

RESEARCH REPORT

Next Steps for the Seattle Housing Authority-Seattle Public Schools Partnership

Assessing Progress for a Strong and Innovative Partnership

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Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Executive Summary	v
Recommendations for Implementation	vi
A Strong and Innovative Partnership	1
Introduction	1
Planning and Launching the Partnership	4
Recommendations for Implementation	11
Next Steps	18
Appendix A. Methodology	19
Appendix B. Key Informant Interview Protocol	21
Appendix C. Online SWOT Survey	27
Appendix D. In-Person SWOT Session Agenda	30
Appendix E. Site Visit Summary Memo	31
Notes	36
References	37
About the Authors	38
Statement of Independence	39

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Executive Summary

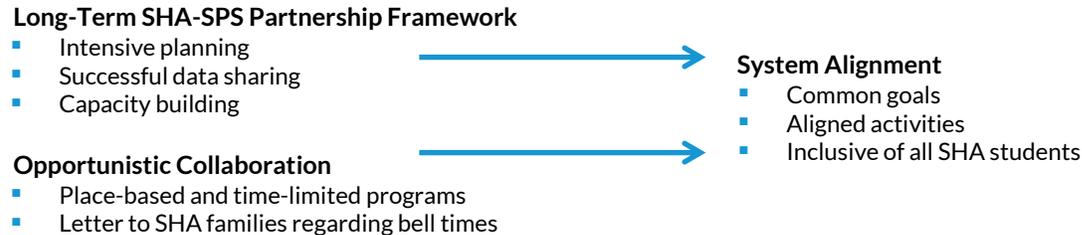
The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and Seattle Public Schools (SPS) provide very different services, yet they share a common clientele and desire to ensure low-income children have equal access to educational and economic mobility opportunities. Housing and school partnerships are a nascent field, and the SHA-SPS partnership’s explicit investment and emphasis on systems-level collaboration is unique from other efforts nationally. The partners have built a solid foundation for a productive, sustainable partnership through thoughtful planning and capacity building.

SHA and SPS have over 5,500 shared youth in kindergarten through 12th grade. One-third of SHA’s clients are younger than age 18, and the majority attends SPS. Approximately 10 percent of SPS students live in SHA-assisted housing. Nearly all SPS schools have at least one SHA student and approximately half of SPS schools have SHA populations of 10 percent or more.

The partnership’s next stage must strike a delicate balance between continued investments in planning and capacity building, and direct services or engagement. Internally facing investments are needed to ensure strong and productive connections across and within the partner agencies and to identify key outcomes and effective entry points for reaching students and families. But programmatic investments are needed to strengthen community engagement and to design and test interventions that support students and families in their homes, schools, and communities.

EXHIBIT ES.1

How Partnership Activities Contribute to Systems Alignment



Recommendations for Implementation

As SHA and SPS move toward implementation, they should prioritize the following activities.

Develop a Decisionmaking Model That Is Both Data and Community Driven

The partnership has established a model of using data for decisionmaking, but it should strengthen the role of community stakeholders. An evidence-based decisionmaking model that blends data analysis with consistent and culturally appropriate community input is necessary to inform program development and improve relationships with community stakeholders.

Focus Joint Activities on Student Outcomes of Interest

To focus and prioritize partnership activities, SHA and SPS should jointly identify short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of interest. This includes measuring and tracking outcomes and identifying joint activities for achieving them. Outcomes and activities should be clear to internal and community stakeholders. Activities that strengthen the relationship between direct service staff at SHA and SPS will build partnership capacity and improve direct services for students and families.

Establish Strategies for Serving Individual SHA Students

Partners must identify strategies for engaging with SHA students and families—including Housing Choice Voucher holders. This includes seeking insights from Deep Dive 3 in the NewHolly neighborhood about using individual-level data and working with staff, students, and families to identify promising opportunities.

Revisit the Core Strategies with a Focus on Outcomes and Sustainability

Interview respondents had difficulty understanding the partnership's three core strategies—either in terms of current activities or efforts to develop new activities. As the partnership pursues key outcomes and joint activities, partners and stakeholders should reflect on progress and use an evaluation framework to continually assess and communicate the connections between the core strategies and the partnership's work.

A Strong and Innovative Partnership

Introduction

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) provides housing assistance to approximately 29,000 people through tenant- and project-based Housing Choice Vouchers and public housing units. One-third of SHA's clients are younger than age 18, and the majority attends Seattle Public Schools (SPS). SPS' staff of 6,300 serves almost 54,000 students through 97 schools citywide. Data analysis by SHA and SPS identified approximately 10 percent of SPS' students (5,500 students in kindergarten through 12th grade) as living in SHA-assisted housing. Nearly all SPS schools have at least one SHA student, and approximately 50 percent of schools have SHA populations of 10 percent or more. While the two organizations provide very different services, they share a common population and a common interest in ensuring low-income children have equal access to educational and economic mobility opportunities.

Since 2014, a five-year planning and implementation grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has allowed SHA and SPS to deepen their relationship and expand their collaborative efforts to focus on a comprehensive, systems-level partnership. The Gates Foundation has been a leader in supporting housing and education partnership work, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. The foundation's Pacific Northwest Community of Practice provides technical assistance and funding to the Seattle, King County, and Tacoma housing authorities to develop innovative housing and education partnerships, which allows the public housing authorities (PHAs) to dedicate staff and resources to partnership development and activities and to learn from one another's efforts. The Gates Foundation also funds the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities' (CLPHA) efforts to create a national network of housing authorities engaging with local schools or school districts on strategies that support learning. The Seattle Housing Authority is a CLPHA member and participates in CLPHA's housing and education partnership activities.

The National Landscape of Housing Authority and School Partnerships

SHA and SPS's partnership is part of a growing field of housing authorities committed to improving educational outcomes for children living in assisted housing and low-income students experiencing housing instability. Housing authorities and nonprofit assisted housing developers across the country

are partnering with schools, school districts, and out-of-school-time service providers. But these partnerships are new and underresearched. No comprehensive clearinghouse documents efforts in progress or previously tested nationwide, and little research examines the effectiveness of partnerships or partnership-led initiatives. In 2012, CLPHA identified 20 formal and informal housing and education partnership efforts through a survey of its members nationwide (CLPHA 2011, 2012), and in 2015, the Urban Institute (Urban) conducted three case studies of initiatives in New Haven, Connecticut (Leopold and Simington 2015); Vancouver, Washington (Galvez and Simington 2015); and Akron, Ohio (de Leon and Saxena 2015), to understand common characteristics of emerging partnerships.¹ Aside from these scans of PHA initiatives, little is known about the work that partnerships are pursuing or various approaches' relative merit. Given the lack of information about housing and education partnerships, many practitioners look to membership organizations (e.g., CLPHA, Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation) to convene peers, advocate for policies that support joint housing and education efforts, and disseminate valuable information and tools. The philanthropic community has responded to these practitioner-led efforts with support for direct service initiatives and learning communities. In 2016, the Gates Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development brought housing practitioners and their membership organizations together to bolster capacity for partnerships, host conversations with US Department of Education officials, and distribute tools for facilitating data sharing across agencies.

The CLPHA and Urban reports reveal that partnerships have diverse goals and tackle many outcomes along the education continuum, but tend to exhibit some of the following components: shared goals and joint strategies, effective leaders and staff members, relationships with strong service providers, access to flexible funding sources, promising program and service models, access to data for decisionmaking, and clear systems and protocols in place for coordination (Gallagher 2015). Although no single element is essential, each can strengthen and deepen a partnership. Urban's work and experience in the field also suggests that partnerships tend to focus on pilot programs that redirect housing assistance to homeless or unstably housed families with students in target public schools or local school districts. With some exceptions, partnerships tend to be built around discrete programs and initiatives, with dedicated funding for a limited time.

