



**IUPUI**

FAMILY, SCHOOL AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT  
Office of Community Engagement

**MARTINDALE BRIGHTWOOD ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL  
SUCCESS**

**Final Evaluation Report**

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## Executive Summary

An evaluation was conducted to understand Martindale Brightwood Alliance for Educational Success (MBAES) functioning and sustainability. The evaluation was intended to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Assess MBAES functioning: leadership and group dynamics
2. Identify partners' contributions to MBAES goals and objectives
3. Inform MBAES on its contribution to partner organizations
4. Inform MBAES on partners' perceptions of the alliances impact on schools and families
5. Provide information about partners' perspectives on partnership challenges and opportunities.
6. Provide understanding about partner organization support to MBAES
7. Provide understanding of how partnership functioning can affect sustainability
8. Identify partnership strengths and provide recommendations for improving MBAES functioning and sustainability

The study used a mixed design that included a survey, a focus group and a semi structured interview of MBAES coordinators.

The survey was completed by 25 of the 42 invited partners (59.5%) representing 19 of the existing 26 partner organizations. These 42 partners included the two coordinators of the alliance who agreed to not take the survey to avoid introducing biases in the results. Six partners including the coordinators of the alliance attended the focus group. Additionally, coordinators were interviewed together without the presence of other partners.

Findings show that

- Partners believe that MBAES leadership has been successful in building a collaborative environment either by promoting collaborative work, promoting participation, or sharing information. In the survey, respondents rated "evaluating and refining partnership actions", the lowest (3.44/5.00).
- Collaboration in MBAES is a combination of powerful commitment and effective communication between partners. It entails knowing the community, family, and/or school context and being able to come up with solutions specifically tailored to specific problems; solutions that sometime require taking innovative routes.
- "Leveraging resources to support students and families" and "facilitating access to target populations" were the items where partners perceive their organizations contribute more to MBAES. The lowest rated item was "bringing other organizations to the alliance."
- Building connections with the community and making connections with other organizations are the two main perceived benefits of MBAES. Partners also value the

access to non-financial resources -like new ideas, knowledge and best practices. The lowest rated perceived benefits were access to new clients and the possibility of enhancing organizational capacity, implying that partners do not perceive that the alliance necessarily increases their organizations' productivity or population reach.

MBAES partners believe that the alliance impacts students, families, community, and schools in the following ways:

- Students: Direct support and supplemental learning opportunities; opportunities for expanded programing.
- Families: empower and support families; keep parents informed; increase parent engagement; give voice to the families; develop skills, awareness and long-life learning opportunities
- Community: Disrupts poverty and its effects; inform and help understand the community as a whole; networking opportunities; awareness of community services.
- Schools: Connect schools with community programs; improve school work to the community and parents; increase understanding of the community school model; increase understanding of student population.
- Overall partner satisfaction with the alliance was rated high.
- Partners are very likely to continue in the partnership. However, they were not as likely to recommend other organizations to participate in the alliance In the meeting to present the preliminary results of the evaluation they expounded that this hesitancy to recommend others steamed from a lack of clarity on the role others would play or their place to do invite others.
- MBAES major challenges and strengths are:
  - *Major strengths:* Collaborative inputs in problems and solutions; leadership; diversity & experience of partners; willingness to meet the needs of the community; IUPUI support; networking possibilities; understanding of, and interest in the issues that affect the community; good rapport with families; visible to the community/ stronger sense of community; values: transparency, reciprocity, trust, mutual benefits, information sharing.
  - *Major Challenges:* Lack of evaluations that reflect diverse outcomes; irregular attendance to meetings; difficulty to show impact in such a short time; need to increase awareness of opportunities to support community and families; build support that is already in place and sustain needed resources; getting more school staff & parents involved in ongoing conversations on education; a perceived low capacity to advocate as a group

- *Threats:* Competitive funding and support; lack of funding/support to schools; uncertain/inconsistency in school policies and decisions; different school contexts demand differencing approaches from same partners, thus more of an effort; high turnover in school staff/ difficult to access teachers; consistent professional development of personnel in the schools; keeping people engaged overtime/high mobility; need of more resources available to the community (jobs);lack of buy-in from important stakeholders/ school district.

The evaluation team recommends that:

- In order to increase engagement and therefore build the case for MBAES sustainability, leadership has to be more intentional in showing results to partners and make them more aware of the benefits brought to their organizations through MBAES. Results also suggest that MBAES leadership should pay attention to the internal organizational factors that support positive partner relationships, intentional on-board of organizational representatives, and influence partners' decision to recommend the alliance to other organizations and remain as members in the alliance.

Based on a SWAT analysis approach the leadership should focus on achieving, keeping, and eliminating or reducing the following:

**Achieve:**

- Systematic collaboration/ synergy/resource & knowledge sharing: Create mechanisms to facilitate collaboration more frequently and systematically, and follow-up results of collaboration. Implicitly, MBAES must aim to extend collaboration outside the alliance.
- Periodic/comprehensive assessment: Collect information about the outputs, short and long term outcomes of the partnership at all levels specified in the logic model: school, community, adult individuals, families and children.
- Visibility/relevance of results to stakeholders: Together, with collecting data and determining results, MBAES must show these results to stakeholders with adequate frequency. The number of agencies incorporated into the partnership, the diversity of services they offer and the differences in the population served call for a monitoring and evaluation system to keep track and report changes periodically.
- Goal & roles reinforcement: Leadership must consider the gaps of information with new partner representatives and create mechanisms to include them by giving information about MBAES, the role their organization plays in the alliance and what is expected from them.
- New/diverse partners: The alliance can be extended to new partners to widen the range of services currently provided and gain more support and credibility for sustainability.
- Improved networking capabilities

- External support/alliances: It is important to find support for the alliance as a whole. Combine efforts and find funding opportunities to support the mission and goals of the alliance.
- Diversify funding sources/strategies
- More teacher training opportunities: The alliance should be more involved in teacher training to promote the community school model.

**Keep:**

- Current partners and diversity
- Collaborative efforts and values that support collaboration and team work
- The values that bring partners together like trust, respect for the individual and love for the community
- Collaborative leadership: Open participation, transparency and shared leadership
- Participatory decision-making
- One-to-one relations with partners
- Informal communication channels
- Consistency in communication
- Tailoring strategies to community, student and family needs
- Annual evaluations
- Member capacity to leverage resources
- University support

**Reduce/Eliminate:**

- Effects of school staff turnover by focusing more on teachers and parents
- Inconsistency in meeting attendance by using alternative methods to meet like conference calls.

