
COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE, COLLABORATION, & PARENT PARTICIPATION IN DISCOVERY COMMUNITIES: FALL 2006



This report was prepared by the Discovery Initiative Evaluation Team based on a presentation to the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund Board of Trustees in December 2006. The information used in this report was collected in the Fall of 2006. Further details on the data collection are presented in the report.

We appreciate the input and feedback of the Memorial Fund staff and the members and staff of the Discovery community collaborative groups. The analyses and conclusions in this report solely reflect the perspective of the Evaluation Team.

Sam Stephens
Center for Assessment and Policy Development
www.capd.org

Donna Studdiford
On Point Consulting
www.onpointconsulting.org



During the summer of 2006 information about Discovery collaborative group structure and processes, collaboration and parent participation was coded from various documents submitted to the Memorial Fund by communities and from staff analyses and reports. These data were analyzed and reported to the Board in July 2006.

Recognizing the limitations of these data, in the fall of 2006, Discovery communities were asked to complete a questionnaire to fulfill their progress report requirement. The survey focused on organizational structure and processes, collaboration with community partners, and parent engagement. The survey provided more detailed and up-to-date information than had been available earlier, directly from those involved in the work in Discovery communities. Almost all of the Discovery collaborative groups completed the questionnaire (45 out of 47, or 96 percent). Coordinators were asked to work with the collaborative group in completing the questionnaire and it appears that most did so.

This document presents analyses of the fall 2006 survey data, focusing on the infrastructure of Discovery community collaborative groups, relationships between the Discovery collaborative group and other organizations and groups in the community, and role of parents in the Discovery collaborative group, including ways the collaborative is fostering and supporting parent engagement in the community.

WHAT TOPICS ARE COVERED, ON WHAT PAGES?

- Summary of Key Findings - pages 4-6
- Definitions - pages 7-9
- Collaborative Infrastructure - pages 10-24
- Collaboration - pages 25-30
- Parent Participation - pages 31-52



KEY FINDINGS RE COLLABORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Almost all collaboratives have a leadership & committee structure
- Generally, few new members have joined over the past year
- Collaboratives rely heavily on Memorial Fund to pay for coordinators
- Some ask their coordinator to serve as chair as well.



4

KEY FINDINGS RE COLLABORATION

- Many collaboratives are affiliated with other community organizations or groups working on behalf of young children
- All collaboratives have partnered with other organizations to carry out parent engagement projects



5

KEY FINDINGS RE PARENT PARTICIPATION

- All collaboratives have parent members - generally, that number is small
- Collaboratives vary in how much they do to recruit & support parent members
- Collaboratives that do a lot have more members who are parents & more parents in leadership
- Collaboratives in which Discovery & the SRC are the same organization have lower parent participation



6

KEY DISCOVERY DEFINITION COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- "The mechanisms or functions necessary to assess and sustain a community change agenda."
- "These supports may include: management information systems to collect data across agencies to assess progress and impact; dedicated staff; parent leadership training opportunities; and public communication mechanisms."



From: Glossary
(http://discovery.wcgmf.org/category_19.html)

7

KEY DISCOVERY DEFINITION COLLABORATION

- "A process whereby multiple organizations, systems and community stakeholders work together to achieve outcomes beneficial to a community that could not be achieved individually."

From: *Glossary*
(http://discovery.wcgmf.org/category_19.html)



KEY DISCOVERY DEFINITION PARENT PARTICIPATION

- "The local Discovery collaborative is an accountability mechanism, ensuring that the community and parents are engaged in a partnership where children are at the center and family roles are acknowledged and respected."



From: Parent Voice and Action in Discovery:
A Community Resource Guide
(http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_801.pdf)

9





See following pages for detailed information on:

- Leadership positions – page 12
- Committees – page 13
- Number of members – page 14
- Positions on collaborative set-aside for other organizations – pages 15 &16
- Length of membership on collaborative – page 17
- Coordinator staffing – page 18
- Payment of coordinator – page 19
- Summary – pages 20-24

WHY IS COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORTANT TO THE INITIATIVE?

- Discovery collaboratives are expected to be broadly representative groups of community stakeholders that assume responsibility, on behalf of the community at large, to improve outcomes for young children.
- These groups are expected to commit to a common vision, conduct joint planning, and pool institutional resources.
- The initiative's supports are intended to help the Discovery communities set up the infrastructure necessary to function as a catalyst to strengthen community capacity to analyze, reflect, organize, and act on behalf of all young children.

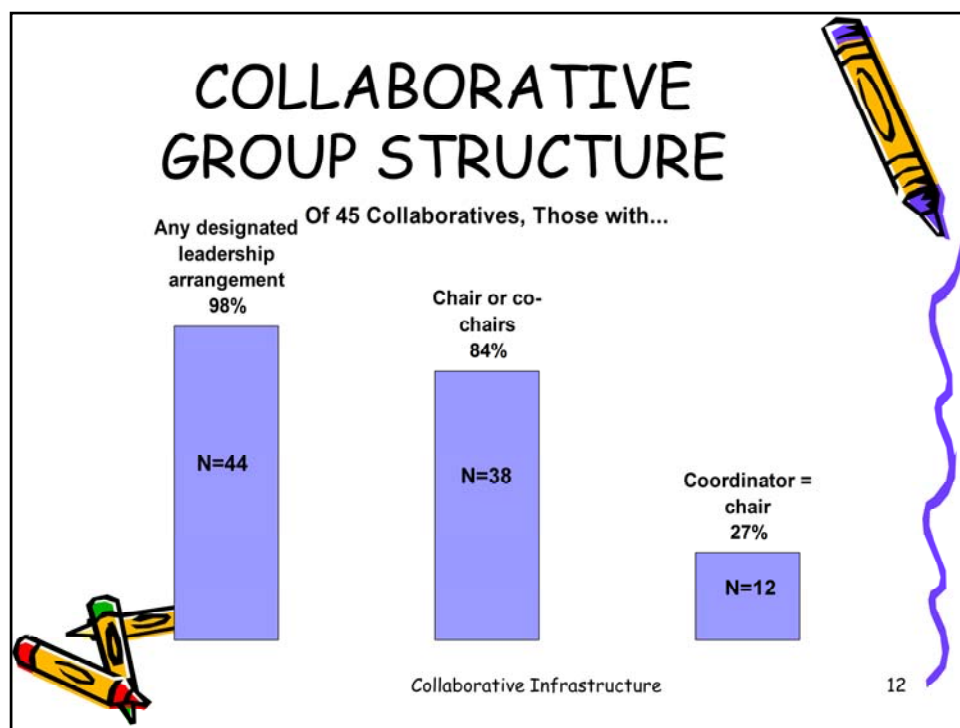
Collaborative Infrastructure

11

The Discovery initiative is intended to assist Connecticut communities in developing the following community capacities -- to:

- Create and sustain a community-wide agenda to improve early school success
- Collect, share and utilize data
- Cultivate and engage parents
- Organize and mobilize diverse constituencies for strategic purposes
- Apply knowledge of child development to practice and policy decisions
- Leverage resources
- Manage and lead a community change process

The grants and technical assistance provided to the Discovery communities during the planning period and since implementation began in 2003 are intended to help a broad-based group of people organize so that they can develop a shared vision and implement strategies that will benefit young children in their communities and make progress toward the Discovery objectives. A specific organizational structure – such as a 501(c)(3) organization or merging with the local School Readiness Council -- was not specified for these groups. However, it was expected that each community would develop a collaborative infrastructure that would facilitate and sustain broad engagement of diverse stakeholders in planning and carrying out activities to pursue local process, practice, and policy changes on behalf of young children and to join with other communities and statewide organizations to pursue changes on the state-level. This report looks at some indicators that such infrastructure had been developed and was operating in 2006.



Almost all collaboratives had some defined leadership arrangement, generally a chair or co-chairs, at the time of the survey.

In over one-quarter of responding collaboratives (12 out of 44), the coordinator was the designated chair or co-chair. This arrangement may overburden that individual and contribute to turnover. It also may blur staff and leader roles.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

- Does your collaborative currently have a chair or co-chairs? Please check one.
 Chair Co-chairs No current chair or leader
 Some other leadership arrangement
- Is your collaborative chair or co-chair the same as the Discovery coordinator?

