



BUILDING THE VILLAGE

*Collective Impact Strategies for School
and Community Collaboration*

Kailin Kucewicz, LMSW, Manager, Community Schools Supports and Partnerships, Erie 1 BOCES



OBJECTIVES

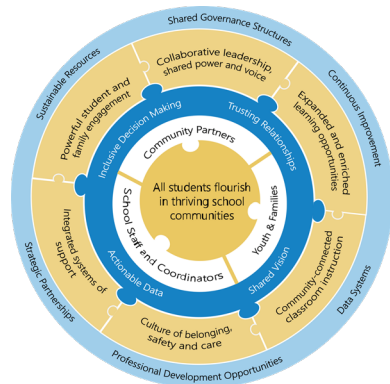
1. Describe the core principles of the Community Schools Framework
1. Identify the role of backbone organizations and regional partnerships in coordinating resources, reducing duplication of efforts, and increasing access to supports for students and families.
1. Examine the WNY SMART Collaborative as a model of collective impact, demonstrating how schools, community agencies, higher education, and local government can work together to address student mental health and social-emotional needs.
1. Apply practical strategies for developing and sustaining school-community partnerships that build trust, leverage community assets, and advance equitable outcomes for children and families



COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

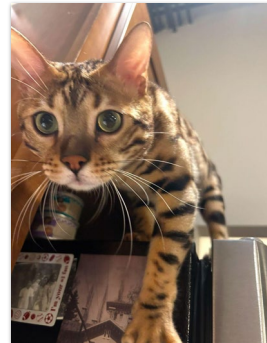
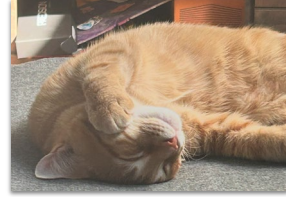
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COSER GOAL

Community Schools resources will provide for students' social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs and partner with districts and community organizations to remove barriers to learning and support the whole child.



Kailin Kucewicz, LMSW

- Community Schools CoSer since February 2023
- Educational background in Business, Engineering and Entrepreneurship, and Social Work
 - Educational Leadership Doctorate program Summer 2027
- Previous roles include
 - Health Educator, Mentor, & Supervisor at a local non-profit
 - Consultant and curriculum developer with a German start up company
 - Associate Professor at SUNY Erie Community College
- Cat mom, Lasertron (Bengal) and Bazooka (Orange)
- Art collector, water aerobics advocate, and novice textile artist





OUR VISION

We envision a world where schools, families, and community partners operate as one coordinated system, so communities have reliable access to the relationships, supports, and opportunities they need to thrive.

OUR PURPOSE

We provide flexible support to reduce barriers by providing resources and connection to community.

WE VALUE

We believe that this can be accomplished through...



COMPASSION



EQUITY



COLLABORATION



INNOVATION



CURIOSITY



OUR WORK

Is committed to evidence-based supports for the whole-child and the whole community.

OUR BENEFITS



CREATE
CONNECTIONS
BUILD CAPACITY



REDUCE BARRIERS

WE PROVIDE

By continuously evolving, we provide the supports and partnerships so schools, families, and communities thrive.



BACKBONE SUPPORTS



CONTRACT
MANAGEMENT



PARTNERSHIPS



PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING



RESOURCES



OUR TEAM

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Kailin Kucewicz

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WE ARE



PROBLEM
RESOLVERS



RESPONSIVE



CONNECTORS



CREATIVE

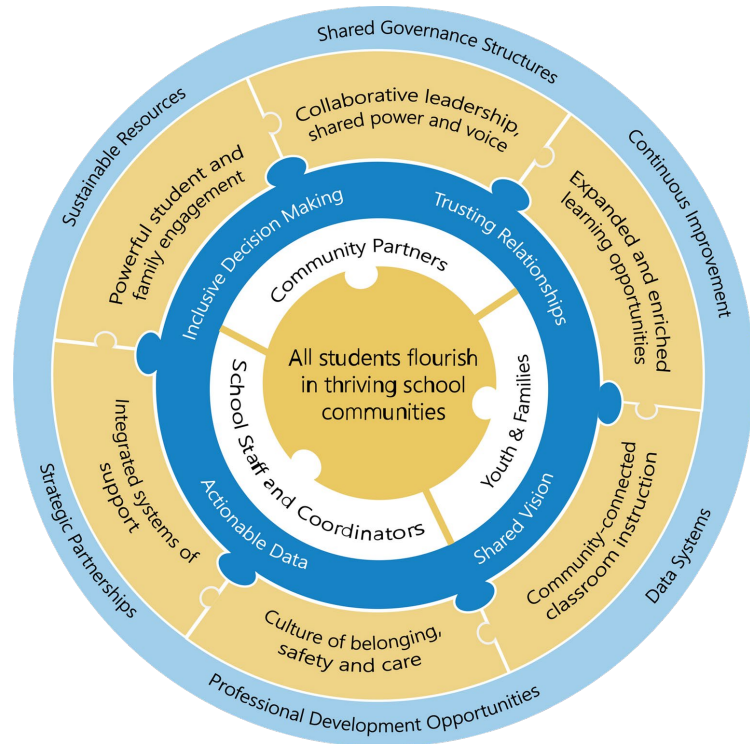


TRANSPARENT



RELIABLE AND
CONSISTENT

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGY



The community schools strategy transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. As partners, they organize in- and out-of-school resources, supports, and opportunities so that young people thrive.