**Avoid:**

- Lack of partner involvement

## Introduction

This report summarizes the results of the evaluation of the Martindale Brightwood Alliance for Educational Success (MBAES).

The evaluation is based on partners' perspectives of the functioning and sustainability of the partnership. Information was collected using quantitative and qualitative methods.

In this report we present the results of the evaluation study organized according to the eight questions that led the evaluation.

1. What are the main aspects that characterize MBAES functioning?
2. How do partner organizations contribute to MBAES goals and objectives?
3. How does MBAES impact partner organizations?
4. How do partners perceive the benefits of MBAES to students, families and schools?
5. What do partners think about MBAES challenges and strengths?
6. Are partners likely to advocate and remain as MBAES partners?
7. How can partnership functioning factors affect partnership sustainability?
8. What can be recommended to improve partnership functioning and sustainability?

The final part of this report presents the general conclusions of the study and final recommendations.

## Justification

School-community partnerships mobilize community resources to promote student's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development (Sanders, 2001) and address specific school needs. Several community-school-university coalitions seek to encourage systemic changes that promote equal access to education by addressing students' needs not only through targeted programs and services, but also through the extension of comprehensive services to teachers, school personnel, and parents (Callaham, 2011; Harkavy, 2005; Phillips, 1978; Ward, Strambler & Linke, 2013). The Martindale Brightwood for Educational Success is among these kinds of partnerships.

Through coordinated efforts MBAES partners are expected to strengthen the capacity of the alliance to better respond to the needs of students, school and families in Martindale Brightwood, reaching higher levels of effectiveness in generating adequate solutions to the complex issues at hand. However, as Tomlinson (2005) suggests, even though naming a 'partnership' implies something about how partners are expected to act in relationship to one another, it remains undetermined how these relationships will be enacted and how they will affect partnership effectiveness and its capacity to be sustainable after funding ends.

After five years in operation, it is important to MBAES partners to get an inside look of the alliance and reflect on how they engage in collaborative efforts; what are the changes they are bringing to the community; what have been the gains and investments of their organizations in this partnership throughout these years; and what are the aspects MBAES leadership must pay attention to in order to make the alliance more effective and sustainable. This report intends to inform partners on these issues.

## Evaluation Scope

### Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation was intended to accomplish the following objectives:

9. Assess MBAES functioning: leadership and group dynamics
10. Identify partners' contributions to MBAES goals and objectives
11. Inform MBAES on its contribution to partner organizations
12. Inform MBAES on partners' perceptions of the alliances impact on schools and families
13. Provide information about partners' perspectives on partnership challenges and opportunities.
14. Provide understanding about partner organization support to MBAES
15. Provide understanding of how partnership functioning can affect sustainability
16. Identify partnership strengths and provide recommendations for improving MBAES functioning and sustainability

### Evaluation Questions

1. What are the main aspects that characterize MBAES functioning?
2. How do partner organizations contribute to MBAES goals and objectives?
3. How does MBAES impact partner organizations?
4. How do partners perceive the benefits of MBAES to students, families and schools?
5. What do partners think about MBAES challenges and strengths?
6. Are partners likely to advocate and remain as MBAES partners?
7. How can partnership functioning factors affect partnership sustainability?
8. What can be recommended to improve partnership functioning and sustainability?

### Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people or organizations invested in MBAES. There are three groups of stakeholders for whom this evaluation will be useful:

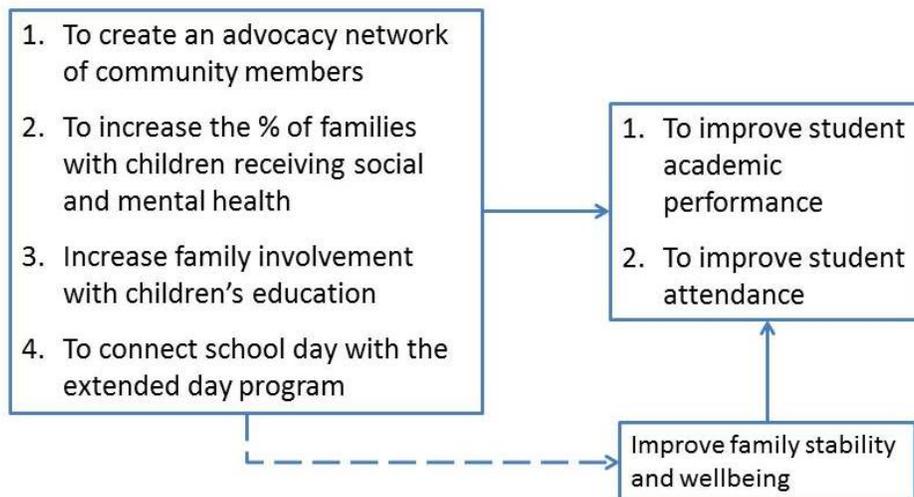
- Partner organizations: Those involved in the partnership operation.
- Federal Government and other potential funding agencies: Those not directly involved in the operation but are the primary intended users of the evaluation findings in order to make decisions.
- Martindale Brightwood community, including schools, students and their families: Those directly served by MBAES partner organizations.

## Martindale Brightwood Alliance for Educational Success

In 2010 IUPUI launched the federally funded Full Service Community Schools initiative to support three full-service community schools in Martindale Brightwood neighborhood—James Russell Lowell School 51, Frances W. Parker School 56, and Joyce Kilmer School 69. The MBAES, a school-community collaborative alliance, was formed to provide mental health, health and academic supports and social services to students and their families in the neighborhood while promoting parent engagement, academic achievement, as well as health and wellness.

The theoretical underpinnings of the program align with the Coalition Community Schools Logic Model (Shah, Brink, London, Masur, & Quihuis, 2009). Five-year term results point to: Improve student academic achievement and improve student attendance through the creation of educational, social and mental health services and programs to students and their parents and the increase in family involvement with their children’s education (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. MBAES Objectives



The alliance was built on the grassroots work of the existing school-community partnerships. Partners were selected for their relevance to the needs of individual students, the families and community and their capacity to assist in project implementation with special attention to populations traditionally underserved. Twenty six organizations are currently involved in the alliance, with IUPUI as the anchor institution taking the lead role in managing the initiative and facilitating the establishment of a community-wide supporting system to foster educational success.

