

Measuring Collaboration among Early Childhood Partners: A Mixed Methods Approach

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Agenda

- Introduction of Organizational Partners
- Program History
- Value of Collaboration
- Collaboration Evaluation Methodology
- Collaboration Spotlight
- Practical Implications



Introduction of organizational partners





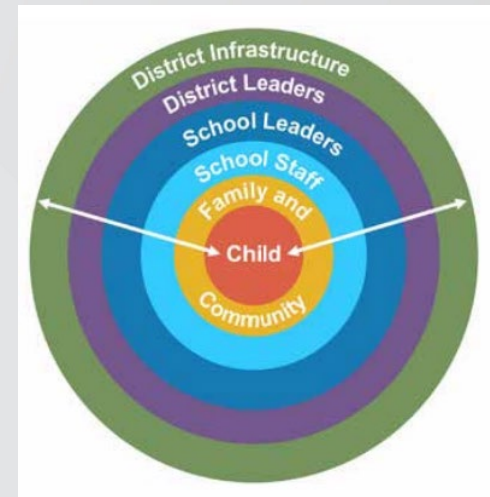
Program History

- 2013: LB 585: "to establish early childhood programs for children in poverty"
- 2015: SECP launched; developed by BECI and district superintendents
- Focus: closing opportunity gaps so that all children can reach their full potential

School as Hub Programming for Birth Through Grade 3



- Home visiting and family facilitation for birth to school enrollment
- High-quality preschool experiences for 3- and 4-year-olds
- Aligned Kindergarten through Grade 3 instruction
- Intentional family partnerships for children birth through Grade 3



Leadership Effectiveness	Instructional Excellence	Family and Community Partnership Engagement
District Organization and Capacity	Foundations for Early Learning	Family Focus
School Leadership	Essential Child Experiences	Community-School Connections



Program Evaluation

Aims:

- Capture the degree to which the School as Hub Birth-Grade 3 framework is being implemented and observed across districts and schools.
- Document, measure, and support implementation of the SECP and provide information about shifts in practices and progress in school systems, family processes and engagement, and child learning and development
- Aid in continuous improvement of program objectives



Value of Collaboration

- Effective collaboration suggests organizations have achieved a relationship grounded in trust and decision making
- Effective collaboration is linked to:
 - Increased profits
 - Enhanced productivity
- Poor collaboration is linked to:
 - Reduced employee performance
 - Lower profits





Evaluation Questions

- What is the level of collaboration between BECI and SECP stakeholders?
- What are the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between BECI and SECP stakeholders?



Collaboration Scale

LEVEL OF COLLABORATION

Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loosely defined roles• Little communication• All decisions are made independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information to each other• Somewhat defined roles• Formal communication• All decisions are made independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share information and resources• Defined roles• Regular communication• Some shared decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share ideas, information, and resources• Regular and focused communication• Frequent shared decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent and strategic communication• Mutual trust• Shared decision-making in all decisions• Consensus reached in all decisions

*Survey adapted from: Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(3), 383-392.

Collaboration Measures



- 1st step: Survey distributed annually
 - Collaboration scale tied to each program domain
 - Likert scale questions
 - Partners are able to speak openly and freely
 - Ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration
 - Power is shared between partners
 - Open-ended questions
 - Greatest accomplishments
 - Perceived strengths and challenges
- 2nd step: Semi-structured interviews (Year 1 Only)
 - Telephonic interviews with organizational partners
 - Challenges/barriers across action plan domains

