Collaborating for Success

Collaboration

Community

Business Trends

Teaching Strategies

Industry Standards

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Jasmine Blanks   -   Joe Nathan, PhD.   -   Naima Bashir

Collaborating for Success:
Lessons for Public Schools

By Jasmine Blanks, Naima Bashir, and Joe Nathan

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Executive Summary
This report aims to give people working in charter and district public schools specific, practical examples and guidelines for collaborations that can help students and families. This guidance comes from examining collaborations among small businesses and among small non-profits.

We offer examples of how collaboration can help district and charter public schools improve their effectiveness with students, and their efficiency as an organization. The report is based on approximately 30 interviews from school administrators, nonprofit and business staff and leaders in three states (Minnesota, Illinois and Massachusetts) and Ontario, Canada, along with a review of best practices research on collaborations. The report describes increased organizational efficiency via collaborative efforts in:

- Public communication/marketing
- Personnel management, accounting and other business functions
- Use of equipment
- Purchasing
- Sharing employees
- Staff development
- Grant-writing
- Sharing Space

The report also describes collaborations that help schools become more effective with students through cooperative:

- Replication of best models in teaching and learning
- Late afternoon programming

We found six essential factors in effective collaborations:
1. *Identification of a priority need for participating organizations*
2. *Joining forces with the aim of reaching mutual goals and outcomes*
3. *Starting small and setting goals that are achievable*
4. *Being honest with partners about strengths and weaknesses*
5. *Investing energy and resources in making the partnership work, and*
6. *Assessing the value of the collaboration*

Introduction

This report is designed to be useful to several different groups: people working day to day in schools, foundations and other funding organizations, and people with a more academic interest in collaboration. For those with an immediate interest in specific forms of collaboration and limited time, we recommend going immediately to Section 2. Those wanting to know more about theories and research regarding organizational collaboration may wish to read section one, which describes the methodology and literature review that helped inform our research and recommendations.

Collaboration can help organizations accomplish their goals. People working together can help build healthier, successful schools and learning communities. "A sense of shared responsibility for the success of schools is leading more and more non-educators to take on education responsibilities" Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker (2002). Consequently, many public schools work with each other and other organizations. This collaboration includes intermediate units created by school districts, statewide charter school associations, and other groups. We seek to inform this by looking at private and nonprofit collaboration.

One of the greatest advantages for charter and some other relatively autonomous district public schools is independence—from mandated curricula and from district school boards. However, with independence comes tradeoff: some problems are too large to be tackled by a small, standalone school, especially one serving, as is often the case, large numbers of special needs or at-risk students. Collaboration with other like-minded organizations could serve as a way for small, autonomous district and charter public schools to address these larger problems without compromising too much of their independence and ideologies.

The topic of how to make collaboration succeed is very broad. Ways that collaboration can help district public schools are still being explored and debated by researchers. This report focuses on:

    a. Examining pertinent collaboration best practices literature;
    b. Providing examples of collaborative projects between different sectors; and
    c. Offering lessons learned.
    d. We hope to help district and charter public school staff and their partners foster, implement and sustain effective collaborations. We hope the review of the literature and examples will be informative and helpful.

Methodology
We started with a literature search focusing on relevant studies, reports and articles on best practices in collaboration. We examined bibliographies, academic search engines and journals. The review of the collaboration literature presented multiple view points on various studies that covered sectors such as health and human services, education and business.

We also talked with a small sample of schools, non profits, social service agencies and business organizations to get a better understanding of how their collaborative work is helping them reach essential goals. While we had identified some partnerships through our own knowledge of their existence, others were identified through internet searches and reviewing previous recipients of the Local Government Innovation Awards at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Some partners are cited at the beginning stages of the collaboration projects and others have been working together for several years. Nevertheless, there is much we have learned from their experiences.

A brief interview protocol was also used during the interview in order to get a better understanding of the collaborative project's background and structure, goals, and outcomes desired by partners . The majority of interviews were held between March 2009 and January 2010. In many instances, several follow-up interviews were conducted to make sure information about the collaboration projects was as accurate and complete as possible.

Section 1: Review of the Literature
Scholars agree that knowing how to effectively partner with others can potentially enhance resources through goal achievement, and benefit not just the partners, but also stakeholders and beneficiaries of programs and projects. According to the literature, the term "collaboration" means different things to different groups. In its simplest form, collaboration means, "to work together." However, there are a variety of ways to describe partnerships along a continuum based on what functions are shared including information, resources and activities, power and authority. Using this framework, collaboration would occur at the synthesis of shared information, coordinated resources and activities, and shared power.[1] In a study by Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, collaboration is defined as "linking or sharing of information, resources, and capabilities by organizations to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by the organizations separately" (2006, p. 44)[2]. Collaborating makes it possible for a group of organizations to collectively achieve beyond the reach of any of its individual members.

A study by Himmelman (2002) also places collaboration as one strategy for working collectively along a continuum characterized by networking, coordinating, cooperating, and collaborating. Collaborating in this context focuses on the willingness of individual organizations to "enhance each others' capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose" (Himmelman, 2002, p. 2). Shared power within collaborations was a common theme between these authors. Both, Bryson and Himmelman, highlight potential pitfalls of unclear and misused power relations especially in the case of organizations who take the lead in shared grant-writing or other funding-related work. According to Bryson, Crosby, Stone, and Saunoi-Sandgren (2009) "The main locus of power will shift over the course of a collaboration process, often following a funding source" (p. 8). In collaborative grant writing, the role of lead agency on the grant can be problematic if the agency "dominates a collaborative process through its fiscal role. This can result in conflicts about power and trust that must be addressed and resolved by all partners" (Himmelman, 2002). A key factor in successful collaborative projects is to understand the roles of each organization while realizing that power may shift throughout the process.

The MACC Commonwealth case study provides examples of how CFOs manage joint-staffing operations and evaluations. The MACC Commonwealth is comprised of four neighborhood centers across Minneapolis and a professional live theater. This collaboration with Pillsbury United Communities has developed a new model that "brings over two centuries of combined expertise in the areas of finance, human resources and information technology… [that] allows us to create shared solutions that far exceed the capacity of any of our members" (www.macccommonwealth.org).

Directors of the participating organizations had to decide up-front that they would not layoff dedicated, long-term staff members and that they would respect evaluations of staff members across organizational borders. Despite planning for shared-power

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[1] Bryson, Crosby, Stone, Saunoi-Sandgren. Designing and Managing Cross-Sector Collaboration: A Case Study in Reducing Traffic Congestion. IBM Center for the Business of Government. 2009.
[2] Bryson, John M., Barbara C. Crosby, and Melissa Middleton Stone. "The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaborations: Propositions from the Literature." Public Administration Review Special Issue (2006): 44

arrangements, there were still conflicts and discontent among staff members; moving was necessary along with other changes. "All recognized the challenges inherent in trying to smoosh people used to working in a variety of organizations, with their unique missions, chains of commands, and cultures. Unless handled carefully, legal action could result when different supervisors took over" (Sandfort & Dykstal, 2007, p. 3). Proactive decision making about power relations created stability, and only one staff member left as a result of these changes[3].

How organizations share power has a direct impact on the risks, responsibilities, and rewards afforded by collaborating (Himmelman, 2002). A case study by Sandfort and Dkystal (2007) found the following:

> The advisory board increasingly recognized that the experiment focused upon collaboration and deeper lessons—about trust, sharing, and community. They began to realize that the longer term savings would come from fundamental changes in operations because of the experiment itself. They would arise from a new heightened awareness of when it is important for the organizations to compete and when to collaborate (p. 4).

Collaboration is usually not a quick fix for single-party problems; it is designed to find comprehensive, efficient strategies in turbulent, competitive situations for two or more collaborating parties with mutual interests. Journalist Scott London groups collaborative partnerships into two main kinds: those aimed at resolving conflicts, and those designed to develop and advance visions for the future (London, 1995). In both cases, collaboration includes working toward joint decisions based on articulated purposes and direction (Crusoe, 2001).

Cross-sector collaboration adds another layer of benefits because it "isolates the sectors and extrapolates their unique opportunities based on proprietary or customary expertise and resources" (Duhart, 2007). Building on the strengths of each sector, these partnerships create unique opportunities as they provide access to a variety of resources and skills.   According to Duhart (2007), some tangible benefits of cross-sectoral partnerships include:

- o Improved effectiveness and efficiencies
- o Economies of scale
- o Organizational synergies
- o Cross-utilization of resources
- o Transferability of skills and assets[4]

Charter schools exist in a context that is highly accepting of partnering, thus collaboration is often a common practice in these schools. Wohlstetter and Smith (2006) observe that "charter schools often face operational challenges that often push them toward forming partnerships".[5] Schools can make effective use of partnerships and when they do so, new opportunities are created. Some of the benefits of an effective partnership are as follows:

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[3] Sandfort, J. & Dykstal, T. Trust as an Asset: Building a Managed Service Organization within MACC. Collaborative Governance Initiative. The Maxwell School of Syracuse University. 2007.