Organizations involved in the alliance provide service in one or more of the areas listed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Services provided by MBEAS Partner Organizations**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. High-quality early learning programs and services</li><li>2. Academic enrichment and Tutoring</li><li>3. Family engagement (including parental involvement, parent leadership, family literacy, and parent education programs)</li><li>4. Mentoring and other youth development programs</li><li>5. Community service and service learning opportunities</li><li>6. Programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled</li><li>7. Job training and career counseling services</li><li>8. Nutrition services and physical activities</li><li>9. Primary health services and dental care</li><li>10. Mental Health Services</li><li>11. Activities that improve access to and use of social service programs and programs to promote family financial stability.</li><li>12. Adult education (including instruction of adults in English as a second language)</li></ol>
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Programs and services currently offered through this partnership are:

- **Programs for children:** summer reading, kindergarten art immersion, afterschool fine art education, afterschool character development and citizenship, in-school science programs, and girl-talk mentoring.
- **Programs for adults:** job training, coaching and placement, and leadership training for parents and family mentoring
- **Services:** funding for adult education programs, wrap around services, social services, mental and health services, food pantries and weekly nutrition program, and utility assistance.
- **Other services:** Preservice Teachers as Tutor's in Classrooms, Connect to compete \$9.95 Internet/Computer Program, and partnership coordination and evaluation.

## Evaluation Methodology

### Study design

The study used a Sequential Mixed approach design (Creswell, 2013) that started with a survey followed by qualitative data collection methods –document analysis, focus groups with partners and semi-structured interviews to program coordinators.

### Data collection techniques

#### Survey

The survey was constructed based on existent partnership studies and previously developed partnership evaluation tools. Namely: The Coalition Effectiveness Inventory (Butterfoss, 1998); the Community School Partnership Assessment (Blank & Langford, 2000); the NJ Survey Instrument (Reiker, 2011); and the Partnership Assessment Tool (Afsana, Habte, Hatfield & Neufeld, 2009).

During the planning phase of the study, the IUPUI program coordinators were consulted to clarify the purposes of the evaluation and validate the preliminary versions of the online survey. The survey was content-validated with a small sample of seven partners during the Community Advisory Committee monthly meeting. The final version was a 45-item survey with 42 close-ended and 3 open-ended questions.

The first four initial questions of the survey asked about areas of service attended in the partnership, time in the alliance, how they knew about the alliance, and reasons for joining the alliance.

Following these four initial questions, the survey grouped 35 items in six descriptive dimensions: leadership, partner engagement, group relationships/dynamics, and partners' perception of benefits (Borthwick, 1995; Lasker et al, 2001; Weiss et al., 2002; Han, et al, 2003).

**Leadership:** We asked partners to rate leadership based on how successfully they believed coordinators communicate common goals that are understood and supported by all partners and evaluate progress. Respondents were also asked to rate the model that defines the internal decision-making process and enables collaboration and partner involvement.

**Engagement:** Partner engagement is defined in this study as the partners' committed and enthusiastic intention to strengthening the alliance and its goals, enhancing positive impact in the communities served through the alliance, and strengthening the community school model.

**Group relationships/dynamics:** refer to how partners work to create a collaborative environment of trusting relationships, open communication, and meaningful participation where common overarching purposes are shared.

**Perceived benefits:** refer to what partners perceive as the benefits of participating in the alliance. Benefits included tangible resources like financial support or intangible resources, like access to networking and to new knowledge.

The next three questions in the survey were open-ended, asking partners' opinions about the **impact of the alliance on school and families**, and the **partnership strengths and challenges**.

In the final three questions partners were asked to rate **overall satisfaction** with the alliance, their **likelihood to recommend other organizations** to participate in the alliance, and their **likelihood to continue as partners** in the alliance. Overall satisfaction was rated using a 1 to 5 scale. To measure partners' likelihood to recommend the alliance to others and to remain in the alliance respondents were asked to use a scale of 1 to 10.

### Focus group

Focus group questions were discussed by the evaluation team after analyzing the preliminary results of the survey. The focus group guide included three questions to deepen understanding of partnership group relationships and impact on school and families. The questions of the focus group were as follows:

- Tell us a story/Give an example of how family, students, school setting, and/or community has been affected by MBAES.
- Were there any unexpected/unintended outcomes of MBAES for your organization?
- If MBAES were to continue for the 5 years, what would be key ingredients for sustainability?

### Interview

Coordinators of the alliance were interviewed to integrate their perspective into the study. The following are the questions for the interview to the coordinators:

1. Do you think MBAES has a strong vision and sense of purpose? Are all partners aligned with this vision?
2. In your opinion, what are the strengths and limitations of team and communication structures built into MBAES?
3. What value does the university bring to this alliance?
4. What are the main values and beliefs that support this alliance? What role do they play?
5. It seems from the survey and focus groups that small organizations get more out of this alliance than larger ones? Would you agree?
6. What actions do principals take to support this alliance? Give me an example.
7. Attendance to meetings is an issue raised by some partners, what motivates low attendance and how does this affect MBAES effectiveness?
8. What do you think the University has done well in its role as partner and coordinator of this alliance?

9. As part of the leadership of this alliance, what would you have done differently throughout these five years?
10. In what ways this evaluation will be used to build on or address the strengths and limitations of this alliance?

### Document Review

In addition, secondary data sources (grant proposal, annual reports, meeting minutes, memoranda of understanding –MOUs–, and MBAES Newsletters) were used to increase understanding of the context in which the partnership operates.

### Evaluation/methodology Matrix

The following table summarizes the relationship between evaluation questions and the data collection methods used in the evaluation.

**Table 2. Evaluation Matrix**

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Techniques			
	s	fg	i	dr
What are the main aspects that characterize MBAES functioning?	x	x	x	x
How do partner organizations contribute to MBAES goals and objectives?	x	x		
How MBAES impacts on partner organizations?	x	x		
How do partners perceive the benefit of MBAES to students, families and schools?	x			x
What are partners' opinions about MBAES challenges and strengths?	x	x		
Are partners likely to advocate and remain as MBAES partners?	x			
How can partnership functioning factors affect partnership sustainability?	x	x		x
What can be recommended to improve partnership functioning and sustainability?	x			x

*s= Survey; fg= Focus Groups; i= Interview; dr= Document Review*

### Procedure

The evaluation was conducted by a team of two internal evaluators, and assisted by one focus group facilitator. The steps followed during the evaluation included:

- Survey development, validation, and online administration. Data collection and preliminary analysis.
- Discussion of results and revision of focus group questions with the focus group facilitator.
- Focus group administration and qualitative data analysis.
- Qualitative and quantitative data triangulation
- Presentation of draft report to partners in the Community Advisory Committee monthly meeting. Use of the Goals Grid to analyze strategies for sustainability.
- Presentation of final report including partners' input to the draft report collected during the monthly meeting.

