

March 9, 2017

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

We look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming meeting of the California Collaborative on District Reform on March 23-24 in San Bernardino City Unified School District (SBCUSD). We are excited to explore strategies of collective impact through a meeting that adds a new flavor to our typical meeting approach. Although the meeting will take place in San Bernardino, we are exploring collective impact through the lens of two district approaches, those in SBCUSD and Oceanside USD. We therefore extend our thanks not only to SBCUSD for their willingness to host the meeting, but to the teams from both Oceanside USD and SBCUSD for their invaluable contributions to the planning process and willingness to share their journey in pursuing broader community goals.

This meeting builds on the fundamental recognition that the challenges facing young people in our K-12 education systems, and the solutions to those challenges, extend far beyond the walls of our schools. Indeed, local districts represent one of many critical players in a broader effort to recognize and address community-wide needs. Collective impact strategies seek to build formal partnerships among a range of partners to address those needs throughout the lifespan of individuals in the community. The Oceanside and San Bernardino communities have both embarked on collective impact efforts, and partners from both teams have actively contributed to our process of understanding the promising practices and challenges we plan to explore during the meeting.

Meeting Overview

Day 1: The meeting will begin Thursday morning with an orientation to collective impact work from our two focal districts. Superintendents Duane Coleman and Dale Marsden will describe the community conditions that led them to design a collective impact initiative and what that approach looks like in their respective contexts. Following questions and reflections from the broader group, we will tour Indian Springs High School with a set of San Bernardino community partners to better understand how collective impact plays out in the student experience in their high school pathways.

After lunch, we will turn to one of the key conditions for collective impact success, agreeing on a common agenda. A panel of community leaders from both Oceanside and San Bernardino will share the reasons that they chose to engage in this work, describe their roles in the partnership, and reflect on the commitments required to pursue a set of joint goals through mutually reinforcing strategies.

Following the panel, we will turn to issues of shared measurement. Both Oceanside and San Bernardino are in early stages of developing systems of sharing and using data. We will therefore draw on the examples of a more mature collective impact effort to see what such efforts can look like in practice and what lessons have emerged from that work. Participants will have an opportunity to pose questions and reflect on the promises and barriers to developing similar systems in their own context.

We will close Day 1 with small group conversations in which leaders from Oceanside USD and SBCUSD will pose a problem of practice on which they would like to receive feedback. The small groups will

work through the consultancy protocol that we have used in several Collaborative meetings to reflect on these challenges and provide feedback to the district teams. As usual, we will end the day with an opportunity for networking and collective relaxation over dinner, this time at The Castaway in the hills of San Bernardino.

Day 2: On Thursday morning, we will turn our discussion to the organization of collective impact initiatives. Successful collective impact efforts often rely on a backbone organization to structure the work, and in both San Bernardino and Oceanside the school districts have played this role so far. A combination of small group and full group discussions will enable participants to explore the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement, and what other approaches might entail.

The meeting will conclude by considering the capacities needed for successful and sustainable collective impact efforts. First, the responsibility of partnering with other organizations that have traditionally operated in isolation from one another may require new skills in facilitation and collaboration. We will again bring in community partners to discuss some of the leadership capacity issues introduced by collective impact and how partners can address these needs. We will then wrap up the meeting with a discussion of fiscal capacity. Because of the size and complexity of the problems they address, collective impact strategies are necessarily long range and thus require ongoing financial support. Traditional funding models often require grant recipients to focus on and document their unique contributions to a solution and the impact they have produced. Collective impact can change this dynamic for grantees and funders alike. A fishbowl conversation among funders will help unpack the fiscal challenges and opportunities that collective impact introduces.

Readings

As usual, all readings and reference materials for the sessions are available in multiple formats. If you requested a hard copy of the binder, all of the materials will be included there; the cover sheet behind each tab identifies a subset of the readings as priority readings that we suggest you read before the meeting. **For your convenience, on Friday, March 10, you will also receive an email with this subset of priority pre-meeting readings attached. We strongly encourage you to read these materials prior to the meeting,** as they provide important background information on the topics we will discuss. Also for your convenience, all of the meeting materials are available on the Collaborative website at <http://www.cacollaborative.org/meetings/meeting32> and via DropBox at a link you will receive via email.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please do not hesitate to contact Dawn Smith at 650.843.8239 or dcsmith@air.org. If have any other questions, please email me (joday@air.org) or give me a call at 202.262.4987. I look forward to seeing you all later this month!

Sincerely,



Jennifer O'Day
Chair, California Collaborative on District Reform, and
Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research