Percent of Discovery collaborative groups with a designated leadership arrangement:

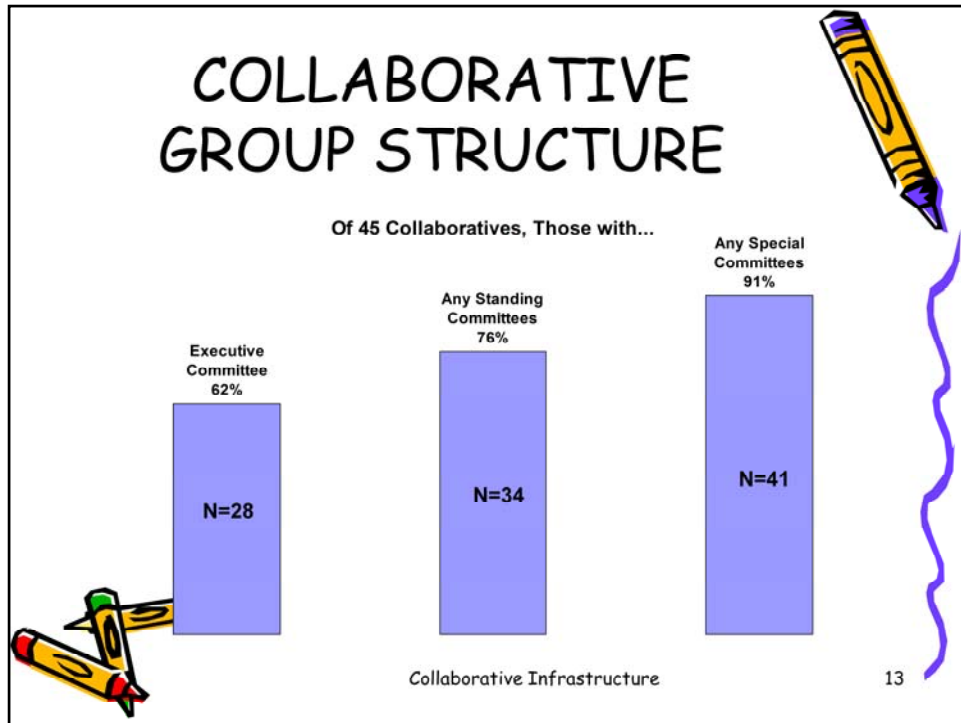
Mean = 96%; n = 45

Percent of Discovery collaborative groups with a chair or co-chair:

Mean = 84%; n = 45

Percent of Discovery collaborative group in which the coordinator was the chair:

Mean = 27%; n = 44



About six in ten had a decision-making subgroup within the collaborative, like an executive or steering committee. More than three-quarters of the collaboratives had one or more standing committees (other than an executive committee), and more than 90 percent had had a special committee for an event or activity at some time during the past 12 months.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

- *Is there a group within your Discovery collaborative group that is responsible for making decisions (like a steering committee or executive committee)?*
- *Does your collaborative currently have any standing committees? [Definition of standing committee from survey: a subgroup of the collaborative group (that may also include some people who are not members of the collaborative) that is responsible for working on an ongoing basis in an area of interest to the collaborative (such as outreach, publicity, or parent engagement).]*
- *During the past 12 months, has your collaborative had any special committees or groups planning or running collaborative-sponsored events or activities (like a community family day or a kindergarten readiness information packet)?*

Percent of Discovery collaborative groups with an executive or steering committee:

Mean = 62%; n =45

Percent of Discovery collaborative groups with other standing committees:

Mean = 76%; n = 45

Percent of Discovery collaborative groups with special committees:

Mean = 91%; n = 45

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

- The Discovery collaborative groups vary widely in size - from as few as 8 members to as many as 40.
- The average collaborative group has between 20 and 21 members.



Collaborative Infrastructure

14

QUESTION FROM SURVEY:

How many people currently are involved in the Discovery collaborative group (as defined in Key Terms on page 3 of this questionnaire)?

Definition of Discovery collaborative group from survey: the broadly representative group of community stakeholders that is committed to a common vision, joint planning, pooling resources and sharing risks, results and rewards and has assumed responsibility, on behalf of the community at large, for improving outcomes for young children, by acting as a catalyst or change agent. For the purposes of this report, do NOT include people who are volunteers if they don't also participate regularly in collaborative meetings and decision-making.

*Average number of members in Discovery collaborative groups:
Mean = 20.8; Median = 20.0; Minimum = 8; Maximum = 40; n = 45*

SET-ASIDE POSITIONS FOR SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

- About half of the collaboratives have positions set-aside for specific organizations
- Those collaboratives have between 1 and 17 set-aside positions - on average, between 7 and 8



Collaborative Infrastructure

15

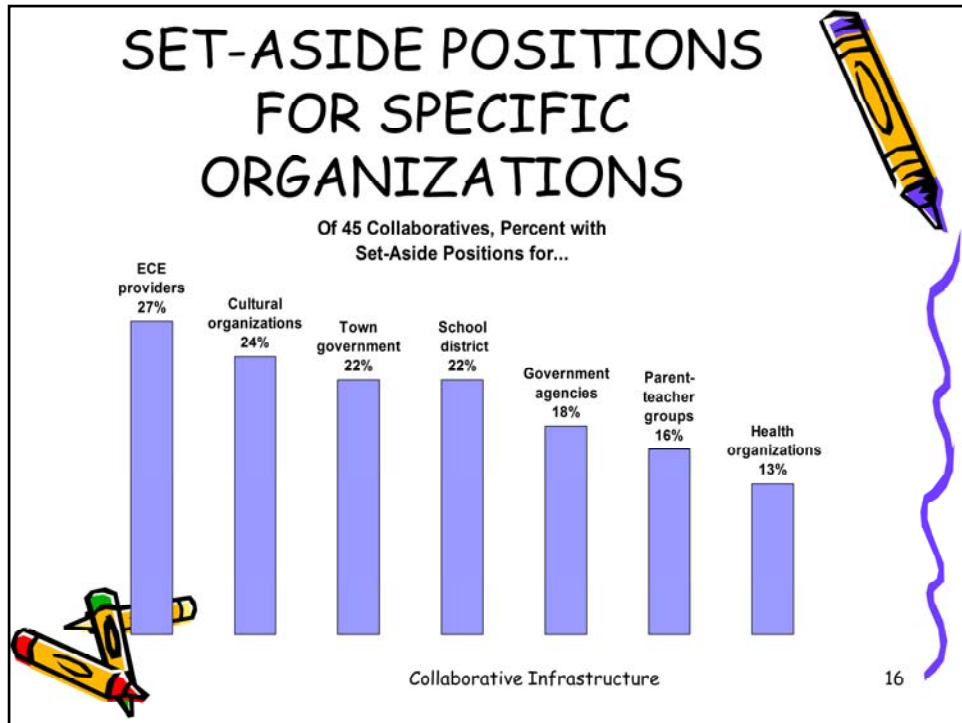
QUESTION FROM SURVEY:

Are there positions on your collaborative set aside for particular groups or organizations?

Percent of Discovery collaboratives with positions set aside for particular groups or organizations: 49%; n = 45

Average number of groups or organizations with set-aside positions:

Mean = 8.1; Median = 7; Minimum = 1; Maximum = 17; n = 18 (out of 22 with set-aside positions)



Percent of Discovery collaboratives (out of 45 total) with positions set aside for:

College/university: 4%; n = 2

Early education providers: 27%; n = 12

Town government including Mayor: 22%; n = 10

Government agencies: 18%; n = 8

Community coalitions: 4%; n = 2

Cultural organizations (like libraries or museums): 24%; n = 11

Local Family Resource Center(s): 7%; n = 3

Head Start: 11%; n = 5

Health organizations (like hospitals): 13%; n = 6

Parent-teacher organizations: 16%; n = 7

School board/district administration: 22%; n = 10

United Way: 7%; n = 3

Other: 33%; n = 15

AVERAGE TENURE AMONG CURRENT MEMBERS

- On average, current Discovery collaborative members have been involved for 2.7 years
 - One-third have been on the collaborative since it was formed
 - Around 10% joined within the past year



Collaborative Infrastructure

17

On average, a large proportion of current Discovery collaborative members have served on the group since it began, while only a few have come on in the past year. This signals member commitment to Discovery and stability of the group, but may also indicate some challenges in recruiting new members. In fact, 6 collaboratives (13 percent) had no members who had served less than one year.