## **Population and Sampling**

Population for the study comprised 42 individuals representing 26 partner organizations working in a cross-sectorial alliance of non-profits, for-profits, public sector, community schools, one community college and IUPUI.

The invitation to respond the online survey was sent to the existing 42 partners. Partners had one month to respond. For the focus group the evaluation team used a nested sample of partners drawn from the same population invited to respond the survey (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Sutton, 2006).

## **Data Analysis**

Primary methods for statistical analysis included frequency analysis to discover patterns in the data, and bivariate correlation to discover relationships between the conceptual dimensions.

Qualitative data was obtained through open questions in the survey, interviews and the focus group. Evaluators used a direct, deductive approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Qualitative data and quantitative were analyzed concurrently to better respond to the evaluation questions.

## **Findings**

To give a more understandable format to the report, findings were organized around the eight evaluation questions.

## **Characteristics of respondents**

The survey was completed by 25 of the 42 invited partners (59.5%) representing 19 of the existing 26 partner organizations. These 42 partners included the coordinators of the alliance who agreed to not take the survey to avoid introducing biases in the results. Six partners including the two coordinators of the alliance attended the focus group. Additionally, coordinators were interviewed separately.

Table 2 summarizes the main characteristics of surveyed organizations: identification of areas of services provided (see Table 1), number of respondents per organization, and the number of years these organizations have been MBAES partners.

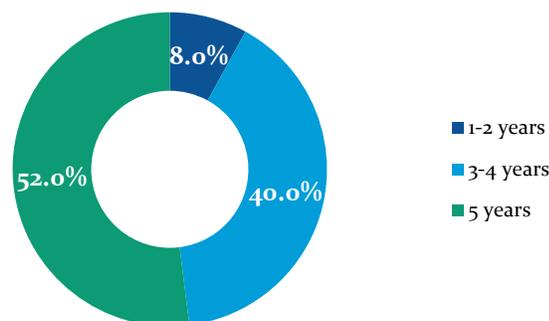
**Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents**

Type of Organization	Area(s) of Service Provided*	# Respondents	Years in MBAES
Community Center	1,2,3,4	1	3 to 4
Community Center	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	2	5
Community Center	1,3,4,5,7,8,11	1	3 to 4
Community Dev Center	5,7	1	5
Connectivity Business	1,3,4,5, 11	1	3 to 4
Family Center	10	2	3 to 4
Food bank	8	1	5
Library	1,3,5,7,8, 11	1	5
Library	3,7	1	3 to 4
Parent Teacher Association	3,5	1	5
School	1,2,3,4,5,8	2	5
School	1,3,8,5,12	2	5
School	1,3	1	5
University	1,3,4,5, 6, 8, 12	3	5
Community College	2,3,5,6	1	5
Youth Org	1	1	5
Youth Org	4	1	5
Youth Org	1,3,4	1	3 to 4
Youth Org	4,6	1	1 to 2

\* Numbers refer to Table 1 in page 9

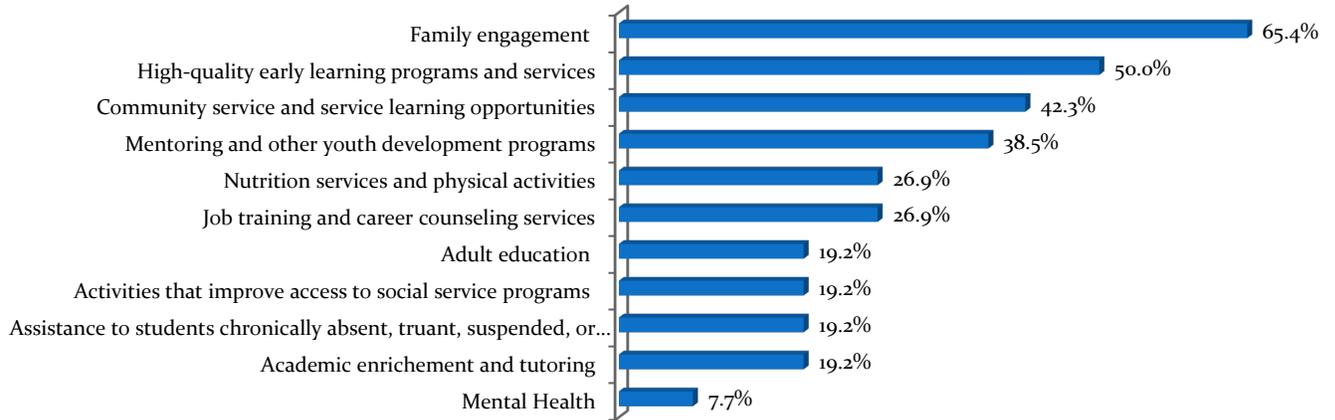
Figure 2 below shows the distribution of respondents according to years in the partnership. According to the results, 56% of surveyed organizations have been partners since the partnership started five years ago.

**Figure 2. Years as MBAES Partner Organizations**



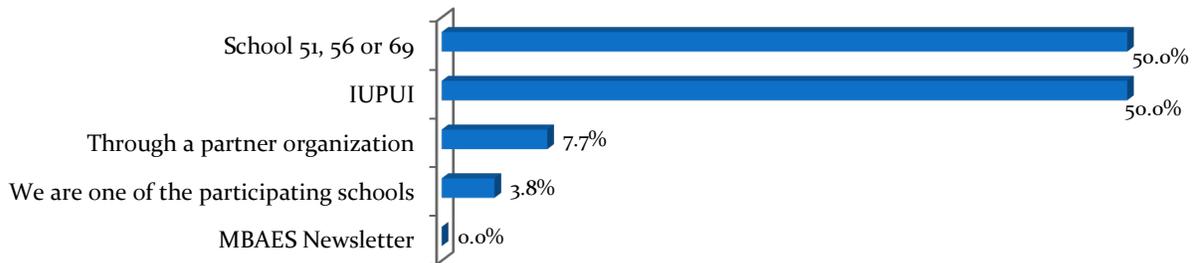
As shown in Figure 3 below, respondent organizations support eleven of the twelve areas of service provided by MBAES.

**Figure 3. MBAES areas your Organization Supports**



Respondents were asked how they knew about MBAES. Fifty percent knew about MBAES mainly through their previous connections with schools 51, 56 and 69 or through IUPUI (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. How did you know about MBAES?**



### What are the main aspects that characterize MBAES functioning?

The reason why partners are brought together into a partnership is to create a collective impact through coordinated efforts. Effective collaboration between partners to create this kind of impact depends on how partners relate to each other (trust, respect, and power balance). Also, their level of involvement and the heterogeneity of partner composition; leadership style; resources administration and management; partnership efficiency; knowledge of available resources, information, and connections; and external environmental factors play an influential role in the way partners collaborate (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Lasker et al., 2001).

