input type="radio"/>						
were at the appropriate authority level within their agency to enact change.	<input type="radio"/>						

Consider your LAP groups' ability to complete tasks and make progress in later in the LAP process, particularly Session 5 through Session 9. Think about whether your group employed strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments. Choose the statement most accurate for your LAP group.

Accountability was...

- Nonexistent: Members were not accountable for their work.
- Informal: Individuals held themselves accountable for their work.
- Informal: Members encouraged one another to be accountable for their work but in an informal way.
- Informal: Coach facilitators encouraged accountability but in an informal way.
- Formal, but driven by the Coach Facilitators: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability but it was mainly driven by the Coach Facilitators/LAP Implementation Team.
- Formal, but driven by the members themselves: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability that was embraced and driven by the members themselves.

Did your answers change from the beginning of your experience? If yes, what contributed to that change?

Additional comments related to any of the questions above:

Routing Q 1

Did you continue to meet with your group after LAP's last formal session, Session 9?

- Yes
- No

Routing Q 2

Do you still continue to meet regularly today?

- Yes
- Yes, but our LAP group has merged with another group or become a totally different entity
- No, but we did meet for a period of time after the formal session ended.

No, but I am continuing to move forward strategies developed during LAP with at least one other member from the original LAP group.

Additional comments:

Post-LAP

The following sets of questions concern your group experiences after LAP formally ended. In other words, once you no longer relied on coach facilitators and the LAP formal structure.

Please consider your post-LAP experience working as a group. When discussing the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn), members of my group...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
agree this is an urgent need in our community.	<input type="radio"/>						
have similar philosophies around the work.	<input type="radio"/>						
do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the different interests of involved stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>						
experience prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration.	<input type="radio"/>						
share a strong commitment to implementing strategies to address the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
agree on specific goals and strategies to address the problem.	<input type="radio"/>						
are implementing (or did implement) a clear plan for our different strategies.	<input type="radio"/>						

The following relates to your feelings as a member of your post-LAP group. Rate the extent to which the following words or phrase describe how you feel (felt) while participating in your post-LAP group:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Part of a team	<input type="radio"/>						
Influential	<input type="radio"/>						
Effective	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to participating in LAP	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to complete my commitments	<input type="radio"/>						
Motivated to collaborate with other members	<input type="radio"/>						
Committed to implementing the strategies and goals generated by the LAP group	<input type="radio"/>						

Please consider your post-LAP experience working as a group. Think about your relationships with your group members during this experience. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about those relationships.

Members of our group...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
do not trust one another.	<input type="radio"/>						

respect different opinions.	<input type="radio"/>						
focus on shared goals rather than individual agendas.	<input type="radio"/>						
value contributions from one sector over others.	<input type="radio"/>						
ensure all interests are represented in the group's membership.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
do not ensure all members have a voice in decisions.	<input type="radio"/>						
are willing to share information, perceptions, and feedback.	<input type="radio"/>						
are not willing to devote the necessary resources (e.g., staff, time, funding, supplies) toward achieving LAP goals.	<input type="radio"/>						
see one another as competitors, not as partners.	<input type="radio"/>						
effectively resolve differences of opinion and other forms of conflict.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
can be expected to complete their work in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>						
enjoy strong working relationships with one another.	<input type="radio"/>						
are at the appropriate authority level within their agency to enact change.	<input type="radio"/>						

Consider your post-LAP group's current ability to complete tasks and make progress. Think about whether your group employs strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments. Choose the statement most accurate for your group.

Accountability is...

- Nonexistent: Members are not accountable for their work.
- Informal: Individuals hold themselves accountable for their work.
- Informal: Members encourage one another to be accountable for their work but in an informal way.
- Formal, but driven by the group leaders: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability but it is mainly driven by the current group leaders.
- Formal, but driven by the members themselves: Our group adopted a formal way of tracking accountability that is embraced and driven by the members themselves.

Did your answers change from the beginning of your experience? If yes, what contributed to that change?