Collaboration Evaluation Spotlight



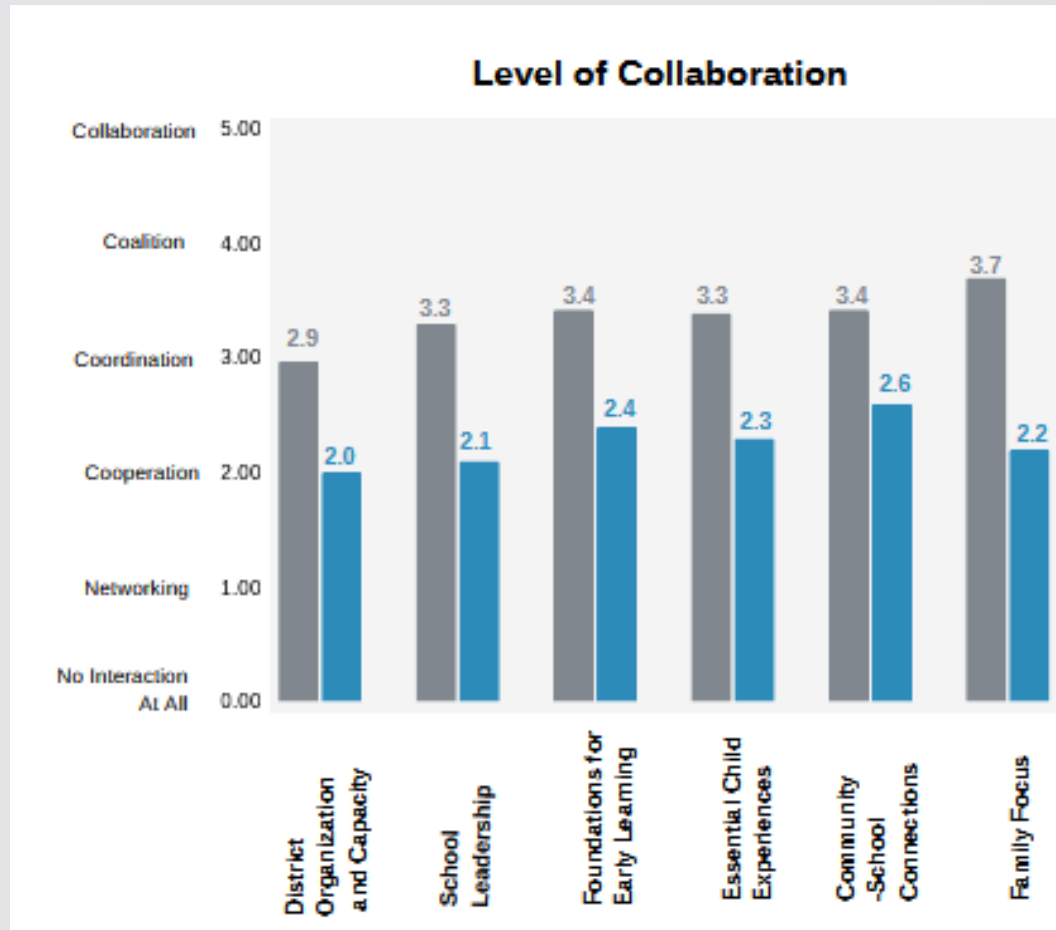
Year 1

- 59 survey respondents across 9 school districts
 - 12 interviewees
- 12 BECI staff members completed the survey/interview