QUESTION FROM SURVEY:

Please estimate how many current **members** have been members of the Discovery collaborative group for the following periods:

- _____ Members since the collaborative was formed
- _____ Members for more than 3 years
- _____ Members for between 2 to 3 years
- _____ Members for between 1 and 2 years
- _____ For less than a year

Average number of years current collaborative members have served:

Mean = 2.7 years; Median = 2.7 years; Minimum = 1.6 years;

Maximum = 3.7 years ; n = 45

[original members = 4 years, 3 year members = 3 years, 2-3 year members = 2.5 years, 1-2 year members = 1.5 years, Less than 1 year = .5 year]

Average percent of current members who have served since the collaborative began:

Mean = 36.0%; Median = 34.5%; Minimum = 7%; Maximum = 90%; n = 45

Average percent of current members who have served less than one year:

Mean = 11.2%; Median = 7.9%; Minimum = 0%; Maximum = 42%; n = 45



All the Discovery collaboratives had a paid coordinator at the time of the survey. On average, Discovery coordinators worked a little less than half-time (17 hours). There is a wide variation in the number of hours per week of coordinator support, however – from as few as 2 hours/week to 47 hours/week. 22 percent worked less than 10 hours/week; 44 percent from 10 to 19 hours/week; 22 percent from 20 to 29 hours/week; and 12 percent worked 30 hours/week or more. In most collaboratives (57% or 25 out of 44), the coordinator has been in that position for 3 years or more. However, one-fifth of the coordinators were relatively new, having come into that position within the past 12 months.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

- Does your collaborative currently have a coordinator?
- How long has this person been the coordinator?

Percent of collaboratives with a coordinator:

Mean = 100%; n = 45

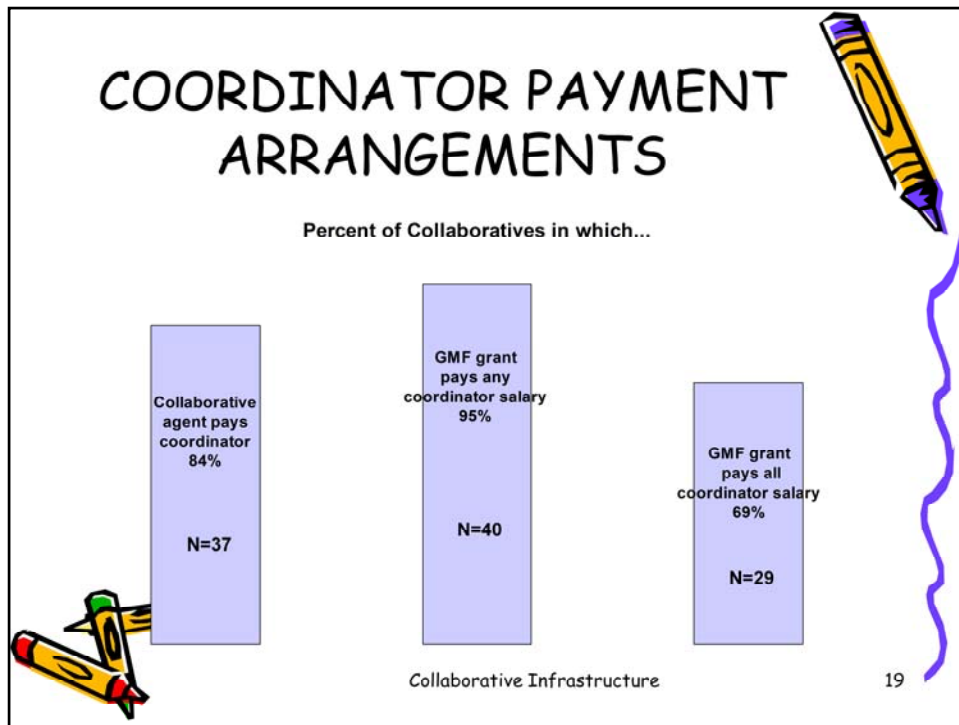
Average number of hours per week of the coordinator:

Mean = 17 hours; Median = 15 hours; Minimum = 2 hours;

Maximum = 47 hours ; n = 41

Percent of collaboratives in which the coordinator has served (n=44):

One year or less: 20%; 2 years: 23%; 3 years: 43%; since collaborative was formed: 24%



In most collaboratives, the collaborative agent is the coordinator's employer, paying his or her salary. Almost all collaboratives pay at least some of the coordinator salary from Memorial Fund grant funds. In almost 7 out of 10 collaboratives, the entire coordinator salary is funded by the Memorial Fund grant.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

- *Is the coordinator paid by the collaborative agent or by another organization?*
- *What percent of the coordinator's pay is covered with the Graustein Memorial Fund grant?*

Percent of collaboratives in which collaborative agent pays some or all of coordinator salary:

N = 44

Percent of collaboratives in which Memorial Fund grant pays none or all of coordinator salary:

N = 42

SUMMARY - COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Almost all collaboratives have a leadership arrangement in place and use committees to implement some Discovery activities.



Collaborative Infrastructure

20

SUMMARY - COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- *Generally, few new members have joined the Discovery collaboratives over the past year.*



Collaborative Infrastructure

21

The percent of long-time and of new members on the Discovery collaborative is similar, regardless of whether Discovery and the SRC are the same organization or whether they are both part of the same broader group.

SUMMARY - COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Collaboratives rely heavily on Memorial Fund grants to pay for coordinator services.



Collaborative Infrastructure

22

Discovery collaboratives that are the same organization as the local School Readiness Council did not report having more coordinator time than other collaboratives. Neither did collaboratives where they were part of a broader group along with the SRC.

SUMMARY - COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Some communities rely on their coordinator to provide collaborative leadership as well as other services.



SUMMARY - COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Having more coordinator time was associated with:
 - Greater use of information
 - Greater public visibility
 - More partnerships with other community organizations
 - More parent engagement activities





See following pages for detailed information on:

- Relationship between Discovery collaborative and School Readiness Council – page 27
- Affiliation of Discovery collaborative with other community groups – page 28
- Partnerships with other community groups on Discovery parent engagement activities – page 29
- Summary – page 30

WHY IS COLLABORATION IMPORTANT TO THE DISCOVERY INITIATIVE?

- Collaboration is a critical element in the Discovery theory of change
 - It expands potential resources
 - It builds broader support
 - It strengthens sustainability
 - It increases breadth & diversity



Collaboration

26

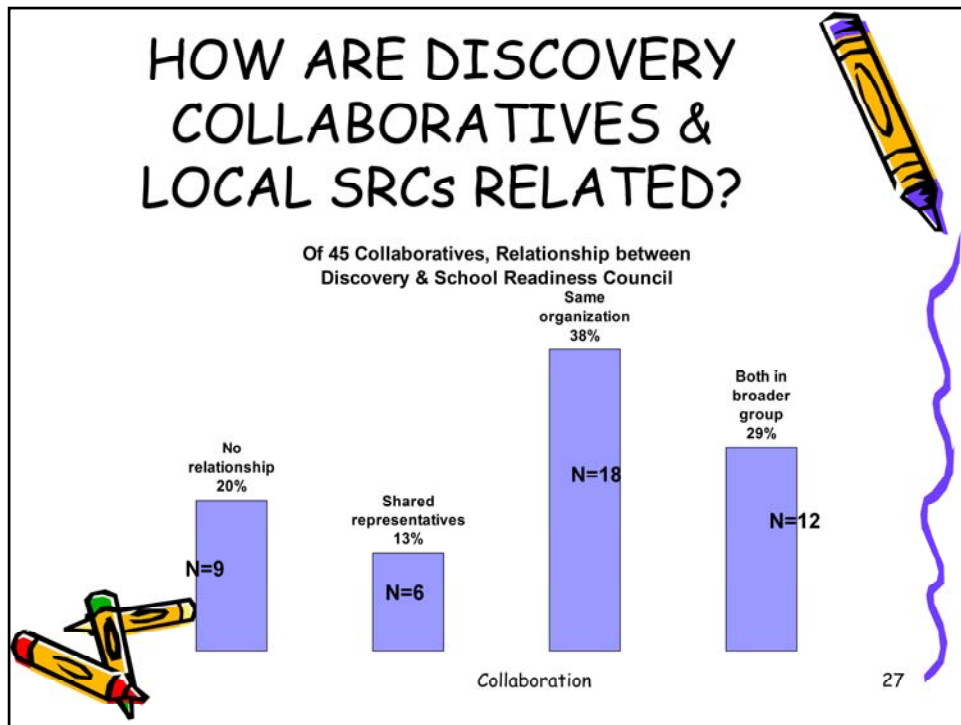
Children need many different kinds of support to thrive in their early years and do well in early grades in school. These supports include child health, nutrition, and safety; opportunities to foster social, intellectual and physical growth and the development of nurturing and responsive relationships with adults. The domains cross many spheres of public and private responsibility including the family, the neighborhood and the larger community (e.g., pediatricians, providers, parks, libraries, and schools).