Source: Community Schools Forward. (2023)

TIERED COSER SUPPORTS

INDIVIDUALIZED

Direct support provided to district, building, or organizational teams:

- Contracted Services
- Community Navigator Support
- C4K Dialogues

COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC

Facilitated collaboration for identified communities:

- Advisory Committee
- Erie County TIG Network
- WNY SMART Collaborative
- Lackawanna Stakeholder Coalition
- Live Well Erie: School Age Children

REGIONAL

Opportunities for learning and Professional Development available to everyone:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma, Illness, Grief (TIG)
- TAC Workshops
- Tending the Roots



ROLE OF BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



Common Agenda

We come together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision of how to solve it.



Continuous Communication

We build trust and strengthen relationships.



Foster Reinforcing Activities

We integrate all of the participants' activities to maximize the end result.



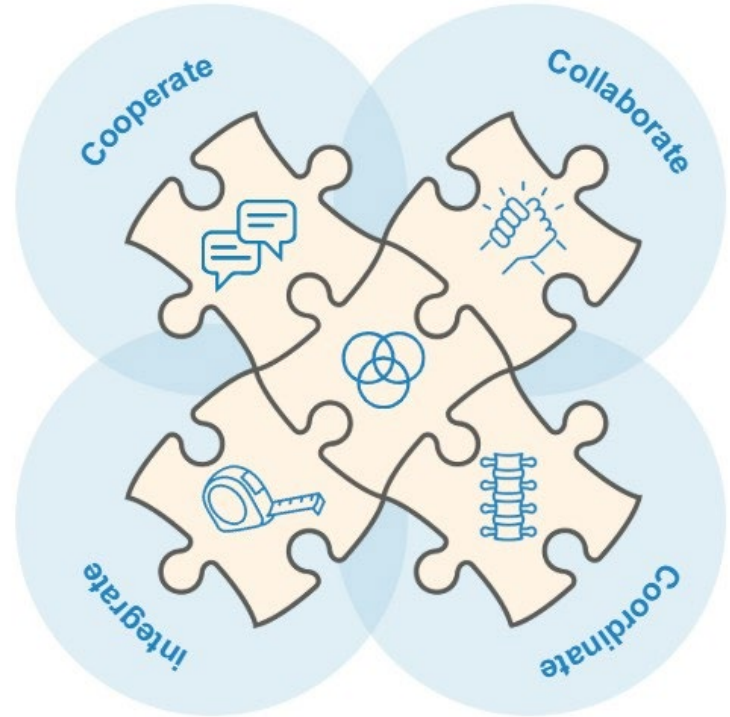
Establish Shared Measurements

We have a dedicated team aligning and coordinating this work.

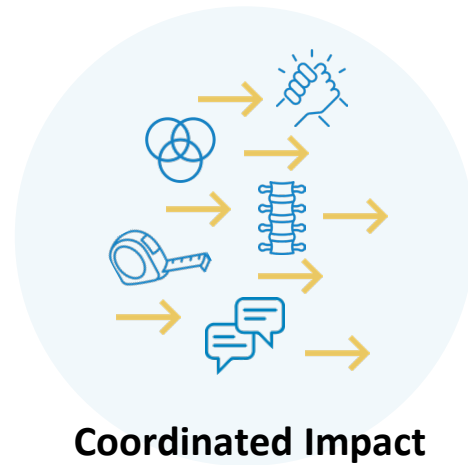
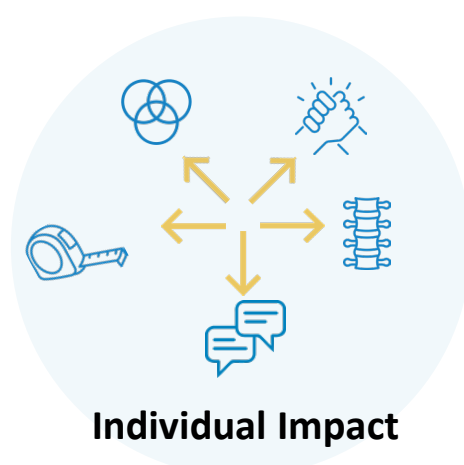
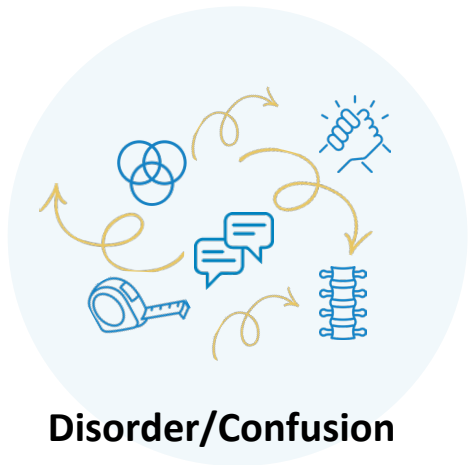


Strong Backbone

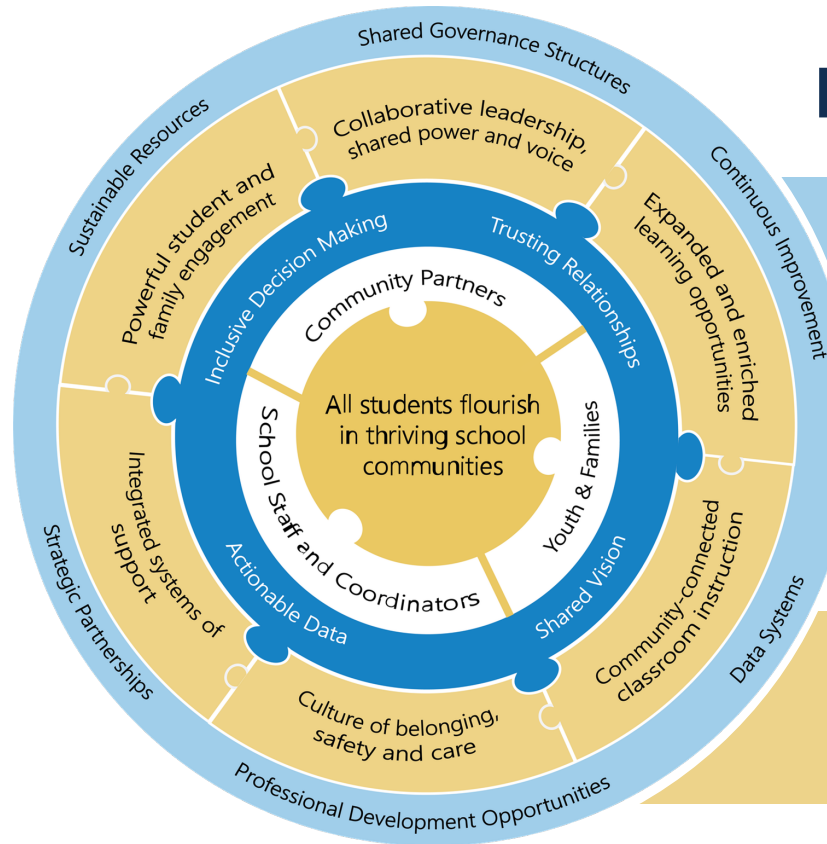
We all track progress in the same way, allowing for learning and accountability.