Year 2

- 61 survey respondents across 9 school districts
- 8 BECI survey respondents

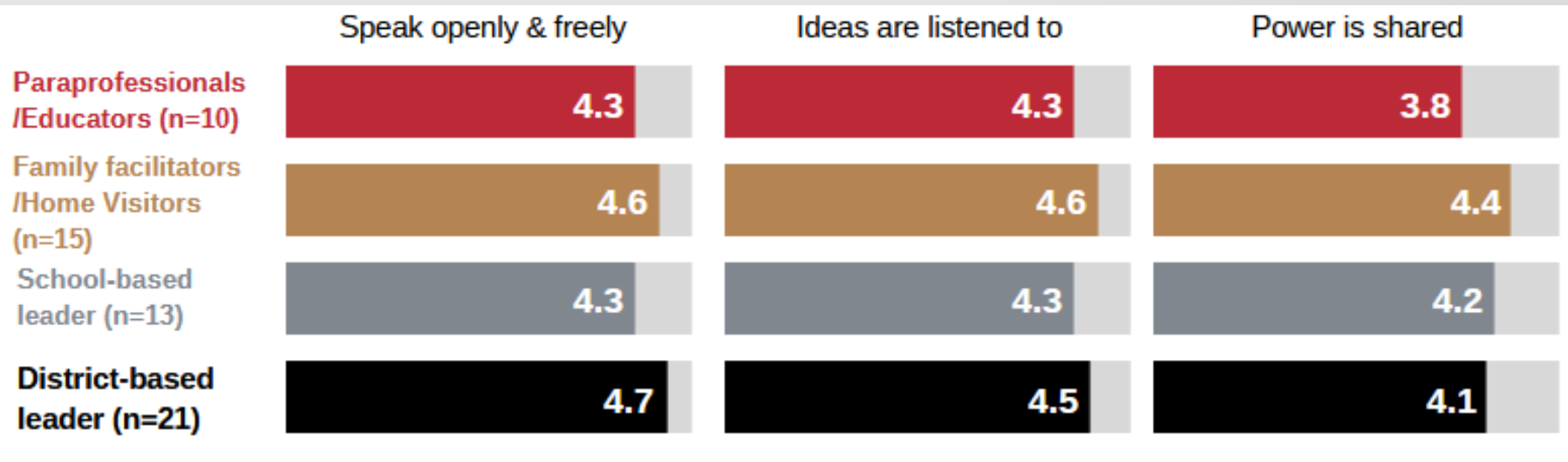
Evaluation Findings-Year 1



Blue=Institute **Grey**=District stakeholders



Evaluation Findings-Year 1





Year 1-Strengths





Year 1-Strengths

Trust and Relationships

"It varies by district, but the greatest strength is actual trust and relationship building that has happened over these last few months. I believe this is the foundation for future success."

-Institute Staff Member

Shared Vision Between Institute and Districts

"[There is a] shared mission and commitment to the children and families in Douglas and Sarpy Counties. Collective action toward improvement in early childhood programming and systems."

-Institute Staff Member

INSTITUTE
PERSPECTIVE



Year 1-Challenges





Year 1-Challenges

Communication

"Communication! We have not been included in the district-level communication and invites to meetings are inconsistent. It is confusing who the leads are in the districts I work in."

-Institute Staff Member

Clarity of Expectations

"[There is] inconsistency in Institute expectations, they vary from district to district."

-Institute Staff Member

Clarity of Outcomes

"Undefined outcomes or ways of measuring success. Priorities are constantly being shifted and changed. [There are] unclear expectations."

-Institute Staff Member

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PERSPECTIVE



Program enhancements made from Year 1 to Year 2

- Expanded communication tools
- Improved programmatic data collection and use of data
- More inclusive space for district stakeholder voices
- Enhanced focus on intentional meetings
- Amplified focus on shared mission



Deliverable Examples

NU

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Leadership > Modules

Home

Announcements

Modules

Discussions

People

2.22.24 Workgroup Meeting Agenda and Feedback Requests

Feedback Item #1: Learning Community Agreement Year 4 Description

2.22.24 SECP Workgroup Agenda.docx

Brief Intro Video- Convening Keynote David Jacobson

KETV video: Liberty Elementary "We're Collaborating"

KETV video: Pinewood Elementary "Experiences are What Grows the Brain."