In this section, we report the results of partnership functioning, measured through partner's evaluation of MBAES leadership and group relationships.

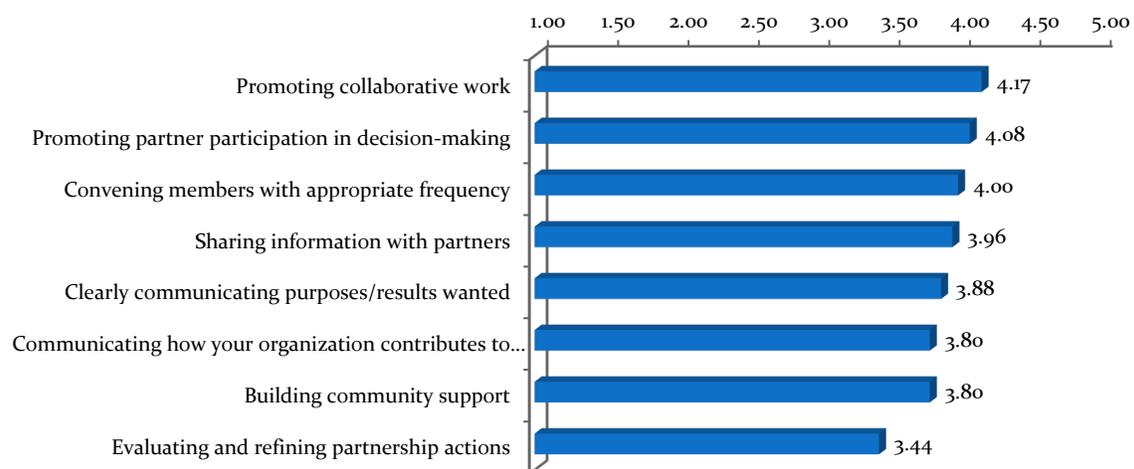
## Leadership

In the survey partners were asked to rate in a scale 1 to 5 whether they think that coordinators have been successful in clearly communicating the purposes, goals and results wanted in the alliance and if leadership effectively communicates to partners how their organizations would contribute to the goals of the alliance. Partners were also asked if coordinators usually evaluated and refined partnership actions.

Leadership was also measured in the survey based on the coordinators' success in building external support for the alliance and scheduling meetings with appropriate frequency. To measure collaborative leadership, respondents rated whether coordinators share information with partners, promote partner participation in decision-making, and encourage collaborative work.

Figure 5 shows that partners consider that MBAES leadership has been successful in building a collaborative environment either by promoting collaborative work, promoting participation, or sharing information. The lowest rated item was “evaluating and refining partnership actions”, (3.44/5.00).

Figure 5. Leadership



Notice in Figure 5 that mission alignment (communicating goals and making clear the role of partner organizations in achieving MBAES goals) was also rated low. This result is consistent with some of the information collected in the focus group and interviews. When asked about unintended outcomes of the alliance during the focus group, one of the partners mentioned that because he was new to the alliance he was not sure of what the intended outcomes were. During the interview with the coordinators, one of them said that they [coordinators] “...didn’t onboard new partners with the vision and the mission...new partners were selected just like the old partners were –because they fit the model and may not realize they fit the model.”

But as one of the coordinators said during the interview, there is a difference between being new personnel and new partner organization in the alliance. Sometimes partners are new personnel in

the partner organization who attend MBAES meetings even though the organization has been partner for five years or less. Either way, creating the conditions for new members to be fully involved is recommended to facilitate partner communication, collaboration, and alignment with MBAES goals.

The collaborative and participatory qualities of MBAES leadership were also part of the conversation in the focus group. During the conversation partners presented examples of collaboration between agencies to address individual situations, in which MBAES coordinators acted as the connectors between agencies to promote communication, facilitate collaboration and encourage a more holistic approach to solve the problem at hand.

Collaboration is facilitated by constant communication and information sharing. Both increase the power to engage not only partners, but also parents and members of the community. During the interview coordinators revealed that they strived to keep partners informed through several formal and informal communication channels like newsletters, monthly partner meetings, weekly individual meetings, emails, and phone calls when necessary. The following was expressed by one of the coordinators during the interview:

*...we meet with the partners all the time. Like every week. I mean I have partner meeting every single week. So we sometimes meet with or talked to them in between the partners meetings and they feel like they are caught up, so it's a continuous process."*

Monthly meetings have become the space where opportunities for mutual collaboration emerge more easily. However, even though partners agreed in the survey that the frequency of meetings was adequate, the truth is that attendance to monthly meetings is very low. This perhaps is contributed to the fact that as one of the coordinators said, "the meetings get repetitious" and, as one of the partners asserts: "folks are busy". Low attendance to monthly meetings should cause MBAES leadership to think of alternative less time-consuming ways to meet and keep partners systematically engaged in collaborative efforts.

During the focus group "the community", "respect for the individual", "reciprocity", and "trust" emerged as important scaffolding values for engagement. In the interview coordinators also agreed that these are values that support the partnership:

*I think there is a call to service that precedes everything. I think there is a value for individuals. I think there is an underscore belief that everyone is creative, resourceful, and whole that we deal with. They come to us that way and we work with them on whatever goals they have. You know what I mean? There is a respect of individual that's basic.*

Transparent communication is the value that builds trust and respect among partners and makes the partnership accountable:

*Like [she] said we send out as much as we can, about as much as we can. We have had presentations about our results, we share general budgetary information so that the partners know where the funding is coming from, where the core budgetary areas that the funding goes to. That kind of thing. I think it's a shared leadership that we envision and try to live out. We know that it takes the partners, as well as us, to work collaboratively to achieve this goal and at the heart of community schools.*  
(Coordinator)

As we have seen, one of the challenges leadership face is creating the right conditions for synergic functioning. When partners create synergy they combine the knowledge, skills and resources of different people and organizations to think and act in new, better ways about an issue, plan more comprehensively integrated programs, and strengthen partnership relationships to the broader community (Weiss, Miller & Lasker, 2002). In contrast to mere collaboration that is usually reduced to actions limited in time, synergy engages people in long term efforts that lead to the understanding of the values, needs and assets of the community and thinking collaboratively to solve complex problems (Lasker & Weiss, 2003).