The Tacoma Housing Authority's McCarver Elementary School program has provided approximately 50 vouchers to families to maintain student and school stability.² The King County Housing Authority's Student and Family Stability Initiative provides housing and employment supports,

including flexible housing funds, to unstably housed families with children in the local school district. Akron's partnership focuses resources on early childhood education supports, including home visiting in housing authority properties and a community-based facility for education services that serves residents of all ages (de Leon and Saxena 2015). New Haven's partnership supports students with access to tutoring, mentoring, college prep, and college scholarships (Leopold and Simington 2015). In Boulder, Colorado, the housing authority and the national nonprofit I Have a Dream Foundation offer Bringing School Home, which provides mentors, after-school programs, and funding for postsecondary education for children living in public housing.³

The SHA-SPS partnership exhibits some of the characteristics documented in case studies with three partnership sites. SHA and SPS conducted intensive planning, leading to core partnership strategies. SHA and SPS describe this approach in detail in the report *Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools: A Multiyear Partnership Plan* (SPS and SHA 2015). Dedicated staff at each agency have secured additional philanthropic and federal funding, used data to gain insights about clients, and instituted formal internal communication and collaboration procedures. Where most partnerships leverage existing, often informal relationships between housing authorities, educators, and local supportive service providers to develop pilot programming in schools or communities, the SHA-SPS partnership has developed a robust, formal partnership that establishes a solid foundation for comprehensive, long-term systems-level collaboration.

Partnerships focused on piloting new interventions to serve school-aged children and their families are important and essential, but may not be sustainable or scalable and may lose momentum when direct service or housing assistance dollars are spent. The SHA-SPS partnership aims to align data and organizational goals to create a foundation for sustainable programs and processes that support shared students and their families in achieving academic and economic success. Seattle's partnership focuses on systems alignment and organization change, and few similar approaches exist. Understanding the partnership's mechanics, implementation challenges and successes, and how it may benefit shared SHA and SPS clients is essential for refining Seattle's approach and informing future housing and education collaborations.

This Report

In September 2016, SHA contracted with the Urban Institute to evaluate SHA's partnership with SPS. The evaluation is part of a new phase of SHA's efforts to design and implement a sustainable education

and housing partnership. In particular, the partners are transitioning from planning and capacity-building activities to opportunities for direct services, programs, and joint initiatives.

The Urban Institute evaluation intends to describe partnership progress to (1) raise questions for SHA and SPS to consider as they implement their partnership and (2) recommend ways to strengthen the partnership. This report synthesizes information gathered through three months of data collection with SHA and SPS to provide practical feedback to inform implementation. The report will also inform Urban’s technical assistance to SHA for tracking the partnership’s development.

In the pages that follow, we describe the planning and early implementation work and recommend ideas to inform the partnership’s next implementation activities. Appendix A provides an overview of the methodology used to develop the report.

Planning and Launching the Partnership

This section describes the partnership as it has come together, drawing from a range of data collection (appendix A). Findings suggest that the partners have built a solid foundation for a productive, sustainable partnership through thoughtful planning and capacity building. The implementation process, however, raises new questions and challenges about ongoing partnership investments and how to track progress.

Planning Phase for Implementation

The first year (2014–15) of the SHA-SPS partnership involved an intensive planning effort, with years two through five (2015–16 to 2019–20) designated for implementation. Figure 1 provides a timeline of partnership activities. In 2014, close to the launch of the housing and education partnership project, SHA hired a former SPS school and community partnerships manager as the strategic adviser for education, who reports to the director of policy and strategic initiatives. The strategic adviser for education’s role was to spearhead SHA’s education and partnership efforts. SPS supported the initiative’s early steps through its Community Partnerships office. Together, the organizations engaged in a yearlong research and planning phase that culminated in their 2015 multiyear partnership plan. The partnership plan describes the initial research phase, during which SHA convened meetings; conducted focus groups and interviews with families, students, and principals; developed a data-sharing agreement; and conducted data analysis with matched SHA-SPS data. The planning phase

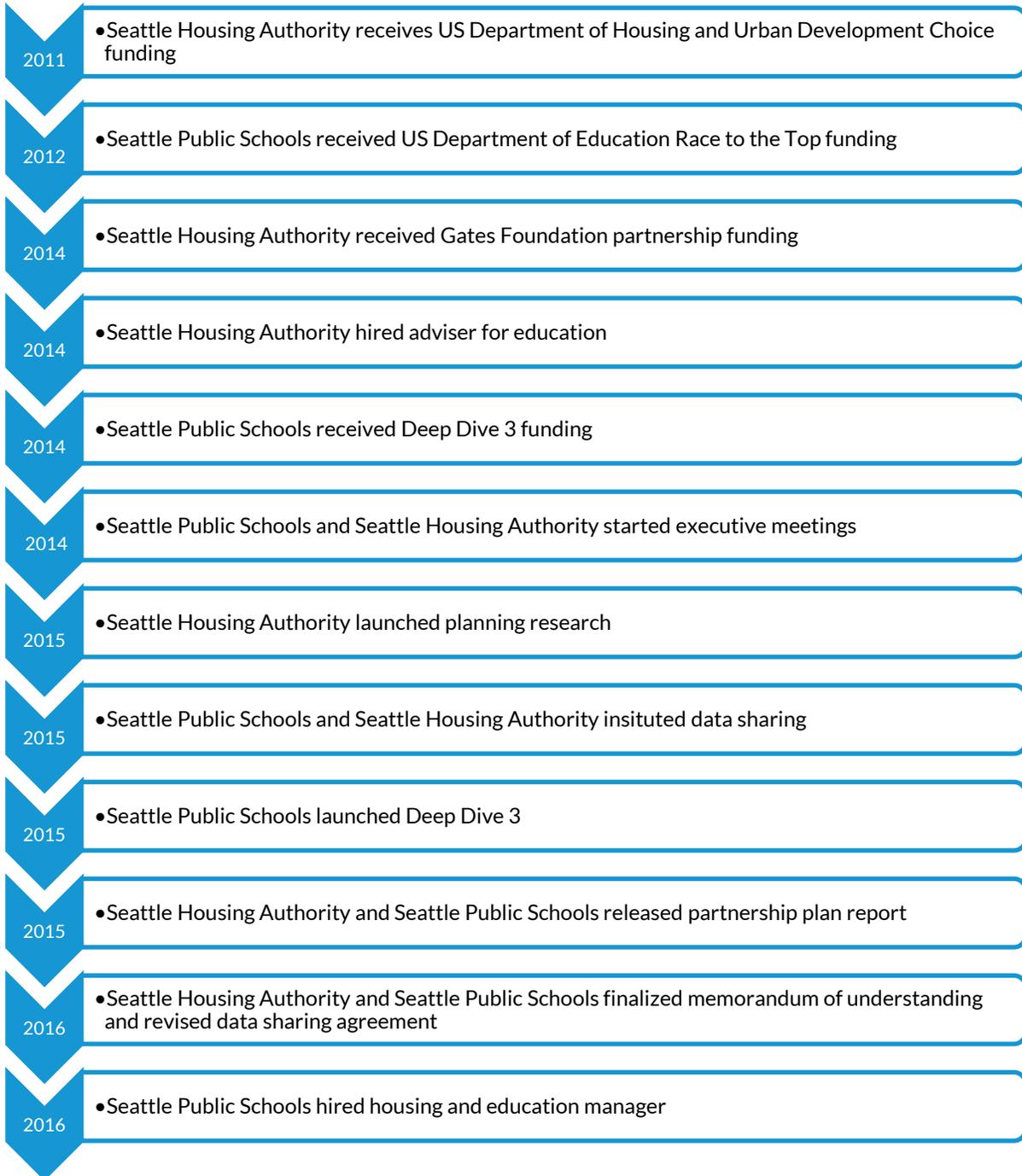
demonstrated the feasibility of a partnership and documented the educational opportunity and achievement gaps for shared SHA-SPS students compared with non-SHA students.