No one family, organization or institution can cover all of these bases alone; no one of them alone has the legal or political power to put all the pieces in place. The business community, taxpayers who vote on city and school budgets, child care and early education providers, schools, elected and appointed officials and organized groups of parents and seniors are all potential partners who can make or break how well children do.

Common definitions of collaboration include the following:

- a way of working together that coordinates individual support;
- an engaged group of stakeholders;
- a set of agreements about a working relationship; and
- an entity or collaborative structure.

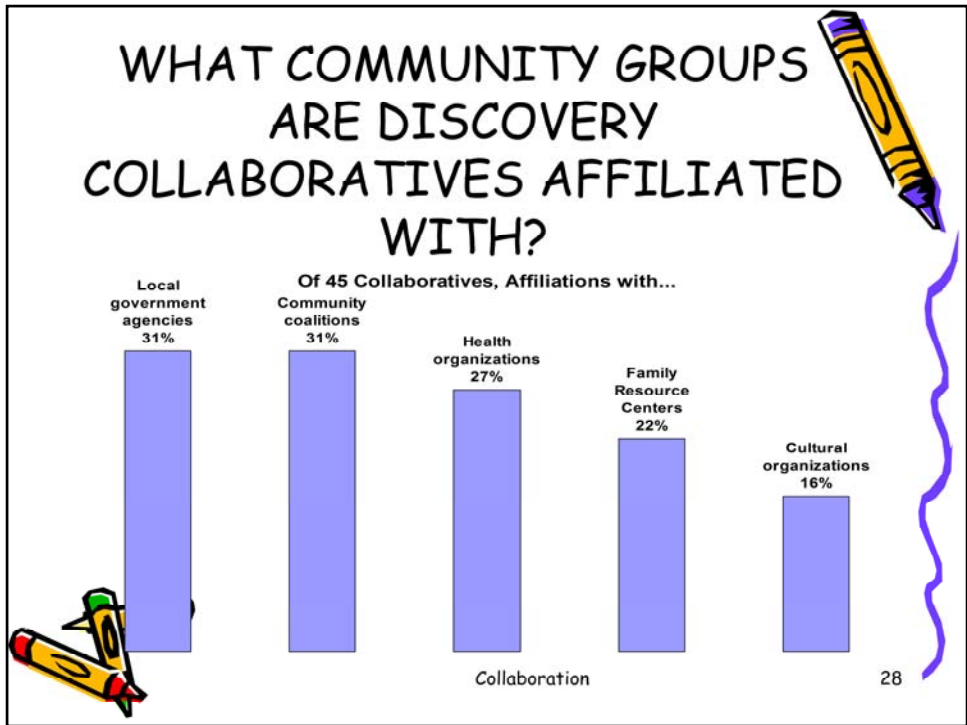
From: SHARING A VISION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN: A Guide To Community Collaboration, April 2002 (http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_321.rtf)



The most common relationship between community Discovery collaborative groups and the local School Readiness Council is for the two to be a single organization (38% percent or 18 communities). In almost three-quarters of these communities, the two efforts were merged. In the other communities, one effort was a committee within the other group.

In 20 percent of all Discovery communities, there was no formal relationship between Discovery and the SRC (including the 2 communities in which there was no community School Readiness Council).

In 29 percent of the communities, both Discovery and the School Readiness Council were part of a broader group working on children's issues.



The survey included the question, “Is the Discovery collaborative affiliated with any other groups or initiatives in your community working on behalf of children?” Most collaboratives are affiliated with at least one other group in their community working on behalf of young children. These collaboratives are, on average, have 3 to 4 such affiliations. The most common affiliated groups are local government agencies, other community coalitions, health organizations, local Family Resource Centers, and cultural organizations like libraries or museums.

QUESTION FROM SURVEY: *Is the Discovery collaborative affiliated with any other groups or initiatives in your community working on behalf of children?*

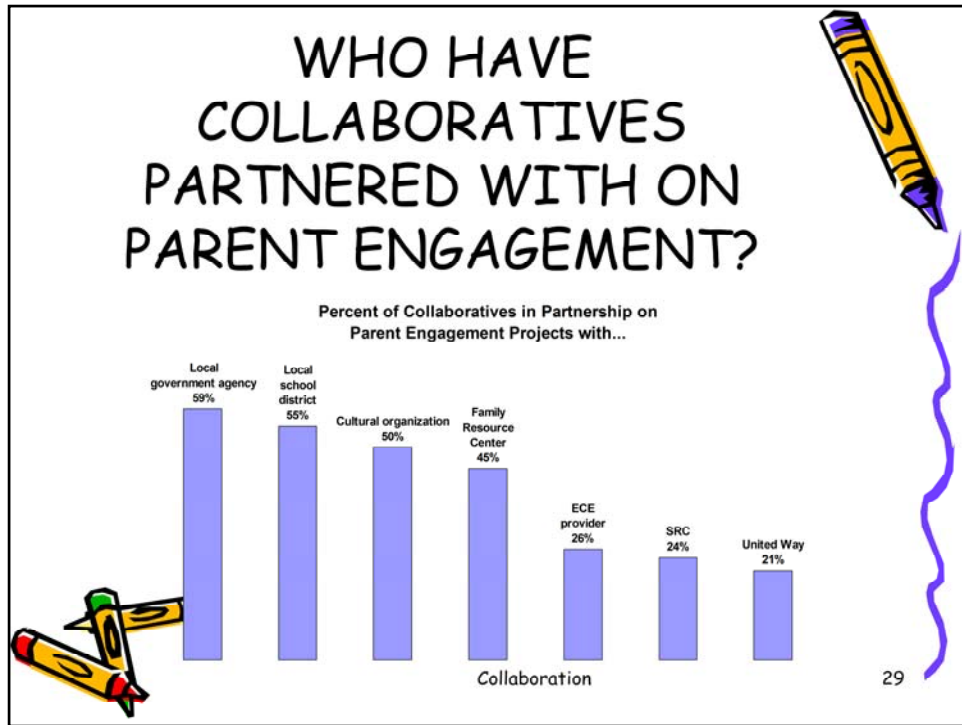
Percent of Discovery collaboratives with affiliations with other community organizations:
80.0%, n = 45

Total number of affiliated organizations for Discovery collaboratives with any affiliations:
Mean = 4.3; Median = 3; Minimum = 1; Maximum of 20; n = 34 (of 36 collaboratives with any affiliations)

Average number of affiliations for all Discovery collaboratives (no affiliations = 0):
Mean = 3.4; Median = 2 ; Minimum = 0; Maximum = 20; n = 43

Percent of collaboratives (out of 45 total) affiliated with:

- College/university: Mean = 2%; n = 31
- Early education providers: Mean = 9%; n = 4
- Local government offices or agencies: Mean = 31%; n = 14
- Community coalitions: Mean = 31%; n = 14
- Cultural organizations (like libraries or museums): Mean = 16%; n = 7
- Local Family Resource Center(s): Mean = 22%; n = 10
- Head Start: Mean = 4%; n = 2
- Health organizations (like hospitals): Mean = 27%; n = 12
- Parent-teacher organizations: Mean = 7%; n = 3
- Schools: Mean = 9%; n = 4
- School Readiness Council: 11%; n=5
- United Way: Mean = 11%; n = 5
- Other: Mean = 38%; n = 17



All of the Discovery collaboratives have partnered with other community groups and organizations on one or more parent engagement projects. The average number of partners is approximately 8. The most frequent partners are local government agencies, the local school district, cultural organizations, a Family Resource Center, early care and education providers, and the School Readiness Council.