[4] Duhart, Wana L. A Call to the village: Retooling Public Schools. Rowman & Littlefield Education: Lanham, Maryland. 2007.

[5] Smith-Wohlstetter 2006 " Improving Schools Through Partnerships: Learning from Charter Schools" University of Southern California

- o Relationships are strengthened
- o Communication is enhanced
- o Responsibilities are met
- o Resources are shared
- o Partners are rewarded with attainment of goals[6]

In one study by Wohlstetter and Smith (2004), researchers at the University of Southern California visited 22 Charter schools and interviewed nearly 150 school leaders and leaders from their partner organizations (businesses, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations, municipal offices, museums, and social-service agencies). The study findings indicated that the sample of charter schools embarked on a number of innovative ideas concerning service delivery and allocation of limited resources.
Thus the researchers learned the following six important lessons:

  At the outset, researchers found that the sample of schools weighed ***the benefits and costs of partnering*** to determine how much time, finances, and human resources were needed to build and sustain the partnership. They assessed political costs associated with the partnerships and school leaders reported that the process of collaboration was very selective and they were not "agreeing to work with every partner that walks through the door."[7]

  Second, a ***great emphasis was placed on choosing partners well***. The researchers pointed out that school leaders discussed the importance and need to choose specific partners carefully and stressed the significance of trust between partner organizations as well as having a great working relationship.

  Third, an explicit ***definition of the partnership*** was found to be beneficial to the success of the collaboration. Thus collaborators set up an accountability plan that detailed goals and responsibilities of each partner; consequences of poor performance as well as a process for terminating partnerships.

  Fourth, defining governance and decision making processes required the partners to ***set up structures for participation.*** School leaders and their partnering organizations used formal and informal arrangements to discuss the project direction and planning for next steps.

  Fifth, ***focusing on leadership*** was a crucial aspect of the partnership thus the partners identified leadership roles central to the success of the partnerships. There were a number of external and internal leadership roles present in the partnerships such as visionaries, cheerleaders, liaisons and so forth.

  Finally ***sixth, evaluating the partnership's progress*** helped assess the value of the partnership itself as well as improve aspects such as participation and reexamine the need that is being met by the collaboration. Collaboration consumes time and resources. Poorly implemented collaborations can lead to waste. Hence collaborations should be evaluated based on the outcomes and value produced relative to the resources used. In the study, charter school partnerships used evaluations to expand their joint projects to reach more students (Smith-Wohlstetter, 2006).

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[6] Smith-Wohlstetter, 2006.
[7] Smith-Wohlstetter 2004 " Partnering to Improve Education: Lessons for Charter Schools" Education Week , Accessed Feb 2009

Collaborations can be beneficial when cooperating parties use the approaches suggested immediately above. However, some studies note reasons why some partnerships struggle to make the most of the collaborative process and accomplish goals. Kresta (2008) states that, first, "effective partnerships are time-consuming, resource intensive and very difficult". Secondly, partnerships encounter great obstacles while attempting to establish good working relationships between partners, create viable plans, and implement interventions. Finally, many of the problems encountered are generally not well anticipated, thus collaborative processes often break down; as a result, "partnerships have a high early failure rate".[8] Weiss et al. (2002) also note that "many partnerships encounter great obstacles while attempting to establish good working relationships between partners, create viable plans, and implement interventions."

Failures seem to be reduced when partners start small and build successes one at a time. Often, partners try to implement projects that are too large and often messy. Focused, well-designed projects with well thought-out goals are more likely to be successful for both the involved organizations and the people being served (Kresta, 2008). Bruner (2001) states that the "most effective goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART)"[9]. In addition, achieving success in collaborative efforts requires setting goals that are realistic to accomplish (Bruner 2001). What seems to help also is frequent reviewing of goals as well as keeping goals in mind during decision-making processes. This will essentially lead to goal achievement (Meyer, 2008).

Another reason why partnerships are often difficult to maintain and sustain is due to significant delays in achieving visible outcomes. Weiss et al (2002) state that "achieving long term outcomes may take longer than the lifetime of many partnerships". For example, a partnership that is aimed at closing the achievement gap in a low income, inner city district may have a hard time seeing outcomes in a fast changing, unpredictable environment. Weiss et al. (2002) also note that partnerships lack valid indicators that would help them document the effectiveness of their work and in accomplishing mutual goals. Thus, measurable goals with valid indicators would help partnerships see what they are accomplishing and the impact they are having.

Bruner (2001) posits that collaborative success also depends on the individual people involved; collaboration occurs among people, not institutions. Individual interactions must also be accounted for as relationships between collaborators often change. Therefore, it is "vital that everyone clearly understands the guidelines for collaboration from the beginning and that there is agreement about what is expected of the group in terms of outcome and timeline".[10] Formal and informal leaders should be in place at every level of the organization to provide authority, vision, commitment, and relational skills; collaboration at one level will facilitate collaboration at other levels (Bruner, 2001). In addition, leaders should continuously be preparing successors in order to

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8 Kresta, Dave. "Business Collaboration Journal." CollaborativEye. 2008. Accessed July 2008. www.collaborativeye.com

9 Bruner, Charles. "Thinking Collaboratively: Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy Makers Improve Children's Services." Cyfernet. 1991. Accessed July 2008. www.cyfernet.org

10 Project Kaleidoscope, http://www.pkal.org/

sustain collaboration over time.[11] Workers at all levels should feel supported and on board with the organization.

Weiss et al. (2002) state that "leadership, administration and management, partnership efficiency, and challenges with partner involvement may be critical for synergy because they are likely to be associated with the ability of partnerships to actively engage diverse partners, to create an environment that fosters productive interactions between partners, and to facilitate meaningful participation in the partnership's work."[12] Maintaining two way communication lines is important in building and sustaining good working relationships between partners. Whitelaw (2006) notes that in collaborative relationships, "regular communication, formal and informal agreements, recognition of efforts, and celebrations of success are all important for maintaining a dedicated staff."[13]

As noted above, collaboration involves people working together to achieve a shared goal, therefore having a good working relationship is important. When trying to nurture good working relationships with partners, Weiss et al. (2002) state that "it is important to assess partnership synergy". It is very important for partnering organizations and groups to determine at an early outset whether or not they are making the most out of their time, energy and resources. "Partnership synergy" is noted to be an important process to consider when assessing the degree to which a partnership's collaborative process is successfully combining its participants' perspectives, knowledge, and skills. According to the study, a partnership creates synergy by combining the perspectives, knowledge, and skills of diverse partners in a way that enables the partnership to (1) think in new and better ways about how it can achieve its goals; (2) plan more comprehensive, integrated programs; and (3) strengthen its relationship with the broader community (Weiss et al., 2002).

Through examining the relationship between partnership synergy and six dimensions of partnership functioning: leadership, administration and management, partnership efficiency, nonfinancial resources, partner involvement challenges, and community-related challenges of 63 partnerships within the study, Weiss et al. (2001) conclude that partnership synergy was most closely related to "leadership effectiveness and partnership efficiency." The study findings are also consistent with other research that has documented the importance of leadership across all phases of partnership development (Weiss et al., 2002).

Trust is also important to relationship building and determines the success of collaborative relationships. In many collaborative relationships, trust does not come immediately and it takes time to develop. Thus, the achievement of trust and the ability to work together may require compromise or changes in the ways individuals perceive and respond to situations. Meyer et al. (2008) for instance, define trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to

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[11] Bryson, et al, 2006

[12] Weiss et al (2002)

[13] Whitelaw, Nancy. "Models of Community Collaboration for Long-term Care." Center for Healthy Aging. 2006. Accessed July 2008. www.healthyagingprograms.org

monitor or control that other party."[14] Trust can also be defined as having three dimensions: ability, integrity, and benevolence.[15]

    In successful collaborations, trust occurs throughout all stages of a relationship, from implementation on. Early trust occurs through clear initial agreements on factors such as purpose, mandate, commitment of resources, designation of leadership, and decision-making structure. Throughout the collaboration period, Bryson et al. (2006) suggest that "partners continue to build trust by sharing knowledge and demonstrating competence and follow-through." Continuous trust-building activities lead to more productive, more successful, and longer-term collaborations. Thus, "It is vital that the early life of the group be built around openness and trust, with procedures, time frames, work plans, and schedules established democratically."[16]

[14] Meyer, Paul J. (2008)

[15] Lederer-Antonucci, Yvonne, "Establishing Trust in a Business-to-Business Collaboration: Results from an International Simulation." BPM Research. 2003. Accessed July 2008. http://www.workflow-research.de/Publications

[16] Project Kaleidoscope (1995), Guidelines for Effective Collaborations , PKAL Volume 3

Section 2: **Examples of Collaborative Projects**
<u>**Nonprofit and Social Service Cooperation**</u>
Shared Back Office Management
Non profits and social service agencies are also teaming up to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness by creating venture initiatives that provide back office and administrative services. MACC Commonwealth, a joint venture initiative, was created by five non profit organizations located in the Minneapolis area. The initiative launched in 2006 with aims to "provide combined administrative services such as finance, human resources, information technology, and purchasing and facilities management" to the five non-profit member organizations (www.macccommonwealth.org). These functions have been expanded to include medical billing.