ALIGNMENT



BUILDING CAPACITY



Erie 1 BOCES acts as a liaison to connect schools with partners, assess needs, map resources, and support districts in overcoming barriers accessing services

District Administrators build and maintain systems that align with district goals, ensure compliance, and oversee implementation and continuous improvement of initiatives.

School Staff and Educators deliver programs and services directly, collaborate in leadership and decision-making, and create a classroom culture of safety, belonging, and care



Backbone
Organization



Leaders, administrators,
supervisors, managers



Direct Implementation

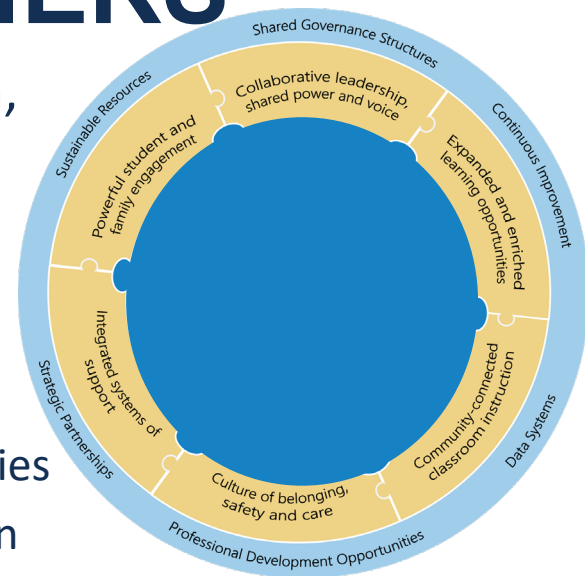


Stakeholders

TEACHERS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Provides the direct implantation, facilitation, and integration of programs and services to support students and families.

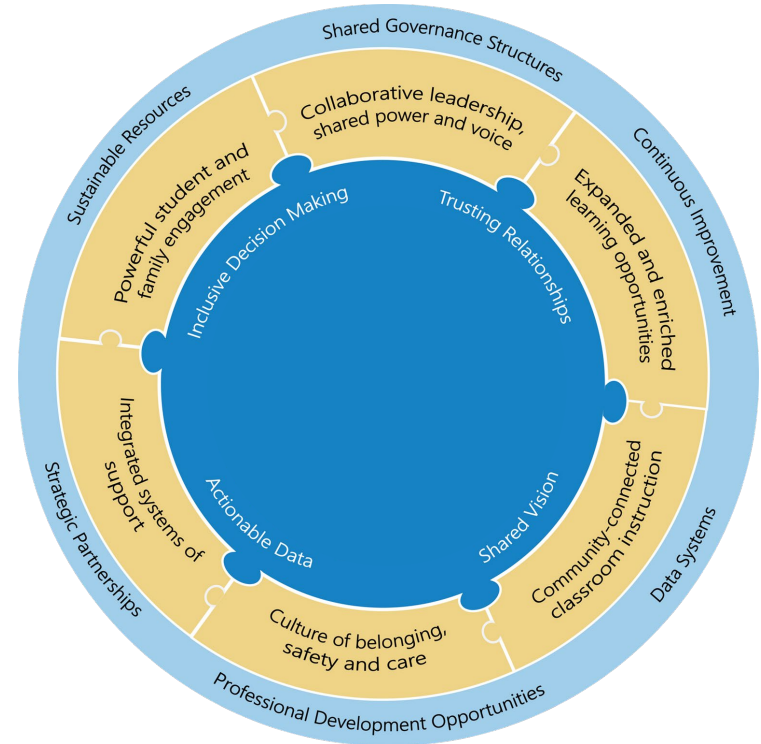
- Collaborative leadership, shared power and voice
- Expanded and enriched learning opportunities
- Community connected classroom instruction
- Culture of belonging safety and care
- Integrated systems of support
- Powerful student and family engagement



DISTRICT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY LEADERS

Provides additional support to districts to successfully address some of the barriers that districts face

