

# Understanding Cross-Agency & Community Collaboration to Address Chronic Absenteeism in D.C.

Presentation of a Draft Collaboration Framework  
Delivered to the Every Day Counts! Task Force

March 19, 2024

**Education**Counsel  
Policy | Strategy | Law | Advocacy

# Discussion Agenda

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1

Review Today's Objectives, Partnership Goals, and Project Arc/Timeline

2

Present Working Draft of Cross-Agency & Community Collaboration Framework

3

Discuss Initial Themes (Plus-Delta) Related to Chronic Absenteeism and Collaboration

4

Next Steps and Closing, including Plans for April and June

*To support DME and the Every Day Counts!  
Task Force in strengthening their shared,  
comprehensive strategy to improve  
cross-agency and community collaboration to  
address chronic absenteeism in D.C. schools.*

# Framing Points

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- One of the big bets (and themes) in this work is around collaboration – a more coherent, connected, comprehensive strategy to advance chronic absenteeism could have greater impact for DC children and youth.
- We have been asked to help (1) develop a shared framework for cross-agency and community collaboration and (2) develop a fuller collaborative strategy and infrastructure to address chronic absenteeism.
- We will focus on collaboration for today’s discussion (and some initial pluses and deltas on our work in chronic absenteeism) so that we can spend more time on our fuller chronic absenteeism strategy in April.

# Today's Objective

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Discuss and solicit feedback on a framework for cross-agency and community collaboration and initial themes (pluses and deltas) regarding efforts to address chronic absenteeism in DC – all to inform our working session in April and our fuller recommendations in June

# Reminder: Timeline of Activities

October 2023-  
December 2023



## Initial Interviews

Completed 9 initial conversations with key stakeholders.

January 2024



## Presentation of Initial Observations to EDC Task Force

Discuss next steps and gather feedback from Task Force.  
Completed 5 interviews.

February - March 2024



## Engage EDC Task Force in Group Discussions

Additional interviews (3), follow-up conversations, and focus groups with Taskforce members and stakeholders to further develop shared strategy. Provide update on follow-up and focus group conversations and strategy development during March's EDC Task Force meeting.

April - May 2024



## Additional EDC Task Force & Stakeholder Conversations

Host stakeholder focus group and in-person working session.

June 2024



## Presentation of Strategy Recommendations

Present and plan for launch of co-developed strategy recommendations for presentation at EDC Task Force Meeting.

# A Framework to Foster Cross-Agency and Community Collaboration: A Working Draft

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# Sample of Reviewed Frameworks, Recommendations, and Literature