The shared back office services unit allows non profits to work more efficiently together and share best practices. Initial member organizations Emerge Community Development, Family & Children's Services, MACC Alliance of Connected Communities, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Plymouth Christian Youth Center, and Pillsbury United Communities enjoy a great return on investment; both in cost savings and reduced risk of financial mistakes. The organizations also have more time to deal with clients rather than with back office duties. Through the MACC Commonwealth initiative, the six member organizations work cooperatively to streamline their back office systems, improve efficiencies as well as enhance their organizational effectiveness.[17] "Membership in MACC CommonWealth has provided each of our members with a network of peer agencies that further contributes to each member's success" (www.macccommonwealth.org). [18] Membership has expanded to include six Associate Members and seven Other Members. Member benefits include achieving administrative expertise, managing and reducing expenses, reducing risks, accessing state-of-the-art technology, and saving time. These services make it possible for member organizations to focus on their mission.   For more information about this organization, please visit: http://www.macccommonwealth.org.

<u>**Nonprofit and Business Cooperation**</u>
Community Development Corporations Work with Businesses
Seward Redesign is a nonprofit community development corporation that works with the business community in the Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods in south Minneapolis. Seward Redesign provides staffing assistance to the Seward Civic and Commerce Association, funds collective marketing for area businesses, and works to improve the neighborhood aesthetic by funding improvement projects through a matching fund. Collective marketing efforts include the distribution of a local business directory, an annual festival to increase traffic and promote home-based businesses, and advocacy efforts to improve transportation to the neighborhood. A Great Streets grant from the City of Minneapolis is distributed through Seward Redesign and has made façade improvements, new store-front windows and awnings possible for area businesses.
    The business directory includes a Welcome with information about what makes the neighborhood unique. It is translated in Oromo and Somali. The directory itself is designed like the yellow pages, divided by type of business and providing relevant

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[17] http://www.macccommonwealth.org
[18] http://www.macccommonwealth.org/members/tabid/274/Default.aspx

contact information. A map of the neighborhood is in the center with bus and bikes routes and parks. Advertisement space is sold to businesses to cover the costs of the directory. It is distributed to every business in the area to display on their counters. Local universities also received copies. This past year, its focus was to reach residents in the community. Hopefully, it will continue to draw people to the neighborhood in the future.

The expansion of the Seward Coop contributed to Franklin Avenue's recognition as a Great Street[19]. Collaboration was evident in all areas of this expansion. Funding was provided by the Great Streets matching grant earned by Seward Redesign. The Seward Coop hired a local architect and saved on development costs by working again with Seward Redesign. Siewart Cabinets and Wood from the Hood, two local small businesses, furnished the coop offices.

These businesses have made a conscious decision to support other local businesses.[20] Brat Tree Services drops trees off to Wood from the Hood for their projects. Buck Brothers has used Wood from the Hood's flooring for a home remodel and Natural Built Home sells their flooring. Welna II Hardware provides Wood from the Hood with glass for their picture frames and Wood from the Hood provides Welna II Hardware with wood scraps for their kindling bundles.   All of these businesses are wasting less and saving more on supplies and shipping costs[21]. For more information about Seward Redesign, please visit: http://sewardredesign.org/ or http://www.sewardbusiness.org/.

Free Professional Assistance for Businesses
The Business Excellence Resource Center in Alliston, Ontario grew out of the business community's desire for professional assistance, tools and support as identified in a Business Retention and Expansion visitation in 1998. In this first initiative, a task force of 33 members was formed by representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce, elected and appointed officials, various organizations and the private sector. The BR & E is part of the University of Minnesota Extension program and helps communities retain and expand local businesses. Over the last ten years, an additional six business retention and expansion projects have been completed with support from over 300 volunteers and Nottawasaga Futures[22].

The BERC currently provides government information, reference materials and other literary resources and guides, individual meetings with professional consultants at no cost, and access to a community investment loan fund. Creating the BERC has added significant value to small/medium enterprises and to the communities across South Simcoe as a whole.[23] By 2009, nearly half of the 3500 businesses in the area have utilized services offered through the BERC with over 1000 businesses receiving

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[19] Phone Interview with Megan Sheridan. Seward Civic and Commerce Association, Seward Redesign. January 25, 2010, 4pm.
[20] Sheridan, M. Jan. 2010.
[21] Meeting Minutes. Seward Civic and Commerce Assocaition. December 2009.
[22] University of Minnesota Extension. BR&E Visitation Program Case Study.
http://www.extension.umn.edu/BusinessRetention/components/case-Nottawasaga.pdf
[23] Electronic Correspondence with Valerie Ryan, CEO, Nottawasage Futures. February 12, 2010.

individualized consulting sessions. Additionally, more than 1100 local jobs were created through support interventions between 2004 and 2009. Each year, the Centre has engaged in knowledge transfer workshops and seminars. More information can be found at: www.nottawasaga.com.

Business Cooperation
Local businesses are also jointly advertising and cooperating through the Northeast Neighbors & Business Association (NENBA) business directory. The association began in 2007 and produces business directories designed to give residents, businesses and local organizations in the Northeast Minneapolis area the tools and resources to find each other and build valuable relationships. The association was created by a former member of the local chamber of commerce who is also a local business owner and a resident of the Northeast Minneapolis neighborhood.[24]

After experiencing various issues with regards to costs of advertising, the founder spoke with other local small business and realized that the Chamber or local newspaper were not doing much to help local businesses grow and get in touch with local consumers. Thus, NENBA's founder took the initiative to develop an association that would "assist local businesses market directly to neighborhood residents, increase their customer base and sales and thus, boost the local economy."[25] The founder also wanted the association to "increase awareness among residents that there are all kinds of small businesses in the neighborhood, not just the ones advertising in the local paper."[26] Through the NENBA business directory, many local businesses are now able to cooperate and find affordable and varied channels of communication that will reach neighborhood consumers looking to support local businesses[27]. For more information, please visit: http://www.northeastnba.com.

Several Minneapolis neighborhood businesses associations and community development corporations participate in cooperative marketing by creating and distributing brochures and directories. The directories usually list all of the businesses in the area with their contact information and highlight special features of the surrounding community. Directories are distributed throughout neighborhood business and public spaces. These organizations also hold annual festivals to highlight businesses in their neighborhoods including home-based businesses. Most festivals include food and music and have a common theme. Linden Hills holds several festivals throughout the year and covers the cost by selling food.[28] Here, music is provided by local musicians for free (**www.linden-hills.com)**. Home-based business owners share space with other businesses for the festival in the Seward neighborhood.[29]

Some neighborhood business associations also have shared websites that highlight the commercial area of their neighborhood. This is part of the business organization's membership fee for 50th & France[30] (www.50thandfrance.com). Other business

[24] Northeast Neighbors and Business Association - http://www.northeastnba.com/
[25] Interview with Shelley Leeson- founder of NENBA. 2008.
[26] Leeson, S. Interview
[27] Leeson, S. Interview
[28] Phone Interview with Mark Dwyer of Linden Hills Business Association. January 2010.
[29] Sheridan, M. Interview.
[30] Interview with Rachel Hubbard, 50th & France Business Association. www.50thandfrance.com.
January 2010.

associations are combining resources to make sure each business has a page on the joint website. Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce (www.minneapolischamber.org) provides space for business advertisements on its website, and Northwest Minneapolis Business Association uses this electronic space to advertise for its festivals as well as promote local businesses (www.nwmplsbusiness.com). Collective efforts are more efficient at drawing customers than the businesses would be individually[31].

Collective Marketing Boosts Sales

The Minnesota Potters of the Upper St. Croix River Tour and Sale are in their 18th year of hosting a nationally-renowned pottery event. Part of this group's success is that they have limited it to a drivable distance within the Upper St. Croix River Valley region, within an hour's drive from the metropolitan Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota area. It is always planned to take place on Mother's Day weekend. This year there are seven host pottery studios and 34 guest potters.