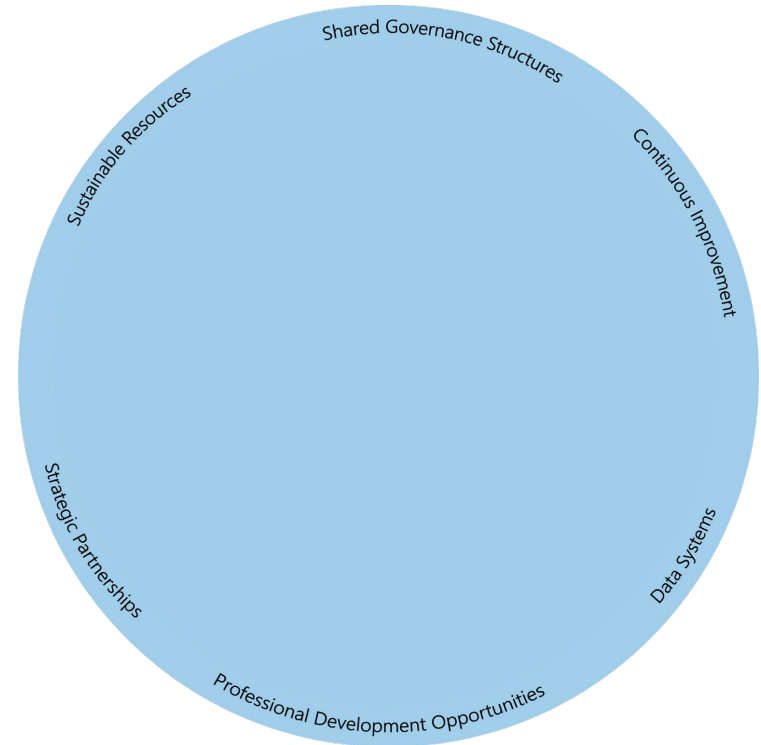
- Inclusive decision making
- Trusting relationships
- Actionable data
- Shared vision



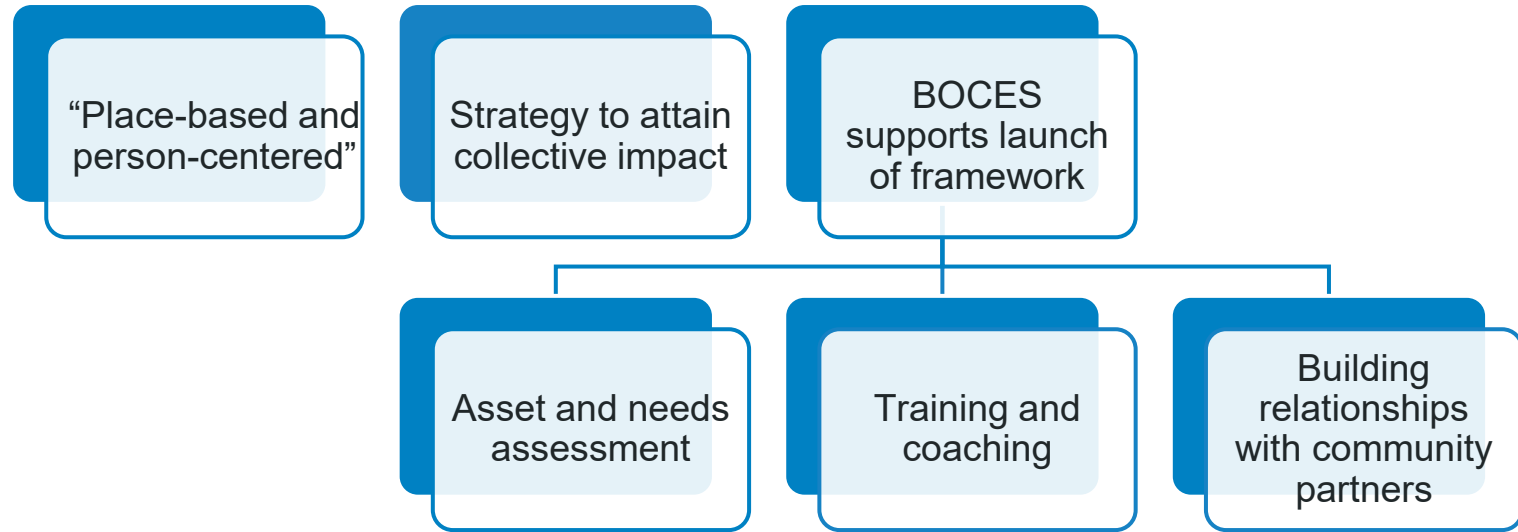
BACKBONE SUPPORT

Develop and maintain the supportive infrastructure needed for districts to best support students and families

- Sustainable Resources
- Shared Governance
- Continuous Improvement
- Data Systems
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Strategic Partnerships



Community Schools Backbone



SMART



SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH BY
ADVOCATING FOR RESOURCES TOGETHER



Family Support Centers



WNY SMART COLLABORATIVE

OUR VISION

Empowering partnership for a healthier community.

OUR MISSION

Promote interagency collaborations that champion supports for the mental health of all youth and families in Erie County.

OUR VALUES

We believe that our community deserves to be...



SAFE



INFORMED



ACCESSIBLE



CONNECTED



EMPOWERED

We believe that our community deserves to be...



SAFE

Students and caregivers feel safe and accepted when seeking mental health supports at school and in their community.



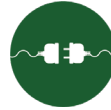
INFORMED

Students and caregivers are aware and knowledgeable about mental health and wellness, understanding all supports provided within the community.



ACCESSIBLE

SMART advocates for and improves student and caregiver connections to community supports by addressing individual community needs and reducing barriers.



