



Tabletop Session Summary

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Establishing Data Sharing Agreements Between Community Based Organizations and Schools

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This tabletop discussion examined the experiences of district, community, and national leaders in developing effective agreements for data and information sharing.

Session Highlights

- » UP Partnership in San Antonio, Texas works with partners from school districts, state agencies, community-based organizations, and businesses. They have 175 partners that are committed to utilizing data and aligning resources for the purpose of creating equitable systems to ensure that all young people in the county are college and career ready. They use a collective impact model to design solutions for students. Each partner brings in their own resources, data, and expertise to ensure the full picture of a student's experience is considered when making policy and other strategic decisions. As a core value, they believe that data should be used for making improvements, not just for measurement.
- » UP Partnership has a data sharing memorandum of understanding (MOU) with more than half of the 15 school districts in San Antonio and with their partner organizations. Based on these agreements, they can match participant data from partner organizations with school district data and present (e.g., in a dashboard) a fuller picture of how students are doing. The goal is to guide student success by connecting partners to existing data, creating student-centered tools, cultivating data literacy, and coordinating with data partners to create community-wide alignment.
- » In addition to outcome measures that are collected by local Boys & Girls Clubs, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America collects data annually at the national level on participants' attitudes, perceptions, social emotional skills, and behaviors (including education and health). Every year, nearly 200,000 young people take the survey. They aim to partner with school systems to use academic data to get a more complete picture of how their programs are working, how young people are faring, and to learn how to support them better.
- » More specifically, at the local level, Boys & Girls Clubs partner with districts on data sharing to better coordinate services and to create continuity between in-school learning and support provided during out-of-school time. At the national level, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has partnered with state education agencies on data sharing projects. They look at the relationship between attendance at Boys & Girls Clubs and academic performance. This data allows them to evaluate their programming holistically and to streamline data requests. Connecticut and Washington are examples of two states where they have done this work.



- » From a school district perspective, building trust is essential for this work. Barriers may surface when exploring data sharing opportunities. However, it is important to make sure that districts are aware of the benefits of data sharing and to have the support of district leadership.

Questions and Answers on Establishing Data Sharing Agreements Between Community Based Organizations and Schools

How do you navigate resistance from schools who are concerned about the data painting a bad picture of them?

It goes back to building trust. If the Boys & Girls Clubs saw a data point that was concerning, it would be discussed with the school and district leadership. Club staff would also want to confirm the data with the school district, since their staff are not necessarily trained data analysts. If the data is pointing to the partnership, then maybe it is the wrong type of partnership.

From the school district's perspective, if the data is interpreted in a way that is detrimental to the school, that partnership will not last. But at the end of the day, schools and organizations are on the same team. Collaboration and communication are important, and the data should tell a story that is beneficial to the students. Hopefully, data is approached from a glass half-full perspective.

Have you run into any Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) issues? If so, how were they resolved?

The school district has not run into any FERPA issues. The established data sharing agreement is extensive and followed by both parties, the schools and the Club. In addition, the Club was very upfront with data collection and usage. There is an opt-out clause in the National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) membership application that parents can select. There have also not been any FERPA issues in the local partnerships.

While FERPA is there to protect student data privacy, it does not prevent organizations from using data in ways that benefit students. Data sharing agreements should lay out exactly what the data is used for and have a clear purpose. They should also have the right permissions determined. At the state level, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America uses a third-party researcher to handle the student-level data because there is no need for the organization to have that level of data. At the local level, however, Clubs are working directly with young people, so data is used in specific ways that are directly linked to an academic outcome.

Can you talk a little more about how you access and use real-time data? For example, do Club staff have access to a program like PowerSchool?

Yes, Club staff have access to student data, but only two key staff have administrative level access. Most districts in the area use Skyward. At the basic level, staff can access data regarding missing assignments and grades. The next level up has data on behavior referrals and trends. Club staff have time dedicated to look at this data. It has increased communication between the district, Club staff, and families. Students in the program can't get away with missing assignments.

At UP Partnership, any student-level data is only shared through a secure server, and specific staff have the authority to download the data. As far as real-time data, there are approximately 15 different school districts and 10 different student information systems. The goal is to get everyone on the same system to be able to truly have access to real-time data.



There are new student data privacy laws in numerous states that often mandate data protection agreements between LEAs and entities that receive student records. Can you share resources or guidance with respect to navigating these new laws?

It is important to have leadership buy-in in this process. When leadership supports the use of data in a way that protects student data privacy, then you can get the right legal minds involved to figure out how to implement the data sharing agreements. It is also important to note that when working with new laws and regulations, if there is no boilerplate agreement, it will take time to develop new agreements or to modify existing ones.

Can you talk about how you determine at which points to collect and share data, especially if there are multiple partners involved?

Organizations always want to know how to help students and narrow down what works. Schools and partners must decide together what is attainable. A good starting place is knowing the measures or data points that are needed by organization and the key metrics that need to be tracked. It is also important to have a fluid landscape when it comes to data, especially during the pandemic. It is becoming clearer that there are other measures that are important to include aside from the traditional metrics that have historically been tracked. Some of these are items like sense of belonging, identity, and other culturally relevant factors.

It is also important to keep in mind that data sharing agreements work both ways. There are data inputs coming from schools, like the number of behavior referrals and number of missing assignments. Then there are soft data inputs that organizations can provide to districts. Club staff, for example, can reach out to school staff and provide information about a specific family in a way that paints a more complete picture. With the transitional nature of housing and with migrant populations, these data partnerships can help ensure students do not fall through the cracks.

How do you continue to bring the importance of data to the fore in districts, as circumstances change such as personnel, changes in funding, etc.?

During COVID, the importance and value of data sharing became clearer for some districts. Schools and districts see students for nine months out of the year, while Club staff see them the entire year. Clubs have important data points that they collect and review during the months of June and August, which they can share with schools and districts at the beginning of the school year. This type of wraparound support is what students need.

One example from UP Partnership is from last year when students were in virtual classrooms, and there was a need to identify and reach out to missing students who were not logging on virtually. Tapping into the UP Partnership network with a list of those students helped to facilitate connections. Many times, students have a better connection with the community-based organization. Partners can contact the student to find out what they or their families need. Another example comes from looking at available data to see who is not being represented. When data is disaggregated, it is easier to see where representation is lacking and find ways to reach those who are underrepresented.