"The tour has grown from a regional interest event in the beginning, to a popular event that draws pottery enthusiasts from a national audience. A few people have come from other countries to exhibit and some international travelers attend the tour as customers," says Janel Jacobson, founding member of Minnesota Potters of the Upper St. Croix River Tour and Sale.[32] Pottery tour hosts and their guest potters are asked to contribute their mailing lists to be merged together. Doing this boosts contacts with people who are interested in pottery.

An early 'save-the-date' postcard is sent out each January to prospective customers who live outside of the Minnesota or Western Wisconsin area so that they will be able to make their travel plans ahead of time. In addition, a large poster with pictures of pots from each potter goes out nearer to the time of the tour. One side of the poster is just of pots, and is attractive enough to be posted on the walls of schools and studios. People who live farther away receive it earlier, and it is sent to those in the Minnesota region a little bit closer to the time of The Tour.

The guest potters come from all over the United States. In 2010, The Tour will have potters in attendance from 14 states. Each studio's host potters provide refreshments for those who are attending The Tour. The host potters also provide food for their guest potters, and may provide lodging for some of their guest potters; these costs come out of host studio's budget directly.

"We host potters meet once or twice a year outside of the tour to make our plans and we remain in regular communication when we have questions about how to make things happen" (Jacobson, 2010). Each host potter takes a part of the responsibility for making things happen. Planning the brochure, producing the web site, and gathering and maintaining mailing lists are among the larger responsibilities. The web site aims to

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[31] Interview with Duane Atter, Northwest Minneapolis Business Association. www.nwmplsbusiness.com. January 2010.

[32] Interview with Janel Jacobson, Minnesota Potters of the Upper St. Croix River Tour and Sale founding member. February 2010.

represent every potter, offers a map with contact information, lodging information and a links page to other pottery related web sites. Each host potter contributes what they can to the organization and production of The Tour; some jobs are more responsibility than others, and are difficult to share or divide between people willing to do the work.

"One benefit to The Tour is that each host potter has potential for selling a lot of their own work from their studio, which is much more lucrative than having to pack up and go to a show that could cost between $1000-3000 in a distant location" (Jacobson, 2010). Booth fees alone are expensive, as are lodging and travel. Another benefit is that people stop throughout the year at the host potters' studios while taking their own mini-tour because they have heard of The Tour or were unable to attend on the actual tour weekend. It goes beyond being just a weekend-long event for the potters.

Before The Tour weekend, posters are available at Northern Clay Center in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, and at Continental Clay Company, a clay and tool supplier in Minneapolis. Individual potters distribute posters at a variety of shows they attend. The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) gathering will have potters distributing posters there as well. Between tour events, the remaining posters are passed out at shows and to studio visitors.

Articles about The Tour have been published in clay and arts magazines such as *Ceramics Monthly*, and the metropolitan area newspapers. Notices are also put up on clay websites, blogs, and forums. This tour has produced camaraderie and a larger network of potters where expertise is shared. On occasion, some of the host potters are interviewed by other potters who hope to organize their own regional pottery tours. Some host potters get invited to other pottery tour events that are in turn hosted by our guest potters. For instance: two of the Minnesota potters were invited to a pottery tour in Virginia last year.

In the late 1970's - 1980's, Jeff Oestreich, Janel Jacobson, and Linda Christianson (the first potters in this region) occasionally advertised on each other's sale postcards and worked together on an informational brochure, that were distributed regionally. Early on, people were encouraged to come to the St. Croix area to find pottery.

In the early 1990's the region had more potters who were independently having their own sales. When they decided to unite their sales, the Minnesota Potters of the Upper St. Croix Valley Tour and Sale was created. This is the 18th year of the tour.

Artists from fourteen states will be showing at this year's tour. There have been ten host potters over the past 18 years, with a maximum of seven sites in any given year. These potters have hosted a total of seventy guest potters, bringing diverse talent and creative work into the region. More information can be found at the Minnesota Potters website: www.minnesotapotters.com.

One Space, Three Businesses
High price rental properties close to the University of Minnesota cause business owners to find creative ways to generate revenue. "It is better to have two businesses instead of

one," says the owner of the hair salon. Originally, all three businesses had one owner. Korea Restaurant was downstairs and a salon specializing in Korean hair styles was upstairs sharing space with three karaoke rooms. The current owners have a friendly working relationship and still cooperate to help support each others' businesses. In fact, they meet daily to discuss their businesses and how they can help each other with small tasks such as shoveling their shared sidewalk. Many customers will eat at the restaurant and then go upstairs to sing karaoke with friends. Others visit the restaurant after having their hair styled. Because the karaoke rooms do not serve food, customers will sometimes place an order with the restaurant while they are being entertained with friends.

When asked about the space constraints for the salon and karaoke, the owner explained that the salon closes at 7pm and karaoke generally begins around that time. It is common for people to come sing after they have had dinner. Sometimes a salon customer will take a little longer and there will be overlap which is not ideal, but it is a tradeoff that has made it possible to have such a prime location. If the businesses were separated, they would be paying much more for rent. Sharing space in this way has also been beneficial to their predominantly Korean client base. Customers know that they can access services that are culturally relevant all in one place. Though karaoke draws students from the University campus including many international students, most of their customers are Asian. The businesses are marketed individually, but marketing materials are tailored for the Korean community and through the same sources. Because the businesses all cater to the Korean community, they share information cooperatively.[33]

A Destination Site of Independent Businesses

The Midtown Global Market (MGM) opened in 2006 in the old Sears building that had been vacant for about 20 year. Four nonprofits joined forces to make use of this historic landmark through a proposal for a mixed-use redevelopment plan for the site that includes office space, housing and the Global Market. The Latino Economic Development Center, the Neighborhood Development Center, African Development Center, and Powerhorn Phillips Cultural Wellness Center had a goal of connecting the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood and entrepreneurial energy. This private-nonprofit partnership between Ryan Companies and the nonprofits named gained the support of the City of Minneapolis and private donors who believed in this grassroots vision.[34]

Over 50 independent locally owned businesses are housed in this internationally themed public market. Cooperative marketing of the MGM as a destination site for visitors has helped all businesses maintain a steady stream of customers, allowed new businesses to build clientele, and provided an opportunity for already existing businesses to have another distribution point and eventually scale up. Holy Land Bakery and Deli and Manny's Tortas are two businesses that have separate locations but utilize space in MGM as a second distribution point. Marketing materials include a colorful brochure with a business directory featuring a layout of all businesses located in the MGM and their contact information. These are made available at the airports information centers

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[33] Interview with owners of Karaoke and Hair Salon. February 1, 2010. 7pm. Translated by Youngeun Choi.

[34] Midtown Global Market website: http://midtownglobalmarket.org/?q=about. Accessed February 1, 2010.

and the Lake Street Council helps to distribute them among area businesses.[35] Electronic newsletters with coupons are also sent out by email. Please visit: www.midtownglobal market.org for more information.

Projects to improve organizational efficiency and better attainment and use of funds
Community clinics in Minneapolis and St. Paul are leveraging their resources and joining forces to increase efficiency and make better use of their funds. The Neighborhood Health Care Network is a business venture created by community clinics in the Twin Cities during the early 1990s. Through a shared management model, the network supports 14 independent non-profit community health clinics with 48 clinic locations in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul metropolitan area. The services are provided on a group basis, and member clinics pay an annual fee of $20,000 to have access to the services.

The main goal of the network is to help member clinics provide excellent healthcare services to their patients many of whom are new immigrants with limited English language skills. Patients served by member clinics come from underserved populations. For example, in 2007, 86% of the patients served by member clinics were below 200% of the Federal poverty Level and 49% were uninsured.[36]

To alleviate the burden of dealing with back office duties from member clinics, the Network offers shared services in five key areas such as; clinical quality and disease management, Information Technology services, manages care and joint contracting between clinics, as well as coordinates community outreach and fundraising events. "The Network also provides joint fundraising services for member clinics, marketing and communication activities that raise awareness about the value of the health care safety net in the community, and shared services and purchasing. Each of the services are subsidized primarily through grant funding, in addition to member fees and earned income" (www.nhcn.org/ms.html).

Group purchasing and shared back office capabilities also help member clinics maximize cost-efficiency and allow clinics to focus their efforts on providing excellent direct patient care. In 2007, the Network was able to help set up an Electronic Health Record (EHR) between 5 clinics. The Network is also continually involved in negotiating with public entities, major health plans, and vendors. Because the network deals with different members, there are times when interests of one clinic might not coincide with others. That produces a challenge, and the network has to be careful when seeking out opportunities and make sure that decisions do reflect the needs of all clinics. Thus the network brings together key staff from all member clinics and the Board of Directors to meet on several occasions, share ideas, make joint decisions as well as build relationships with each other.[37] More information can be found at: www.nhcn.org.