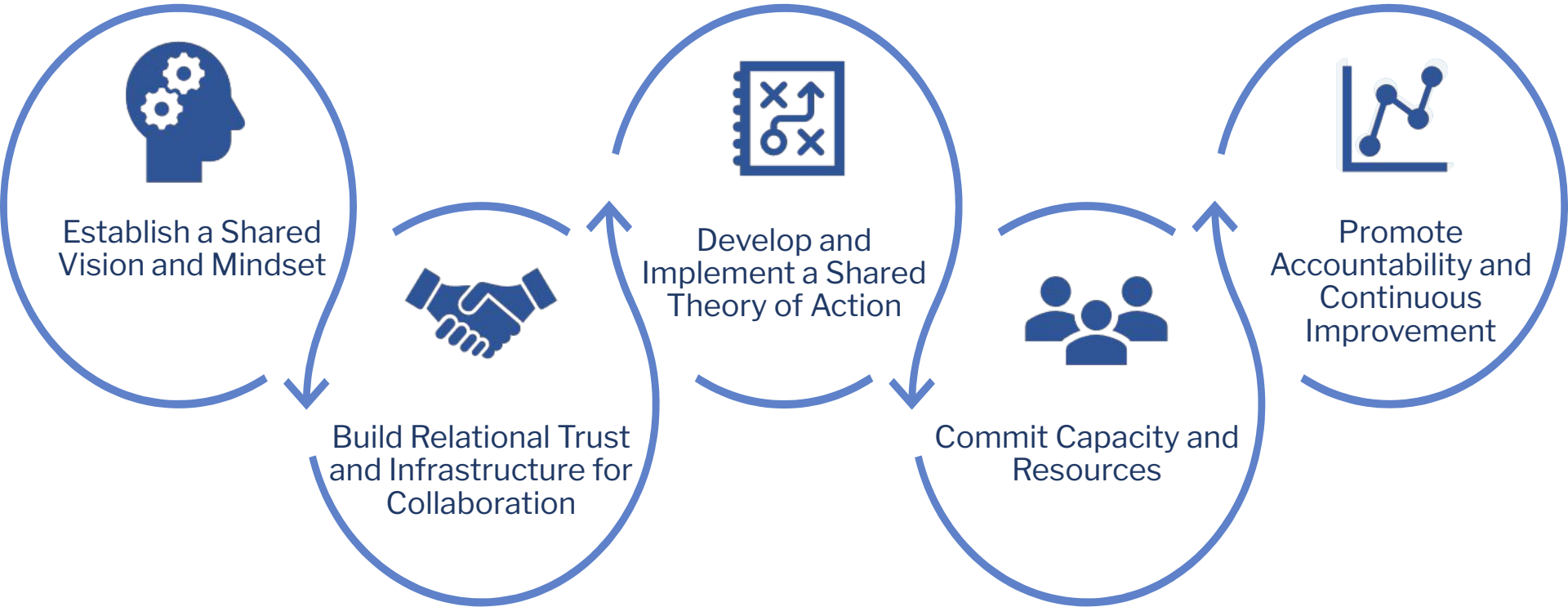


Emergent Framework for Cross-Agency & Community Collaboration .



# Framework to Foster Effective Cross-Agency and Community Collaboration

Working Draft: March 19, 2024



# Framework to Foster Effective Cross-Agency and Community Collaboration

Working Draft: March 19, 2024



## 1. Establish a Shared Goal, Vision, and Mindset

- Align on the nature, scale, and urgency of the problem.
- Develop a shared, positive vision and goal for the work, including a focus on equity.
- Obtain commitments from key leaders with authority and establish a shared priority.
- Identify concrete points of entry for each stakeholder to address problem.



## 2. Build Relational Trust and Infrastructure for Collaboration

- Identify and engage critical partners from across government.
- Engage key community stakeholders, including those most proximate.
- Identify interests and roles of each key partner, including benefits of collaboration.
- Establish clear roles and capacity to lead and support collaboration.
- Convene and engage key partners on an ongoing basis to share and coordinate knowledge and activities.
- Develop shared documents, operations, and procedures, as appropriate.



## 3. Develop and Implement a Shared Theory of Action

- Review research, data, evidence, experience, stakeholder input, and other key information.
- Develop a shared theory of action and priority strategies to achieve the goal.
- Map existing initiatives, assets, and gaps.
- Align roles and incentives to promote collaboration.
- Develop measurable objectives and milestones and leverage existing (or gather new) data to achieve set goal.
- Assess current data infrastructure and outline future data needs.
- Confirm who will lead the collaborative.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for partner agencies.



## 4. Commit Capacity and Resources

- Identify and support personnel in each entity focused on collaboration as a core element of their work.
- Determine what continued and additional resources are needed to successfully execute core strategies.
- Assess what resources are currently available and how additional resources may be pursued, as appropriate.
- Identify champions for the initiative in government, non-profits, business, communities, etc.



## 5. Promote Accountability and Continuous Improvement

- Utilize formal communication channels to share progress toward milestones and goals.
- Periodically review and continuously improve strategies based on data, evidence, feedback, judgment, etc.
- Share progress of collaboration with key stakeholders and the community.
- Regularly invite community members to deliver feedback on progress of collaborative initiatives and adapt to maximize impact.

# 1. Establish a Shared Vision and Mindset

## Pluses

- Citywide commitment to addressing chronic absenteeism.
- DC agencies currently engage in individual partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations to further the reach of their initiatives.
- OSSE attendance reports, DME analyses, and Re-Engagement Campaign allow EDC Taskforce and stakeholders to understand the scale of the challenge.

