# *Collaboration and Collaborative Leadership*

Introduction

The Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement (OCCMSI) relies on just that, collaboration among key people in your school community. This collaboration starts with new, improved relationships among all the people working at the school, and it encompasses new and improved working relationships with other key people and organizations in your surrounding community (i.e., leaders from youth development organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses, higher education, etc.).
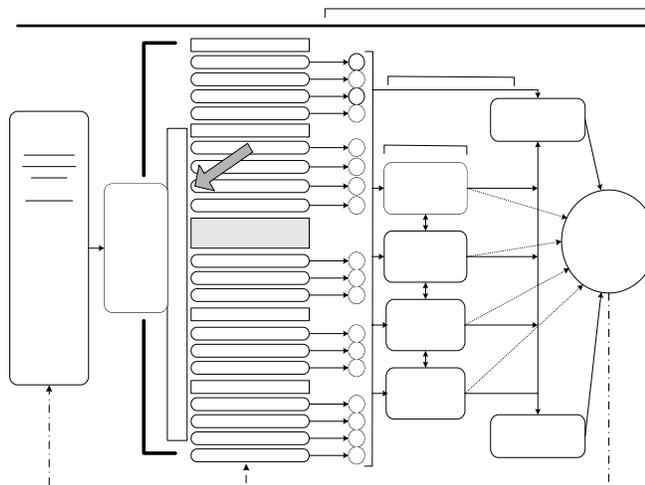
Essentially, no longer is the school alone responsible for the academic success and the healthy development of youth. The responsibility for these achievements is owned by all community stakeholders, not just by educators. The main reason is individuals and groups from the community become aware they depend on children's academic success in school; at the same time educators learn they also depend on these outside individuals and groups. In a word, everyone involved in the new relationship – the collaboration – becomes aware they are interdependent; and so they work together to improve results.

This chapter is designed to help you create, organize and manage your school improvement efforts via collaborative leadership. We will discuss important concepts that will help you structure your relationships with individuals and groups outside your schools, as well as those that will help you manage and maintain these partnerships over time.

Collaboration is one concept emphasized. Collaborative leadership is another. Later in this guide, we also provide an additional section focused on building community partnerships, particularly in relation to the delivery of various programs and services.

We also draw on the growing amount of research that indicates how you and other school leaders can develop mutually-beneficial community partnerships, including how these new partnerships will improve outcomes for your school and the students and families it serves. We encourage you to become strategic in the partnerships you develop, ensuring that partnerships are integrated in school improvement planning.

What do we mean by collaboration and collaborative leadership?

You and other school community leaders need to make important decisions about the kinds of relationships you want to develop with other people and organizations. For the sake of simplicity, we encourage you to think about relationships with people as "collaboration" and relationships with organizations as "partnerships." This differentiation is especially important, and it is reflected by the fact that we have devoted two chapters to it (i.e., collaboration and collaborative leadership and community partnerships).

At their most basic levels, both collaboration and partnership start with simple relationship-building. We provide you with a relationship continuum that may help guide your deliberations (Lawson, 2003; Torres & Margolin, 2003).

Table 3.1: Types of relationships	
Relationship type	**Description**
Networking	Networking is the most basic and informal way for individuals to work together. These relationships reflect a minimal level of trust, limited time availability and a reluctance to share turf. Networking involves exchanging information and ideas. It excludes working together on any activity or toward any goal beyond sharing information.
Communicating	Communicating is a more formal way for individuals to share information and ideas. Individuals share information and perspectives as they converse and talk through formal channels such as newsletters, letters, press releases, updates, etc. Little happens beyond the sharing of information through these formal mechanisms.
Coordination	Coordination involves synchronizing operations or activities in order to make services more accessible and less redundant. Coordination requires more trust than networking and greater time commitments from people, especially time for meetings and completing assessments and paperwork. It does not, however, require resource sharing and, all in all, involves integrating separate or independent operations. In some instances formal contracts are created (or memorandums of understanding) that serve as another level of cooperative relationship, one involving contracting.
Cooperation	Cooperation entails a much higher level of commitment and trust. It involves sharing. Resources, knowledge, staff, physical property; clients, money and reputation are just some of the resources organizations may share when they are cooperating.
Collaboration	Collaboration develops when entities recognize that none can succeed without the others. Each has special expertise or unique capabilities that the others need. It is characterized by trust, norms of give-and-take, shared responsibilities, consensus-building and conflict resolution mechanisms, shared power and authority and shared information and decision-making systems.

Each type of relationship identified above has special requirements and demands. As you proceed from networking to collaboration, you take on more complexity, added commitments, and additional time and resource requirements. Each takes longer to develop and more supports and resources to sustain. Because of the required investments for relationship building, school leaders and others will want to think strategically about what types of relationships they may want and/or need.

What types of relationships do you want and/or need?

Initially, you and other school community leaders will need to make important decisions about the kinds of relationships you want and/or need to develop with other people and organizations. You will also want to examine the different types of relationships that already exist within your school and community.

For example, your school probably already has an established student support or teacher assistance team and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team. Perhaps your school also organizes teachers in teams, whether in the same classroom or in grade level teams. Furthermore, you no doubt already have working relationships of some kind with other organizations – for example, museums, zoos, the local library, businesses and colleges and universities.

When you build and expand these relationships among people and organizations, you should consider these four questions:

1. Which family and community entities offer the greatest contributions to school improvement, especially to academic learning and achievement?

2. Which family and community entities enable you to address the needs and gaps identified in your assessments?

3. What does the research indicate about which kinds of relationships are most likely to improve learning, academic achievement and success in school?

4. What kind of strategic relationship do you want and/or need to establish with each entity?

In short, you have the opportunity to address some important issues as you reach out to family and community resources. These four questions help guide your strategic planning for partnerships.

For each potential relationship you identify, you should consider how far you want to go in the partnership (i.e., networking, communicating, coordinating, cooperating or collaborating). Do not underestimate the importance of these choices; you will find that a "one size fits all approach" to partnership development may not serve you well.

For example, you may find that a coordinating relationship is satisfactory for linking social and recreational programs to youth in your school. Or you may find there are many youth in your school who experience mental health problems, and you know that your school has not had good experiences with the local mental health agency as a whole. In response to this need and the accompanying gap in services, you may need to move to a cooperative or collaborative relationship with a set of individual service providers in the community who actually collocate services to your school.

The point is you may not actually need to develop relationships that foster collaboration – interdependent relationships among the partners. To the contrary, when people and organizations communicate better, cooperate, coordinate their efforts and share resources, good things usually happen and benefits accrue.

