Sustaining Collaboration 

Excerpt from Fostering Collaboration Between District and Charter Schools:   
A Toolkit for State and Local Leaders

Sara Allender, Andrea Browning, Robin Chait, Chris Dwyer, Carol Keirstead, and Amanda Nabors

**Description:**  
This section describes key steps, structures, and processes that are needed to sustain the collaboration.

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Sustaining Collaboration from Fostering Collaboration Between District and Charter Schools

A Toolkit for State and Local Leaders

## E. Sustaining Collaboration

If a collaborative initiative or activity has been successful, stakeholders will likely be motivated to continue working together, and perhaps even to scale up their work in partnership with other traditional public schools in the district and/or other charters. To maximize investment of time and resources, it is wise to treat any collaborative initiative — even if it is conceived as a small pilot effort — as the initial activity in what may evolve into a longer-term collaborative relationship.

Laying the pgroundwork for sustainability and scaling up should begin early in the collaborative process. The way an initiative is designed and executed helps to sustain the improvements that have been made and to foster future work together.

Preparing for Scale Up and Sustainability

1. Identifythe collaboration; give it a name (e.g., the Boston Compact, Partners for Success, Service to Students).
2. Place the collaborative initiative in a visible position that helps establish its importance (e.g., as a special project of the mayor) and gives it an organizational home.
3. Ensure that leaders of partner organizations (e.g., governing board members) are involved and are informed about the purpose of the collaboration and its progress.
4. Ensure that those implementing the collaboration have adequate compensated timeto attend to the health of the collaboration (e.g., by learning about one another’s schools, by building relationships) as well as to conduct the collaborative project (e.g., through joint professional development).
5. Build a logic model for each initiative, describing the intended outcomes, implementation activities, and inputs required for implementation (see the *Sample Logic Model Template* on page 23 for a logic model template).
6. Establish information-sharing channels, both internal (among collaborators) and external, to collect feedback from stakeholders and to communicate the work to the public; prioritize accurate and frequent communication.
7. As the project unfolds, build capacity by distributing responsibilities for aspects of the collaboration among stakeholders so that more individuals have the opportunity to work together and build relationships.
8. Incorporate formal evaluation of desired outcomes. Take time periodically to reflect on the progress of the collaboration and the benefits of the collaborative project. Use the reflections to make improvements as needed to better serve students and families.
9. Widely publicize what the collaboration is trying to accomplish, the benefits for students and families, and what is being learned from the efforts. Document key features for potential scale up.
10. Develop a governance structure that makes the initiative permanent, solidifies the responsibilities of cross-sector actors, and establishes a vehicle for collecting feedback from key stakeholders.
11. Take stock at the conclusion of an initiative; build consensus about what worked well in the collaboration and what could be improved in future collaborations. As part of the initiative debrief, identify challenges that might be addressed by collaborative activities. Discuss optimal timing, who should be involved, and necessary resources for addressing these challenges. Consider conducting a self-assessment again to determine a new starting place.