



Leadership in Action Program

Case Study

LEADERSHIP LEARNING
COMMUNITY

We are lifting up the Leadership in Action Program (LAP) as our first case study for the Task Force for several reasons: 1.) the program has shown dramatic results in school readiness for children in Baltimore achieved in less than two years, 2.) they have consciously developed and tested their working assumptions through multiple iterations of program implementation to develop a solid theoretical base for their work, 3.) they are attempting to achieve population level results rather than focusing on individual development or stronger organizations.

The Leadership in Action Program sponsored by Annie E. Casey brings together a diverse group of stakeholder focused on achieving a specific result. The foundation chooses an anchor institution to partner with, a city task force, a citizen group, a governor's subcommittee. The anchor organization helps to recruit 40 participants who are chosen based on their ability to help make change happen, the resources they can bring to the table, and their positions in key organizations. It's a diverse group from government, nonprofits, residents, faith based community, child advocates, and community leaders who all share a commitment to the well-being of kids and families. For example, one LAP program focused on preparing children in the city of Baltimore to enter school ready to learn.

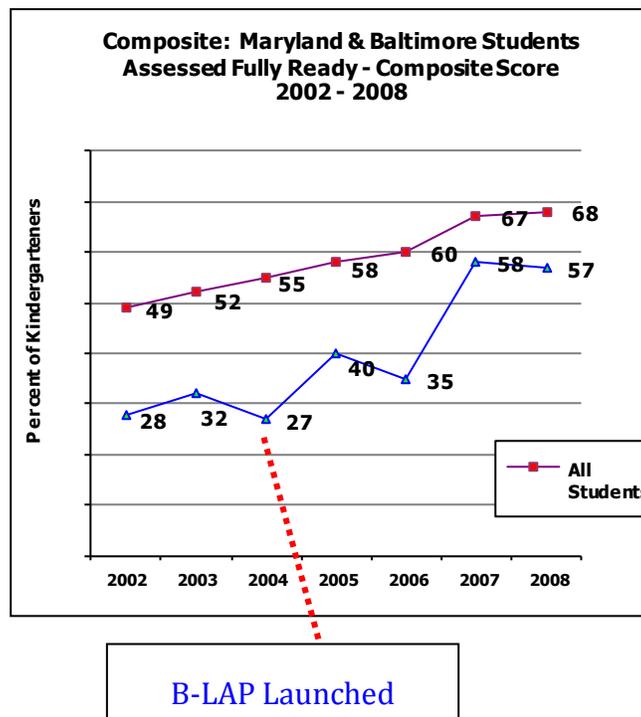
This group takes part in 9 two day sessions that occur over a 14 month period. They look at the problems, enlist new partners and begin to identify possible solutions. Between sessions they team to test ideas, put things into action and begin learning about what is working and what it will take to get results.

During the 9 sessions they develop their skills in four key areas:

- Results based accountability – a tool that ask what difference you want to make, what action you will take to achieve and what progress you are making to that end.
- Leading from the middle – recognizing the influence, resources and authority that leaders can bring to bear on the issues they care about.
- Collaborative Leadership – build their relationships and align their combined resources with other leaders and organizations to have greater impact.
- Race, class and culture dialogue- use data to understand inequities related to class race and culture, engage in constructive dialogue and develop strategies for taking on disparities.

The LAP program has had dramatic results in helping groups to gain significant measureable achievement in the results they focus on. This model has a working hypothesis that:

Population level changes are most likely to occur if a core group of multi-sector, cross agency leaders not only respond to a call to action, but also take aligned actions at scope and scale towards a result.



The theory and its application in LAP develops from a set of assumptions about improving community well-being: a) achieving changes at the level of populations cannot be addressed by any single organization/agency and need to be multi-sectoral (both private and public sectors); b) achievement of “outcomes” have proven disappointing because of a lack of alignment on results (i.e. attempting multiple results without coordinated learning and collective impact); and c) breaking through can appear “impossible” (systemic challenges); d) public accountability can increase the sense of urgency and provide motivation to take action/make aligned contribution; e) 'tipping' the scale is possible with a small group who share a common sense of purpose, and have connected with one another and have a shared appreciation for the urgency of the issue being addressed; f) action learning with a sense of urgency is critical for forward movement toward change sought; g) given the skills and tools, leaders can do the adaptive work required to achieve the results they seek.

It predicts the acceleration of population results when leaders from multiple sectors equipped with specific skills and a sense of heightened urgency:

- *Make an unequivocal commitment to be publicly accountable for a result for a specific population: and,*
- *Work together to take aligned actions to contribute at a scope and scale sufficient to make measurable progress and towards the result. (Pillsbury 2009)*

Participants are trained in the use of Mark Friedman's results-based accountability framework as a tool for forward movement, by: 1) Identification of the result/outcome being sought stated in clear and direct language; 2) Identify an indicator that is the measurement being sought; 3) Develop a strategy that will achieve the result sought. (Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship Program, November 2007)

Developing these competencies requires a neutral and supportive environment where leaders can experiment, practice new behaviors and skills, form authentic relationships, have real conversations and solve conflict in order to support the collaborative work of making aligned contributions.



LEADERSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY

ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY

We are a national nonprofit organization transforming the way leadership development work is conceived, conducted and evaluated, primarily within the nonprofit sector. We focus on leveraging leadership as a means to create a more just and equitable society. We combine our expertise in identifying, evaluating and applying cutting-edge ideas and promising practices in the leadership development field, with access to our engaged national network of hundreds of experienced funders, consultants and leadership development programs, to drive the innovation and collaboration needed to make leadership more effective. We provide members with unparalleled access to resources and networking opportunities. We also offer the following consulting services to help programs and foundations optimize their leadership investment strategy: scans, evaluations and network development.

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