Expect to develop different types of relationships initially with partners. Over time your goal should be to work toward what we call "a collaborative system" consisting of multiple partners, all of whom are focused together on your major school improvement goal – the academic success and healthy development of youth. At some point, you may even consider identifying a specific person the task of coordinating and managing ongoing relationships and partnerships.

Additionally, you will work to develop true, sustainable collaboration among the partners. When you are successful, they will see that when schools are successful, they are successful, and vice versa. They will "stay the course" with you, sharing responsibility for school outcomes and processes and sharing resources – because they are aware of their interdependence with your school.

Collaboration and collaborative leadership

Collaboration is the most complex type of relationship. It requires the most resources and takes the most time to develop. In collaboration, people network, communicate and cooperate. They share information, harmonize operations and activities, share resources and enhance each partner's capacity (Gardner, 1999; Lawson, 2003; 2004: Lawson & Barkdull, 1999; Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001). They also share power and authority; that is, they view themselves as equals ("all in the same boat").

Most importantly, participating entities realize they are interdependent. They learn they cannot achieve their missions and goals without the contributions of the others (Lawson, 2003; 2004). For this reason, collaboration is characterized by lasting relationships characterized by high levels of a reciprocal investment, focus, trust, mutual commitment and a strong sense of joint ownership of positive outcomes for youth and families.

The facilitation of collaboration requires new types of leadership styles and structures. Collaborative leadership styles distribute power, authority and responsibility across the group. Leadership fosters shared commitments, helps resolve conflicts, facilitates lasting relationships and stimulates effective action. Collaborations also require new leadership, management and governance structures. Collaborative leadership structures involve team approaches rather than single person approaches. Team members collaborate, and their

organizations develop firm partnerships in support of this new way of doing business (Rubin, 2002).

Essentially collaborative leadership offers a new way to solve old problems and take advantage of untapped opportunities. It mobilizes collective"know-how," clarifying problems, resolving conflicts and building consensus to act.

Outcomes associated with collaboration and other types of relationships

Several researchers have documented significant benefits occurring as a result of collaboration, various types of relationships and school-family-community partnerships in general. Please note that school communities may be involved in several different types of relationships, partnerships and collaborations at the same time. Because these multiple strategies operate simultaneously, there are often contagion effects – also called ripple effects because they spread – that are not easily measured or attributed to one intervention or collaborative (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2002). Nonetheless, collaboration and school-family-community partnerships have contributed to the following key outcomes.

Table 3.2: Key outcomes associated with collaboration and other types of relationships	
Improvements in:	**Reductions in:**
- Academic achievement - Productive learning during out-of-school time - Attendance in school - School climate - Psychosocial functioning - Healthy youth development - School safety - Political gains (school levies are passed) - Communication among providers - Family-centered and -driven practices - Job and life satisfaction for professionals - More resources and better utilization of them - Service integration, coordination and delivery - Access to services; faster delivery of services	- Problem behaviors - School suspensions - Duplication and fragmentation of programs and services, including service and program gaps - Feelings of isolation among agencies and people - Student mobility (i.e., transience)

From: Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2000; Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2002; Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, & Barkdull, 2003; Family Care Healthy Kids Collaborative, 1994; Gold et al., 2002; Hatch, 1998; Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997; Mooney, Kline, & Davoren, 1999; Lawson, Anderson-Butcher, Barkdull, & Peterson, 2003; Oppenheim, 1999; Shirley, 1997; Smith, Armijo, & Stowitschek, 1997; Surko, Lawson, & Muse-Lindeman, 1997.

Design principles and strategies for collaboration and collaborative leadership

A great deal of research attention has been given to the study of collaboration over the past 25 years. In the following table, we have built upon Matttessich et al.'s (2001, p. 8-10) framework describing common factors essential to successful collaboration. These design principles and strategies describe key conditions, process and characteristics that link to successful collaborative relationships.

You will note the success factors are organized into seven categories – environment, structural considerations, process considerations, membership characteristics, communication, purpose and resources – that represent broad areas for attention. Within each of these categories, additional key factors influencing collaboration are provided.

While it may seem a little overwhelming at first, when you use these design principles and strategies, you will find they help you avoid barriers, false-starts and long-term disappointments. We recommend you think through the seven key themes: environment, structure, process, membership, communication, purpose and resources.

Table 3.3: Design principles and strategies in collaboration	
Principle and strategy	**What this looks like**
Environment	
History of collaboration	• The collaboration begins with stakeholders with whom you have had successful experiences in the past • Collaboration members have past histories of relationships and trust
Legitimacy	• The collaboration team (and by implication members of the group) is competent and reliable, and has a solid reputation – at least as related to the goals and activities it intends to accomplish • The collaboration is respected within the community; is recognized as a valuable group • Collaboration members are credible (both professionally and personally)
Favorable political and social climate	• Political leaders, opinion-makers, persons who control resources and the general public support the collaborative • The collaboration's goal fits well within the social and political climate (i.e., school improvement focus; education and youth are priorities in the community)
Structure	
Appropriate cross-section of members	• The collaboration receives input from the segment of the community who will be affected by its activities • The collaboration team is comprised of the right mix of people, including a representative mix of organizations • The collaboration team includes active involvement from residents and "clients" who benefit from the partnership (i.e., youth, families, etc.)

Table 3.3: Design principles and strategies in collaboration	
Principle and strategy	**What this looks like**
Multiple layers of participation	• The collaboration team is comprised of multiple levels of involvement, or multiple teams, that engage individuals of various levels in member organizations (i.e., upper management, middle management, operations) • Partners at every level of partnering organizations are committed to ongoing involvement in the collaboration (i.e., agency directors, front-line staff, principals, teachers, etc.)
Development of clear roles, functions and responsibilities	• Collaboration members clearly understand their roles, rights and responsibilities. • Collaboration members understand how to carry out their responsibilities • Organizations and individuals take lead responsibility for certain aspects of the collaboration • Accountability systems within the collaboration ensure organizations and individuals follow through on their responsibilities • Ongoing tasks and activities are managed using clear agendas, action plans, and management systems
Intermediaries	• The collaboration team has an intermediary (or persons/organization) that serves as a go-between (i.e., United Way, Boys & Girls Clubs, Communities In Schools, etc.), providing facilitation within the collaboration • The collaboration team's intermediary does the "leg work" associated with the facilitation of the partnership • The collaboration team's intermediary is neutral and can do the work for others (i.e., the schools) without the politics, baggage, etc. • The collaboration team has key organizations or individuals who serve as conveners, building collaborative partnerships throughout the process (especially at the start-up stage)
Leadership	• The collaboration team has an identified leader who is charged with overseeing and facilitating the process • The collaboration team is led by individual(s) with effective organizational and interpersonal skills, and role(s) is (are) carried out with fairness • Collaboration members grant respect or "legitimacy" to the leader • The collaboration team leader(s) is the institutional worrier who oversees and makes sure all tasks are done in relation to the collaboration
Process considerations	
Adaptability	• Collaboration members are open to varied ways of organizing • Collaboration members are open to varied ways of accomplishing their work • The collaboration team alters its mission and goals based on changing conditions • The collaboration team has the ability to sustain itself in the midst of major changes in goals, members, etc.