Additional comments related to any of the questions above:

Block 7

Each LAP had "accountability partners" who were asked to lend public support to the collaborative and provide accountability to the group. The following is a list of accountability partners by LAP group. Please reference this

list when answering the questions below:

Anne Arundel County, MD	Local Management Board
Baltimore City, MD	Board of the Family League of Baltimore City
DeKalb County, GA	United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta Early Learning Commission and DeKalb County Early Learning and School Readiness Commission
Elkhart, Indiana	State Representative Wes Culver, Bob Gerard, Mike Lloyd, Hon. Stephen Bowers
Indianapolis, Indiana	Indiana National Governor's Association Re-Entry Policy Work Group and the Criminal Justice Planning Council
Montgomery County, MD	Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families (Local Management Board)
Polk County, IA	The Polk County School Readiness Accountability Partners (a public/private panel of 19 city, county and state officials, business leaders and local philanthropic leaders)
U.S. Virgin Islands	Governor's Children and Families Council LAP Liaisons: First Lady Cecile de Jongh, VI Department of Education Commissioner Dr. LaVerne Terry

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your accountability partners.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Overall our LAP group felt responsible to perform well because of the support we received from our accountability partners.	<input type="radio"/>						
Our accountability partners were actively involved in the work of LAP.	<input type="radio"/>						

About how influential would you say your accountability partners were in the work of your LAP?

Extremely Influential	Somewhat Influential	Slightly Influential	Slightly Uninfluential	Somewhat Uninfluential	Extremely Uninfluential	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How positive or negative was the influence of your accountability partners?

Extremely Positive	Somewhat Positive	Slightly Positive	Slightly Negative	Somewhat Negative	Extremely Negative	N/A
<input type="radio"/>						

Comments related to any of the questions above:

LAP Implementation Team

Think about your LAP implementation team . Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Our coach facilitators were skilled in helping us make progress.	<input type="radio"/>						
Our coach facilitators acted in a neutral and unbiased manner.	<input type="radio"/>						
The services provided by the LAP staff (including	<input type="radio"/>						

notes, meeting space, food, posters around the room, etc.) improved our effectiveness.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The presence of a coach facilitator improved our effectiveness.	<input type="radio"/>						
Our group productivity fell once the LAP team stopped managing our group.	<input type="radio"/>						

Comments related to any of the questions above:

Block 9

When answering this section, please consider any changes in your organization that have resulted from your participation with LAP. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following questions.

Due to my involvement with LAP...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I have better working relationships with other individuals involved in this work.	<input type="radio"/>						
I have participated in new initiatives or activities (independent of LAP activities).	<input type="radio"/>						
My organization, or work unit, has adopted different strategies.	<input type="radio"/>						
My organization, or work unit, has implemented strategies as part of the LAP action plan.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I have made contacts that are useful to me and/or my sector/organization.	<input type="radio"/>						
I have gained new or improved skills.	<input type="radio"/>						
I have a better understanding of this issue and the population served.	<input type="radio"/>						

The following is a list of issues concerning the services of your agency. Please go through the list, and for each, indicate how you believe **your agency** and its services have been affected by your involvement in LAP

	Extremely Positive Impact	Somewhat Positive Impact	Slightly Positive Impact	Slightly Negative Impact	Somewhat Negative Impact	Extremely Negative Impact	N/A
Number of services offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of clients we can serve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of our services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling the cost of our services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinating care with other agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Extremely Positive Impact	Somewhat Positive Impact	Slightly Positive Impact	Slightly Negative Impact	Somewhat Negative Impact	Extremely Negative Impact	N/A
Ease of client access to our services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ability to obtain funds	<input type="radio"/>						
Acquiring new resources	<input type="radio"/>						
Community legitimacy with our clients	<input type="radio"/>						
Reputation with our peers and funders	<input type="radio"/>						

Is there any other way in which your organization has been affected by your participation in LAP?

Additional comments related to any of the questions above:

Block 10

The following set of questions concern any results that have occurred because of your LAP group.