Percent of Discovery collaboratives partnering with other community organizations on parent engagement:
100%, n = 45

Total number of partnering organizations for Discovery collaboratives with any partners:

Mean = 8.1; Median = 6.5; Minimum = 1; Maximum of 21; n = 45

Percent of collaboratives partnering with:

College/university: Mean = 7% ; n = 3

Early education providers: Mean = 24%; n = 11

Local government offices or agencies : Mean = 55%; n = 25

Community coalitions: Mean = 18%; n = 8

Cultural organizations (like libraries or museums): Mean = 47%; n = 21

Local Family Resource Center(s): Mean 42%; n = 19

Head Start: Mean = 11%; n = 5

Health organizations (like hospitals): Mean = 20%; n = 9

Parent-teacher organizations: Mean = 9%; n = 4

Schools: Mean = 51%; n = 23

School Readiness Council: 22%; n = 10

United Way: Mean = 20%; n = 9

Media organizations (like newspaper): Mean = 7%; n = 3

Other Discovery communities: 8%; n = 4

Other: Mean = 89%; n = 40

SUMMARY - COLLABORATION

- Most (80 percent) of Discovery groups are affiliated with one or more other organizations in their community
- All have worked in partnership with other community organizations on parent engagement projects



Collaboration

30



The Discovery theory of change recognizes that parent involvement in the education of their own children is a critical factor in children's learning and development. It also posits that parent participation and leadership in civic life, including in the Discovery collaborative groups, is essential to creating and sustaining the public will and systemic changes necessary for all children in the community to do well.

Experience in other initiatives and settings, as well as with the CFI and Discovery communities in Connecticut, has found that engaging a broad spectrum of parents in meaningful ways can be difficult. The Memorial Fund has kept a steady focus on parent engagement and provided many kinds of supports and resources to assist communities in this work. (One example is the Parent Voice and Action Resource Guide.) It has also supported the development of parent engagement and leadership resources and capacities at the state level. (One example is Connecticut Parent Power.)

See following pages for detailed information on:

- Recruitment of parent members – pages 33 & 34
- Supports for parent members – pages 35 & 36
- Inputs from non-member parents – pages 37 & 38
- Number of parent members – page 39
- Percent of members who are parents – page 40
- Parents in leadership positions on collaborative – page 41
- Parent volunteers – page 42
- Areas of parent engagement in work plan – pages 43 & 44
- Parent participation summary score – pages 45 & 46
- Parent participation & connection between Discovery and SRC – page 47
- Summary – pages 48-52

WHY IS PARENT PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO THE INITIATIVE?

- Parent participation and leadership in civic life can improve the early learning of *all* young children
- The Discovery initiative is committed to promoting the participation of parents at every level of decision-making, within the home as well as the organizations and networks that touch the lives of young children.

Parent Participation 32

Parents are...*the most immediate caretakers of children—mothers, fathers, grandparents, and/or other relatives or adults who accept responsibility for a child's nurturance, safety and well-being.*

The assumptions underlying the critical role of parent engagement in the Discovery theory of change are:

- Parents are responsible for the well-being of their own children in partnership with providers and other institutions. Communities are responsible for the well-being of all children.
- Meaningful and sustained change requires that all parents, and in particular parents whose children are the most vulnerable, need to be engaged.
- Parents are the best advocates for their children and can be effective agents for change.
- The community is responsible for maintaining a system of opportunities for parents to participate in the civic life of their community and to love, nurture and care for their children.
- The local Discovery collaborative is an accountability mechanism, ensuring that the community and parents are engaged in a partnership where children are at the center and family roles are acknowledged and respected.

RECRUITMENT OF PARENT MEMBERS

- Discovery collaboratives used a range of methods to recruit parent members.
- Out of 8 specific methods, the average collaborative used 6.
- No collaborative used fewer than 2 methods.



Parent Participation

33

DEFINITION OF PARENTS GIVEN IN SURVEY: Parents: the most immediate caretakers of children—mothers, fathers, grandparents, and/or other relatives or adults who accept responsibility for a child's nurturance, safety and well-being; in this questionnaire the term "parent" refers to people involved in the Discovery work primarily in their role as parents, particularly those parents who are not already working on behalf of children in their professional capacity.

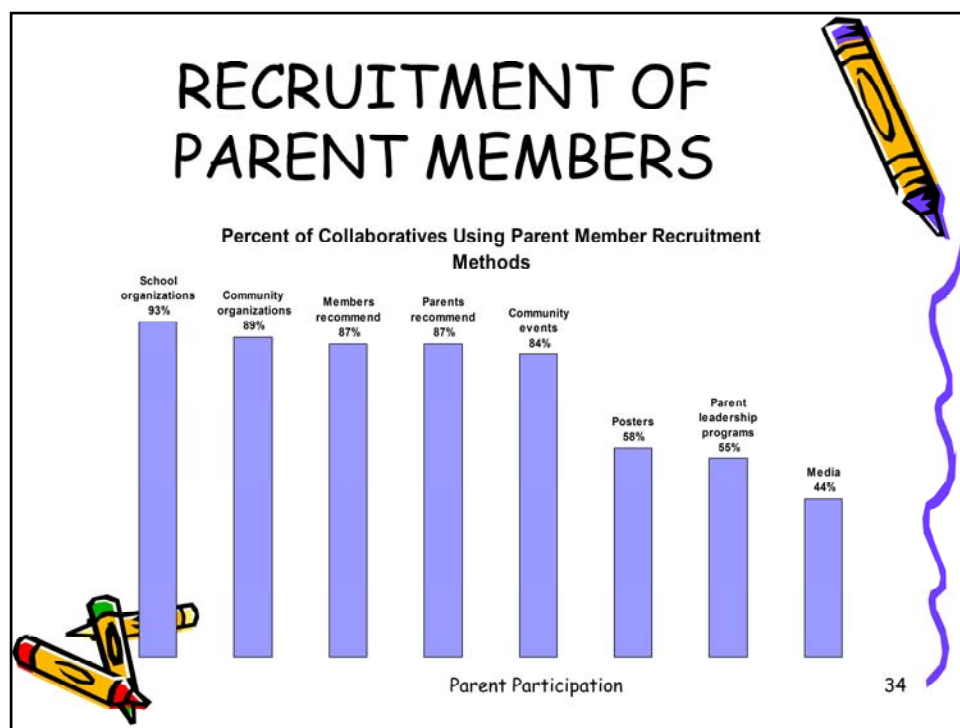
QUESTION FROM SURVEY: How have parents been recruited to participate in your community's Discovery collaborative body or in its activities? Response categories:

- *Invited parents involved in preschool or school parent organizations (93%)*
- *Invited parents active in other community organizations or groups (89%)*
- *Invited parents who were recommended by other collaborative members (87%)*
- *Asked parents currently active in the Discovery work to recommend other parents (87%)*
- *Held events or attended community activities and invited parents to participate (84%)*
- *Put up posters or distributed flyers inviting parents to participate (58%)*
- *Invited parents from parent leadership training programs (55%)*
- *Invited parents to participate via newspaper, radio or TV announcements or news reports (44%)*

Number of parent recruitment methods used:

Mean = 6.2 methods (out of 9); Median = 6.0 methods

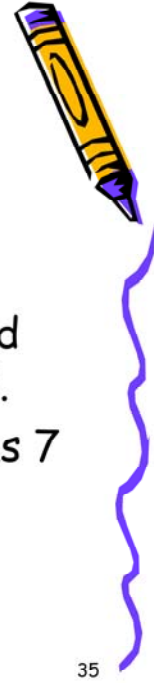
Minimum = 2 methods; Maximum = 9 methods; n = 45



Most collaboratives relied on recruiting through other organizations, by recommendations of parent and other current members, and at community events. As with other parent engagement efforts, building on current relationships and word-of-mouth were extensively used.

SUPPORTS FOR PARENT MEMBERS

- All collaboratives support their parent members in some way.
- The average collaborative provided around 4 supports from a list of 9.
- The maximum number provided was 7 supports.



Parent Participation

35

QUESTION FROM SURVEY:

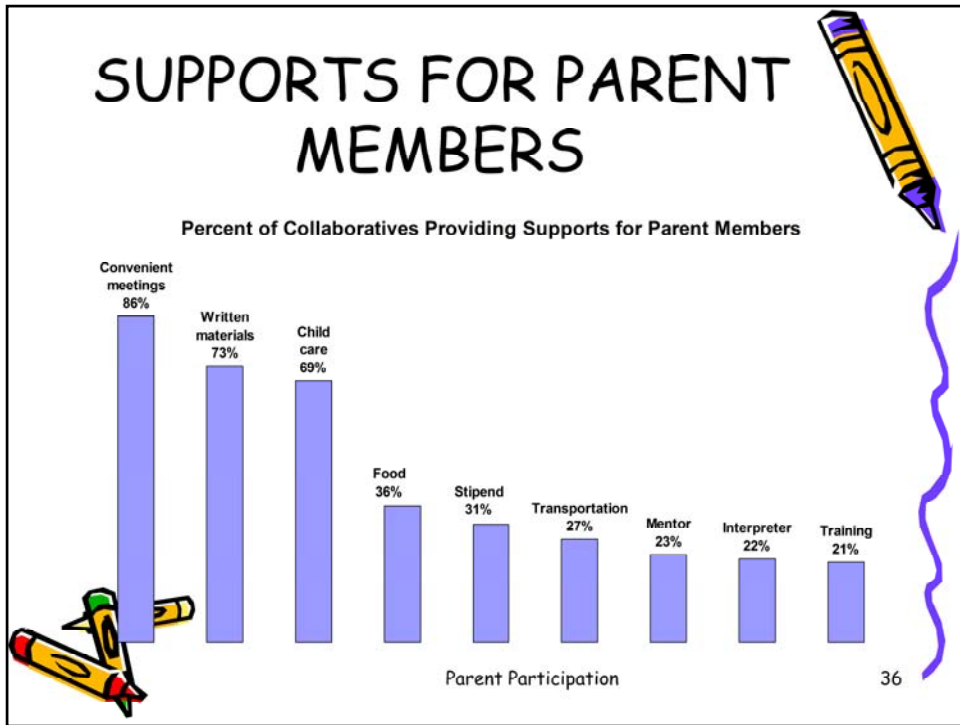
Please indicate if your community's Discovery collaborative group does any of the following to help make it easier for parents to participate on your collaborative or committees. Please check all that apply.