As the partnership prepared to shift into implementation mode in 2016, SPS hired a senior housing developer from SHA to be the housing and education manager in SPS' School and Community Partnerships department. The role adds dedicated internal capacity with cross-domain experience and is a counterpart to SHA's strategic adviser for education.

Cross-agency communication continues up the chain of command. SHA and SPS executive staff, including SHA's executive director and SPS' superintendent, meet quarterly to discuss partnership progress. Project staff from SHA and SPS meet weekly about the partnership.

FIGURE 1

Timeline of Partnership Activities



A Strong and Innovative Partnership

Because of the initial planning phase, the SHA-SPS partnership has a strong foundation for success, including positive and productive relationships among senior staff, successful data sharing, a shared understanding of the challenges facing joint SHA-SPS students, and a shared commitment to serving joint students and their families. SHA's interest in supporting educational achievement for SHA students as a pathway to future economic stability aligns with SPS's goals of eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps for low-income students and students of color.

Executive leadership has empowered staff to establish relationships and develop the foundation for future collaboration. Nearly all the staff who participated in interviews spoke to SHA's and SPS's motivations for engaging in the partnership, policy priorities, and outcome goals. Staff were well informed about the share of SPS students who live in SHA housing, the disparities in academic achievement that have been identified through data-sharing efforts, the proportions of SHA students who are people of color and English Language Learners, and how addressing disparities for SHA students kept with SPS's priorities to close opportunity gaps for Seattle's students of color. A key success of the partnership was the establishment of this shared understanding and motivation.

Of note are the data-sharing agreements and linkage processes that allow SHA and SPS to identify the SHA share of SPS' student population, identify outcomes for SHA students, and identify individual students for Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly school-level interventions. Establishing processes for sharing and linking data is a major achievement, requiring effort by both SPS and SHA staff and establishing SHA and SPS as leaders in a growing field of partnerships. Successful data sharing presents opportunities to develop data-driven strategies and sheds new light on ways housing authorities and educators can partner to meet the needs of low-income students and families.

BOX 1

SWOT Overview

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis is a strategic planning tool that uses four key domains to assess the internal and external contexts of program development efforts. At the SHA-SPS partnership SWOT session (appendix D), participants were guided through individual and group exercises to identify the factors that could help or harm the partnership's efforts to achieve its implementation goals. Findings from the session are integrated into this report, but take-aways from participants include the following:

- *Strengths* include the partners' commitment to the effort and mission-driven alignment for closing the opportunity and achievement gaps and supporting low-income students and families. The joint emphasis on systems-level change was also highlighted as strength.
- *Weaknesses* include the lack of clear and substantive outcome goals and the difficulty communicating externally about the partnership's system alignment in a clear and compelling way. SWOT participants also perceived the organizations as unwilling to discontinue an ongoing program or approach with less of a proven impact to redirect resources to test new evidence-based efforts.
- *Opportunities* include a rise in national attention to housing and education partnerships, their work in Seattle as a new and promising model of engagement, and other local cross-sector partnerships as an opportunity for a supportive learning community.
- *Threats* include Seattle's high housing costs and changing housing market, which strains resources available to the partnership. In addition, each organization must grapple with community mistrust and societal tendencies to overlook students' and residents' complexity and diversity.

Sustainability

SHA and SPS have developed an approach to connect housing authority and school district staff and to examine linked data to identify and better serve their shared clientele. The partnership has focused on establishing itself, which the partners believe to be a critical step toward sustainability and identifying effective ways to engage with shared students and families. Because the partnership's systems change goals are ambitious, progress has been careful and incremental with iterative research, planning, and

data analysis. Investments in the partnership over the first two years of the Gates Foundation grant have been targeted to dedicated agency staffing, relationship building, data and research, strategic planning, and internal capacity building. This intensive investment of time and resources into planning and development intends to ensure a strong foundation for a lasting, productive collaboration that can endure the ebbs and flows of discrete program funding, lead to more supportive learning environments for shared SHA-SPS students, and have positive impacts on educational outcomes.

These investments have paid off in clearly articulated common interests and a strong understanding of each organization's resources, constraints, and priorities. Investments in this phase were not without trade-offs. Among stakeholders with low levels of trust in the organizations, the partnership's planning period may have been seen as slow and ineffective rather than thoughtful and sustainable. Interviews indicate that SHA and SPS are committed to cultural competency training, but the historic weaknesses in trust between the housing authority and school district and the low-income communities they serve—particularly African American and other communities of color—are not resolved and merit more attention from partners.

Core Strategies

The yearlong planning phase identified three core strategies for improving educational outcomes for SHA students, as outlined in the partnership plan, for implementation in the remaining Gates Foundation grant years: (1) using data more effectively to guide decisions and resource allocation, (2) developing dual-generation services, and (3) jointly pursuing systems-level change to ensure SHA students have the same access to educational opportunity as higher-income peers. These strategies have not been clearly defined for implementation. For example, although SHA and SPS have made the most headway in the partnership's data use, interviewees expressed different interpretations of what effective data use should look like moving forward.

Data Capacity

In July 2015, SHA and SPS signed a data-sharing agreement allowing SPS to receive identifiers for all SHA school-aged children to link to SPS data and examine select academic information. This agreement was updated in July 2016 with expanded characteristics and outcomes. Data sharing allowed the partners to identify the number of SPS students who live in SHA-assisted housing and SHA student populations by school. The agreement also allowed the partners to identify key academic outcomes for

SHA students in the aggregate and compare them with average outcomes for other SPS students. For the activities associated with the time-limited and place-based Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly initiative, program staff have access to data identifying SHA students to engage with them individually, match them with programs and services, and track progress. The planning phase has yielded tremendous progress in data capacity, but additional negotiation and planning is needed to determine whether the partnership's goals are best served with aggregate data or require individual identification of the SHA-SPS shared population.

Place-Based Initiatives

Before developing the formal partnership, SHA and SPS initiated place-based efforts in two communities through independent funding streams, which were testing grounds for partnership activities. At NewHolly, the US Department of Education funded Deep Dive 3 in 2014 to improve attendance and suspension and expulsion rates at five schools with significant SHA student populations. At Yesler Terrace, the Choice Neighborhoods initiative, Seattle University Youth Initiative, and Home from School initiative each support local students with housing and services. Table 1 provides an overview of these efforts and their goals. Though launched independently of the formal Gates-funded partnership, these initiatives are integral to the partnership's planning efforts and seen as testing grounds for expanded partnership activities. Seattle Housing Authority staff credit the Gates Foundation grant with allowing the agencies to add staff capacity that allowed them to secure additional grant funding. People working on these initiatives are familiar with SHA students, families, and communities and are typically engaged in partnership planning. These initiatives have underscored the importance of up-front, ongoing, and culturally competent communication with families and communities to prevent misunderstandings and maximize opportunities. Place-based initiatives allow for testing new and innovative ideas, but a challenge is to determine how to expand, replicate, and fund promising practices identified through these initiatives.