Consider outcomes that have resulted from your LAP group (relationships, strategic plans, activities, initiatives, etc). Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Individuals and/or organizations in our LAP group were never able to step out of past history in order to start fresh.	<input type="radio"/>						
Our LAP group was able to manage power differences among members effectively.	<input type="radio"/>						
Our LAP group generated new and/or redirected funds to continue our work.	<input type="radio"/>						
The resulting plan from our LAP group does not address the needs, concerns, and values of the organization I represented.	<input type="radio"/>						
I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	<input type="radio"/>						
I consider the LAP process a success.	<input type="radio"/>						

The work of our LAP group has resulted in:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
a decrease in financial costs to the community.	<input type="radio"/>						
a positive change associated with the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn).	<input type="radio"/>						
effective representation of the interests of the broader public.	<input type="radio"/>						
an increased awareness of the problem in the community.	<input type="radio"/>						
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
an increased sense from the community that the problem is being addressed.	<input type="radio"/>						

support from legislators and important external stakeholders to implement the work.
less duplication of services in the community.
a strong potential to impact the problem, or turn the curve.

<input type="radio"/>							
<input type="radio"/>							
<input type="radio"/>							

Which best describes the work of your LAP Group? (Check all that apply)

- Our LAP group is not planning to implement community-wide initiatives.
- Our LAP group is currently in the process of implementing community-wide initiatives.
- Our LAP group has implemented community-wide initiatives that will not make a significant impact on the problem.
- Our LAP group has implemented community-wide initiatives that may make a significant impact on the problem.
- Our LAP group has implemented community-wide initiatives that will make a significant impact on the problem.
- Our LAP group has implemented community-wide initiatives that have made a significant impact on the problem.

Has the work of LAP brought about legislative or policy changes directly/indirectly? (Check all that apply)

- Yes (National policy changes)
- Yes (State policy changes)
- Yes (Local policy changes)
- No policy change

Please feel share to share any specific results from your LAP group.

Additional comments related to any of the questions above:

Block 11

Do you have any additional feedback you wish the research team to know about your experience?

Appendix E:

Survey Demographics

In which LAP did you participate?

Answer	Response	%	Total sent:	Response rate:
Anne Arundel County, Maryland LAP	15	15%	26	57.7%
Baltimore City, Maryland LAP	16	16%	34	47.1%
DeKalb County, Georgia LAP	17	17%	22	77.3%
Indianapolis, Indiana LAP	28	28%	54	51.9%
Montgomery County, Maryland LAP	11	11%	34	32.4%
Polk County, Iowa LAP	13	13%	33	39.4%
Total	100	100%	203	49.3%

Which best describes your agency? Please select all that apply.

Answer	Response	%
Faith-based organization	2	2%
Nonprofit	37	38%
Business	2	2%
School district or local school	9	9%
Local government	20	20%
State government	18	18%
Federal government	0	0%
University	1	1%
Other	15	15%

What is the approximate total number of full-time equivalent employees in your agency/organization?

Answer	Response	%
Under 25	21	22%
25 - 100	20	21%
100 - 250	14	14%
250 - 1000	21	22%
1000 or more	21	22%
Total	97	100%

Please select the categories that best describe your role with the organization you represent(ed) in LAP (check all that apply)

Answer	Response	%
Direct service provider	10	10%
Manager/Team Leader	34	35%
Administrator	49	50%
Collaboration project staff	13	13%
Teacher / School personnel	4	4%

Elected official	1	1%
Law enforcement personnel	1	1%
Judge / Magistrate / Court personnel	2	2%
Business person	2	2%
Representative of a faith-based organization	0	0%
Researcher	2	2%
Volunteer	3	3%
Concerned community member	4	4%
Primary Caregiver (parent, guardian, kin, etc) of service recipient	0	0%
Person receiving services	0	0%
Other	11	11%

Did you continue to meet with your group after LAP's last formal session, Session 9?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	56	72%
No	22	28%*
Total	78	100%

*All that answered no were directed to questions about Accountability partners rather than about Post-LAP experience

Do you still continue to meet regularly today?