Table 3.3: Design principles and strategies in collaboration	
Principle and strategy	**What this looks like**
Appropriate pace of development	• The collaboration team's structure, resources and activities change over time to meet the needs of the group and the school community • The collaboration team allows for changes to occur without overwhelming overall capacity • The collaboration team structure nurtures the process, realizing that people and agencies have not done it well in the past • Stakeholders are "ready" to collaborate; it makes sense
Balance between process and task orientations	• The collaboration team allows for time for group process, but not at the expense of getting to outcomes and tasks • The collaboration team accomplishes its deliverables and outcomes, and relationships are simultaneously developed and nurtured • The collaboration hosts effective and efficient meetings (time is not wasted)
Ability to compromise	• Collaboration members are able and willing to compromise • Collaboration members understand that many decisions within a collaboration effort cannot possibly fit the preferences of every member perfectly • Collaboration members are able to relinquish their special status, power and authority
Membership characteristics	
Mutual respect, understanding and trust	• Collaboration members share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations • Collaboration members share an understanding and respect for how they operate, their cultural norms and values, their limitations and their expectations
Interdependence	• Collaboration members understand their interdependence and that each relies on the other for results to occur • Collaboration members realize that they can not achieve what they want and need without others
Self-interest	• Collaboration members believe they will benefit from their involvement in the collaboration • Collaboration members experience the advantages of membership which are offset by the costs associated with involvement (i.e., loss of autonomy, turf) • The collaboration strikes a balance between the interests of individuals and/or organizations and the interests of the group at large
Ownership and buy-in	• Collaboration members feel ownership of the way the group works • Collaboration members share ownership of the results or products
Communication mechanisms	
Open and frequent communication	• Collaboration members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly and convey all necessary information to one another • The collaboration team establishes formal communication channels among partners • The collaboration team is open to new membership

Table 3.3: Design principles and strategies in collaboration	
Principle and strategy	**What this looks like**
Open and frequent communication continued	• The collaboration team considers the opinions of other people and organizations outside the group within their decision-making process • Leaders within the collaboration facilitate effective and efficient communication across the partners
Informal relationships	• Collaboration members establish personal connections, producing a better, more informed and cohesive group working on a common project • The collaboration team encourages informal communication among members, allowing for the development of relationships and trust • Collaboration members develop friendships with others involved in the process
Conflict resolution mechanisms	• The collaboration team establishes procedures and mechanisms for dealing with conflict • Leaders within the collaboration understand that conflict is unavoidable • Leaders develop consensus among participants regarding how they will work through conflicts as they arise in order to best prevent and deter escalation and crises • Collaboration members are able to compromise and reach consensus as opposed to creating warfare • The collaboration focuses on partner, school and community strengths as opposed to getting bogged down with deficits and problems
Purpose	
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	• The collaboration has clear goals and objectives • Collaboration members understand the goals and objectives • The collaboration has goals and objectives that can be realistically attained • The collaboration has focused goals and objectives
Shared mission and/or vision	• The collaboration has clearly agreed-upon mission and/or vision, objectives and strategies, and that mission and/or vision directs its work • Collaboration members are involved in creating the mission and/or vision, objectives and strategies • Collaboration members agree with and understand the mission and/or vision, objectives and strategies • Leaders within the collaboration use consensus-building strategies to create a common direction and focus
Unity of purpose	• The collaboration has a mission that expands upon the mission, goals and/or approaches of the member organizations • The collaboration is built upon consensus • Collaboration members experience a unity of purpose • Collaboration members understand how their commitment to the overall purpose will support their own interests • Collaboration members are "on the same page" regarding goals and directions (i.e., school improvement and closing achievement gaps)

Table 3.3: Design principles and strategies in collaboration	
Principle and strategy	**What this looks like**
Results-oriented	• The collaboration focuses on outcomes • The collaboration's decisions and plans are data-driven; • The collaboration identifies and implements research supported plans for improving results • The collaboration has systems in place that ensure member follow-through and accountabilities • The collaboration is not too process-oriented (i.e., not a "feel good" partnership); tasks and deliverables are completed
Resources	
Sufficient resources	• The collaboration is adequately and consistently funded • Collaboration members commit a sufficient amount of time in order to achieve goals and include time to nurture the collaboration (i.e., long-term investments) • Collaboration members contribute resources to the larger group process
Shared resources	• The collaboration pools and shares resources, enabling schools and organizations to get help where they have resource shortfalls • Collaboration members reallocate resources and blend resources in order to maximize programs and services and reduce duplication • Collaboration members share in grant writing responsibilities • Collaboration members support other members in relation to their own individual or organizational goals (and the collaboration's goal)

From: Abramson & Mizrahi, 1996; Bronstein, 2002, 2003; Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001; Mulroy, 2000; Lawson, 2003, 2004; Lawson, Anderson-Butcher, Barkdull, & Peterson, 2003; Robertson, Anderson, & Meyer, 2004; Rubin, 2002; Ryan, Tracy, Rebeck, Biegel, & Johnsen, 2001.

Other considerations

This section provides additional direction related to the design and implementation of collaboration. Remember that collaboration involves interdependence among participants. In these relationships, collaborative members believe their overall success is dependent upon the work of others in their school community. In other words, educators and school leaders realize they can not accomplish alone their mission of ensuring all youth succeed in school. They realize they must expand the boundaries to school improvement to gain the assistance, support and resources provided by strategic collaborations among key people and strategic partnerships with community organizations.

One of the first questions you will want to explore is whether you are indeed "ready" for collaboration. We have developed a brief collaboration readiness checklist that will help you in the determining your readiness.