TABLE 1

Placed-Based Housing and Education Initiatives

Initiative	Goals	Places or schools served
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (2010)	Redevelop units in an SHA property and provide a pipeline of educational and other supports for families, including home visiting, summer learning, tutoring, and family engagement. During redevelopment, SHA coordinated with SPS to minimize disruption in children’s schooling and relocated students by providing transportation to their original schools. Seattle University is the lead education partner for Seattle’s Choice grant from HUD.	Yesler Terrace community; Bailey Gatzert Elementary
Seattle University Youth Initiative (2011)	Seattle University’s Center for Community Engagement launched this initiative to support children and families in the Bailey Gatzert neighborhood by connecting the university to its surrounding neighborhood and sharing lessons with others.	Yesler Terrace community; Bailey Gatzert Elementary
Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly (2014)	Improve attendance and reduce suspension and expulsion rates for 627 low-income and black students. Funded by a US Department of Education Race to the Top grant.	SHA’s NewHolly development and five surrounding schools: Aki Kurose, Dunlap, Rainier Beach, Wing Luke, and Van Asselt
Home from School (2016)	Provide affordable and reliable housing opportunities to families experiencing homelessness with children who attend Bailey Gatzert Elementary to maintain the child’s school and residential stability and the school’s classroom stability.	Yesler Terrace community; Bailey Gatzert Elementary

Notes: HUD = US Department of Housing and Urban Development. SHA = Seattle Housing Authority. SPS = Seattle Public Schools. In January 2017, after our data collection for this report, SHA won a \$452,000 Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency for Education grant from HUD to hire an “education navigator” to assist youth living in SHA-assisted properties with college applications and financial aid.

Recommendations for Implementation

The partnership’s implementation phase marks an important turning point, where capacity-building investments can be translated into activities that build on the momentum, data, and relationships established during planning. Stakeholders at both agencies are eager to move forward and sense that planning needs to evolve into direct services that affect outcomes for the students and families SHA and SPS share.

Despite this urgency to develop direct programs, stakeholders noted that attention is still needed on developing partnership connections, refining the core strategies and approaches to using shared data, and identifying programmatic priorities. Some staff noted that staff and families alike—particularly in lower-income communities and communities of color—are wary of initiatives seen as fleeting.

The next iteration of partnership activities must strike a balance between internally facing planning and capacity-building investments and externally facing direct service or engagement activities. Internally facing investments ensure strong and productive connections across and within the partner agencies, integrate additional resources and partners, and identify entry points for reaching students and families. External or programmatic investments are needed to design and test interventions that directly support students and families at the home, school, and community levels.

We recommend prioritizing the following four actions as SHA and SPS strengthen the partnership and support low-income students and families in closing the achievement gap. These include developing a decisionmaking model that is data and community driven, focusing future joint activities on key outcomes of interest, establishing mechanisms to identify and reach individual SHA and SPS students, and revisiting the core strategies to reflect key outcome and sustainability goals. For each, we suggest examples of internally and externally facing activities that partners can jointly pursue. The four actions aim to address stakeholder engagement and outreach. Stakeholders include families and frontline SPS and SHA staff who interact with students and families.

1. Develop a Decisionmaking Model That Is Both Data and Community Driven

Data sharing is at the heart of the partnership, and administrative and qualitative data have driven core components of the planning process. But interview respondents noted a need for more community outreach and trust building with students, families, principals, and teachers by both SPS and SHA partnership staff as part of the partnership rollout and development. Respondents also expressed a need for more meaningful interaction between SHA and SPS frontline staff who interact with SHA-SPS families to build connections, share knowledge about organizational roles, infuse information about the partnership into direct service staff, and identify opportunities to jointly engage with families.

The current Deep Dive 3 and Home from School efforts have laid important groundwork for working with SHA families at the school and community levels, but reveal challenges and areas for improvement. Both SHA and SPS struggle with building and maintaining students' and families' trust, and developing positive relationships may be difficult given the authority that families may perceive each institution to have. Principals, teachers, and school counselors may feel disconnected from the partnership activities or unfamiliar with SHA services. SHA staff who interact with families may feel detached from partnership planning and SPS staff who interact with shared families.

These challenges can be addressed in part by shifting to more consistent and culturally competent communication with community members and by elevating the community's role in partnership decisionmaking. The Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools can address community mistrust and inform program development through an evidence-based decisionmaking model that blends data collection and analysis with community feedback.

Opportunities may exist to further mine administrative data, examine the evidence base nationally, or collect new local data from educators or families about the reasons SHA students lag behind their peers. A partnership advisory board of SHA-assisted families at the school or district level may then provide opportunities to directly engage assisted households in discussions about these findings and open questions and to explore families' perceptions of contributing factors to achievement gaps or the services needed to support their students' educational needs. A similar advisory board of teachers, counselors, or principals may reveal the challenges they experience or anticipate with engaging SHA-SPS students or low-income families and identify new ways to engage with educators or families around partnership goals.

The Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools can use a combination of internal planning and capacity-building work and externally facing engagement and direct service activities to pursue a decisionmaking model that balances data and community input.

The following are internal efforts:

- Conduct additional data analysis and research to explore academic outcomes for low-income or assisted housing students and identify key factors driving outcomes or student challenges.
- Identify opportunities to engage with staff to ensure they understand partnership goals, to collect information on what might be driving achievement or opportunity gaps, and to identify ways to engage with joint SHA-SPS families. This may include school-level or district-wide trainings for SPS staff on SHA programs and resources and on the partnership itself.
- Strengthen connections between SHA and SPS direct service staff, particularly where schools are physically close to SHA communities or serve many SHA students.
- Provide incentives for and train staff to engage and follow up with families and community members about partnership planning phases, decisions, or programming. This involves developing clear expectations, protocols, and materials for frontline staff to communicate effectively and consistently with community members and professional development to

improve staff competencies around outreach, community engagement, and culturally competent communication.⁴

The following are external efforts:

- Identify community advisers to determine culturally appropriate community participation mechanisms, such as standing community and family advisory boards or periodic town halls. Appropriate mechanisms may vary at the school, neighborhood, or district levels.
- Engage with the community consistently to communicate partnership efforts, report and interpret findings on student outcomes and challenges, and discuss open questions about student achievement and community needs. Create feedback opportunities and obtain meaningful feedback before and after implementing new services, programs, or policy changes.

An emphasis on establishing a meaningful community role in decisionmaking may delay some direct service activities, but the experience from Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly and Home from School efforts reveal the implications of weak community engagement. For example, SPS staff noted that weak initial community engagement created avoidable and time-consuming challenges.

2. Focus Joint Activities on Student Outcomes of Interest

The partnership has yet to define key academic outcomes.⁵ Staff noted that absenteeism, suspensions, graduation rates, early learning enrollment, and outcomes for English Language Learners have all been raised as potential outcomes of interest, but there is a tension between tracking longer-term measures (e.g., graduation rates) and shorter-term measures (e.g., attendance rates) of partnership success and impacts. To focus and prioritize the partnership's activities, the partners need clarity about short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of interest. Both internal and external stakeholders should be included in this process.

The following are internal efforts:

- Determine capacity (staff, data availability, resources for direct services) to address and track outcomes simultaneously or consecutively to prioritize specific short- and longer-term outcome goals.
- Develop a long-term plan for achieving and tracking key outcomes. The plan may establish periods for identifying, designing, and implementing services tied to key outcomes; specify

outcomes metrics and data sources; set assessment intervals for tracking outcomes; or determine timelines and mechanisms for course-correcting outcome goals or intervention activities.

The following are external efforts:

- Communicate outcome goals, assumptions, and timelines with internal and community stakeholders and provide opportunities for community feedback before implementing initiatives and tracking outcomes.
- Strategically pilot evidence-based interventions that can be tied to key outcomes of interest, and consistently articulate outcome expectations and progress toward goals to staff and community members.