- *Hold a training specifically for new members (not necessarily only parents) in Discovery (21%)*
- *Provide translation and interpreter services (22%)*
- *Pair a parent new to Discovery with a more experienced person as "mentor" (23%)*
- *Provide transportation assistance (27%)*
- *Provide a stipend or honorarium (either monetary or otherwise) (31%)*
- *Provide food (36%)*
- *Provide child care (69%)*
- *Provide written materials describing the Discovery group and its work (73%)*
- *Schedule meetings at times and places that are convenient for the parent members (86%)*

Number of types of support provided to parent members:

Mean = 3.8 types of support (out of 9); Median = 4.0 types of support

Minimum = 1 type of support; Maximum = 7 types of support; n = 45



Most collaboratives tried to have meeting times and places that were convenient for parents, and many provided written materials for members. Child care was provided by many collaboratives as well.

About one-third of collaboratives provided food and/or a stipend to support parent members. About one-quarter provided transportation, interpreter assistance, and/or a mentor for parent members. About one-fifth had new member training for all members, including parents.

INPUTS FROM NON-MEMBER PARENTS

- All but 2 collaboratives had gotten input from non-member parents at some point during the previous 12 months.
- On average, collaboratives used 2 (out of 4 listed) ways of getting this feedback.



Parent Participation

37

QUESTION FROM SURVEY: Other than having parents serve on your community's Discovery collaborative, over the past 12 months how else has the collaborative gotten information, ideas and feedback from parents? Please check all that apply.

Through parent or community meetings (67%)

Through a parent or community survey or questionnaire (58%)

Through parents who are not members attending collaborative meetings (34%)

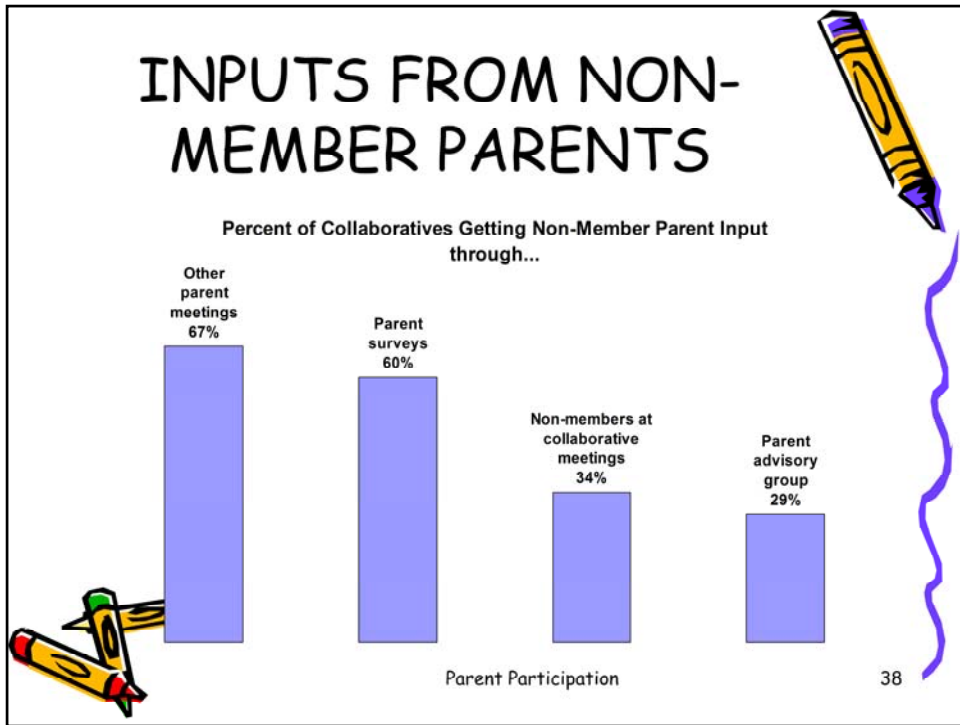
Through a parent or community advisory group (29%)

In some other ways (41%)

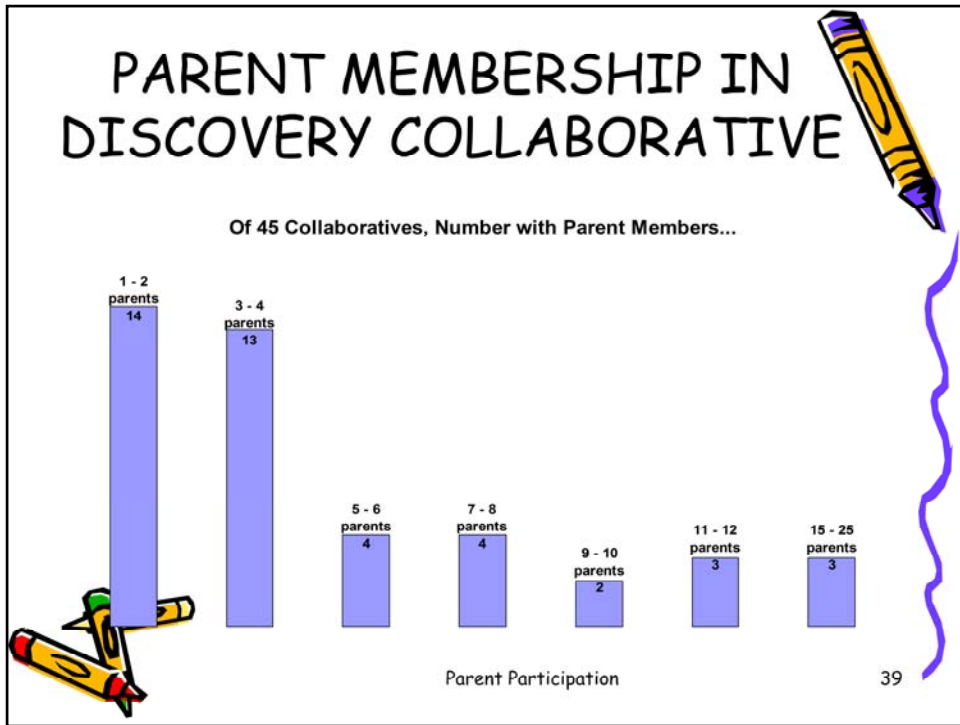
Total number of ways input is obtained from parents:

Mean = 2.2 ways; Median = 2.0 ways

Minimum = 0; Maximum = 4; n = 45



Many – between 60 and 70 percent – collaboratives get input from non-member parents at meetings of other parent groups or through surveys they conduct. About 3 in 10 collaboratives have a formal parent advisory group.



All Discovery collaborative groups had at least one parent member. Most collaboratives (27 out of 45 responding to the survey, or 60 percent) had between 1 and 4 parent members.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

How many people currently are involved in the Discovery collaborative group? How many of these are parents?