Table 3.4: Collaboration readiness checklist
• You have determined through a comprehensive conditions and resources assessment that you need to partner with individuals, families and organizations to address youth and family needs • You have found the right people and agencies – the right partners – who promise resources that will enable your school to close the achievement gap • You have found the right mix of partners – at least initially – to address youth and family needs; if you have gaps between needs and resources, you have started to formulate a strategy to fill those gaps • You have identified the types of partnerships – networking, coordination, cooperation, collaboration – you think you want to develop between your various resource providers • In anticipation of moving to a true collaborative relationship between and among resources providers, you have consulted the potential collaborative partners about the design principles and strategies outlined in this chapter • Your potential partners are open to a solid working relationship and are willing to work together toward a common goal of good youth and family outcomes • Potential partners are willing to develop a clear relationship identifying roles, responsibilities, resources, goals and accountabilities and are willing to make this arrangement formal • You have developed mechanisms and processes for reaching consensus (and regaining it) • You have developed mechanisms and processes for resolving conflicts – and for harvesting the innovations that stem from productive conflicts • You have identified intermediary people and organizations who will help steward and convene the partners • You have cultivated shared leadership committed to the same outcomes and, in turn, to the success of the collaboration

This last point is crucial to the success of your partnership efforts. Without good stewardship – leadership – you will find that relationships deteriorate over time. This leads to our next topic – collaborative leadership – the emerging science of managing the creation and maintenance of strong and effective partnerships within the Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement.

Collaborative leadership structures: a team approach
Even the most gifted and talented superintendent, principal, school-family-community coordinator or after-school program coordinator will not be able to develop, operate, manage and sustain a successful collaboration and complex partnerships without shared, distributed leadership structures and process. Collaborative leadership is an ideal way to develop and advance innovative collaborations and partnerships.

Because both collaborations and partnerships – strictly defined as they are in this toolkit – are new, no one has all of the answers. Problems need to be solved by groups of committed people, power must be shared and everyone must delegate responsibilities to others. Above all, all the partners must communicate regularly, efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, collaborations and partnerships require decisions and actions that go beyond any one job description, and these decision-making environments involve many organizational boundaries. Collaborative leadership enables you to manage and lead "across the boundaries." Flexible, joint leadership, shared decision-making, the ability to get along with other people with diverse views, power sharing and the ability to delegate responsibilities are thus practical necessities. These practical necessities associated with partnerships are among the defining features of collaborative leadership.

Essentially, collaborative leadership involves a team approach to leadership and management, rather than "a great person approach" (Rubin, 2002). The collaborative leader forms a team with key partners (e.g., parents, youth, other program and service providers), who are either designated or elected, to serve on the team. The team assumes responsibility for leadership (ensuring the right things are done), management (ensuring that things are done right) and governance (ensuring the collaborative or partnership remains on course toward a more desirable future). Essentially, the team ensures the work of the collaboration or partnerships as it:

- Encompasses every participant's mission;
- Meets the needs and addresses the gaps identified through the conditions and resources assessment;
- Remains focused on the implementation of programs and services that enhance school improvement efforts;
- Stays sufficiently comprehensive, coherent and integrated; and
- Remains driven by data (i.e., data are used for decision-making, learning and continuous improvement).

Clearly, these functions are related. But all are necessary as your team completes the following five tasks:

1. Identifies and capitalizes on school-owned and -operated and community-owned and -operated resources;

2. Identifies needs and gaps in school and community offerings; and then plans programs, services, strategies and activities to meet these needs and bridge these gaps;

3. Develops connective mechanisms that link people and organizations within your school community, including mechanisms for communications, referral and boundary crossing;

4. Ensures all work fits together (i.e., what results is a comprehensive, coherent and integrated system that yields the maximum number of benefits to the greatest number of people, including the achievement of your mission and progress toward realizing your vision); and

5. Determines who is responsible and accountable for what and delegates lead responsibilities to key people and agencies.

Next we examine several key structural considerations designed to help you accomplish these tasks. These factors are essential to the design and structure of a successful collaboration. They include role of the collaborative leader, the advisory board, the actual collaboration or working group and the concept of lead responsibility.

The collaborative leader

Successful collaborations often start with one collaborative leader who identifies and convenes regularly a collaborative leadership team that focuses overall on school community improvement needs. This person, who is often a school principal, remains in charge, but delegates lead responsibility for each key school improvement priority to others.

It takes a special skill set in order to be an effective collaborative leader. The following set of skills and competencies seem to be consistently identified in the literature.

Table 3.5: Characteristics of a collaborative leader
• A collaborative leader has the ability to manage conflict, to compromise and to build trust between multiple constituencies
• A collaborative leader has the ability to network and build relationships between a wide range of community partners
• A collaborative leader has the ability to exercise non-jurisdictional power - the power of ideas, the power of the media and the power of public opinion
• A collaborative leader has the ability to help people reach consensus and resolve conflicts
• A collaborative leader is entrepreneurial (i.e., able to see and capitalize on opportunities to do good work and improve results)
• A collaborative leader has the ability to discover new ideas of agreement and opportunities to talk and listen
• A collaborative leader has the flexibility to react as circumstances change and opportunities emerge

Expanded from: Rubin, 2002.

These skills sets are critical as the collaborative leader begins assigning lead responsibility to others in relation to school improvement needs. For example, the collaborative leader may assign a school social worker the role of health and social services coordinator, a parent liaison the lead within family engagement efforts and an after-school staff person to oversee programs and activities related to youth development (Lawson, 2004). These key people and others designated by the collaborative leader become part of a collaborative team (i.e., the collaboration). This team provides the school, especially the principal, with the supports it has long wanted and needed. The school can then focus on the area where it has lead responsibility: academic learning and instructional leadership.

Intermediary people and organizations
Mindful that both collaboration and partnerships involve committed relationships, and oftentimes the needed relationships involve strangers and even former adversaries, neutral parties often are needed. Intermediary people (i.e., social workers and others who cross professional and organizational boundaries) and intermediary organizations (i.e., the local United Way or local non-profit organizations) often are needed to facilitate partnerships and collaboration (e.g., Lawson & Barkdull, 2001; Moore & Sandler, 2004).

Intermediary people perform vital relationship-building, boundary-crossing, and agenda-setting functions in support of the collaborative leader. For example, they assume responsibility for cultivating awareness of interdependent relationships, developing equitable relations, resolving conflicts and facilitating resource sharing. They do the legwork and "behind the scenes work" associated with developing and sustaining partnerships.

Intermediary organizations often provide the organizational home for the collaboration. These special organizations are salient when safe, neutral settings are needed (i.e., organizational settings in which stakeholders can explore and benefit from their differences and resolve their conflicts). For example, your school may not be the best place for a collaborative leadership team to operate. The local United Way office or the Boys and Girls Club may provide a more suitable, neutral organizational home.