By taking a collaborative approach to establishing and communicating outcome goals, the partnership may experience indirect benefits of improved communication and messaging with internal and external stakeholders and identify natural opportunities to strengthen the connections between SPS and SHA direct service staff. Thoughtfully and transparently piloting new initiatives focused on a few key outcomes or engagement approaches will allow the partnership to develop and test new service models and new staff and community engagement processes. Rolling out multiple direct service interventions targeting different outcome goals without developing a solid infrastructure for staff and community engagement could exacerbate ongoing challenges with conveying partnership goals, progress, and core strategies.

3. Establish a Mechanism for Serving Individual SHA Students

With some exceptions, the partnership has focused on matching student data, de-identifying it, and using it at an aggregate level. This approach is best suited to identifying the share of SPS students who are SHA residents and baseline academic achievement indicators and to identifying schools with high proportions of shared students. But the partnership plan noted that Housing Choice Voucher participants represent 63 percent of SHA households with children (10 percent of whom live in SHA units). If these families attend schools with small shares of SHA students, current partnership activities and data-sharing approaches may not meet their needs. Representatives from both agencies noted that higher-income schools with fewer SHA students have limited access to supportive services or resources for low-income students because these schools do not serve many low-income families. This is

important if SHA's residential mobility efforts result in more students living in opportunity neighborhoods, which may inadvertently reduce these students' access to needed supports.

Partners are torn about using data to identify and engage students and families. Allowing school-based staff to use linked data to contact students or their families may not be appropriate or beneficial. Staff closest to students and families suggested that, absent resources for SHA-SPS students or a framework to inform how staff should engage more meaningfully with these students, they did not know how they might use the information that a particular student lives in assisted housing. Identifying households may also be perceived as invasive, or students or caregivers may feel a stigma associated with housing assistance.

The Deep Dive 3 team has insights about the challenges, value, and process of using data to identify and engage students. If SHA and SPS hope to learn from Deep Dive 3 and expand promising practices, the partners must look carefully at what did and did not work and why. Similarly, the partners should consider what can be learned from McKinney-Vento liaisons and school counselors about working directly with homeless students and families.

Testing different approaches to using data to engage SHA students in different settings could be possible. In schools with fewer students, individual identification may be useful so teachers or counselors can be armed with specific assistance or information to offer families. In higher-population schools, a less invasive approach may be more effective by targeting resources at the school level (e.g., engaging and educating principals and teachers) without identifying students. Using data to identify students and contact them centrally from SHA or SPS may be useful for voucher-assisted students who may need more targeted outreach and supports, particularly if their communities have few resources for low-income families.

To determine the most appropriate action, SHA and SPS need to take internal and external action. Because outreach to students or families would be more effective if guided by specific outcomes (e.g., chronic absenteeism) or tied to services, these activities will be most effective once student outcomes of interest are identified or are part of an intervention design process.

The following are internal efforts:

- Assess gaps in reaching and serving SHA-SPS students based on the current approach, and determine an appropriate model for ongoing assessments of how the partnership is reaching Housing Choice Voucher students and families.

- Seek insights from Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly about the challenges, benefits, and burdens of using data to identify and contact SHA-SPS families.
- With SPS and SHA staff who work with students and families, identify feasible options for testing different student or family engagement approaches.

The following are external efforts:

- Engage with Housing Choice Voucher families to understand opportunities, challenges, or benefits of individual identification and outreach and to communicate about efforts to use SHA-SPS data for outreach.

4. Revisit the Core Strategies with a Focus on Outcomes and Sustainability

Interview respondents did not understand the partnership's three core strategies for current activities or efforts to develop new activities. Among the three core strategies, using data for decisionmaking was noted as an approach that had gained traction and shown clear success, but respondents voiced concerns about sustainability and expectations for data-driven interventions. The dual-generation strategy was unclear, but stakeholders at SHA described new connections between resident services, workforce development, and health programs that could contribute to a dual-generation service model. Respondents perceived that the pursuing-bold-policy-change strategy was the least developed, but an emphasis on bold policy change is evident in the Home from School pilot, initiated by the City of Seattle. The pilot, which responds to the city's rental housing crisis, represents an important collaboration between SHA and SPS to stabilize a community and its school by providing housing assistance to homeless students.

Going forward, SHA and SPS should revise the strategies to reflect partnership progress and shifting priorities since the development of the partnership plan in 2015. Or the strategies could become more grounded in ongoing partnership work with improved communication with staff and articulation of the connections between core strategies and ongoing activities.

As the partnership progresses toward implementation, SHA and SPS can work internally and externally to revisit the core strategies that ground the partnership's work.

The following are internal efforts:

- Assess each strategies' importance and role in guiding the partnership's work, and reframe or remove strategies that do not directly contribute to the partners' goals.

The following are external efforts:

- Ensure the partnership's strategies resonate with agency and community stakeholders.

These activities may be more effective if completed after establishing decisionmaking and community engagement processes or may be good entry points for an initial engagement with community stakeholders.

Next Steps

The next iteration of partnership activities needs to balance continued planning and capacity-building investments with increased direct service or engagement activities. Our research suggests the partnership would benefit from a decisionmaking model that is both community and data driven, implementing joint activities to improve student outcomes of interest, establishing a mechanism for serving individual SHA students, and revisiting the core strategies with a focus on outcomes and sustainability.

The SHA-SPS partnership is dynamic and evolving, and staff reported making progress on several of these recommendations even as we finalized this report. For example, the partnership has selected outcomes related to attendance and chronic absenteeism to guide the next phase of activities. The Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools are committed to tracking and measuring their efforts to develop a sustainable and productive partnership. The final component of Urban's evaluation will be to help the partners develop a measurement framework to document their ongoing contributions to the partnership and measure key indicators of partnership success.

Appendix A. Methodology

The Urban Institute's research team had access to a range of information to develop this report. Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools staff provided internal and external documents developed through partnership activities. In October 2016, the Urban team circulated a survey to staff at each agency, conducted a site visit to interview staff at each agency, and facilitated a cross-agency facilitated "SWOT" (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) session. For this report, we synthesize information gathered from the full range of data collection. We do not present findings in a SWOT format. But, where relevant, we note how findings connect to specific data-collection steps, and a brief overview of the most important SWOT session findings is included in box 1.

Document Review

Urban's research team reviewed over 50 documents obtained from SHA and SPS regarding the partnership. Documents included meeting agendas and notes, planning-phase project management documents, progress reports for Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly at the planning and implementation phases, organizational charts, data-sharing documents, and the 2015 partnership plan. These documents were used to obtain baseline information and context about the partnership. The documents were summarized and reviewed by the research team in September and October 2016.

Interviews

The research team designed interview guides and conducted 23 informant interviews in October 2016 to better understand the partnership's development and current activities (see appendix B for the interview guide and appendix E for the list of interviewees). The interviews were semistructured, and guides covered partnership context and structure, communication and collaboration, understanding and perceptions of core strategies, and the partnership's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Interviews were conducted in person at SHA or SPS and took between 30 and 45 minutes. Interviewers took comprehensive notes during each interview and recorded interviews when the respondent consented. To assist with data analysis, the research team coded the notes according to a list of key words using NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

SWOT Survey and In-Person Session

In early October, Urban provided an online survey to partnership stakeholders that covered questions on partnership strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (appendix C). Fourteen respondents completed the survey. During Urban's site visit on October 19, members of the research team facilitated a two-hour session at SPS with staff from both SHA and SPS (see appendix D for the SWOT session agenda). Twelve people participated, with equal representation from each agency.