Percent of collaborative members who are parents:

Mean = 28%; Median = 24%

Minimum = 3%; Maximum = 90%

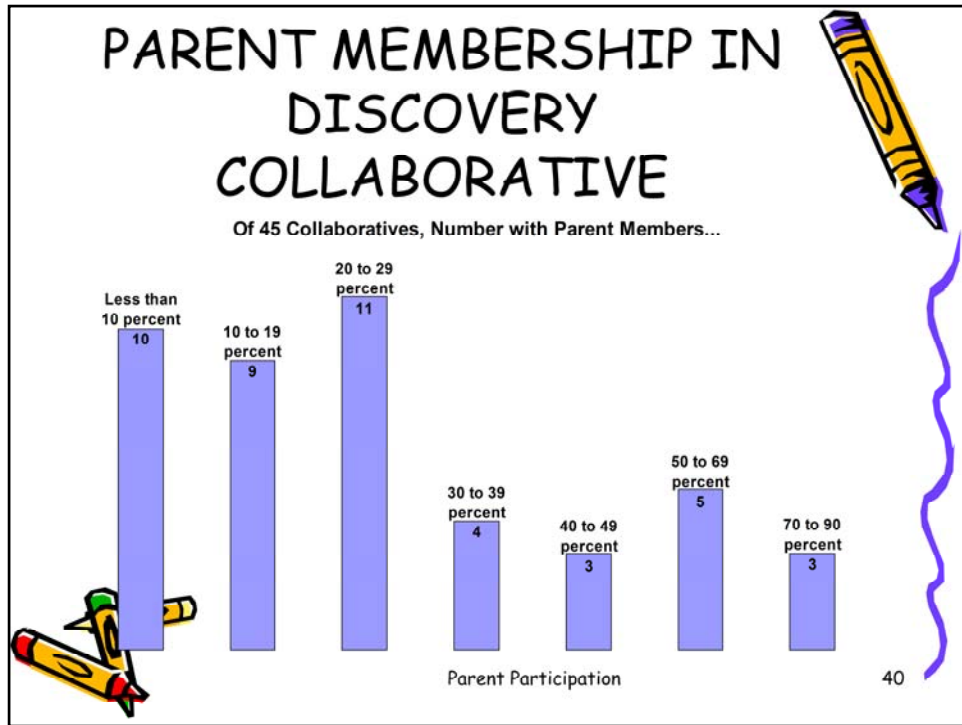
Less than 10% of members are parents = 22%

From 10% through 25% are parents = 40%

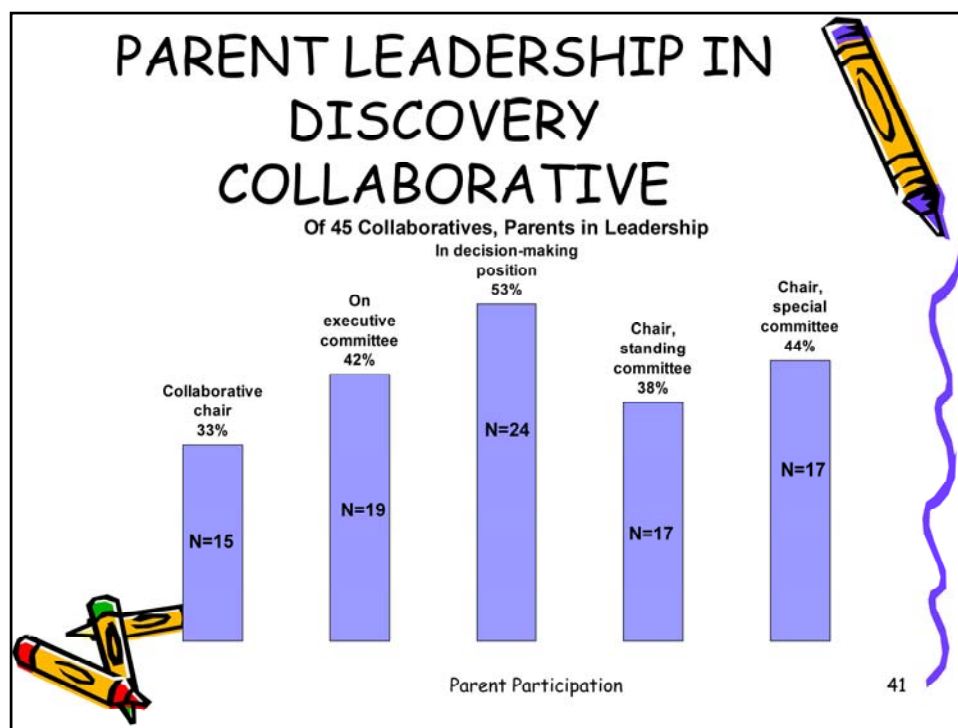
From 26% through 50% are parents = 22%

More than 50% are parents = 16%

N = 45



Two-thirds of Discovery collaborative groups had less than 30 percent parent members. Only 8 collaboratives had a majority (more than 50 percent) parent members.



About one-third of the Discovery collaboratives have a chair or co-chair and over 40 percent have parents on an executive committee. Combined, parents are in one or the other of these decision-making positions in more than half of the collaboratives. In addition, almost 40 percent of Discovery collaboratives have parent chairs of standing and/or special committees.

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

What is the affiliation of the current chair or co-chairs? Response categories included "Parent."

Is there a group within your Discovery collaborative group that is responsible for making decisions (like a steering committee or executive committee)? How many in that group are parents?

Percent of collaboratives with parent chair or co-chair = 33%

Percent of collaboratives with parents on executive committee (if no such committee, coded as "no parents on committee") = 42%

Percent of collaboratives with parent as chair of a standing committee (if no such committee, coded as "no parent chair") = 38%

Percent of collaboratives with parent as chair of special committee (if no such committee, coded as "no parent chair") = 44%

Percent of collaboratives with parent chair or co-chair and/or parents on executive committee = 53%

PARENT VOLUNTEERS IN DISCOVERY

- Most Discovery collaboratives (84 percent) have volunteers who are not members of the collaborative decision-making group.
- The average number of volunteers is 18 persons.
- On average, about 3 of 10 volunteers are parents.



Parent Participation

42

QUESTIONS FROM SURVEY:

How many other people are involved in Discovery work in your community, (who) which do NOT attend your regularly scheduled Discovery collaborative group meetings? How many of these are parents?

Percent of collaboratives with volunteers: 84%

Number of volunteers per collaborative:

Mean = 17.6; Median = 8.0; Minimum = 0; Maximum = 82

Percent of volunteers who are parents (if no volunteers, coded as “no parents”):

Mean = 29%; Median = 27%

Minimum = 0%; Maximum = 100%

N = 45

FOCUS ON PARENTS IN DISCOVERY WORK PLAN

- All Discovery collaboratives were working on one or more areas of parent engagement.
- On average, the number of parent engagement areas in the current Discovery work plan was between 4 and 5 (out of 6).



Parent Participation

43

QUESTION FROM SURVEY:

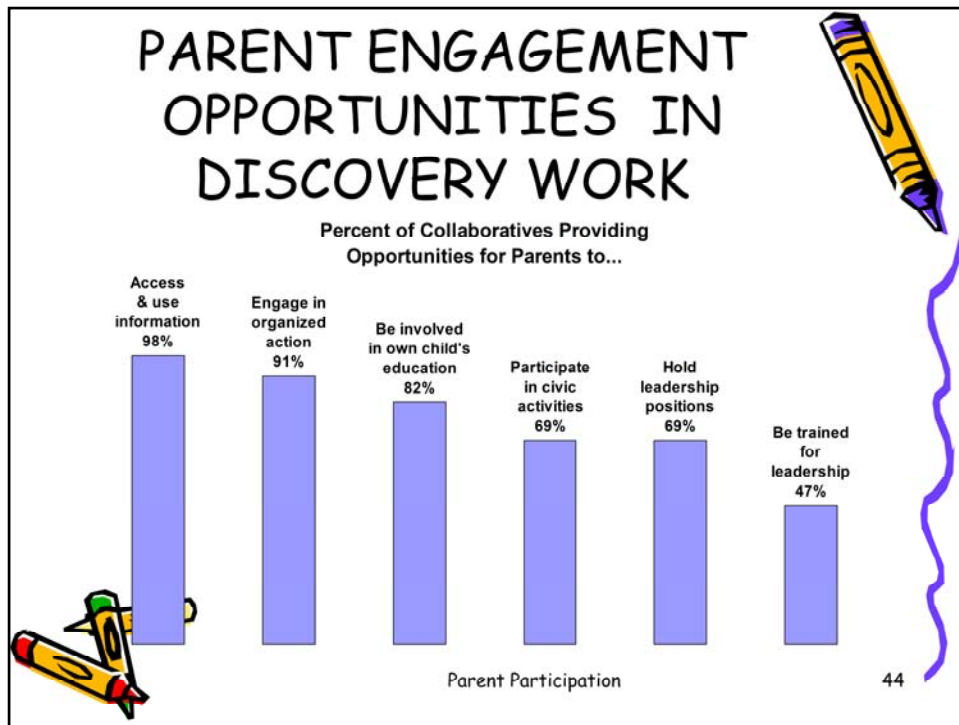
Please put a check mark beside the areas (or segments of the “honeycomb”) that are currently part of your community’s Discovery work plan. For each area checked, please briefly describe the types of activities the Discovery collaborative has carried out itself or in partnership with other groups in the community.