During the focus group, one of the partners expressed having lack of clarity of the resources available to accomplish MBAES goals when asked about barriers for MBAES sustainability:

*...there's so many partners that are now part of MBAES that I don't even know. I don't even have met. So I have no idea of what other utilities are out there that I have access to, that I don't have access to because I have never seen a partner...*

Then he continued:

*Maybe knowing more of what it offers because I don't necessarily know fully what's available to me as being a partner. And maybe some other partners don't either. You know, maybe they don't know like they have access to being able to get a service in something or certain you know.*

Whether it is in the best interest of MBAES leadership to create that kind of synergy or not, it is important to notice that there are several conditions that may at least be hindering effective collaboration. One of them is that partners may not be fully aware of the resources available to them through the partnership. This kind of awareness keeps partner organizations from planning in isolation, and helps them organize their work based on the network of services provided by MBAES.

Another important challenge for MBAES leadership is MBAES capacity for building and maintaining external support. While internally MBAES leadership has managed to build strong one-to-one relationships between coordinators and partners that seem to favor stronger partner commitment; externally, factors like high mobility of families out of the neighborhood and high school staff turnover undermine the MBAES efforts to maintain the community engaged. When

a principal is changed, it is impactful to the alliance because coordinators have to reintroduce themselves and gain the new principal's confidence. It is as one of the coordinators said during the interview, like "going back to square one".

Maintaining parents support over five years of operation is not an easy challenge either. Coordinators understand that change is a natural process:

*"...kids get older. As kids get older they are more autonomous in their school work and parents are less involved in their daily communications with the teacher... And they start to withdraw from volunteering at the school"*

Coordinators also understand that though they have been able to engage certain people in the community over short periods of time, creating long-term bonds with the community becomes "a building job every year" because of the high mobility in the neighborhood. And this not only happens in the neighborhood, it also happens with external organizations and individuals supporting the alliance:

*"...we may get people to help us, consultants and things, but to keep them; they know too this is going to end its not going to on forever. You are constantly brining in folks. We had several outstanding professionals who made a good impact. But you can't keep them."*

### **Group relationships**

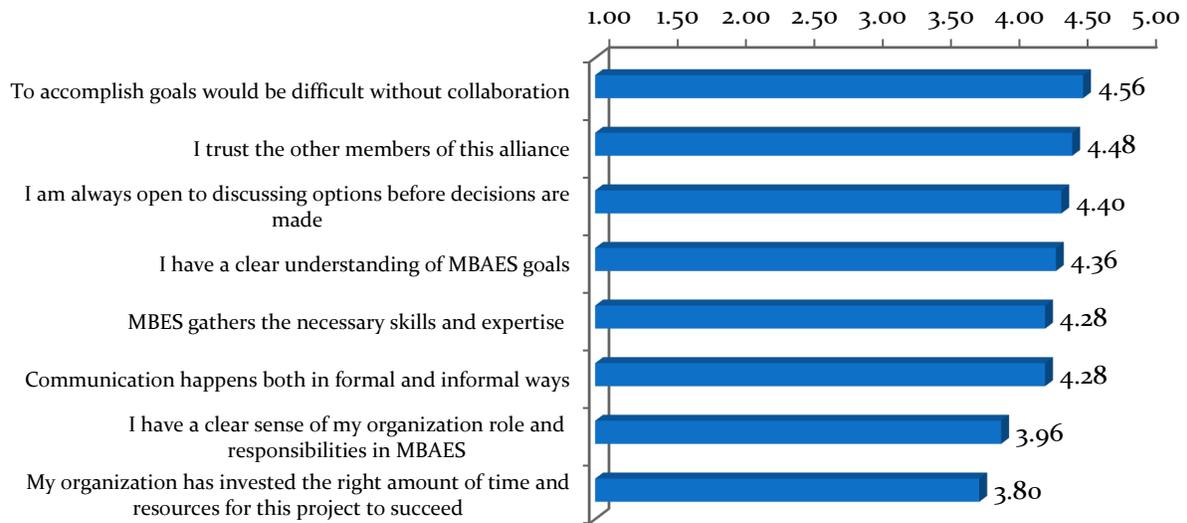
One measure to assess group relationships was shared meaning. Considered a pre-requisite to ease partner engagement into co-creating and sharing initiatives with other partners, it ultimately assists in aligning the values and goals of the alliance with the partner organizations' goals and values. To measure if partners have developed a shared meaning of the partnership, they were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: 1) I have a clear understanding of what this alliance is trying to accomplish; 2) I have a clear sense of the roles and responsibilities of my organization in this alliance; and 3) Communication in this alliance happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.

The survey also measured if partners have developed a sense of collaboration through the work they do in MBAES. Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: 1) I am always open to discussing different options before decisions are made; 2) What this alliance is trying to accomplish would be difficult without collaborating with other organizations.

Finally, the survey measured mutual trust and partners' confidence that other members bring to the alliance the necessary resources and skills to achieve goals. Partners were asked to show their level of agreement with the following statements: 1) I trust the other members of this alliance; 2) This alliance gathers the necessary skills and expertise for what we are trying to achieve; and 3) My organization has invested the right amount of time and resources for this project to succeed.

Results of the survey (Figure 6) show partners' disposition to work collaboratively. Results also show that partners trust other partners in the alliance.

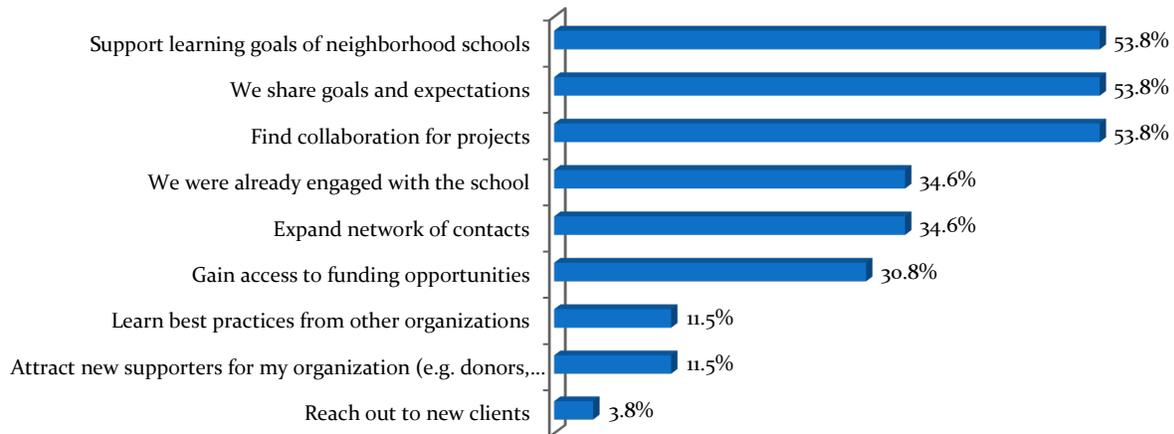
**Figure 6. Group Relationships**



The perception of collaboration, as pillar to group relationships, is consistent with partners' perception about what were their expectations for joining the alliance. Figure 7 below shows that when partners were asked to give three main reasons their organizations joined MBAES, the three most selected reasons were: "Find collaboration for projects" (53.85%); "Shared goals and expectations" (53.85%); and, "Support learning goals of neighborhood schools" (53.85%); followed by: "Expand network of contacts" (35%). The act of seeking collaboration and networking between two organization is usually fueled if partners believe that their organizations share common purposes and values, and most importantly, if they perceive that their goals align with the goals of the alliance.