Collective Grant Writing and Public-Private Partnership
Responding to the demand of a community can be the key to forming innovative collaborations. When the North Mankato Area Soccer Association took the lead on trying to find potential locations for additional soccer fields based on demand, they found

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35 Interview with Ted Muller, previous Executive Director of Lake Street Council. January 29, 2010.
36 Neighborhood Health Care Network http://www.nhcn.org/
37 Interview with Walter Cooney, Executive Director NHCN. 2008.

that the area school district had a similar interest and available land. The school district got approval and signed off on the use of their land by the board, the Mankato Area Soccer Association helped finance the project with cash, and the City of North Mankato also provided cash and in-kind donations. $50K from the City and $40K from the Soccer Association covered the costs of final grading, irrigation, drainage, and benches.

No formal joint-powers agreement was established but because of the shared interest, each entity did their part. Bolton and Menk Engineering Firm provided their services for a grading plan at a reduced cost. The City used some in-house services such as initial grading and seeding of the fields to further reduce the costs of this project. Once the facility was built, its upkeep and maintenance became the responsibility of the school district as planned. This collaboration is continuing to create additional fields on new ground to meet the demand for more soccer fields in North Mankato.[38]   For information about the City of North Mankato and the Mankato United Soccer Club, visit: http://northmankato.com/links.php.

Collective Grant Writing, Shared Information and Resources
The Northwest Minnesota Council of Collaboratives seeks to improve services and reduce costs while positively impacting the health and well-being of youth and families residing in six counties across 6,700 square miles. The fifty-four partners in the Collaborative come together to discuss opportunities for sharing and coordinating activities while reducing duplication. One method of collaboration is a process for writing common grants. In the last nine years, $18 million in grants have been awarded to the partnership to address the physical health, mental health, early childhood development, school safety, chemical health, disaster mental health, and public health, juvenile justice supports, and law enforcement training.[39] The partners include a combination of consumers, families, twenty-two school districts, county government from six counties and agencies that represent mental health, public health, social/human services, corrections, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and community action agencies.

By streamlining the efforts of each partner agency and collaboratively strengthening approaches, the administration of existing programs is improved. Overall, individual agencies have increased their knowledge about how they can maximize and combine resources. If one partner does not have the resources, they can network with others to help fill service gaps. As the knowledge of each partner's services, strengths and abilities increases, so does the level of cooperation.[40] The Collaborative strives to increase access to services for children and families while enhancing efficiencies and overall effectiveness.

Agencies are better able to identify excess capacity and offer their resources to other partners. They also have coordinated access to a variety of services. For example: in the children's mental health system of care, it does not matter from which agency a family is referred. All access is coordinated through one system. If a teacher notices a student who is experiencing difficulty, the teacher can contact any partner to get care for that student. Care team facilitators are selected from different organizations based on the needs of the student and family with any array of service providers. Through collaboration, they are

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[38] Fischer, Michael. Interview. City of North Mankato. September 2009.

[39] http://www.councilofcollaboratives.org/html/CCnews.cfm?ID=6744

[40] Interview with Colleen MacRae. NW Minnesota Council of Collaboratives. September 2009.

better able to provide a family-focused approach which is culturally and linguistically effective.

Service coordination involves finding ways for service providers, consumers and families to work together. A single point of contact for enrollment into programs is how the collaborative continues to reduce costs and improve service delivery. In this way, everyone works together as a whole to design services for a larger region. One tool is the use of ITV and interactive services with secure internet connections. This tool is used with some students who need mental health counseling after an initial face-to-face meeting. This improved access decreases travel and "wind shield" time for both consumers and counselors and also increases the attendance at appointments. This process of coordination and integration occurs amongst various service providers. Public Health agency members work to address obesity, smoking and tobacco issues throughout the region. While each county public health agency can meet needs specific to each community, they can also provide a coordinated program for regional impact and utilize specialists while maximizing their knowledge base.

Another example of technology used to improve coordination is the Collaborative website http://www.councilofcollaboratives.org. This information clearinghouse provides opportunities for partners to go to one source and learn about activities, events, local and national data, resources, links, articles and special announcements. It is an effective way to communicate across the large geographic region to a variety of stakeholders. A weekly news digest goes out to subscribers to keep them informed about current work and provides them with tools and resources they can use every day.[41]

Monthly governance board meetings are held. Through this process, there are annual reviews of goals, objectives, and outcomes. The Governance Board consists of CEOs and Superintendents who determine areas of focus and levels of activity and opportunity. Each County has a children's mental health and/or family services collaborative structure. Two members from each of the six local collaboratives serve on the Governance Board and represent all fifty-four members across the six counties.

The Council of Collaboratives follows protocols in pursuing grants. A fiscal host is identified and becomes the applicant on behalf of the collective. The host then works with a governance group, as needed, in the administration and implementation of grants received. The Council of Collaboratives has not only provided opportunities for grant funding over a large region of Northwest Minnesota, but it has also been a platform for discussion and updates regarding new state/federal rules, changes in regional profile for children's services and several studies of specific issues for adolescents in their rural area. The Council of Collaboratives also provides resources that support agencies and school district members that have an impact across the children's network of services[42].

The governance process continues to evolve as the environment constantly changes. Regular analysis of needs and partner capacity occurs and opportunities for maximizing services and resources are continuously sought. Momentum between agencies is shared because partners realize that every organization has a substantial amount to contribute to the lives of families and children. "If everybody does their part to raise the ship a little bit, we are able to enhance what we're doing and impact lives in a way we may not think we are able to do" says Governance Board member Denny

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[41] MacRae, C. Interview. September 2009.

[42] Interview with Dawn Ganje. NW Minnesota Council of Collaboratives. September 2009.

DeMers.[43] For people outside of an organization's regular client base, everybody can be helped in a way that is different than what may have been expected, to positively impact the health and well-being of children and families in Northwestern Minnesota. For more information, please visit: www.councilofcollaboratives.org

Shared Personnel and Equipment to Improve Service Provision
The South Central Community Based Initiative (SCCBI) Telehealth Project uses videoconferncing equipment to allow individuals to consult with a provider at another site.[44] It is the result of a collaboration of human services agencies in ten counties: Sibley, Nicollet, Le Seuer, Rice, Brown, Watonwan, Martin, Faribault, Freeborn, and Blue Earth. Human service agencies in each county serve as satellite sites with telehealth audio visual equipment including a camera and remote control. Some counties have multiple points but there is a minimum of one unit within each county. Two community residential treatment providers in the region and one group home in Brown county (located on the border of the initiative) are also partners in this collaboration. Four hospitals, one community behavioral health hospital, three jails in different counties, one public health agency and the South Central Crisis Center for sub-acute mental health in Mankato complete this network. The telehealth equipment is used by the collaborating agencies and organizations multiple times each week with increasing numbers from medication management services alone.

One of the primary goals of the collaboration is to improve psychiatric and mental health access for patients to see their doctors in medication management. Approximately 150-200 staff and clients use the equipment. Previously, it has been difficult to sustain Psychiatric professionals when much of their time was spent traveling to see clients at multiple sites. Sharing this equipment allows psychiatric professionals to remain on-site instead of having to pay psychiatrists to go to different counties and practice in isolation. Funding for this equipment came from the SCCBI and other sources.

Here, Blue Earth County is the site of the Psychiatric Services Hub which is being shared with all of the counties. This way, patients have coverage five days a week instead of intermittent days throughout the month. Further down the road, they see clinical supervision as a possible use of this equipment. It is also used to connect case managers to their clients, as well as, provide trainings. The ten counties sharing in this project meet monthly with those based at a great distance often connecting through telehealth equipment. The Minnesota Department of Human Services has connected in this way to avoid traveling long distances to give presentations or participate in collaborative meetings. Voting on important issues has also been done via telehealth equipment in meetings.

Though it took awhile to adopt use of this technology on the scale it is currently being used, this method is preferred more than using the phone.[45] Informal evaluation has shown that patients seem satisfied stating that their experiences have been positive. Convenience is the greatest advantage as people no longer have to drive long distances for services, but some would prefer face-to-face communication. Learning the technology is where they have seen the most complaints- everyone goes through the learning curve.

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[43] Ganje, D. Interview. September 2009.
[44] http://www.sccbi.info/default.asp?page=714
[45] Interview with Angela Youngerberg. Blue Earth County Human Services. September 2009.

It is taking some time to see the greater vision as people learn to use the new technology. "The need will continue to grow as opportunities to be part of a larger collaboration for meetings and trainings outweighs the complexity of learning the technology".[46] More information can be found at: www.sccbi.info.

Collective Grant Writing, Shared Personnel and Equipment to Improve Communication and Increase Safety
Similarly, the North East Minnesota Enforcement and Safety Information System (NEMESIS) is the result of collaboration across six counties that began in 2002. A number of the public safety agencies in St. Louis County wanted to use one application of computer programs and circuits that would allow devices in different places to connect and users to interact with the system. This interface tool would permit agencies to have their own data and choose which information to share with other agencies within one system.