Appendix B. Key Informant Interview Protocol

Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools

Housing and Education Partnership

Key Informant Interview Protocol

Interview Introduction

My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. I am (we are) from the Urban Institute, a non-profit research organization in Washington, D.C. We are conducting an independent evaluation of the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and Seattle Public School (SPS) partnership. This is not a “good” or “bad” evaluation. Rather, we are hoping to provide SHA and SPS with an in depth analysis of how the partnership works, its strengths, data capacity, gaps and weaknesses of the partnership and organizations involved in the partnership, and opportunities for growth and improvement. We hope this conversation will help us answer some of these questions. We are also interviewing other key stakeholders involved in the SHA / SPS partnership. We are also conducting a document review as well as a SWOT analysis to help us learn more about the partnership. Given your role and involvement with the SHA / SPS partnership, we want to learn more about the partnership from your perspective.

Informed Consent Statement

Before we begin, I want to let you know that the information you share with us today in this interview will be kept private, but we do not ensure confidentiality due to the fact that there are a few respondents. That means your individual answers will not be shared with anyone outside the research team working on the evaluation. When we report our findings, we will combine information from each interview and present it in a way that individual answers cannot be identified. We will make every effort to preserve your privacy by not using your name or any other identifying information (i.e. job title) that can be linked to a specific comment in our reporting.

(If there is more than one respondent): However, because there is more than one participant in this interview, we cannot ensure that what is shared during this conversation cannot be shared with outside stakeholders. We encourage participants not to share what other respondents say in respect of their privacy.

We want to be sure you freely consent to participating in this interview and that you are aware that you are not obligated to answer any questions you do not wish to. Do you consent to participate in the interview? (If yes, note time. If no, address concerns and explore the possibility of participation. If the respondent will not participate, ask if there is another person in their organization that they can recommend the research team speak to.)

Audio Recording Consent

With your permission, we would also like to record our interview. This recording serves as a back-up to the notes we take and allows us to fact check as we report our findings. You can also ask us to turn off the recorder at any point in the interview, we just ask you to note when it might be okay to turn back on the recorder. The recording is saved on a limited-access confidential drive and is erased at the end of the study. Do you consent to having the interview recorded? (If yes, turn on recorder). (If no, do not turn on recorder). *Before we begin, do you have any questions?*

Introduction and Background Information

Before we move to questions about the SHA SPS Partnership, we'd like to learn more about you and your background.

1. Name / Job Title / Education: To start, could you please tell me (us) your name, job title, and any education, training, or previous employment experience you have that is relevant to your role in the SHA SPS Partnership?
 - a. Tenure: How long have you been in your current role at [ORGANIZATION]?
2. Typical Day: What percentage of your work would you say is devoted to the SHA SPS Partnership?
3. Current Role: What is your current role in the SHA SPS Partnership?

SHA SPS Partnership Context and Vision

Thanks for sharing some of your background with us. Now we would like to ask you questions about the history of the SHA SPS Partnership, its mission and goals, as well as the participating organization's visions and goals.

4. Launch: To the best of your knowledge, could you tell us why the SHA SPS Partnership was launched?
5. Overarching Partnership Vision: Focusing more on the partnership as a whole, what are the SHA SPS Partnership's overarching vision and goal(s)?
6. Overarching Organization Vision: Focusing more on the individual organizations participating in the partnership, what is [ORGANIZATION]'s overarching vision for a sustainable partnership?

- a. Do you think that is similar to your partner organization's, or do these visions differ by organization? If so, how?
7. Individual Previous Cross-Sector Experience: Now thinking about experience in building and sustaining cross-sector partnership, do you have previous experience with cross-sector partnerships? If yes, could you explain your role? How do you think that experience informs your work on the SHA-SPS partnership?
 8. Organization Previous Cross-Sector Experience: Has [ORGANIZATION] been involved with any other cross-sector partnerships? If so, could you explain what that experience was? How do you think that experience informs your organization's contributions to the SHA-SPS partnership?

Structure: Organizational Structure and Partnership Structure

So far we've learned about your background, the SHA SPS Partnership vision and goals as well as the vision and goals of participating organizations, and previous experience you and [ORGANIZATION] have had with cross-sector partnerships. Now we'd like to learn about the Partnership structure as well as [ORGANIZATION]'s structure.

Structure

9. Governance Structure: What are formal mechanisms and governance structures for the partnership, and how do they function? In other words, who identifies strategic goals and makes key decisions? Has that arrangement been working out so far?
10. Organization Partnership Leadership Structure: Within your organization, who is involved in the partnership? Have any new positions been created for the work of the partnership? Has that structure been working out so far?
11. Did funding for your organization's partnership activities come from your existing budget or were new funding streams identified or tapped for the partnership?
12. Reforms & Changes: Have partnership activities required your organization to change protocols or remove legal or regulatory barriers? What reforms or system changes were, or are, necessary to support the partnership? Are these being addressed? If so, how?

Inclusion of Other Stakeholders

13. Community Members & Other Stakeholders: How have community members or stakeholders with expertise in core strategy areas been included in partnership activities and planning?
 - a. (Probe) For example, have social service providers with expertise in dual-generation initiatives, ELL services, or trauma-informed care contributed to discussions about partnership goals and activities?
14. Missing Partners: Are there potential partners who have not contributed to date but should? Are there critical missing partners whose absence or even opposition threatens the success of the partnership?
 - a. Were efforts made to engage these partners in the past?

- b. Are efforts currently underway to bring these critical missing partners into collaboration?

Internal and External Communication and Collaboration

Now that we know more about the Partnership's and [ORGANIZATION]'s structure, we'd like to learn about how internal and external communication and collaboration works.

Internal Communication

- 15. How do housing and education partners communicate and coordinate at the leadership level, to maximize advantages to participants?
 - a. Where are the strengths in this coordination?
 - b. Where are the weaknesses or shortfalls in this coordination?
- 16. Have housing and education partners communicated and coordinated at the program level yet (like the newly launched program at Bailey Gatzert)?
 - a. Where are the strengths in this coordination?
 - b. Where are the weaknesses or shortfalls in this coordination?

External Communication

- 17. How has the partnership been communicated to important stakeholders?
 - a. Where are the strengths in this coordination?
 - b. Where are the weaknesses and shortfalls in this effort?

Three Core Strategies

Next we'd like to talk about how the SHA SPS Partnership goals and activities related to the three core strategies.

- 18. Confirming Three Core Strategies: Before we begin with this section, we'd like to confirm what the three core strategies are. We understand them to be: (1) Create a data-driven service delivery model that informs how SHA and SPS allocate resources to improve education outcomes for shared students, (2) Develop dual-generation supports to improve education and skills attainment for youth and adults, and (3) Act as allies in bold policy and systems change in order to advance the well-being of shared students and families. Do you agree that these are the three core strategies? Do you have any changes to make in what we've described?

We'll talk through the first core strategy first. As a reminder that strategy is:

Create a data-driven service delivery model that informs how SHA and SPS allocate resources to improve education outcomes for shared students

19. Related Goals & Activities: Can you talk a little bit about this goal? What does it mean and how does your work relate to this goal?
20. Resources to Implement Core Strategy: What are the resources available to implement this component of the plan?
 - a. (Probe) For example, to extend SHA services to schools with large percentages of SHA students? Are these resources sufficient to meet partnership goals?

Now let's move onto the second core strategy. As a reminder that strategy is:

Develop dual-generation supports to improve education and skills attainment for youth and adults

21. Related Goals & Activities: Can you talk a little bit about this goal? What does it mean and how does your work relate to this goal?
22. Resources to Implement Core Strategy: What are the resources available to implement this component of the plan?
 - a. (Probe) For example, to extend SHA services to schools with large percentages of SHA students? Are these resources sufficient to meet partnership goals?