Collapse All

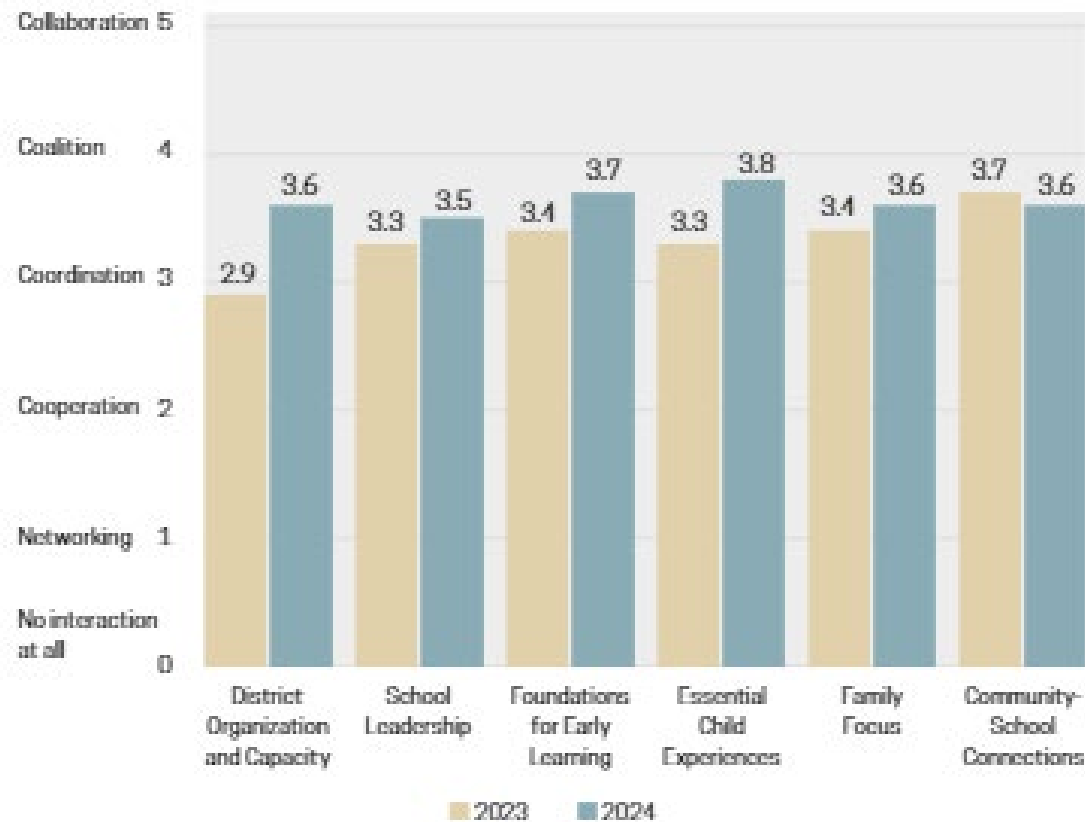
Instructional Excellence				
Goal: In one school year, preschool staff will foster social emotional development skills using evidence-based practices, explicit instruction, and intentional opportunities to practice skills.				
Milestone	Anticipated date	Principle of Practice	Descriptors	Status/Progress
Provide Second Step PD for Preschool teachers and paras	10/14/22 10/21/22 01/04/23 04/06/23	6. Professional Growth	IE1.6 Social Emotional Learning	On Track
Provide Second Step overview for principals	11/02/22	6. Professional Growth	IE1.6 Social Emotional Learning	Complete
Provide TS GOLD PD for Preschool teaching teams	01/04/22	6. Professional Growth	IE1.3 Content and Development	Complete
Provide district group coaching to Preschool Teachers	9/1/2022 10/6/2022 11/3/2022 12/1/2022 2/2/2023 5/4/2023	6. Professional Growth	IE1.1 Birth Through Grade 3 Continuum	On Track
Preschool teachers and Preschool paras participate in evaluation of Second Step professional development	10.14.22 10.21.22 01.4.23 04.6.23	6. Professional Growth	IE1.4 Assessment for Learning	On Track
Preschool teachers and Preschool paras participate in evaluation of TS GOLD professional development	01/04/23	6. Professional Growth	IE1.4 Assessment for Learning	Complete
Align coaching between the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan and District EC coach (support for Trish in her coaching model)	03/31/23	6. Professional Growth	IE1.1 Birth Through Grade 3 Continuum	On Track
Planning for next steps in coaching support to Preschool from district EC coach (Trish)	June 2023	6. Professional Growth	IE1.1 Birth Through Grade 3 Continuum	On Track
Gold Training for preschool paraprofessionals, including creating GOLD accounts.	03/31/23 (Belleaire) 9/1/23 (4 other schools)	6. Professional Growth	IE1.3 Content and Development	On Track
Analyze GOLD and TPOT data	May 2023 September 2023	6. Professional Growth	IE1.4 Assessment for Learning	On Track
Create plan for 2023/24 year to support TPOT data (levels of support based on	May 2023	6. Professional Growth	IE1.1 Birth Through Grade 3 Continuum	On Track