Initially, the City of Duluth, Hermantown, and Proctor Police Departments, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and the UMD Campus Police pursued a CriMNet planning grant for public safety through the state of Minnesota. CriMNet financed a planning grant for $50K matched from St. Louis County. With that, they planned for use of applications they designed and necessary interfaces. The designing company already had the prosecution package they wanted to use as it has become pretty dominant in the country. In this planning phase, they completed total requirements analysis for new law enforcement system, identified interfaces and means of integrating systems, contracted with Constellation Justice System to obtain complete technical design for law enforcement system and interfaces, and installed Constellation Justice System's DAMION Prosecutor in regional prosecutor's offices.[47]

Ten more agencies endorsed their next project to pursue a second state CriMNet grant for implementation by providing letters of support. This implementation grant required $540K in cash contribution and $260K in-kind in return for getting $800K from the state. An agreement was signed by UMN, Hermantown, Duluth PD, St. Louis County Sheriff and Proctor stating that the $540K from St. Louis County on the front-end was to be repaid over 5 years at 4% interest. The agreement also covered what the five agencies would be paying yearly for support. The law enforcement application and interfaces were built with the State of Minnesota and the prosecution system.

Many interfaces have been built since but they have always received funding for these projects through a second implementation grant of $140K[48]. In this implementation phase, necessary hardware and software were installed, data was converted, the SHIELD Law Enforcement application was completed, horizontal and vertical interfaces were built, and SHIELD training was initiated. NEMESIS also saw an expansion from twenty-eight agencies to forty-five agencies including jail corrections, law enforcement, 911 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), prosecution, and mobile-field reporting through five applications and many interfaces covering all of Northeast Minnesota: Pine, Carleton, Lake, Crook, St. Louis, and Koochiching counties.

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[46] Interview with Angela Youngerberg.
[47] http://nemesismn.org/About/NEMESISHistory/tabid/1192/Default.aspx. Retrieved Oct. 13, 2009.
[48] Interview with Michael Dean- Assistant County Attorney, St. Louis County. Oct. 5, 2009. 10:30am

In order to set goals and objectives, they have formed a user committee consisting of the five initial partners and subscriber representatives that make all policy decisions pertaining to law enforcement. They regularly do strategic planning. In the law enforcement sector, the user committee sets goals and objectives with subscriber representative sitting on that committee. They have meetings and report back to the five-partner user committee.

Because of the nature of this collaboration, they have been able to participate in every major pilot project in State of Minnesota and have taken the lead thereby saving enormous amounts of money. If these agencies did not collaborate, twenty-eight interfaces would have to be build and maintained instead of one. This year, NEMESIS is participating in five significant pilot projects with the state: electronic criminal complaints, electronic charging or filing of criminal documents, the comprehensive incident-based reporting system (CIBRS), Name Event Index Service (NEIS) went live the first week in October 2009, and administrative forms that go to Department of Vehicle services began in December 2009.[49]

NEMESIS will be the first region in the nation to implement electronic criminal complaints which required a supreme court order to complete without a signature. From a squad car, an officer will be able to electronically give a citation that will directly go to the Courts before returning to Law Enforcements technological application keeping records and seamless communication at both points.[50] NEMESIS was chosen as the only region to use this newer method as a pilot. This method saves time that is usually devoted to substantial data entry on all ends thus creating a paperless environment.

Twenty agencies are already signed on as participants in CIBRS and other can join the pilot anytime. These five pilot projects are a continuation of a federal grant awarded in 2005 in the amount of $937K for the 911 CAD system. The need to share information led to further sharing of activities, resources, and power. Authority is given to the user committee to provide direction and make final decisions for the collaboration. Sheriffs offices in State of MN are set up in a way that they work together as regions: Metro, NE, NW, SE, SW. They receive federal and state money and sit down together to decide how to spend it. NEMESIS has reached out because they see the value of collaborative work based on their past success. Homeland security including emergency management and communications are also funded through these regions.

Everyone has to work together and sometimes that takes some getting used to. However, to date there have been no significant compromises. The initial five partners expected this undertaking to be a lot of work since the majority of their efforts are pilot projects. These endeavors take some figuring out along the way. With these expectations in place, everyone contributes and generally works well together. Though there have not been any formal evaluations that would be a measurement barometer before and after, every step saves time in the field which is measureable. "Crime rates are harder to get your arms around- sometimes it's more about solving the crime than preventing it" says Dean.[51] It is too soon to measure results from other pilot programs. More information can be found at: www.nemesismn.org.

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[49] Dean, M. Interview. October 2009.
[50] http://nemesismn.org/Components/Interfaces/tabid/1196/Default.aspx
[51] Dean, M. Interview. October 2009.

Culturally Relevant Social Services for Youth
Between 1998- 2003, the Midwest Children's Resource Center (MCRC) was seeing an increased number of sexually exploited young teens. Child protection was not mandated to open these cases because the abuse was not inter-familial. The 11-14 year old population was particularly vulnerable because services were available for older teens in the community but not for youth in elementary or junior high school. These youth were also vulnerable to being abused again.

The Truancy program of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) was not identifying some runaway teens as being truant from school. For example, if the teen ran away from Friday to Sunday, it would have to happen five to ten times before the necessary number of days were missed from school for there to be a report to the Truancy program. This could take up to ten weeks and in this time there was a significant chance the teen would be sexually assaulted.

SPPS Truancy office wanted to see kids in school for several reasons. First, teens that are not in school are more likely to be victims of abuse or to commit crimes. It also costs a lot to society if students do not graduate. In order to build resiliency, children need to have connection to schools. Schools need to be involved in the process of reporting truancy and helping identify children who are running away. A community needs assessment by Safe Harbors Youth Intervention Program was already being implemented. There was lots of parallel work going on. From that assessment, each agency was asked to develop a best practice protocol that their agency would use in responding to a runaway youth. The County Attorney's office has a coordinator for screening kids running away with those who are truant. Everyone works together.

Originally, the Midwest Children's Resource Center, Sexual Offense Services, the Ramsey county Attorneys Office, and Hmong American Partnership jointly applied for and received a grant with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. An outside evaluator found that families in the program were happy with its services, but there was concern in the larger community about targeting only one population. At this point, RIP targets all runaways though the majority of its participants are Hmong girls. A 2006 study shows that extra-familial sexual abuse cases were more severe among Hmong runaways in comparison to the general population.[52] "The abuse experiences of Hmong girls were strikingly different from those of Other girls. More than three of four Hmong girls experienced gang rape, prostitution, or multiple assaults, whereas less than one in five Other girls did" (Edinburgh, p. 114). Thus, services were initially tailored to be culturally sensitive to the Southeast Asian population which may be a reason that the program continues to serve many of these youth.

As part of Safe Harbor Youth Intervention Project (SHYIP), the Runaway Intervention Program has monthly meetings with a sexual assault protocol team. In those meetings, representatives discuss how the organizations should be responding using best practices. When problems arise, this provides a forum to discuss and figure out how to make changes.[53] Approximately eighteen people grapple with what makes sense in particular cases. They focus on how they can link together and work to streamline

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[52] Edinburgh, L. "Sexual Exploitation of Very Young Hmong Girls". Journal of Adolescent Health. 39 (2006) 111-118.
[53] Interview with Laurel Edinburgh- Clinics of Minnesota Nurse Practitioner. Oct. 15, 2009; 1:45pm.

redundancy between their agencies. In this way, SHYIP is a sort of umbrella organization that helps set best practices for youth intervention.

Research was printed in the Journal of Adolescent Health Care showing that the Runaway Intervention Program is a "promising intervention for restoring sexually abused runaway girls to a healthy developmental trajectory".[54] Girls showed significant improvement in protective factors such as family connectedness after six months of intervention and sustained school improvements after twelve months. RIP has had the greatest effect in high risk cases where the baseline for supports is much lower.   For more information, please visit: http://www.childrensmn.org/web/whatsnew/186762.asp. Copies of the publications can be requested from staff listed on this site.

Projects that aim to increase student achievement through inter-school collaboration and sharing of innovative ideas

Project for School Innovation (PSI) is a non-profit organization founded by the Neighborhood House Charter School. In 2006, PSI was awarded the Keeping the Promise (KTP) grant, a federal grant administered by the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA). The organization was commissioned by MCPSA to work with five of the highest performing charter schools in Massachusetts and identify what makes these schools successful so they can serve as national models for dissemination and replication.