- **Civic Participation** (parents have opportunities to exercise their civic rights as voters and taxpayers – such as voting, attending town meetings, volunteering on a civic project like a park cleanup)
- **Engagement** (parents have opportunities to develop skills and apply them to benefit a group of children – such as joining the Parent-Teacher Association, joining the Discovery collaborative, attending a Community Conversation)
- **Information** (parents have opportunities to access information on services and supports for their children and family – such as attending a workshop on child development, using a community service directory, finding information at the town library)
- **Involvement** (parents have opportunities to participate in events and gain skills that support their own child’s early school success – such as attending school performances, reading to own child, volunteering in the classroom)
- **Leadership** (parents have opportunities to be leaders and make decisions on issues they and other parents care about – such as running parent-led projects, serving on a community board, being chair of the School Readiness Council)
- **Stewardship** (parents are supported in efforts to replenish and sustain a continuum of parent leaders – creating a parent training fund, ensuring access to parent leadership training and development opportunities, ensuring parent participation in selecting leaders of community organizations, supporting parent-led advocacy groups)

SEE http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_762.pdf and PARENT VOICE AND ACTION IN DISCOVERY: A COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE (http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_801.pdf)

Number of areas in work plan:

Mean = 4.5; Median = 5.0; Minimum = 1; Maximum = 6; N = 45



Almost all collaboratives were working to provide parents with information through resource guides, inserts in local newspapers, web sites, etc.

Most (between 80 and 90 percent) were encouraging parents to participate in groups working on behalf of the community's children (such as Discovery) and to become involved with their child's school.

About 70 percent were providing opportunities to educate parents as voters, to register them, and to encourage them to vote. An equal number of collaboratives were encouraging parents to take on leadership positions in other organizations in the community.

Just under half of the collaboratives supported parent leadership programs such as PLTI, PEP and ParentSEE.

Working on access to information, n = 44 out of 45
Working on engagement in organized action, n = 41 out of 45
Working on involvement in child's education, n = 36 out of 45
Working on civic participation, n = 31 out of 45
Working on parents in leadership, n = 31 out of 45
Working on parent leadership development, n = 21 out of 45

CAN WE DESCRIBE COMMUNITIES BY DEGREE OF PARENT PARTICIPATION?

- Specific measures of parent participation can be combined into a single summary score.
 - This score ranges from 0 (zero) to 4
 - The average score was 2.3, just above mid-point in the range



Parent Participation

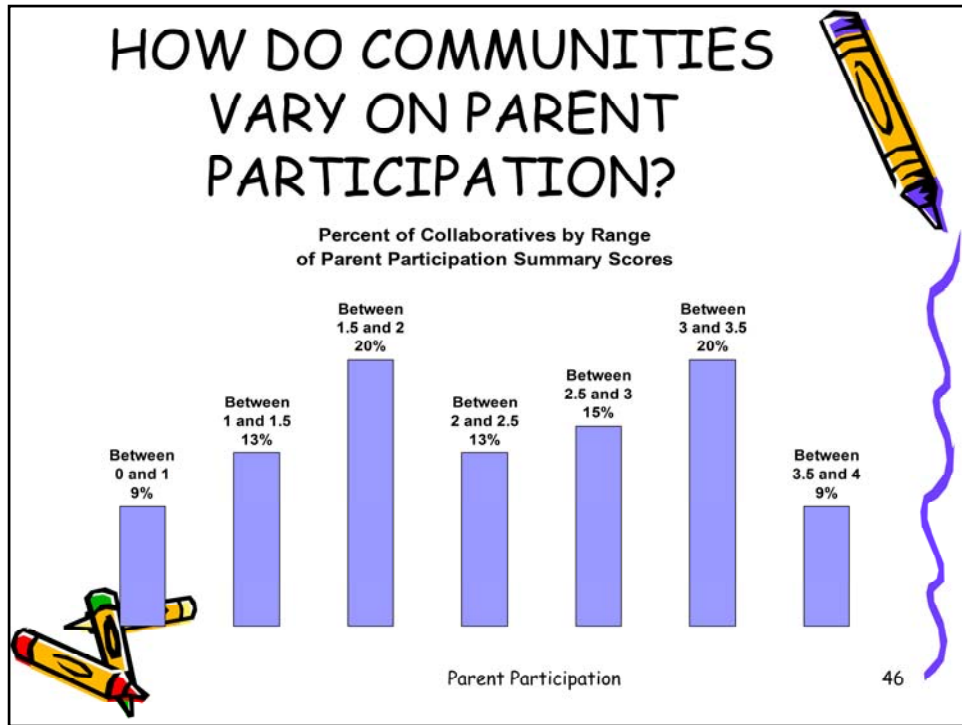
45

Principal component factor analysis extracted 3 components. Together these components explained 57% of the variance on the included variables across the communities. The first factor, which was significantly correlated to all but one of the included variables, explained 41% of the variance (. Communities were given a parent participation summary score based on the first factor.

The measures included in the factor analysis were:

- Whether parents were in leadership positions (chair or on executive committee)
- Percent of collaborative members who were parents
- Percent of volunteers who were parents
- Number of ways parent members were recruited
- Number of ways parent members were supported
- Number of ways non-member parent input was gotten
- Number of parent engagement areas included in work plan

Factor scores for the first factor were recalibrated so that the lowest parent participation summary score was 0 (zero) and the highest was 4. The average parent participation summary score was 2.3 and the median summary score was 2.3. The number of valid cases was 45.



Two-thirds (68 percent) of the Discovery collaborative groups ranged in parent engagement score from 1.5 and 3.5 – that is, in the mid-range of parent engagement (2.3 was both the mean and median value of this score). However, there were more collaboratives with lower parent engagement scores (22 percent) than with higher scores (9 percent).

Percent of collaboratives with parent participation summary score:

- Between 0 and 0.99 = 9% (n = 4)
- Between 1 and 1.49 = 13% (n = 6)
- Between 1.5 and 1.99 = 20% (n = 9)
- Between 2 and 2.49 = 13% (n = 6)
- Between 2.5 and 2.99 = 15% (n = 7)
- Between 3 and 3.49 = 20% (n = 9)
- Between 3.5 and 4 = 9% (n = 4)

DISCOVERY-SRC CONNECTION AND PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Communities in which Discovery and the SRC were the same organization had lower parent participation summary scores than in other communities.



Parent Participation

47

Communities that had no formal relationship between Discovery and the SRC as well as those where both were members of a broader group had higher parent participation summary scores than communities in which Discovery and the SRC were the same organization.

Components of parent participation that were significantly lower for communities in which Discovery and the SRC are the same organization are:

- Percent of volunteers who are parents
- Percent of members who are parents
- Number of supports provided to parent members
- Number of methods used to recruit parent members

Comparison of mean parent participation summary scores:

(Difference significant at $p = .01$)

Same organization as SRC: 1.7

Not same organization as SRC: 2.5

Total: 2.3

N: 45

SUMMARY - PARENT PARTICIPATION

- While all Discovery collaborative groups have parent members, in most there are only a few parents involved.



SUMMARY - PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Parent participation in the Discovery collaboratives represents a constellation of intentional activities and supports to recruit and support parents as members and leaders.



SUMMARY - PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Communities that use multiple approaches are more successful overall in parent participation in the Discovery collaborative.



Parent Participation

50

The Discovery approach of looking at multiple dimensions of parent engagement through the “honeycomb” encourages and supports collaboratives in offering multiple opportunities for parents to participate in Discovery and more broadly in their communities.

SUMMARY - PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Discovery collaboratives vary in how much parents participate in the work.
- As elsewhere, some collaboratives have found parent participation challenging and are still struggling.
- Some communities now have a strong base and successful strategies for parent participation and leadership. Their experiences and approaches could serve as useful models for others.



SUMMARY - PARENT PARTICIPATION

- While the School Readiness Councils can bring resources to the Discovery work, parent participation strategies are less well developed when the two are a single organization.



Parent Participation

52

One concern may be how to balance the programmatic and professional focus when the Discovery collaborative and the SRC are the same organization, with a commitment to deep and sustained parent participation and leadership.