Year 2- Evaluation Findings

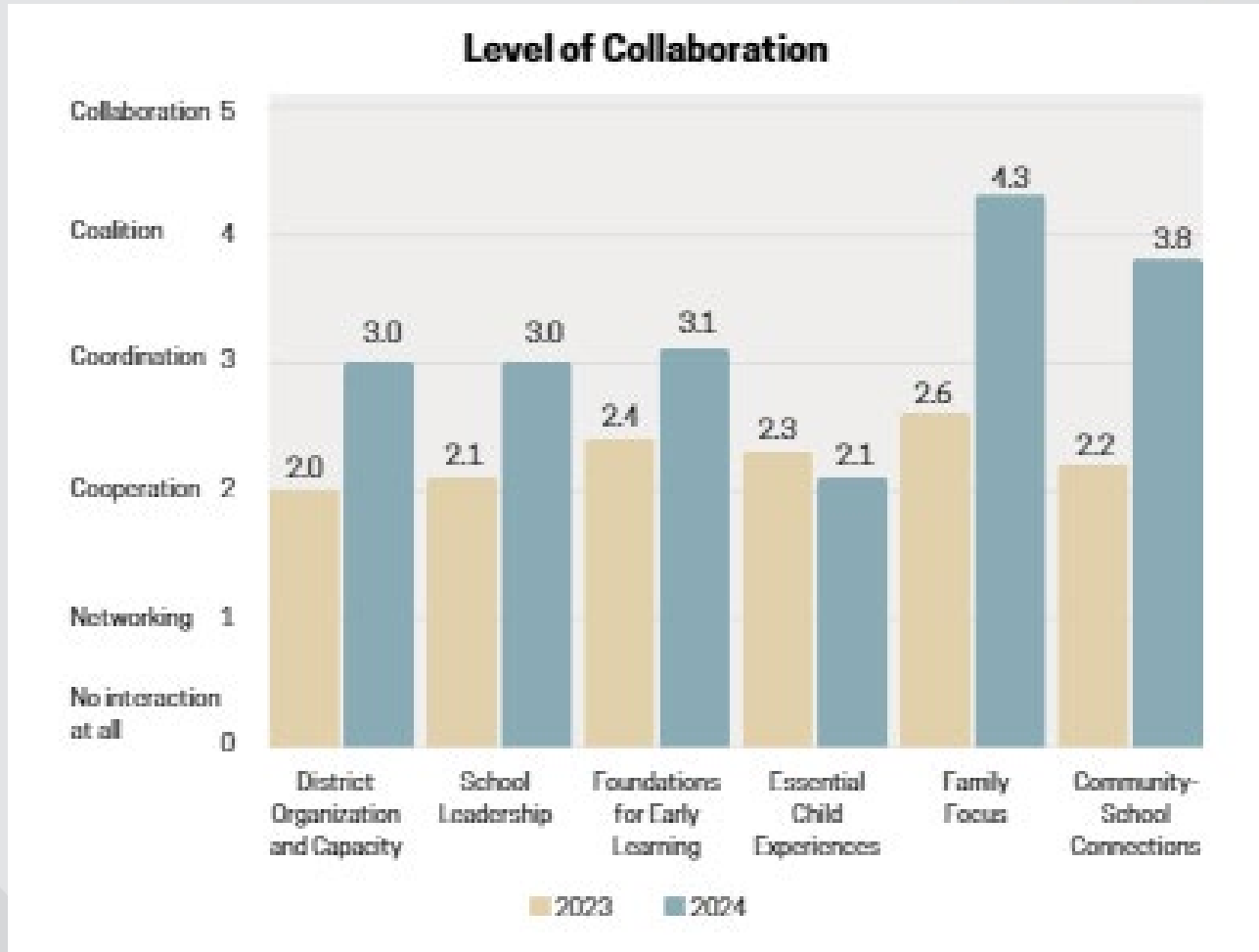
District Perspective

Level of Collaboration





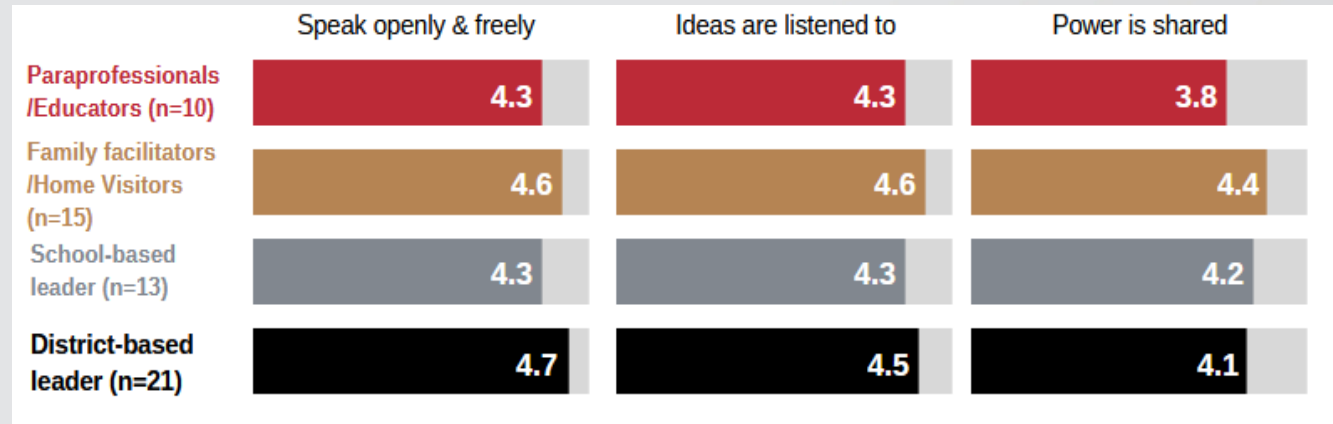
Year 2- Evaluation Findings Institute Perspective