And now let's move onto the third core strategy. As a reminder that core strategy is:

Act as allies in bold policy and systems change in order to advance the well-being of shared students and families

23. Related Goals & Activities: Can you talk a little bit about this goal? What does it mean and how does your work relate to this goal?
24. Resources to Implement Core Strategy: What are the resources available to implement this component of the plan?
 - a. (Probe) For example, to extend SHA services to schools with large percentages of SHA students? Are these resources sufficient to meet partnership goals?

Now let's talk about how all three strategies work together. (Repeat all three strategies if you feel it would be helpful).

25. Related Goals & Activities: We have talked about how your work relates to each goal separately, but are your activities mutually re-enforcing? Are your efforts overall greater than the sum of the parts?
26. Resources to Implement Core Strategy: What are the resources available to implement components of the plan?
 - a. (Probe) For example, to extend SHA services to schools with large percentages of SHA students? Are these resources sufficient to meet partnership goals?

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities for Growth

Thank you for sharing all of this information with us! We are almost done with this interview. Now, we'd like to learn what you think are the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth are in relation to the SHA SPS Partnership.

27. Partner Organization Capacity: What capacities do partners have to manage or carry out major components of the plan?

a. To what extent do they need to take on new roles or develop capacity?

28. Coordination Challenges: What are challenges of coordination among multiple partners and agencies, and how do SHA and SPS manage these tensions?

a. How do they overcome regular challenges of engagement, communication, and consensus building?

29. Overall Strengths: How would you describe the overall strengths of the SHA SPS Partnership?

a. Where do these strengths come from?

i. (Probe) Are they based on previously held relationships, because of intentional trust building, etc.?

30. Overall Weaknesses: How would you describe the overall weaknesses of the SHA SPS Partnership?

a. Where do these weaknesses come from?

i. (Probe) Are they based on previously held relationships, because of competing priorities?

31. Overall Threats: Are there any threats to the SHA SPS Partnership? If so, what are they?

a. Where do these threats come from?

32. Overall Opportunities for Growth: What are the overall opportunities for growth?

a. How would you suggest the partnership harness and achieve these opportunities for growth?

Closing

Thank you so much for participating in our interview. As a reminder, when reporting our findings we will not use any names or other identifying information, but we cannot promise confidentiality. If we choose to quote you, we will reach out to you so you can confirm the accuracy of the quote.

Do you have any last comments to share or any questions for us?

[TURN OFF RECORDER AFTER LAST COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS ARE MADE].

Appendix C. Online SWOT Survey

Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools

Housing and Education Partnership

Online SWOT Survey

The Urban Institute (Urban) is providing research and technical assistance support to help inform and guide the future of the Housing and Education Partnership between the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and the Seattle Public Schools (SPS). This includes a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” or SWOT exercise to understand the partnership effort in more depth and how to best continue and/or modify the effort moving forward.

Today, we are seeking your input on the SWOT from your unique vantage point. Your responses will inform the work that will be conducted over the coming months.

Please share your observations about the partnership below. Responses are due by October 14, 2016. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and your responses will not be linked to you in any way. We will use this information to prepare for a more in-depth opportunity to discuss these themes with SHA and SPS staff.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you are not required to complete the survey. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

Your name, email address and IP address will not be collected, and your survey answers will not be linked to you in any way. Responses will be stored in a password-protected electronic format.

If you have questions at any time about the study or procedures, you may contact Martha Galvez at the Urban Institute directly, at mgalvez@urban.org or at 202-261-5260.

Do you consent to participate in this survey?

- a. Yes
- b. No

The goal of our work is to understand how (and whether) the SHA-SPS partnership can best deliver on the following three strategies:

1. Create a data-driven service delivery model that informs how SHA and SPS allocate resources to improve education outcomes for our shared students.
2. Develop dual-generation supports to improve education and skills attainment for youth and adults.
3. Act as allies in bold policy and systems change in order to advance the well-being of shared students and families.

Please share your observations about the partnership below. Responses are due by October 14, 2016. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and your responses will not be linked to you in any way. We will use this information in developing guidance to improve the partnership moving forward.

Strengths: What resources and capabilities within SHA and/or SPS will help the partnership deliver on these goals?

Weaknesses: What characteristics within SHA, SPS, or the partnership itself need to be improved or addressed for the partnership to succeed?

Opportunities: What external factors might make it easier for the partnership to achieve its goals? (For example, the public policy landscape, demographic trends, the economy, other organization's operations, etc.)

Threats: What external elements might make it harder for the partnership to achieve its goals? (For example, the public policy landscape, demographic trends, the economy, other organization's operations, etc.)

We would like to know a little bit more about your unique vantage point. Please answer the following questions about your role in the partnership:

1. I work for
 - a. SHA
 - b. SPS
 - c. A Seattle city agency
 - d. A non-profit organization
 - e. Other (please write-in) _____

2. My role is
 - a. Managing or directing the partnership
 - b. Providing direct services to adults
 - c. Providing direct services to children
 - d. Providing administrative support
 - e. Other (please write-in) _____

Thank you in advance for your input!

Appendix D. In-Person SWOT Session Agenda

Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle Public Schools

Housing and Education Partnership

SWOT Session Agenda

Wednesday, October 19

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

2:00 p.m.	Welcome and introductions
2:20 p.m.	About SWOT
2:35 p.m.	Individual Exercise: SWOT Matrix
2:40 p.m.	Discussion and brainstorming
3:10 p.m.	Identify focus areas
3:15 p.m.	Small-Group Exercise: Using the SWOT results
3:35 p.m.	Discussion
3:55 p.m.	Wrap-Up

Appendix E. Site-Visit Summary

Memo

To: Denille Bezemer and Courtney Cameron, Seattle Housing Authority
From: Martha Galvez, Megan Gallagher, Maya Brennan, Priya Saxena, Urban Institute
Date: November 7, 2016
Re: October 18–19 2016 Site-Visit Memo

On October 18th and 19th, 2016, Urban Institute researchers Martha Galvez, Megan Gallagher, Maya Brennan, and Priya Saxena visited Seattle to conduct a series of one-on-one interviews with SHA and SPS staff, and to facilitate a group Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats or “SWOT” session at SPS with a combination of SHA and SPS partnership stakeholders.

This memo provides a synopsis of our site visit and interviews, and highlights some key themes that emerged from our interviews and SWOT meeting. The purpose of the memo is to document the site visit activities. The themes identified below are preliminary insights from the research team. A thorough assessment of the data collection process, including data from document review and the site visit, will be included in the final report, along with findings and recommendations.

SHA interviews

Megan Gallagher and Priya Saxena conducted a total of 10 interviews on site at the Seattle Housing Authority’s main office. Interview respondents included:

- Andrew Lofton, Executive Director
- Lisa Wolters, Director of Intergovernmental Relations
- Andria Lazaga, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives
- Cynthia West Setel, HCV Program Director
- Matt Helmer, Senior Policy Analyst
- Dani Fitts, Senior Policy Analyst
- Courtney Cameron, Strategic Advisor for Education

- John Forsyth, Community Services Administrator
- Cicily Nordness, Supportive Services Coordinator

In addition, they met with project funder Kolin Min from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to discuss the broader objectives of the Gates Foundation's investment in housing and education partnerships. A final two interviews will be conducted with SHA staff that were not available during the time that the Urban team was on-site.

SPS interviews

Martha Galvez and Maya Brennan interviewed a total of 12 people at the Seattle Public School District's main office, including:

- Michael Tolley, Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
- Tyra Williams, McKinney-Vento Liaison/Program Manager
- Kathlyn Paananen, Housing & Education Manager
- Audrey Querns, Project Manager
- Dedy Fauntleroy, Principal, Cedar Park Elementary
- Alesia Jessie, Program Manager, Family Support Workers
- James Bush, Director of Community Partnerships
- Anna Cruz, Lead Statistical Analysis
- Rivka Burstein-Stern, Partnerships Alignment Coordinator
- Veronica Gallardo, Director of ELL and International Programs
- Natasha Rivers, Demographer, Enrollment Planning
- Shukri Olow, Schools and Community Partnerships Coordinator

Up to three additional phone interviews are anticipated for the coming weeks with staff that were unavailable when the Urban team was on site.