Answer	Response	%	Anne Arundel	Baltimore City	DeKalb County	Indy	Mont Cty	P. C
Yes	23	41%	8	1	7	4	3	
Yes, but our LAP group has merged with another group or become a totally different entity	13	23%	1	0	0	6	5	
No, but we did meet for a period of time after the formal session ended.	17	30%	0	5	3	6	1	
No, but I am continuing to move forward strategies developed during LAP with at least one other member from the original LAP group.	3	5%	0	2	0	0	0	
Total answer for Post-LAP	56	100%	9	8	10	16	9	
Total began survey			15	16	17	28	11	
Percent post-LAP			60.0%	50.0%	58.8%	57.1%	81.8%	

Consider outcomes that have resulted from your LAP group (relationships, strategic plans, activities, initiatives, etc); Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Question	Percent agree	Percent Disagree
Anne Arundel	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	100.0%	0.0%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	100.0%	0.0%
Baltimore City	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	55.6%	33.3%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	66.7%	22.2%
DeKalb County	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	72.7%	18.2%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	83.3%	8.3%
Indianapolis	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	70.0%	15.0%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	65.0%	20.0%
Montgomery County	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	70.0%	20.0%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	70.0%	20.0%
Polk County	I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.	37.5%	50.0%
	I consider the LAP process a success.	75.0%	25.0%

Appendix F: Comparison of Provan and Milward Framework to Littlefield

Framework

Provan and Milward (2001) Framework Variables	Littlefield Framework Variables	Definition of Variable
Community Level	Community Level	
Cost to community	<i>Data not available</i>	
Building social capital	<i>Included in Process analysis in Chapter 4</i>	
Aggregate indicators of client well-being	<i>Data not available</i>	
Public perceptions that the problem is being solved	<i>Too similar to variables below</i>	
Changes in the incidence of the problem	Changes in the incidence of the problem	Questions asked whether the work of LAP resulted in a positive change associated with the problem being addressed (i.e. recidivism or children entering school ready to learn) and had a strong potential to greatly impact the problem.
	NEW: Implementation of community-wide initiatives	Survey questions asked whether the LAP group has or plans to implement community-wide initiatives and whether these initiatives will have a significant impact on the problem being addressed. Interviews generated a list of initiatives, and these initiatives are then compared to best practices in the literature in order to evaluate their potential for affecting community outcomes.
	NEW: Implementation of new policy or legislative change	Survey questions asked whether the group was able to make changes or create new policies to better serve their community and whether those were local, state or national policy changes.
Network Level	Collaborative Level	
Range of services provided	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Absence of service duplication	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Relationship strength	<i>Included in Process analysis in Chapter 4</i>	
Integration/coordination of services	<i>Not applicable</i>	

Network membership growth	Membership commitment and growth	Questions asked about membership commitment in the early and later stages of the LAP. Questions around membership attrition and growth/membership post Casey funding were asked in the interviews.
Creation and maintenance of a network administrative organization	Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year	Survey variables include the percent of respondents who continued to meet after the last session, and the percent who meet regularly today. Interviews asked questions around the current group and its administration. Survey and interview questions asked whether their LAP group was able to generate new and/or additional funds to continue their work, information on the different types of resources and fundraising efforts conducted by the group as well as their overall level of difficulty in acquiring funds.
Cost of network maintenance	Incorporated into variable above: Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year.	See above
Member commitment to goals	Incorporated into variable above: Membership commitment and growth	See above
	NEW: Collaborative Self-Assessment and Outcomes	Questions asked whether the resulting plan from their LAP group addressed the needs, concerns, and values of the organization they represented as well as whether they were satisfied with the current outcomes(s) of the LAP process. Interviews inquired into the level of conflict the group experienced as they decided upon strategies and the individual's overall evaluation of collaborative outcomes. The strategy impact variable includes strategies coded by impact or strength according to best practices in the literature.
	NEW: Member Driven Accountability System	Questions asked whether the group employed strategies to ensure people were responsible for their work commitments, whether this responsibility was informal or formal, and whether driven by coach facilitators or members themselves. The survey measure looks at the percent of people that said the accountability was driven by members and the percent change of this perspective from early to later in the process.
Organization/participant level	Organization/participant level	
Agency survival	<i>Not applicable</i>	