Outside, intermediary organizations like these are especially important when the school's facilities are limited; and when educators and others at the school already are feeling over-burdened. Oftentimes, these organizations also offer staff supports, which they provide at no cost – a considerable incentive for schools to work with them and use them. Carefully drafted Memorandums of Agreements (MOU) may help to solidify these partnerships. Last, but not least, the work of sponsoring and overseeing partnerships and collaborations is complex and demanding. When an outside agency assumes primary responsibility for it, the school can stay focused on its primary mission, goals and accountabilities. This serves educators, others at the school and, of course, the students.

Two examples of collaborative leadership structures
Because collaborative leadership is new, it is helpful to ask and answer the following questions. How would you know it if you saw it? What kinds of team structures would you develop? We provide two examples for you in response to these important, practical questions.

The advisory board
Advisory boards are often created in successful partnerships and collaborations. They typically consist of representatives from education, social and health services, business, higher education, the school board, relevant coalitions and governments within the school community. In most cases, you'll want to engage top level leaders and management for your advisory board. In essence, this decision making group consists of persons considered to be "power and resource brokers."

Examples of members include:

- School board members
- Local city or town council members
- Parents and community members
- Business leaders
- Higher education faculty members
- District personnel (i.e., Title I coordinator; Safe and Drug-Free Schools coordinator; etc)
- Pupil service personnel (i.e., school social workers, counselors, etc)

- Partnerships for Success representative;
- Children and Family First Council representatives
- Executive directors from local youth development and family service organizations
- Administrators within local health and social service agencies
- Others

The Advisory Board meets quarterly. It is charged with resource development and coordination, policy development and change and overall governance. It makes sure the collaboration stays focused on results and accountabilities, helps the collaboration "work" the right political channels, guides relationships with the media, mobilizes resources and pushes for institutional change. Advisory Board members are actively involved in planning the direction for the collaboration and in getting resources, supports and assistance that make the collaboration and its programs and services sustainable over time.

The collaboration: an expanded school improvement team
Chances are your school already has a designated school improvement team. As you know, this team focuses on curriculum alignment, standards-based accountabilities, quality teaching and instruction and the school climate. As you implement the Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement, you will want to expand this school improvement team so it includes individuals external to the school, especially as you and other school leaders think through your resources and needs assessment.

As you add these new members, you will be changing the team's name and composition; it will become a school community improvement team. You and other school community team members will develop new and expanded partnerships and collaborations. These new working relationships will allow you and your team to successfully address the various needs, barriers, and conditions influencing student achievement in your school community and to take advantage of untapped opportunities and resources.

As a result, your actual collaboration might consist of leaders representing teachers, school social workers, counselors and psychologists, the principal, parents, youth, youth development specialists, health and social service providers, faith-based representatives, local government officials, higher education faculty and others. Basically, this team represents your most important partners, particularly the ones that do the "work" within your school improvement efforts (i.e., those that organize and implement the programs and services). Although the list of potential partners is in one sense limitless, you will want to identify members strategically, aiming for genuine collaboration.

This expanded school improvement team will oversee the "day-to-day" operations within your school improvement efforts. It meets regularly (as frequently as once a week at the outset). Essentially, this group coordinates the various programs, services and implementation phases within the model.

Key activities. Members develop a shared mission as well as consensus around a common purpose. They identify immediate, intermediate and long term outcomes (as indicated in the logic model). They assign responsibilities and determine roles and accountabilities. They collect and analyze the data within the needs and resources assessment. They design action plans for targeting identified needs. They design and implement the programs and services in relation to the identified needs. And they develop evaluation methods (Lawson, 2004; Rubin, 2002). Figure 3.1 indicates some essential representatives in the collaboration:
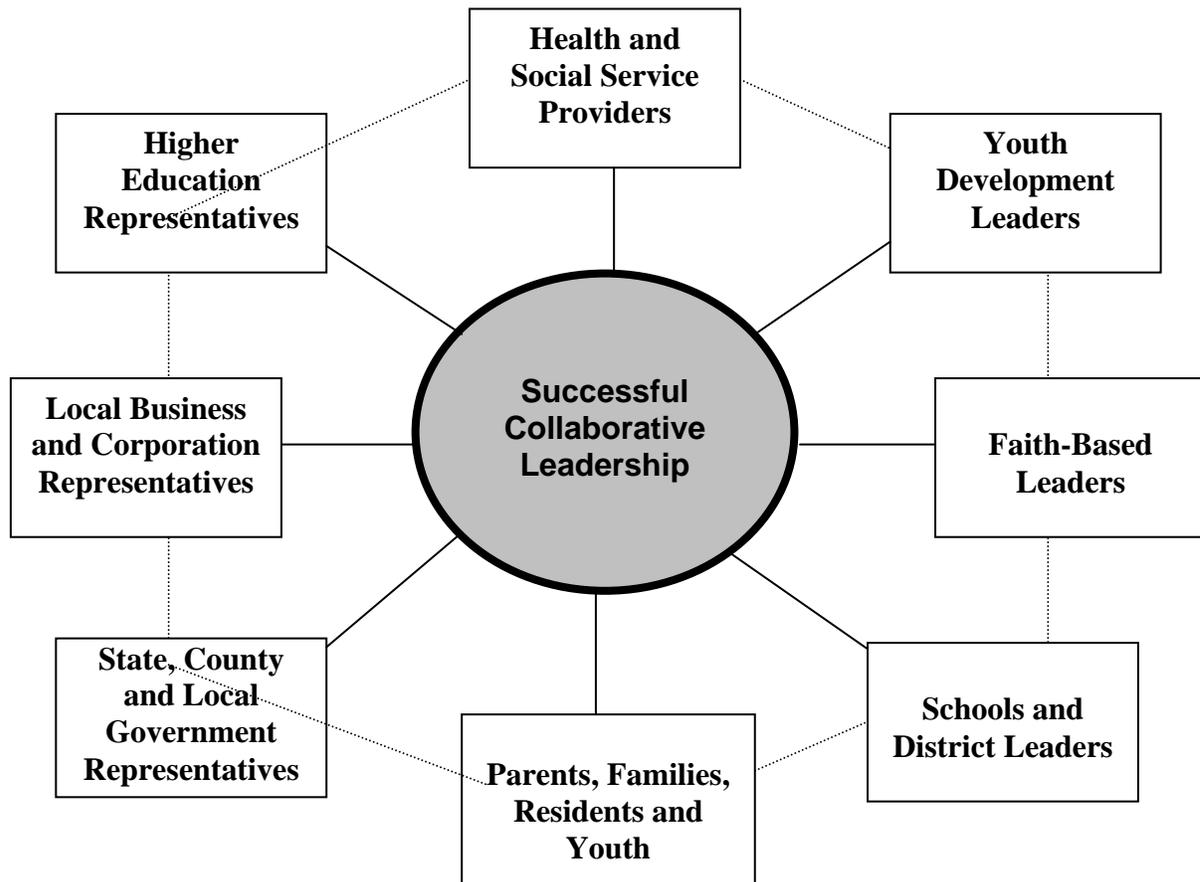