SWOT

On October 10, Urban provided an on-line SWOT survey to partnership stakeholders, which was completed in full by 14 respondents⁶ in preparation for the in-person session held on October 19th at SPS. Maya Brennan facilitated the two-hour session with staff from both SHA and SPS. In total, 12 people participated, with equal representation from each agency.

At the SWOT, participants were guided through individual and group exercises to identify the internal and external factors that could help or harm the partnership in achieving its goals. Participants voted on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that they found most warranted SHA and SPS attention. After collecting this information, participants worked in small groups to identify potential actions they could take based on this information, for example by using a strength as a starting point to help them leverage an opportunity or overcome a threat.

Early Themes

Several themes emerged from the surveys, 22 individual interviews, and the SWOT session conducted over the two-day site visit. Here we highlight a number of them.

- There is a strong commitment to the partnership and strong leadership at each organization—particularly at the senior levels. There is some concern that Carri’s recent departure has left a gap that needs to be filled, but also optimism that Kathlyn’s involvement in the partnership work will fill the gap.
- Representatives from each organization also expressed a shared understanding of the key drivers or motivations for the partnership. Interview respondents frequently noted the evidence that (1) SHA students represent a significant proportion of SPS’s population overall, and in individual schools near SHA properties; and (2) that SHA students are not keeping up with their peers as measured by academic performance and attendance. In particular, SPS’s commitment to eliminating opportunity gaps for students of color was noted as directly related to their partnership goals, recognizing that SHA students are more likely to be students of color and English language learners.
- The data-sharing agreement that allowed SHA and SPS to identify the SHA share of SPS’s student population and outcome disparities was acknowledged as a significant achievement for the partnership, requiring unique effort on the part of both SPS and SHA staff.

- Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly and Home from School are strong foundations for the larger systems-level partnership, by informing the partnership’s development and providing insights into how SPS staff can engage with SHA staff, students and families on discrete projects.

Respondents also noted challenges to strengthening the partnership.

- There is a need for more clarity around the partnership’s long-term goals, target entry points for school-based programs or services, and available resources. Several interviewees and SWOT participants noted that the partnership needs to shift from its initial development work to identifying clear common goals.
- Staff noted that short-term programs dependent on temporary funding streams are common, and do not lead to sustained change. They have therefore been slower to use partnership resources for specific direct service programs, focusing instead on identifying potentially sustainable, longer-term changes.
- Successful data sharing presents the partnership with an opportunity to develop data driven strategies, but also presents a challenge to develop more efficient and sustainable processes, and more strategic analysis goals.
- There are information gaps about what is driving overall patterns of SHA student attendance and achievement, which complicate efforts to identify clear entry points for interventions. Data sharing and analysis to date has been limited by staff capacity and a lack of clarity about the strategically important questions that additional data analysis may answer, therefore many questions remain about SHA students.
- There is no clear consensus within the partnership about the value and risks of data sharing or analysis for the purpose of targeting individual students or families for interventions. This is in part because the root causes of SHA student disparities are not well understood, and in part because resources may not be available to dedicate specifically to struggling SHA students.
- SHA staff noted a need for more and ongoing community outreach and trust building with SHA students and families, by both SPS and SHA. The current Deep Dive 3 at NewHolly and Home from School efforts have laid important groundwork for working with SHA families at the school and community levels, but also reveal some areas for improvement—including more effective, consistent, and culturally competent communication. For example, SPS staff noted that early missteps in community engagement have created avoidable and time-consuming challenges.

- Whereas SHA's Choice Neighborhood and HOPE VI communities offer clear entry points for community engagement, it is less clear where other housing communities and voucher holders fit in to partnership interventions.

Next Steps

Urban will analyze the SWOT and interview data, and review partnership documents, in order to develop a report that (1) describes and assesses the housing and education partnership, including the internal and external contexts supporting the partnership; (2) describes and assesses the extent to which the partnership and activities are consistent with the three core strategies described in the RFP and the partnership plan; and 3) provides recommendations for strengthening or course-correcting the partnership. For example, the report will describe the current state of the partnership, stakeholder perceptions of the partnership's implementation, and recommendations for leveraging strengths and addressing weaknesses.

The report will be followed by a prospective evaluation framework, developed collaboratively with SHA and SPS, that provides tools and guidance to monitor the partnership's ongoing development.

Notes

1. As of early 2017, CLPHA staff report that more of their members are engaged in education-related activities than in previous years, with 28 PHAs participating in its education work group. This informal accounting of PHA efforts does not account for all CLPHA members or PHAs nationwide that may be partnering with local schools or school districts.
2. Matthew Johnson and Justin Milner, “Crossroads: The Intersection of Housing and Education Policy,” Urban Institute, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://apps.urban.org/features/crossroads-housing-education-policy/>.
3. “Bringing School Home,” Boulder Housing Partners, accessed February 17, 2017, <https://boulderhousing.org/bringing-school-home>.
4. See Murray, Falkenburger, and Saxena (2015) for one approach to sharing research with community members through “data walks” to present data and research findings:
5. When this report was finalized, SHA staff reported that significant progress had been made on identifying outcomes of interest, including attendance and absenteeism.
6. Twenty respondents opened the SWOT survey; only 14 completed and submitted the survey before the site visit.

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About the Authors

Martha Galvez is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Her expertise is in housing and homelessness policy, with a focus on examining how interventions aimed at improving housing stability and choice for low-income families are implemented and how they affect individuals, families, and neighborhoods. Galvez's current projects include studies on housing stability, child welfare, and neighborhood mobility outcomes for low-income families who receive Housing Choice Vouchers, and a study examining the role of race or ethnicity in housing and neighborhood location decisions. She is also interested in improving access to and use of integrated housing and social service data to understand the characteristics of families living in subsidized housing and the housing and service needs of vulnerable households. She has experience in mixed-methods research and has designed and managed studies involving collection and analysis of complex administrative, survey, and qualitative data.

Megan Gallagher is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Her research focuses on efforts to improve housing and educational opportunities for children in low-income families. She studies how housing and neighborhood initiatives affect schools and how schools and education policies affect neighborhoods. Gallagher also provides research and technical support for place-based initiatives that seek to improve educational outcomes.

Maya Brennan engages in research, analysis, and stakeholder engagement as part of the Policy Advisory Group at the Urban Institute. She is a principal investigator on the How Housing Matters project. Since 2007, her work has focused on the connection between housing and individual well-being. Most recently, she was vice president of the Urban Land Institute's Terwilliger Center for Housing, where she was the project lead for HowHousingMatters.org. She has given keynotes on affordable housing issues for HousingWorks Rhode Island and Housing Virginia and has presented on research application as a panelist before the Population Health Roundtable at the National Academy of Sciences.

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

The Urban Institute strives to meet the highest standards of integrity and quality in its research and analyses and in the evidence-based policy recommendations offered by its researchers and experts. We believe that operating consistent with the values of independence, rigor, and transparency is essential to maintaining those standards. As an organization, the Urban Institute does not take positions on issues, but it does empower and support its experts in sharing their own evidence-based views and policy recommendations that have been shaped by scholarship. Funders do not determine our research findings or the insights and recommendations of our experts. Urban scholars and experts are expected to be objective and follow the evidence wherever it may lead.



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