The five high performing charter schools would also take part in hosting district schools in full-day Study Tours. The Study Tours are designed to help evolve one aspect of participating schools' Whole School Improvement Plans and to facilitate replication of key practices of high-performing schools. Thus, educators from district schools serving high need communities in Massachusetts would be given the opportunity to engage with high performing charter schools and learn about what they are doing to increase student achievement in their schools. Study tours incorporate classroom observations, interactive workshops, action planning, and collaboration. According to PSI, "study tours also provide a unique opportunity for inter-school, and specifically district-charter, collaboration."[55]

PSI, along with the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, is helping build leadership among district and charter school teachers, by enabling them to share their successes, challenges, and best practices through workshops and publications. Many milestones have been reached thus far. PSI's peer-to-peer learning sessions brought together 42 educators from 17 charter schools with 75 colleagues from 22 district schools in 2006 alone. Since 2002, PSI has convened 30 intensive Support & Study Groups for over 240 professional educators and published 17 teacher-authored guidebooks on effective practices. PSI has also distributed over 5,000 books and DVDs to educators nationwide and presented at 24 local, state, and national conferences. Using PSI action plans, eight district public schools replicated effective charter school practices and five charter public schools replicated effective district school practices. PSI has also supported

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[54] Saewyc, E. "Restoring Healthy Developmental Trajectories for Sexually Exploited Young Runaway Girls: Fostering Protective Factors and Reducing Risk Behaviors". Journal of Adolescent Health. 2009. 1-9.

[55] Project for School Innovation website:
http://www.psinnovation.org/what_we_do/collaboration/keeping_the_promise

the development of 35 school action plans for implementation.[56] Please visit: www.psinnovation.org for more information.

The Illinois Network of Charters (INCS) is another example of a nonprofit organization that is working to open healthy dialogue between charters and public schools. In late 2008, INCS began piloting partnerships between charter public schools and district schools in Chicago through their Charter Up Program. The main goal of the program is to allow two-way sharing and learning to occur between district and charter schools. Too often school politics involving district and charter schools hinder real sharing and collaboration therefore the two school systems operate in silos. Thus, INCS was able to open up in depth communication channels to enable charter and district partnerships to flourish. The ultimate goal is to increase student achievement and engagement in Chicago school through peer learning and collaboration.
INCS is currently facilitating pilot partnerships between Catalyst Elementary School (charter) and Goodlow Magnet school (district).

Leaders from both schools meet with each other, share ideas and discuss the similar needs of their students. Presently, both schools are embarking on enhancing their after school programs. Goodlow Magnet school for example was interested in developing a family history program to help its students learn about their family's background and history. Students would be able to enhance their research and writing skills through this program. Catalyst School wanted to enhance their award winning after school drama club but did not know how. When both schools were matched by INCS Charter Up program, they were able to have access to each others' programs and have conversations about how to enhance program delivery and impact. Catalyst school is now working to incorporate a family history component into their after school drama club (an idea borrowed from Goodlow). Goodlow is also working to add a role playing/ acting component into their Family History program to make the program more engaging to students (an idea borrowed from Catalyst).

Staff members at INCS continually reach out to Chicago district schools about the Charter Up program. At a recent conference, INCS highlighted the experiences of the pilot partnerships and brought together various Chicago Public School administrators, principals and teachers. A panel discussion including INCS staff and leaders of the two pilot school partnerships discussed the importance of charter-district collaboration as well as their projects. INCS believes that the pilot partnerships exhibited a great deal of trust, leadership and openness to each other's ideas. They were able to focus on their shared interests and that helped them work together to provide the best opportunities for their students.[57] For more information and examples, please visit: http://incschools.blogspot.com/2009/05/2009-charter-up-winners.html.

Projects that aim to increase college attendance and graduation
The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) also works with charter schools to increase the number of students participating in post secondary education. By enabling and developing charter school guidance counselors' knowledge about post secondary education and enrollment, INCS aims to increase the number of first generation and low income students attending and succeeding in college. The College for All (CFA) was

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[56] Interview with PSI project officers. 2008.
[57] Interview with Steve Zimmerman (INCS)

established in 2008 to do just that. The main goal of the program is to help charter high schools create a college-going culture and enhance students' college readiness, access and persistence. By pairing charter school guidance counselors, principals, and teachers with experienced college counselors and admissions officers, charter schools are better prepared to help their students get ready for post-secondary education. In 2008, CFA offered six high schools, college guidance resources and support for specific projects geared towards increasing college readiness and attendance among students. Four additional schools have also enrolled in this program in 2009.[58]

Member schools participate in a series of six seminars during the year and learn about different aspects of the college admission and application process. INCS also provides a College for All (CFA) consultant who works with each school individually on specific projects. The project must be related to college readiness, and schools are allowed up to fifteen hours of assistance from the CFA consultant. The CFA consultant helps schools specifically look at ways to increase persistence in college and to ensure that students have a successful freshman year once they are enrolled. The ultimate goal of the College for All Cooperative is "to ensure that all charter high schools have strong reputations with colleges and universities so that students have exceptional college options to choose from…and are positioned to succeed once they enter college." INCS sees this collaboration as an opportunity to "collectively tackle" the hurdles of preparing students for post-secondary education."[59]

The CFA consultant helps schools deal with the challenging aspect of inter-school communication. Other channels of communication such as web forums are helping relationships develop and peer learning to occur. Participating schools are finding themselves sharing their experiences more through web forums and learning sessions, bouncing off ideas and helping each other formulate strategies that would help their students get ready to attend college and succeed.[60] More information can be found at: www.incschools.org/cfa.asp.

Charter schools and community colleges have also become more involved in partnerships that aim to improve high school students' ability to perform college-level work and succeed in the college environment. Tenor High School in Milwaukee has been partnering with Milwaukee Area Technical College since 2007 in order to offer its students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a vocational certificate in a specific area of concentration during their senior year. The high school has a career focus and is designed for students that want to explore a particular occupational route during high school.

This collaboration allows for community colleges to work directly with high school students and recognizes that students need to graduate from high school with at least some college experience. The impact of this collaboration has also been seen in student achievement at Tenor High school. In comparison with the Milwaukee Public

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[58] Interview with Anne Brown, INCS and Willard Dix, CFA consultant. 2008.

[59] "College for All Cooperative: A New Approach to College Accessibility." Illinois Network of Charter Schools.

[60] Interview with Willard Dix, CFA consultant at INCS

Schools students during the last two years, Tenor High school students have enjoyed higher test scores in the areas of reading, language, math, science and social studies.[61]

Projects to improve organizational efficiency

Some years ago rural school authorities Paul Nachtigal and Sylvia Parker wrote about what they called "clustering" of schools: "The cluster strategy allows a group of neighboring schools to exchange ideas, share resources and make more effective use of outside resources. "Traditionally in rural areas when a job is too large to accomplish alone, people band together to get the job done" (p. 1-20).   Examples: Raising a barn or harvesting crops (still done cooperatively in many places).

Their report gave examples such as:

- Small Colorado districts formed a "science cluster" to provide staff development and allow creation of "hands on" science curricula.
- Small Missouri and Kansas districts formed a collaborative to hire a computer specialist who would provide training and technical assistance to teachers and administrators.
- North Dakota cluster hired two guidance counselors, an art teacher and a Spanish language teacher.

Cooperative teams involving several small schools

Benefits cited included:

- Improving teaching
- Increasing learning opportunities for students
- "Reinvigorated teaching staff"
- "More 'bang for the buck'" (Nachtigal and Parker, p. 1-20).

Charter schools are enhancing their organizational capacity through partnerships with businesses. LEAD for Charters, is an example of school-business collaboration that was made possible by funding from the Cargill Foundation in 2004. Larson Allen, a consulting firm, in partnership with the Nonprofits Assistance Fund, embarked on implementing an organizational capacity building model in 7 Minneapolis charter schools. Acknowledging that the initiative may not have a direct effect on student achievement; partners agreed that the model would however provide charter schools capabilities that are necessary to effectively lead schools and serve student needs.

The main goals of the initiative were to provide schools with consulting services from Larson Allen's resource team, create and foster peer learning opportunities, and allow for networking and relationship building between schools. These opportunities allowed participants to learn new ways of solving organizational needs such as streamlining human resource efforts, financial management systems, board governance

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[61] Tenor High School website http://www.seedsofhealth.org/tenor/home.html, Interview with John Gee, Wisconsin Charter School Association

and strategic planning. Through the LEAD program, schools also implemented executive leadership teams, and worked with the resource team on strategic planning regarding school expansion projects.[62]

An evaluation conducted by Wilder Research found LEAD successful and beneficial to the participating schools. Some key outcomes from the collaboration included an increased knowledge in organizational management and leadership as well as building sustainable relationships. In addition, participating schools not only had access to individualized consultations from Larson Allen's Resource Team, they were also able to learn and share their own knowledge and experiences with one another. Inter-school relationship building was found to be an essential success tool and participating in LEAD allowed schools to increase their networking, engagement and enhancement of inter-school relationships. Please see www.wilder.org for a report summary of LEAD.