Further analysis of the data provided about reasons to join MBAES shows that motivations vary depending on the type and size of the organization, and the kind of services partners offer. For instance, youth organizations and community centers want to "Get access to funding opportunities", while schools seem to be more interested in "Learning best practices from other organizations".

Figure 7. Three main reasons for joining MBAES



During the focus group participants told their experiences in past collaborations; the way they occurred and combined resources from multiple partners, to respond to the needs of students, their families and adults in the neighborhood, and follow-up on specific cases. This is especially important in Martindale Brightwood where families are sometimes transitional and continuity of services can be a challenge. In cases when students move outside the neighborhood or to different schools, collaboration between organizations can make the difference in easing a child's transition to a new school or informing a school about that student's unique needs. As one of the partners expressed during the focus group, one of the great advantages of this partnership is that partners have "a longitudinal view of a child" and can bring understanding to the school about what are the underlying causes of a problem.

Collaboration, as can be observed in the following story, is combination of powerful commitment and effective communication between partners. It entails knowing the context and being able to come up with solutions specifically tailored to specific problems; solutions that sometimes require taking innovative routes:

*...this situation is such that, you know, at this age 14 years old he's making a lot of adult decisions because he has to, he has to. You know, with the grandmother just doing all she can and all she knows, she does not know this side of what reality is, and you know, so he's making a lot of adult decisions and his grandmother is um tired. You know, and so, so as a result of that it's... and plus he's one that just steals your heart... and so this calls us to really get more engaged. And we have plenty of those organizations to really catch the initial piece, get the parents, and install some tools that they can use and close to follow-up and then connect them with the services that are useful. But we saw where a lot of the gaps were and we can easily see when something was going to fall through the gaps...we were there to help, and we were able to call on Mary in a few cases, you know, this is what's about to*

*happen, you know, what are your suggestions, you know, how do we keep these kids from also fall through the gaps.*

However, there are challenges that affect group work dynamics and collaboration; the most important seems to be the aforementioned problem of low attendance to monthly meetings. One of the focus group participants expressed the following:

*One thing that I think that we could do more of is getting back to groups together to have that discussion of what do you have going on, what needs do you have, maybe somebody in this group can help with that need, you know, I have that kid that's doing this, oh, so and so can you help that, we have this program over here that's perfect for that or a parent that I see on the regular basis, oh we got this program over here that can help with education for this or whatever, that kind of thing. I think that it means to be able to do more of that kind of when we get together. That's the focus, I think. I think sometimes we lose some of that.*

Partnership composition (homogeneity .vs. heterogeneity) is another factor that can affect partners' relationships and partnership effectiveness. Partner selection process plays an important role for goal alignment. MBAES partners were selected because of their relevance to the needs of individual students, the families and community and their capacity to assist in project implementation with special attention to populations traditionally underserved, ensuring alignment with MBAES goals. Partners came from different experiences and organizations that attend diverse types of clients and community needs. Based on their individual beliefs and the mission of the organizations where they belong, partners bring to the alliance their unique perspective to understand and read the community conveying diversity into the alliance and allowing access to diverse lens to provide innovative and adequate responses to problems in the community.

Nonetheless, diversity of partners can also be a challenge, especially in the case of MBAES working with three different schools. Each school has its own situation and each one of them has to be approached differently. Besides, the complexity of the relationship between schools, parents and school districts increases since information and decisions are not fully and opportunely communicated by the district, which affects transparency of communication and information sharing with partners.

Values emerged again as a theme when discussing group relationships. Trust is just one of the values that support this collaborative work and relationships in the alliance. In the interview, when asked about the values that support work, coordinators mentioned: reciprocity, transparency, and information sharing, as part of a shared leadership approach they have taken to lead the alliance:

*I think that we have a value of equity and social justice. So just the work that we do in the neighborhoods that are diverse and we pay attention to that and it's a value*

*that we have and many of our partners share with us as well. Many of our partners have values of reciprocity and we try to make sure that it's mutually beneficial. If we are approached by a partner that says please help us make entree to do that knowing that it's a mutually beneficial way to work with school leadership. We defiantly value transparent communication.*

Paying attention to the diversity in the neighborhood, schools and children speaks to the values of equity and social justice.

There is also mutual benefit among partners and some kind of interdependence that benefits both parts, as expressed by one of the coordinators during the interview: *"I think there's an interdependency that's really healthy. They need our expertise, we need their services, they need our entrée to school leadership, and we need their capacity. I mean it's this real hand and glove kind of thing"*.

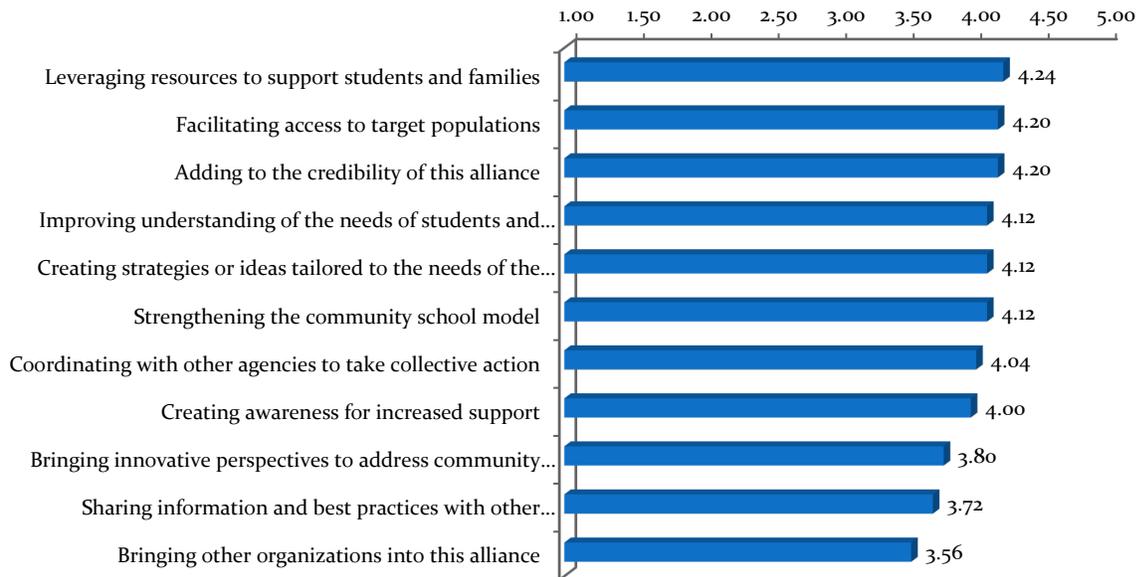
### **How do partner organizations contribute to MBAES goals and objectives?**