CONNECTED

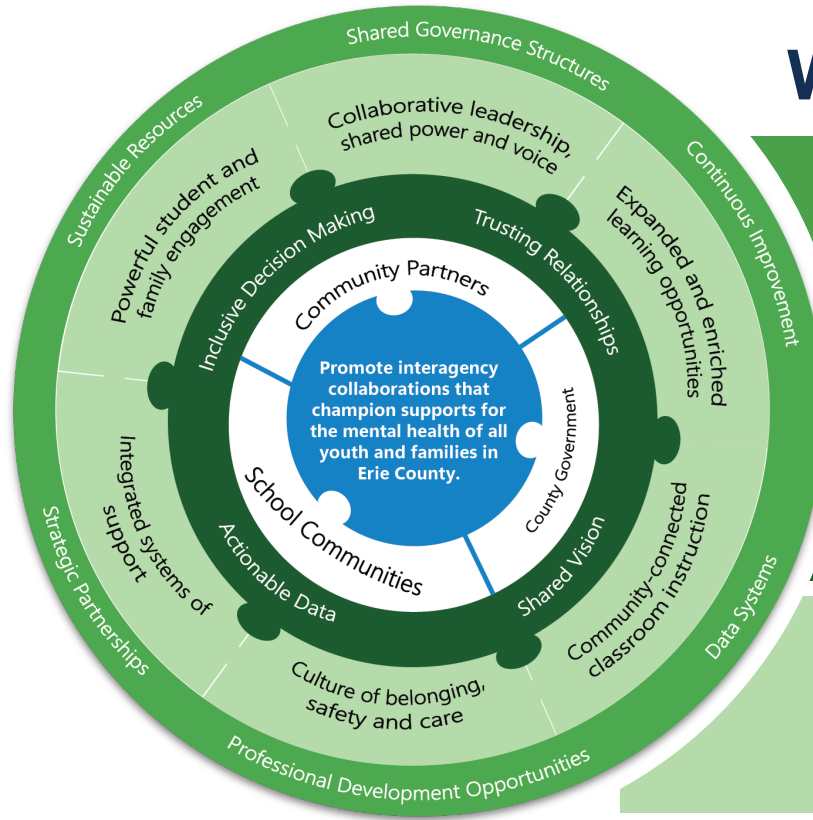
Students and caregivers are connected to resources and supports that foster relationships to promote a sense of belonging and wellness.



EMPOWERED

SMART uplifts students and caregivers to promote the growth and wellness of the community.

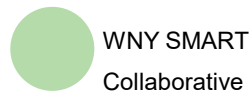
WNY SMART COLLAB



Steering Committee acts as a liaison to guide the direction of the work of the WNY SMART Collaborative by leading subcommittees and convening to plan for each meeting.

Subcommittees provide direct support to addressing the barriers to use accessing mental health care and supporting the work of the task groups.

WNY SMART Collaborative gather three times a year to participate in learning and workgroups to identify and take back best practice to their districts, departments, and organizations.





Backbone
Planning &
Communications
Team



Steering
Committee



Family Engagement:
Conference Support



Advocacy



Resource
Mapping



Conference

SMART Collaborative



WNY SMART COLLABORATIVE BACKBONE SUPPORT

Erie 1 BOCES and the
Community Schools CoSer
team provide backbone
planning and communications
support. Providing support
through:

- Listserv Management
- Meeting coordination and communication
- Meeting host and facilitation
- Managing fundraising

RACI Matrix

Responsible

The person or team who performs the task and delivers the work

Accountable

The individual who owns the outcome and has the final decision-making authority

Consulted

Stakeholders who provide input, feedback, and expertise before or during the task

Informed

Individuals who need updates on progress and results but are not directly involved

Using a RACI Matrix

A RACI Matrix helps clarify roles when multiple partners are involved. It identifies who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed, reducing confusion and supporting shared ownership.

ABOUT SMART

Our Steering Committee

Ann Linder, Orchard Park Central School District

Anna Cieri, Suicide Prevention Coalition Of Erie County

Annahita (Anna) Ball, University at Buffalo, School of Social Work

April Slater, New Directions Youth and Family Services

Candace Reimer, Erie 1 BOCES

Catie Gavin, Erie County

David Evans, Cleveland Hill Union Free School District

Emily Sass, Erie 1 BOCES

Emily Schutte Watson, Erie 1 BOCES

Hannah Balfour, Erie 1 BOCES

Heather Wood, Erie County

Jean Sadowy, NYS Office of Mental Health

Jessica Karches, Erie 1 BOCES

Kailin Kucewicz, Erie 1 BOCES

Karen Rybicki, Erie County

Kelli Gaiser, New Directions Youth and Family Services

Lisa Chimera, Erie County

Mai Nguyen, Buffalo Public Schools

Marie Sly, Erie County Department of Mental Health

Matthew Bystrak, Ken-Ton UFSD

Melissa Brind'Amour, West Seneca Central School District

Melissa Rivers, Erie 2 BOCES

Michael Capuana, Erie 1 BOCES

Michael Cornell, Hilbert College

Sarah Bonk, Erie County

Talisa King, Live Well Erie

Tera Siegfried, Erie 1 BOCES

Tom Adams, Hamburg Central School District



SUBCOMMITTEE WORKING GROUPS

Training Resources

- Inventory current available training
- Develop overview of mental health services within schools
- Develop an overview of community services

Data Collection

- Create a data guidance resource
- Identify shared measurement across SMART

Family Engagement

- Support Family Engagement Conference
- Resource mapping and alignment with Erie Path
- Create articles/highlights of local resources

2025 IMPACT REPORT

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT



289
attendees



28 school districts

55 community partners



6 award winners



1 BIG thank you

On behalf of the SMART Steering Committee, we are grateful for your support of this inaugural event. Our region and its students are fortunate to benefit from partners who are dedicated, caring, and responsive to youth mental health needs. Your impact is immense—and together, our collective impact is immeasurable. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL SMART INITIATIVES

School Hospital Collaboration

- Reentry process
- Consent forms (FERPA & HIPPA)

School Pediatrician Collaborative

- Dos and Don'ts of communication
- Panel Presentation to Buffalo Pediatric Society