Figure 3.1: Essential partners within successful collaborations

The use of subgroups. It is often helpful for the expanded school improvement team to be divided into core subgroups, arranged according to strategic targeted areas identified in the overall plan. For example, some collaboration teams have organized around key outcomes associated with the partnership: academic, family, community and youth conditions. Others might organize around program areas: academic learning, youth development, health and social services, family engagement and community partnership. Still others might create some blended format that is more focused on activity areas: assessment and evaluation, sustainability, youth program and services, family program and services and/or community activities. Figure 3.2 provides an overview of one way of organizing your collaboration and its expanded school improvement efforts into subgroups.
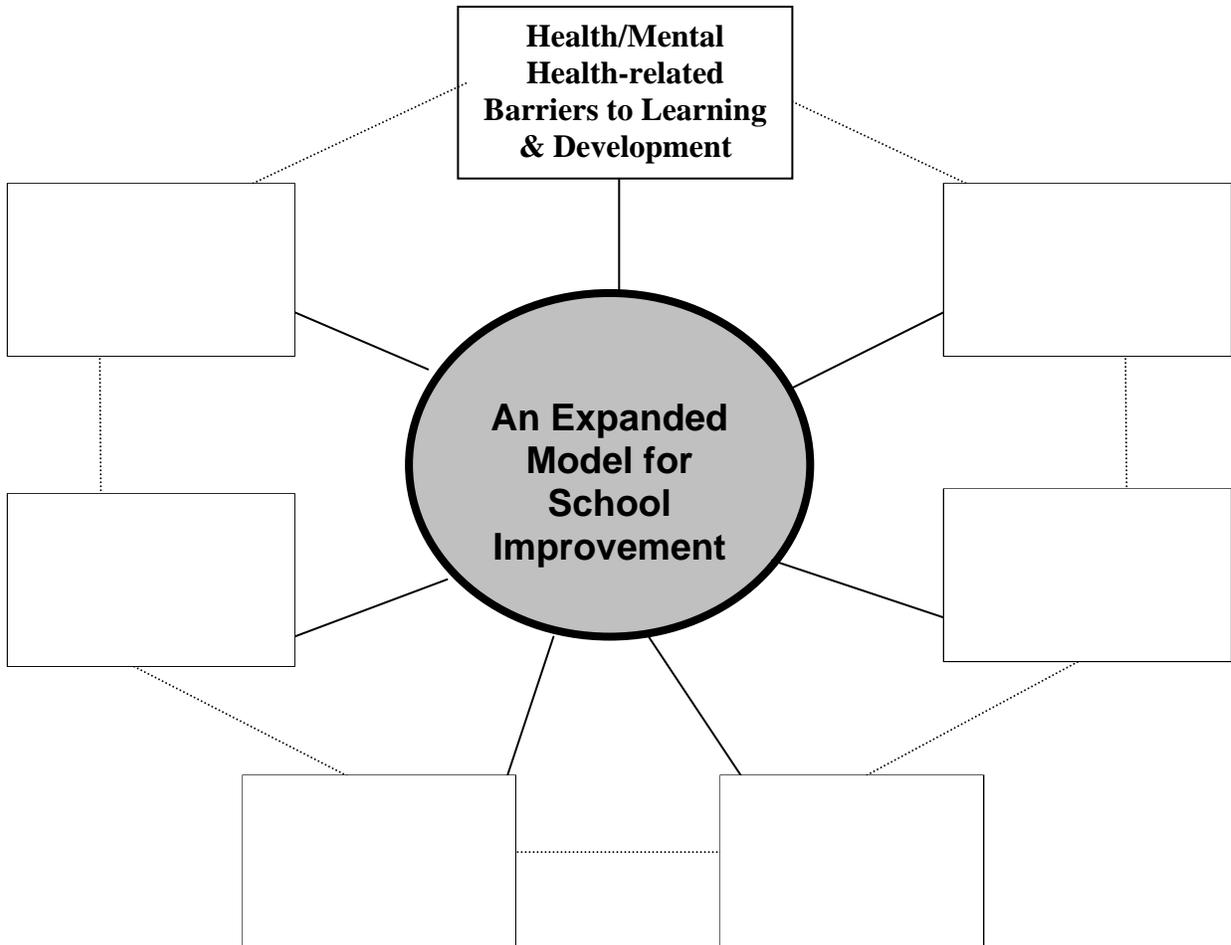

Figure 3.2: A layout of potential areas subgroups might address

These core subgroups consist of the school improvement team members that are central to each targeted area. For example, the subgroup focused on academics might include teachers, Title I paraprofessionals, tutors, after-school program staff and curriculum specialists. The subgroup focused on family related issues might consist of family liaisons, school social workers, the parent teacher organization president, parents, representatives from local social service agencies that do family work, etc. A subgroup focused on after-school youth development might be comprised of representatives from local child care centers, youth development organizations, parks and recreation, community education and faith-based organizations. Essentially, the actual day-to-day "work" within the collaboration is done at the subgroup level.

Lead responsibilities. One key strategy for ensuring that this work gets done involves the assignment of lead responsibilities (Lawson, Barkdull, Anderson-Butcher, & Butcher, 1998). This strategy stems from this fundamental need: No school or agency can be "all things to all people" and, in essence, "do it all, alone." The collaborative school improvement team must "piece out" and delegate the work needing to be done. They assign people and organizations "lead responsibility" – meaning they will take the lead in getting it done.

In this fundamental sense, delegating responsibility is an essential part of collaborative leadership. Leadership for a given priority is given away, and the person or agency accepts the leadership responsibilities for this priority. These people then regularly update the advisory group and larger collaborative on activities, goals, and next steps. (Please note, however, if you are working in a small school, especially a small school in a rural community, you are already shaking your head as you review this. In small schools, especially small rural schools, one person, maybe two people, perform all of these roles.)