## Deltas

- Desire for a more clear and unifying vision, actionable goals, alignment on metrics/timeline, and accountability mechanisms to guide agency and community action.
- Opportunity for coordinated leadership commitment and prioritization to alleviate “siloeed” approaches and promote the use of shared knowledge and resources across agencies and community partners.
- Calls for increased integration of nonprofit partners into the work to address chronic absenteeism to help inform strategies and maximize impact.

## 2. Build Relational Trust and Infrastructure for Collaboration

### Pluses

- EDC Taskforce is seen as a useful convening body, meeting regularly to share updates from partners and review critical attendance data.
- Agencies engage in data sharing agreements and other program partnerships as needed.
- Seasoned EDC Taskforce members have developed tight, personal connections in addition to programming partnerships.

### Deltas

- Desire for deeper engagement through EDC (e.g., working groups) as well as additional mechanisms.
- Participants seek better coordination between schools and service providers, and policies that would alleviate delays in assistance and support familial trust.
- Agencies requested more notice when new programs are designed that may involve their staff.
- Desire for more engagement with communities and education practitioners to understand initiatives that are promising/working and emergent challenges.

# 3. Develop and Implement a Shared Theory of Action

## Pluses

- Range of strategies and interventions that leverage expertise from leading national organizations (e.g., Attendance Works) and evidence-based interventions (e.g., nudging and texting).
- Existing strategic plan and roadmap to address chronic absenteeism to use for reflection and improvement.
- Attendance included in assessments of school quality (e.g., OSSE's School Quality Framework and School Report Cards); provides incentives to schools and students for improvement in attendance with events, sports tickets, bikes, sneakers, and laptops.

## Deltas

- Desire for more analyses of systemic factors influencing chronic absenteeism and fuller map of current and potential actions.
- Requests for updated strategic plan, framework, and roadmap to address chronic absenteeism.
- Increased attention to where absenteeism is most acute (e.g., young children, transitions) and more use of individualized approaches.
- Need to evaluate existing program impact and sunset those that are less effective.

# 4. Commit Capacity and Resources

## Pluses

- DME staff are committed to expanding collaborative work and have leadership from Deputy Mayor Kihn.
- EDC Taskforce includes staff across agencies dedicated to addressing this challenge as well as community leaders.
- DC Government funds multiple initiatives to promote attendance, addressing factors such as transportation, safety, health/well-being and more.

## Deltas

- Desire to strengthen EDC and support additional capacity and resources, including staff and budget to maximize impact of successful programs.
- Participants seek technical assistance, revised communications materials, and updated points of contact to enhance their own knowledge of attendance promotion practices and initiatives.
- Participants suggested revisiting working groups (e.g., communities of practice) to allow deeper, manageable collaboration around chronic absenteeism strategies (e.g., a “problem solving space”).

# 5. Promote Accountability and Continuous Improvement

## Pluses

- DC Council hosts attendance hearings where agencies must provide updates on specific programs, enforcing accountability.
- Some agencies currently have data sharing agreements and MOUs to foster collaboration.
- The EDC Task Force allows for opportunities to share new data across agencies to track progress.

## Deltas

- Updated evaluations needed to determine which interventions are effective, how they could be improved, and which efforts need sunsetting.
- Need for a cross-agency policy audit to enable accountability and effective communications of attendance goals and expectations with stakeholders and families.
- The Task Force would benefit from mechanisms to more fully include students, families, educators, etc., to elevate on-the-ground perspectives on interventions.

# Reflections on Framework

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1. Do the elements of the framework resonate with your vision of successful collaboration? How is this congruent with your experience on the EDC Task Force and more broadly?
2. Is there anything missing? How could the draft framework be improved in relation to DC's context and our focus on chronic absenteeism?
3. Do the initial pluses and deltas resonate with regard to the EDC and efforts to address chronic absenteeism? What points do you think are most important to prioritize about our current strategy and/or where we need to head?
4. What do you most want to address in our longer, April working session on our chronic absenteeism strategy?



# Next Steps

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## Next Steps:

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1. **April:** Stakeholder focus groups and follow-up conversations.
2. **April 24 or 25:** EdCounsel will convene an in-person working session with EDC Task Force members. During this session, participants will collaborate to develop a comprehensive framework of strategies aimed at tackling chronic absenteeism.
3. **June:** Final co-developed recommendations delivered to EDC Task Force.

Thank you!

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