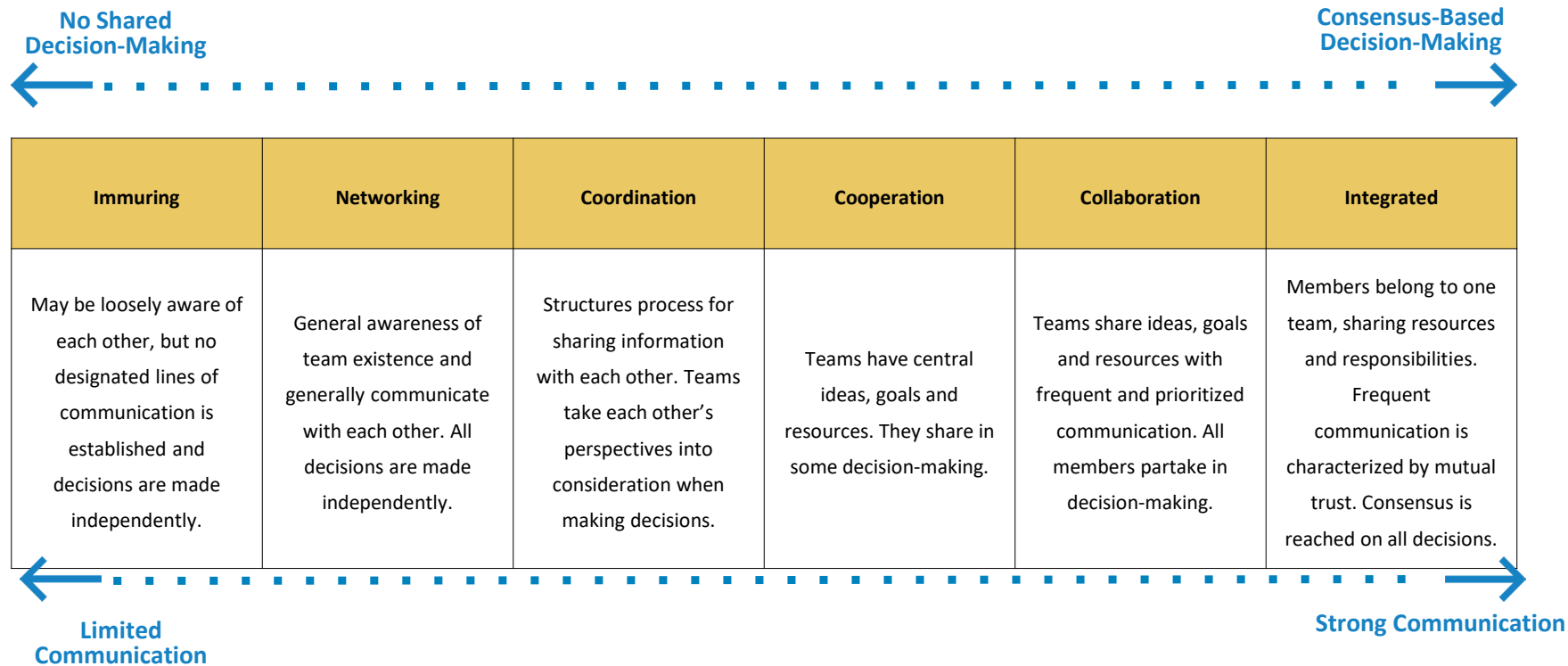




PARTNERSHIP BUILDING BEST PRACTICES

Collaboration Spectrum

Internal Collaboration Partnerships



Collaboration Spectrum

School Community Partnerships

Capacities Needed



Basic independent capacities for functioning within a school



Clear communication channels across teams and strategies for identifying information needs from others



Process for sharing information, stated objectives, known leadership structure, and a plan for regularly evaluating progress



Teams take each other's perspectives into consideration when decision-making and there is a stated process for arranging time, budget, and resources



Regular opportunities to come together for reciprocal learning



Access to resources and support available to groups contained within a single organization (ex. decision-making bodies, leadership, visibility)

COLLABORATION SPECTRUM



Low
Commitment
Low Trust

Networking

Partners primarily share and exchange information about their activities and services. Networking requires low levels of trust and minimal time, and it does not require partners to resolve turf or territorial issues.

Coordinating

Partners exchange information and are willing to adjust their services or program activities to achieve a common goal. This may include coordinating communication timelines, aligning with one another's organizational policies and procedures, or adapting practices to accommodate partners' limitations, resources, and fiscal realities.

Cooperating

Partners act on one another's recommendations to achieve a common goal. This may involve reaching out when issues arise or obtaining and implementing one another's recommendations.

Collaborating

Partners enhance one another's capacity by fully sharing expertise, learning from one another, sharing risk, and taking on challenges together. This can include intensive consultation and teaming around interventions, jointly monitoring implementation and progress, and maintaining ongoing feedback loops.

Integrating

Partners merge operational and administrative structures. This may involve fully embedding supports into the school setting, culture, and day-to-day operations. Integration requires a high level of commitment and trust, as well as effective handling of turf and territorial concerns.

High Commitment
High Trust



PARTNERSHIP LEVEL EXAMPLES



↑
Low
Commitment
Low Trust

Networking

Share information about programs, events, and enrollment opportunities that may benefit students and families; invite to a tabling or community event.

Coordinating

Girl Scouts aligns program schedules, recruitment efforts, or badge activities with school calendars and Community Schools priorities to support a shared goal, such as youth leadership or after-school engagement.

Cooperating

Girl Scouts adjusts programming or outreach based on recommendations from Community School staff, such as targeting specific student groups or responding to emerging needs identified within schools.

Collaborating

Co-design and jointly implement programming—such as leadership development or SEL-focused troop experiences—while sharing expertise, monitoring participation, and refining efforts together.

High Commitment
High Trust
↓

Integrating

Girl Scouts programming is fully embedded into the school community through the Community Schools model, with shared planning, staffing coordination, and ongoing integration into the school's culture, schedules, and whole-child supports.



FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Focused

Identify areas of need or interest

Build on Community

Identify what services are currently in your community

Expand Community

Identify what services are located in the surround areas and county.
Connect with services that others may already be using.