Schools are also sharing facilities in many areas of the country as a way to broaden learning opportunities for students, offer high quality services to students and families, increase student achievement and graduation rates as well as to make efficient use of funds. As a way to expand learning opportunities to students through co-location, the Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center shares space with South Mountain Community College. Through this shared arrangement, the school also shares faculty with the college. The impact on student achievement is enormous. According to the Arizona Dept of Education, AAEC is considered a "high performing" school. According to the principle, 'students earn an average of 46 college credits before graduating and even a few earn an Associates degree along with their high school diploma."[63]   For more information, visit: aaechighschools.com.

Projects that aim to save money through Cooperative Purchasing/Advertising and Resource Sharing
Since 1991, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) has been working with higher education institutions to advance cooperation and resource sharing. MHEC is now serving several Midwestern states such as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The compact helps institutions maximize cost effectiveness by securing better property insurance rates for members of the MHEC Master Property Program (MPP). The goal of the program is to offer institutions broad property coverage and address individual institutional needs. The program has received wide coverage as it have been "compared to a Fortune 500 company since it currently underwrites over $62.3 billion in total insured values at over 100 campuses." In addition, the program has also "saved institutions $11.4 million in the year 2008." MHEC also operates a Hardware Program that enables institutions to save money by taking advantage of competitive pricing on desktops, laptops, printers, and other hardware.

The Hardware Program saves institutions money because it makes the purchasing process easy by alleviating the need to conduct a Request for Proposal (RFP) as a stand-alone institution. In 2008 for example, the program saved cooperating institutions over $18.3 million. Through MHEC, cooperating higher education institutions have access to

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[62] LEAD for Charters information sheet.
http://www.wilder.org/download.0.html?report=2090&summary=1. Retrieved February 17, 2010.
[63] Nathan, Joe- Thao, Sheena (2007) *Smaller Safer Saner Successful Schools* pgs 29-30

various pre-configured technology products such as Dell, Hewlett Packard, Lenovo, and Xerox at a discounted group price.[64] Visit: www.mhec.org for more information.

Shared Equipment Cuts Costs

Some businesses are also cooperating through sharing equipment. Manufacturing companies in Willmar, MN for example, bought a prototyping machine together. The machine is owned by one of the collaborating companies- NovaTech. Each cooperating company in the collaboration is allocated time to operate the machine. The machine is located and operated at a central site (a hospital) and is made available to everyone. This collaboration is cost effective and is helping the bottom line of these businesses.[65] Businesses are also sharing airplanes to save money, and maximize productivity. Marquis Jet Card is a program that provides business executives the ability to "reach multiple locations, control schedules, increase efficiency and maximize productivity" through private aviation. The jet card program allows access to NetJets for 25 hours at a time.[66]

Collective Advertising for School Options

The Center for School Change (CSC), based originally at the Humphrey Institute and now at Macalester College in St. Paul, has worked in collaboration with charter public schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul for the past five years to publish the Charter School Brochure. The brochure covers many charters in Minneapolis and St. Paul and reached more than 40,000 families through direct mail for less than $1000 per school. Schools cooperate with CSC staff and make available information that they would like students and parents to know about their schools in order to make a sound and informed choice.

The brochure includes information about school location, educational curriculum emphasis, grade levels, and philosophy as well as teaching strategies. The impact of the brochure has been observed in the increase of parents' awareness of the various choices they have when it comes to choosing the best schools for their children. Charter schools also find great value in having their information out to parents and students through the brochure. Families are encouraged by CSC to find the school that appeals to their student's needs as well as to visit school websites, call and/or attend open houses.[67] The brochure currently reaches about 30,000 families via direct mail. It also is distributed through libraries, social service agencies, recreation centers and real estate agencies. The 2009 Charter School Brochure can be found at: http://www.centerforschoolchange.org/2009-charter-public-school-brochure/index.html.

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[64] Midwestern Higher Education Compact - http://www.mhec.org/index.asp?pageID=page_12.htm
[65] Interview with Bill Blazer- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. 2008.
[66] Marquis Jet Card Program http://www.marquisjet.com/card_comp.aspx
[67] Interview with Sheena Thao, Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute http://centerforschoolchange.org/

Section 3: **Lessons Learned**
From the literature we reviewed as well as the conversations we had with partnering organizations in the examples above, we learned a great deal. Successful collaborations take time and commitment. Organizations may have to make trade-offs between pursuing a goal that can be accomplished independently or working toward a common purpose that may produce a greater impact.

We recognize that this information will be extremely useful for many organizations and that others will need to be creative in figuring out if collaboration is the best way to meet their specific needs. Just as not all artists will participate in the neighborhood festival, not all schools will make collaboration a priority. Timing is crucial; examples that may not have direct application now might be the perfect solution or innovation at another time. We identify the following six key lessons from the collaboration projects as well as the best practices literature.

1. *Work on real, important organizational needs:* Time, energy and other resources always are limited. The best collaborations enable organizations to accomplish something that is a priority. These cooperative efforts allow participants to either accomplish something they could not by themselves, or allow them to accomplish it far more effectively or efficiently.

2. *Think outside the box and experiment with new and innovative ideas*: Some charter schools are finding value in experimenting with collaborations that involve new ways of thinking and doing. Charter schools are partnering with businesses, higher education institutions and non-profit organizations to increase student achievement, enhance service delivery and improve organizational capacity. PSI and the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association are collaborating with schools to help build leadership among district and charter school teachers and enabling them to share their successes, challenges, and best practices through workshops and publications in order to have an impact on student achievement.

3. *Join forces to maximize cost effectiveness and efficiency:* Community clinics in Minneapolis and St. Paul are leveraging their resources and joining forces to increase efficiency and make better use of their funds; local businesses in NE Minneapolis are also jointly advertising and cooperating through a shared business directory; institutions of higher education are maximizing cost effectiveness through group purchases of technology and property insurances

4. *Start small and set goals that are achievable:* Failures and messiness in coordinating collaborative projects can be reduced when partners start small and build successes one at a time. The City of North Mankato and the United Soccer Club started with just one field and have continued to meet the demand in other areas since. Achieving success in collaborative efforts also requires goals that are realistic to accomplish and have indicators that measure concrete results. The Illinois work involves just one district and one charter. It would have been very difficult to get all district schools and charters in Chicago to partner but starting with a pilot partnership increases the likelihood of success.

5. *Be honest with partners about strengths and weaknesses*: Honesty with partners about strengths and weaknesses will help develop trust and credibility. Partners

should also look closely at what each organization can offer and leverage each others' strengths in order to maximize the effectiveness of the partnership. MN Potters of the Upper St. Croix River recognized the capacity of each host potter to fulfill certain tasks and has grown to have national recognition over 18 years. Honesty can also help partners deal with challenges, because trust is not compromised.

6. *Invest energy in making the partnership work*: By communicating effectively using formal and informal arrangements, having a solid project plan that is agreed upon by all parties involved, sharing decisions making responsibilities, establishing and fostering leadership among all staff involved in the project and trusting each other's work, effective collaborations will be fostered, as is the case of MACC Commonwealth.

7. *Assess the value of the collaboration:* Because collaborations consume time and resources, partners must be able to assess the value of partnering since poorly implemented collaborations can lead to waste of energy, time and resources. NEMESIS has seen significant decreases in time spent processing information using law enforcement applications jointly. Researchers agree that partnerships should be evaluated based on the outcomes and value produced relative to the resources used.

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About the Authors

Jasmine Blanks, Master of Public Policy Candidate at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, is concentrating in Public and Nonprofit Leadership and Management. Her Masters research is titled "Creating New Schools through Cross-Sector Social Entrepreneurship: A Business Plan for Residential Education". She currently serves as the Research Assistant for the Center for School Change and the Executive Vice President for GAPSA, a nonprofit serving 25,000 graduate and professional students at the University of Minnesota through advocacy, governance and developing best practices.

Naima Bashir is a graduate of the Humphrey Institute's Masters of Public Policy program with a certificate in Program Evaluation. She has specialized in public/nonprofit management, strategic planning, program development, assessment and evaluation with particular expertise in multi-cultural and immigrant communities. Naima has worked with the Center for School Change, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Ramsey and Hennepin counties as well as various grassroots and non-profit organizations engaging in research; strategic planning; program development and evaluation projects. She is currently a consultant with Copeland - Carson & Associates.

Joe Nathan, PhD, directs the Center for School Change at Macalester College. The Center works with district and charter public schools, parents, community members, governors and state legislators to help promote more effective public education.   Nathan has written several books and more than 250 articles, along with more than 1,000 newspaper columns. Twenty-two state legislatures and eight Congressional committees have asked him to testify.