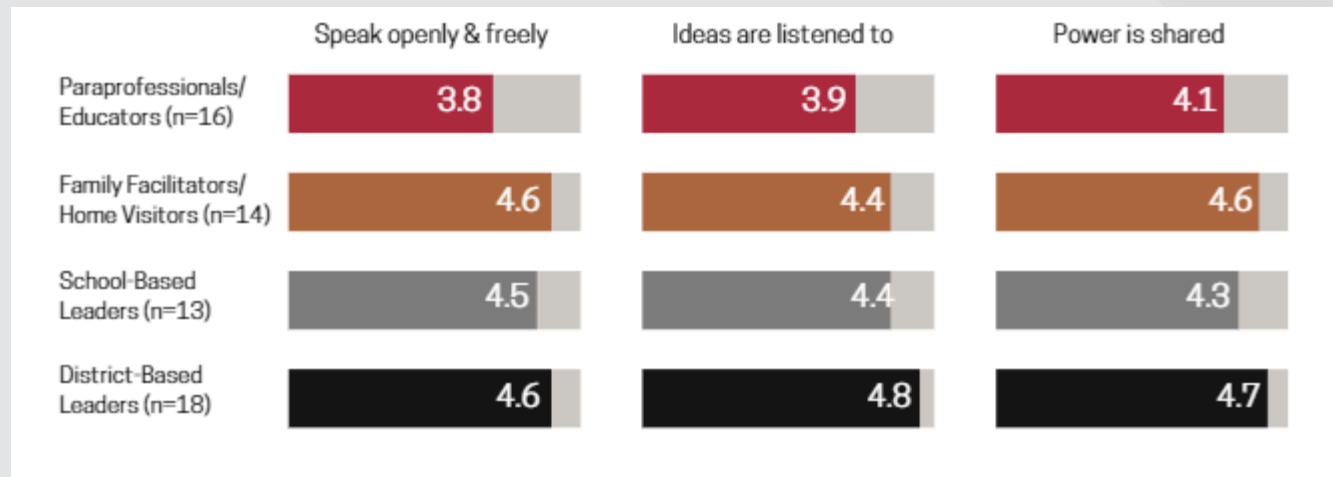


Year 2-Evaluation Findings

Year 1



Year 2





Continued Challenges-Year 2

Time Constraints

"The time, but this has gotten much better and BECI has been very responsive to this need"

-District Leader

Clarity of Expectations

"Common understanding internally and externally about how we tell our story through data"

-Institute staff member



Strategies to continue to enhance collaboration into Year 3

- Continue to identify intention for each group meeting
- Provide data in real-time and schedule meetings to facilitate data driven discussions about potential program changes
- Recognize that facilitators and barriers evolve year to year and continue to adjust barrier resolution strategies as needed



Practical Suggestions

- The inclusion of an annual collaboration evaluation can capture stakeholder perspectives in a timely manner
- Ensure proper time to digest the data and make actionable strategies designed to enhance collaboration in the following year
- Mixed methods allow for greater depth of findings
- Ensure everyone who is at the table should be when developing actionable next steps



Acknowledgements

- SECP participants
- BECI Program Development team including Amy Schmidtke, Director of Program and Development
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- Greg Welch, Associate Director of Research and Evaluation at BECI
- Jolene Johnson, Director of Education and Child Development at MMI
- MMI Evaluators and Assistant Project Directors
- Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties



Discussion Questions

- How can information from this project inform or advance early childhood practice?
- How can information from this project inform or advance early childhood public policy?
- How can lessons from practice or policy inform this line of work?



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