Win Win Win

Explore how partnerships are mutually beneficial



FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Start Small

- Low stakes ways to connect
- Sharing opportunities, attending events, in-person meetings

Strength-Based Approach

- Where can you lean on each other?

Communication

- Transparent and open
- What, why, and how
- Public communication

Types of Partnerships

- **Informal:** advisory, thought partner
- **Formal:** MOU, contracts



DISCUSSION

Outside your group/table - find someone you haven't talk to yet - discuss one of these options:

- ★ What is your school or organizations most unique partnership?
- ★ What partnership do you have that has progressed over time?



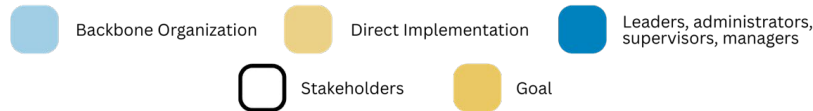
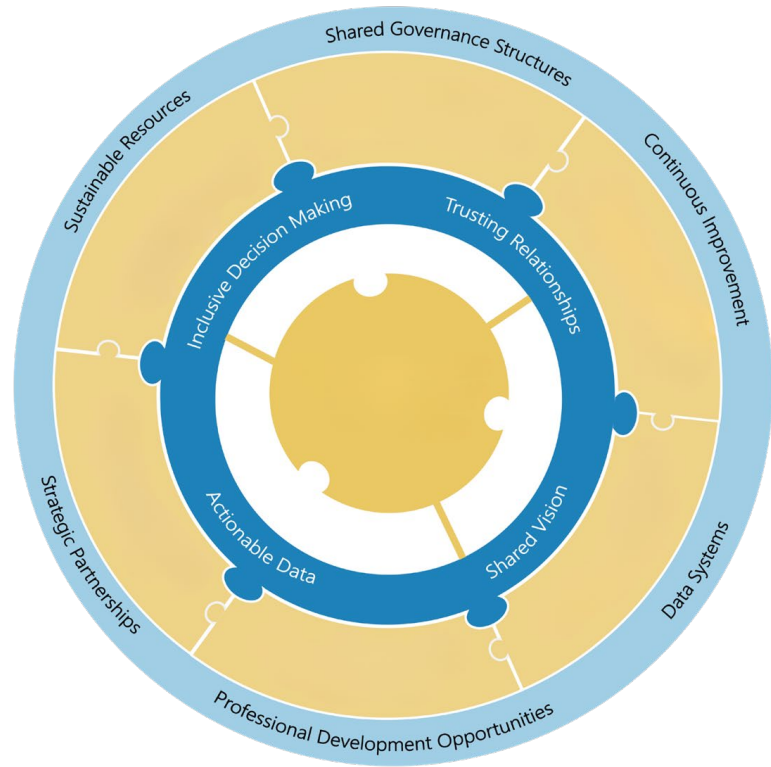
THINKING ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS

Pick 1 partnership you work with and answer the following:

1. What might a strong partnership look like to you?
2. What might partners need to make that happen?
3. What are possible ways you can support partners?
4. What what might you need to provide that support?