Cost of services	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Minimum conflict for multi-program agencies across multiple networks	<i>Included in Process analysis in Chapter 4</i>	
Enhanced legitimacy	Increased agency outcomes	Survey and interview questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in greater community legitimacy with clients and reputation with peers and funders and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in participant's greater ability to obtain funds and acquire new resources for their individual agency.
Resource acquisition	Incorporated into Increased agency outcomes above	See above
Client Outcomes	Increased client outcomes for organization	Questions asked whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in increased ease of client access to services and whether the participant's involvement in LAP resulted in higher number of services offered, quality of services and coordinating care with other agencies.
Service access	Incorporated into Increased client outcomes above	see above
	NEW: Individual self-assessment of personal skills and relationships	Survey and Interview: Whether participant has gained new or improved skills; better working relationships with other individuals involved in this work; participated in new initiatives or activities (independent of LAP activities); has a better understanding of this issue and the population served; made contacts that are useful to them or their sector/organization.

Appendix G

Community Level Analysis	LAP	Survey: Percent Agree	Interviews
Implementation of best practice community-wide programs or initiatives			
	Anne Arundel	91.7%	High
	Baltimore City	55.6%	High
	DeKalb	66.7%	Med-high
	Indianapolis	80.0%	Med
	Montgomery	80.0%	Med-low
	Polk	37.5%	Low
Implementation of new policy or legislative changes			
<i>Implementation of new policy or legislative changes</i>	Anne Arundel	66.7%	Didn't mention
	Baltimore City	66.7%	Didn't mention
	DeKalb	75%	Didn't mention
	Indianapolis	60%	Yes
	Montgomery	50%	Didn't mention
	Polk	25%	Didn't mention
Changes in incidence of the problem			
<i>Percent agree the work resulted in a positive change associated with the problem being addressed</i>	Anne Arundel	100%; 100%	Yes
<i>Percent agree the work had a strong potential to greatly impact the problem.</i>	Baltimore City	78%; 67%	Yes
	DeKalb	75%; 89%	No
	Indianapolis	70%; 70%	Yes
	Montgomery	80%; 70%	No
	Polk	37.5%; 50%	No
Collaborative Level			
Membership commitment and growth			
<i>Member Commitment, Percent Change from Early LAP to Later LAP</i>	Anne Arundel	8.9%	Growing
	Baltimore City	11.9%	Grew
	DeKalb	6.3%	Struggled
	Indianapolis	-6.3%	Conflict
	Montgomery	3.2%	High attrition
	Polk	-1.8%	High attrition
Member driven accountability system			
<i>Accountability - Percent Member Driven, Later LAP</i>	Anne Arundel	81.8%, 18.2%	High
<i>Accountability - Percent Member Driven, Percent Change from Later LAP</i>	Baltimore City	62.5%, 6.9%	High
	DeKalb	70%, 31.5%	High
	Indianapolis	31.25%, -7.2%	Med
	Montgomery	88.9%, 22.2%	Med-low