In the end, the school improvement team's subgroups, as directed by the person or agency with lead responsibility, move forward with the work of the collaboration by developing and implementing programs and services aimed to address identified conditions and needs within the school community.

These small working groups focused on the same kinds of barriers have the power to generate exciting innovations, take advantage of untapped opportunities and recruit other people and organizations for the school improvement initiative. For example, the people operating a school-operated tutoring program may cooperate with a school-based child care program to share snacks, supplies, space and other resources. Teachers may coordinate with youth development program staff, supporting the design and implementation of academic enrichment activities that are driven by the school curriculum. School social workers and counselors may coordinate services provided by multiple providers among families who have children on Individualized Education Plans. The school principal and the head of the local settlement house may collaborate by pooling together resources and sharing accountability and responsibility for the implementation of a family education class in the school community.

An example
Table 3.6 builds from Figure 3.2. This table provides a planning and implementation template, indicating how you and others on the school improvement team can "piece it out" and, at the same time, have control over the "whole" school improvement plan. This template also emphasizes one of the most important advantages and contributions of the model. It indicates that you and your school community improvement team can implement multiple improvements in several places, simultaneously. This capacity contrasts sharply with the typical linear, "one at a time" improvement strategies found in most walled-in school improvement models.

With these important benefits in mind, study the table and learn how you can develop the same kind of template. You will find the various subgroup target areas noted in the first column of the table. You will note there are seven subgroups focused on key barriers associated with academic achievement and healthy youth development – namely, barriers related to the school, youth and peers, family and parent, health and mental health, early childhood, community and policy.

Next note that each subgroup consists of key individuals whose work directly relates to the subgroup's purpose. In other words, the individuals and groups assigned to each barrier are the ones committed to, and accountable for, addressing them. For instance, the subgroup focused on school-related barriers is made up of principals, teachers, teacher liaisons, school-family-community coordinators, school social workers and counselors, university professors, tutors and attendance trackers. A key teacher in the school may be assigned lead responsibility for the facilitation of this subgroup's work.

The program and service strategies designed and implemented by subgroup members are then created based upon the resource gaps identified in your conditions and resource assessment. In the case of the school-related barriers subgroup, these strategies are focused on improved academic achievement, teaching and instruction, school climate and overall teacher satisfaction and retention. These strategies are then aligned with their targeted improvement area (i.e., reducing school barriers).

Table 3.6: An example of a planning and implementation template			
Barrier classification	**Individuals involved and/or assigned lead responsibility**	**Example program and services strategies**	**Example improvement targets and/or conditions**
School-related barriers	Principals, teachers, teacher liaisons, school-family-community coordinators, school counselors and social workers, university professors, tutors, attendance trackers	Professional development; curriculum alignment; classroom management; academic assistance (i.e., tutoring, enrichment, etc); gain assistance, support, and resources from parents, after-school staff, community	Academic achievement, improved teaching and learning strategies and methods, school climate, teacher efficacy and job satisfaction, staff retention

Youth and peer-related barriers	School counselors and social workers, health and physical education teachers, coaches, after-school and youth development program staff, juvenile justice professionals, youth	Service learning; mentoring; after-school and youth development programs; sports and extracurricular activities; school-to-work; job training	Academic achievement, sense of connection to school and other organizations, child well-being
Family and parent-related barriers	Parent-family coordinators, principals, community- and school-based social workers, employment counselors, community organizers, parents	Parent-teacher organizations; parent education programs; employment support programs; family support groups,	Academic achievement, child and family well-being, stabilized, stronger families, less mobility
Health and mental health-related barriers	School and community health educators, safe and drug-free schools coordinators, school nurses, school counselors and social workers, health and social service providers, school-family-community coordinators	Health education, promotion and prevention programs; social and life skills programs; integrated services; nutrition and physical activity programs; school-based mental health; crisis response planning and intervention	Academic achievement, child and family well-being, improved service access and quality, reduced duplication in services, resource utilization and maximization
Early childhood-related barriers	Head Start coordinators, early childhood center staff, family support professionals, religious leaders, parent groups	Prenatal programs; birth-to-three initiatives; early childhood education programs	Academic achievement, school readiness, child and family well-being
Community-related barriers	School-family-community coordinators, community organizers and developers, police, juvenile justice officers, religious leaders, residents	Community and youth policing; family-to-family networking; small business development	Academic achievement, safer schools and neighborhoods, less isolation, social support, trust, social capital
Policy-related barriers	Superintendents, health and social services administrators, state and local governmental officials	De-categorized funding programs; incentive and reward programs for successful collaboration; levy passing; school funding policy work	Academic achievement, resource utilization and maximization, prioritization of child and family well-being

A final word on this planning and implementation template and the exciting possibilities it offers you. The other chapters in this guide, especially the chapters on academic learning, youth development, family engagement, health and social services and community partnerships, provide frameworks, guidelines and concrete action steps that can guide your planning and implementation efforts. Table 3.6 is just one example of how your school community improvement team can structure, implement and advance its work.

This work is not without challenges. The reality is that when you bring multiple people and organizations together, all who have different identities, missions and/or visions and self-interests, multiple barriers exist. We have highlighted a few of these in the following, providing some minimizing strategies that should help you with resolving some of these issues.

Common barriers in collaboration and collaborative leadership
Several barriers have been identified in the literature by those implementing and evaluating collaborations (Lawson 2003, 2004; Lawson et al., 2003; Mattessich et al., 2001; Rubin, 2002).

One of the most common challenges related to this work involves the failure of the collaboration and partnership to focus on results. People and organizations collaborate just for the sake of collaboration or partner just to say they are partnering. When you ask them what changes as a result of their collaboration or partnership, they will tell you they are collaborating and integrating programs and services. They do not tell you about improved results. They do not tell you about improved academic achievement, healthy development and overall success in school.

This is because collaborations and partnerships sometimes consume endless time and resources in relation to "getting to know you" and "what do we have in common" activities. Nothing concrete gets done, and people and organizations leave when the relationships are not focused on key outcomes and deliverables associated with school improvement.

Collaborations and partnerships will experience other barriers. A few are highlighted here, including challenges with political and social climates, problems with building trusting relationships, barriers in creating buy-in and value among members and struggles in reaching consensus.

Barrier: Political and social climate
Sometimes timing may not be supportive of collaboration or of your collaborative's mission and goals. Politics, the social climate and the power dynamics create many obstacles that prevent or deter collaboration.