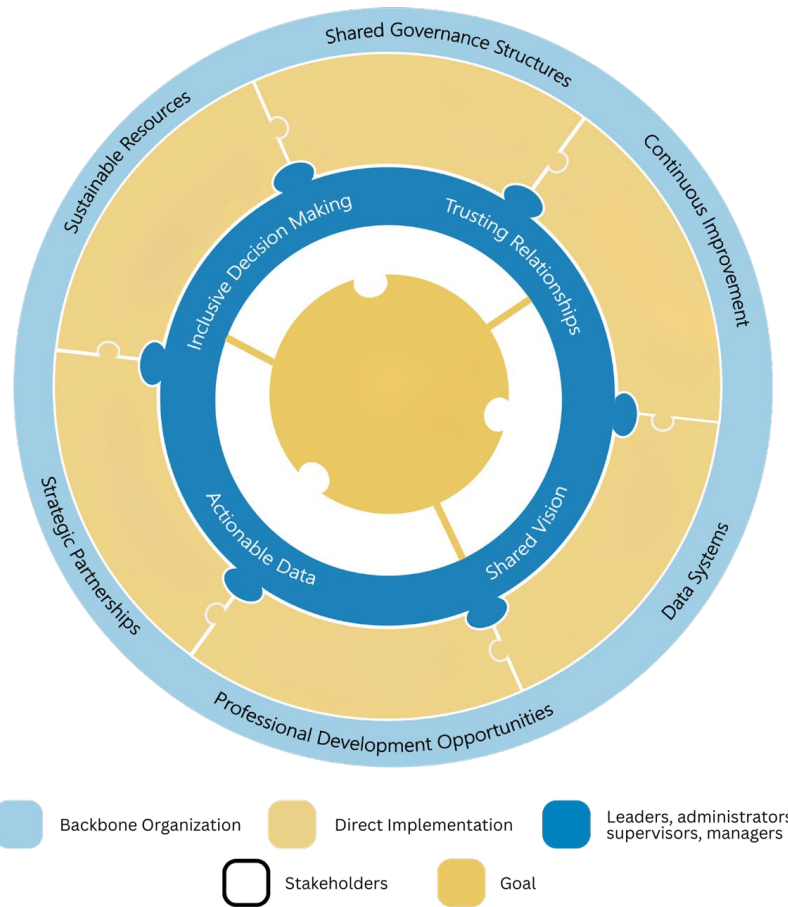
Activity: Tool for Alignment





Activity: Tool for Alignment

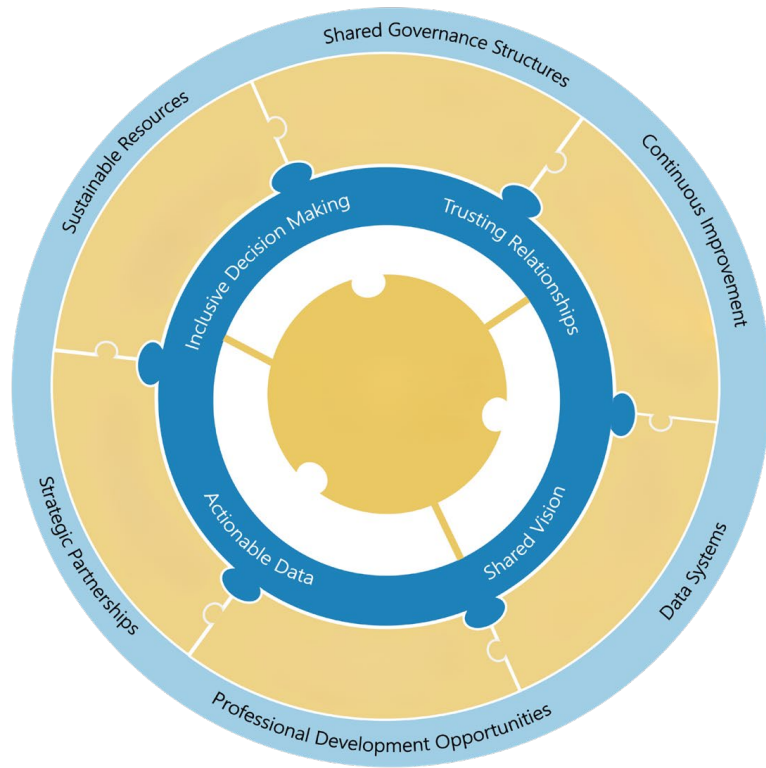
1. Place your response to question 4: *What what might you need to provide that support?* In the center.
2. Identify the stakeholders involved in the next ring
3. Identify action items you or your team could take to reach your center goal





THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Who might be some of your established partners?
- What might be some possible opportunities to expand on those existing partnerships?
- What resources might be available in your community? Who might your students and families already have relationships with?
- What might be an opportunity for new partnership?
- What could be one step you might take to begin to form that partnership?
- What gap does this partnership fill?



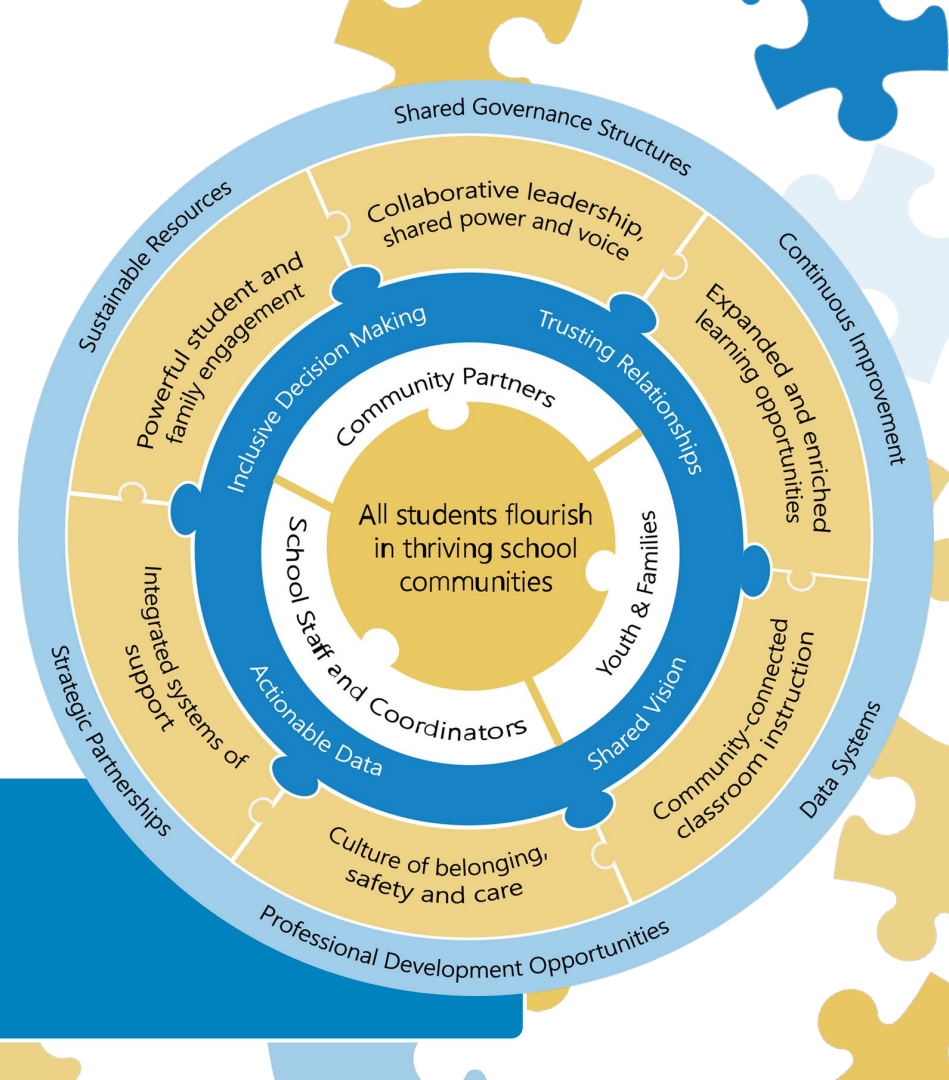
Who might the backbone organizations be in your work and how might you support them?





ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community Schools resources will provide for students' social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs and partner with districts and community organizations to remove barriers to learning and support the whole child.



Kailin Kucewicz

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CONTACTS