	Polk	42.9%, -1.6%	Low
Collaborative Self-Assessment and Outcomes			
<i>The resulting plan from our LAP group addresses the needs, concerns, and values of the organization I represented.</i>	Anne Arundel	75%; 100%; 1.79	Little conflict forming strategies; Med-high performance evaluation
<i>I am satisfied with the current outcome(s) of the LAP process.</i>	Baltimore City	78%; 56%; 1.78	Little conflict forming strategies; Med-high performance evaluation
<i>Strength of Strategies (coded score)</i>	DeKalb	55%; 73%; 1.53	Little conflict forming strategies; Medium performance evaluation
	Indianapolis	55%; 70%; 1.38	Little conflict forming strategies; Medium performance evaluation
	Montgomery	80%; 70%; 1.5	Struggled to form strategies; Low performance evaluation
	Polk	75%; 38%; 1.38	Struggled to form strategies; Low performance evaluation
Continued existence of collaborative and resource generation after first year			
<i>Percent who continued to meet after Session 9 Resource acquisition for collaborative as a whole to continue services or work as a group</i>	Anne Arundel	75%; 92%	Yes, Structure and additional resources
	Baltimore City	77.8%; 56%	Yes, Structure and additional resources
	DeKalb	71.4%; 91%	Yes, Structure and additional resources
	Indianapolis	68.2%; 50%	Yes, unsure structure and intermittent resources
	Montgomery	90%; 70%	Yes, no structure; resources acquisition at first but now none
	Polk	44.4%; 38%	No
Organization/Participant Level			
Individual self assessment of new personal skills and relationships			
	Anne Arundel	88%	Med-high
	Baltimore City	78%	Med
	DeKalb	83%	Med-low
	Indianapolis	80%	High
	Montgomery	78%	Med-low
	Polk	67%	Med-low
Increased agency outcomes			
<i>Resource acquisition for individual agencies Enhanced agency legitimacy</i>	Anne Arundel	38%; 67%	No agency funding or additional legitimacy mentioned
	Baltimore City	39%; 39%	No agency funding mentioned; increased agency legitimacy
	DeKalb	67%; 58%	Agencies acquired additional resources and increased legitimacy
	Indianapolis	40%; 43%	No agency funding or additional legitimacy mentioned

	Montgomery	35%; 60%	No agency funding or additional legitimacy mentioned
	Polk	39%; 44%	No agency funding or additional legitimacy mentioned
Increased client outcomes for organizations			
<i>Increase in client outcomes for organizations</i>	Anne Arundel	66.3%; 50%	Yes
<i>Increase in service access for clients</i>	Baltimore City	48%; 22%	Yes
	DeKalb	61%; 50%	Yes
	Indianapolis	59.3%; 40%	Yes
	Montgomery	70%; 40%	None mentioned
	Polk	59.7%; 44%	None mentioned

Appendix H:

LAP	Survey: Percent Agree	Interview Results	
External Factors			
Existing Relationships or Networks			
How many did you know prior to LAP? (Higher average indicates more people)	Anne Arundel	4 people; 46.2%; 84.6%	Mixture of old and new relationships
Early LAP: experienced prior political/turf relations between organizations that hindered collaboration.	Baltimore City	3.3 people; 100%; 80%	Mixture of old and new relationships
Early LAP: enjoyed strong working relationships with one another.	DeKalb	2.3 people; 53.8%; 100%	Knew each other
	Indianapolis	3.6 people; 76.9%; 78.6%	Mixture of old and new relationships
	Montgomery	4.6 people; 55.6%; 88.9%	Knew each other
	Polk	4.2 people; 77.8%; 88.9%	Knew each other
Competitive pressures			
Individuals and/or organizations in our LAP group were able to step out of past history in order to start fresh.	Anne Arundel	83.3%	Yes
	Baltimore City	66.7%	Yes
	DeKalb	72.7%	Yes
	Indianapolis	55%	Yes
	Montgomery	90%	Yes
	Polk	37.5%	Yes
The establishment of an external partner(s) in which the collaborative feels accountable for performance			
The establishment of an external partner(s) in which the collaborative feels accountable for performance	Anne Arundel	91.3%; 91.7%	Med-Low
Positive influence of convener relationship	Baltimore City	77.8%; 66.7%	Med-Low
	DeKalb	83.3%; 83.3%	Med
	Indianapolis	50%; 64.3%	Med-High
	Montgomery	90%; 90%	Med-Low
	Polk	50%; 83.3%	Med-Low
Strength of implementation team (facilitator, support staff, etc.)			
Average of four survey questions related to implementation team	Anne Arundel	97.9%	High
	Baltimore City	100.0%	High
	DeKalb	89.4%	High
	Indianapolis	90.5%	High
	Montgomery	62.5%	Low
	Polk	80.6%	Med
Internal Factors			
Development of group leadership skills and forging agreements			
Ensure all members had a		83.3%; 81.7%	Leadership skills - Medium; High

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