Table 3.7: Political and social climate barriers and minimizing strategies	
Barrier: Political and social climate is not conducive	**Minimizing strategies**
• Public opinion may not support the collaborative mission • Political climate may not be conducive to the mission (i.e., education, youth, coordination, partnership, etc.) • Political climate encourages individualism and independence	• Collaborating participants should spend time up front "selling" the collaboration purpose and intention in order to create the best political climate possible • If the right climate does not exist, collaborating participants should consider strategies and tactics for improving the climate – by changing public opinion, for example, to achieve the collaboration's goals • Collaborative groups should set goals realistically to meet

• Economic and social climate emphasizes competition for resources • Power dynamics get in the way of partnership • Collaborative agenda may not fit the political and social climate of the day • Others…	political and social requirements • Do not be afraid to talk about sticky subjects • Develop a resource coordinating team that focuses on addressing these issues • Work with the media • Use government contacts to gain support • Ensure the "right mix" of people is involved • Solicit and nurture support and buy-in from people with power • Others…

Barrier: Relationships are not built

Relationships are at the core of any effective collaboration. People and organizations are often so busy accomplishing their own work and missions they do not have the time to build relationships and trust with others. Collaborations struggle when relationships are not built.

Table 3.8: Relationships are not built barriers and minimizing strategies	
Barrier: Relationships are not built	**Minimizing strategies**
• Relationships are not built among partners • The time necessary to develop relationships is lacking • Members do not respect each other and their organizations • There are misunderstandings about what others do: missions, goals, etc. • There is limited trust between individuals and organizations • Members do not see how their work relates to others • Turf issues get in the way of partnerships • Organizations compete for the same funding streams, creating competition as opposed to cooperation and collaboration • Others…	• At the very beginning of the effort, partners should temporarily set aside the purpose of the collaboration and devote energy to learning about each other • Develop a collaborative leadership council • Partners must present their intentions and agendas openly and honestly to bring out trust-building • Reach consensus on norms for how members treat each other • Emphasize learning about and improvement in relationships • Partners must be willing to listen to and value others perspectives and agendas • Building strong relationships takes time; collaborative groups should allow sufficient time for understanding and trust to develop • Create communication networks and channels to assist with building relationships, trust, understanding, etc. • Use intermediary organizations and people who are neutral, facilitating partnerships and connections • Others…

Barrier: Members do not see value

Collaboration depends upon mutuality and interdependence. In essence, members must get their own agendas met while simultaneously supporting the collaborative mission. This is difficult to do, and many times members to not see the value of being involved in the partnership.

Barrier: Members do not see value of collaboration	Minimizing strategies
• Individuals and organizations do not see how collaboration can help them • Individuals and organizations struggle to see how their own self-interests are met via the partnership • Individuals and organizations see themselves as specialized experts • Members do not see their work as interdependent with others' work; they do not see how collaboration can help them do their work better • Others…	• Always make clear what member individuals and organizations stand to gain from the collaboration, and those expectations should be built into goals so they remain visible throughout the life of the collaborative effort • Emphasize, where possible, interdependent relationships – no one can achieve their missions and goals without others • Make linkages and connections for people and organizations so they can see how they fit into the larger picture • Incentives for individuals and organizations to get involved and to stay involved should be built into the collaborative effort, and those incentives should be monitored to see if they continue to motivate members • Identify and communicate the benefits of being involved in the collaborative, as well as the costs of not being involved • Others…

Barrier: Difficulty in reaching consensus

Creating a consensus in direction and focus, as well as sticking to the direction and focus, is difficult, especially when multiple stakeholders from different perspectives and organizations convene together over a period of time. Creating and keeping consensus is one of the most difficult barriers to address when forming and maintaining collaboration.

Table 3.10: Difficulty in reaching consensus barriers and minimizing strategies	
Barrier: Difficulty in reaching consensus	**Minimizing strategies**
• Group is unable to reach consensus • Members are unwilling to compromise • The collaborative lacks focus and direction, and is easily side-tracked off target • Relationships are not built among members so there is little willingness to give and take • Roles, responsibilities and expectations are not clear within the collaborative • Some members believe their "vote" counts more than others • Members bring multiple competing goals and directions to the collaborative • Members "come and go" and membership changes over time • Collaborative leaders do not have the skills to facilitate consensus building • Others…	• Spend time building consensus around a shared vision and mission • Develop a coherent model with strategies that are focused on results • Ensure all partners see themselves and their own self-interests in the model and plan • Participants must have some latitude in working out agreements among partners; rigid rules and expectations will render collaboration unworkable • Collaborative members should allow time to act deliberately and patiently when reaching decisions • Collaborative members must know when to seek compromise or common ground and to amicably negotiate major decisions in situations where members do not share the same opinion • Build on participants' awareness that they are interdependent; demonstrate that none can achieve their missions and goals without the others • Focus on results needing to be improved, including how this work will help each participant do so • Others…

Final thoughts

In the end, collaboration and partnerships entail a new way of doing business. The most important priority for you to keep in mind is that these new ways of doing business yield improved results for schools, families, community agencies and youth.

New ways of doing business also require new ways to lead, manage and govern, and collaborative leadership is the answer to these needs. As the boundaries of school improvement expand, the school improvement team adds new members representing families, community agencies, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and, where applicable, colleges and universities. These new team members join with existing members to share responsibility and accountability for school improvement processes and outcomes.

These collaborative leadership teams, structures and processes are vital when multiple programs and services are being implemented simultaneously in several places and involving many organizations and people. This distinctive advantage of the Ohio Community Collaboration Model – the ability to affect multiple improvements simultaneously – also highlights the limitations of "one person leadership and management."

In this new model, the principal or the superintendent simply does not have to do it all, alone (and simply can't). Collaborative leadership teams and structures enable coordinated and harmonized leadership, management and governance that cross the boundaries of schools and communities.

These new working relationships respond to the needs of principals, teachers, service providers, youth development leaders and others in your school community. All know first hand the problems they encounter individually in trying to be all things to all people. Collaboration, partnerships and collaborative leaderships thus offer new supports and resources for each person, promising to maximize their effectiveness, prevent burnout and improve worker retention.

Last, but far from least, children, youth and families will be better served, especially when their representatives are included in collaborative leadership teams. The other benefits are no less important. Collaboration and partnerships promise to eliminate fragmentation, duplication and competition that often prevent participation. Furthermore, this new way of doing business promises to address heretofore unmet needs, including program and service gaps. As these needs are met, and as the gaps are bridged and filled, children, youth and families will benefit, and, in turn, school communities will see improved results.

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