Survey respondents were asked to rate the levels of contribution their organizations provide to strengthening the alliance in the following ways: adding to the credibility of the alliance; bringing innovative perspectives to address community issues; bringing other organizations to the alliance; leveraging resources; sharing information and best practices with partners; creating strategies or ideas tailored to the needs of the community; and creating awareness for increased support. Respondents also rated their contribution to facilitating access to targets populations; improving understanding of the needs of students and their families; coordinating with other agencies to take collective action; and the extent to which they consider they contribute to strengthen the community school model in Martindale Brightwood.

Figure 8 shows the results of the survey. Notice that "leveraging resources to support students and families" and "facilitating access to target populations" are the items where partners perceive their organizations contribute more to MBAES. Notice also that the lowest rated item was bringing other organizations to the alliance. This response can have multiple interpretations; one of them is that MBAES relies on its current members to address multiple situations.

Observing forms of contribution to the partnership is also a way to understand partner engagement and their commitment to MBAES goals. Responses to the survey show that partners' major commitment is with the students, families and the community.

Figure 8. Organization contribution to MBAES



Adding credibility to the alliance of MBAES was also rated high by partners. Access to resources is sometimes obtained because of the credibility that partners bring into the alliance, benefitting small and larger partner organizations. It is undeniable that partnering with large organizations like IUPUI and Edna Martin Christian Center is likely to bring more stability, continuity, and leverage to MBAES.

### How important is MBAES to partner organizations?

Partners rated whether the alliance was important for their organizations to make new connections, gain access to non-financial resources, gain access to financial support, gain access to new clients, and if it was important to identify new and creative ways to solve problems. Additionally partners rated the importance of the alliance for their organization to connect with the community, gain access to new knowledge and best practices, and enhance their organizational capacity for service delivery.

Survey results show that building connections with the community and making connections with other organizations are the two main perceived benefits (Figure 9). Partners also value the access to non-financial resources -like new ideas, knowledge and best practices- through MBAES. The lowest rated perceived benefits were access to new clients and the possibility of enhancing organizational capacity, implying that partners do not perceive that MBAES necessarily increases their organizations' productivity or population reach.

These results are consistent with the response to the question about why they joined MBAS and seem to demonstrate an alignment of their expectations for joining MBAES and what they perceive they are getting as result of being partners.

Figure 9. Perceived Benefits



Following is good example of how MBAES functions and helps partners to connect with each other, work together and connect with the community in this information given by one of the partners at the focus group:

*I think one that we had that was just this past summer was being able to make that connection with the Felege Hiywot Center. For me being able to come together for summer reading and be able to... you know, had I had not met her through this you know I might never met her... or got to know her and what she did and things like that, So I mean, that helped us to be able to form a partnership really where I got the first kid signed up for summer reading which helps us as a library with our numbers and kids and stuff like that, and it helps us to get the books to kids and in turn she gave me another stuff like each subject they were going over for each week and I was able to supply her with books on the subjects for the kids to be able to read during that time.*

### How do partners perceive MBAES benefits students, family and schools?

Before analyzing partners' perceptions, it is important to have a quick look at partnership's outputs during these five years of MBAES operation. Thought this information does not refer directly to outcomes, it gives an idea of the reach and breadth of the work MBAES does.

The following Table 4 summarizes the main results of MBAES in the last five years. Information was extracted from the Grant Performance Annual Reports One Year and Ad Hoc reports to the Department of Education 2011-2015. Normally, results in the Annual Reports are based on the Project Objectives and reflect the annual performance of the partnership in relation to project objectives and annual target measures. Table 4 and Figure 10 show only absolute numbers, not taking into consideration targeted results for each year.

Table 4. Summary of MBAES results (2010-2015)

Performance Measure	Actual performance data totals				
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
<b>1. Project objective: To increase the % of students, families and community members receiving educational, social, primary and mental health services</b>					
1.1 Total number of individuals who received service	7894	8777	3489	4105	9011
Number of students who received service	5597	2814	1319	1407	3376
Number of family members who received service	920	2817	1306	1362	1532
Number of individual community members who received service	1377	3151	864	1470	4146
<b>2. Project Objective: To improve student attendance</b>					
2.1 Average daily attendance for chronically absent students who participated in extended learning programs	8	29			23
<b>3. Project Objective: To create and establish an advocacy network of community partners that provides services.</b>					
3.1 Network of providers that will engage families and improve student achievement.	125	45	41	49	48
3.2 Resource connections activities including the, Martindale Brightwood Community Connections Celebration	818	176	312	135	500
3.3 Number of individuals /organizational representation joining the alliance	20	17	6	9	6
<b>4. Project Objective: To improve student academic achievement</b>					
4.1 Number of children participating in extended learning programs who score at or above proficiency in reading/language arts on ISTEP	283	74		0	0
4.2 Number of children participating in extended learning programs who score at or above proficiency in math on ISTEP	265	63		0	0
4.3 Number of students completing grade honor roll or attaining mastery level proficiency.		377		0	651
4.4 Number of students participating in academic enrichment initiatives (during and after school).	1524	1387	1766	1159	0
<b>5. Project Objective: Increase family involvement with their children's education</b>					
5.1 The number of parents participating in school based activities. Participation is measured by their attending four hours of informative sessions and the completion of at least two post workshop evaluations.	506	206	143		174
5.2 In the first year, number of needs assessment of parent opportunities for growth and engagement done by school coordinators. In subsequent years, number of programs designed by parents (i.e.. Parent nights, coffee w/principal, etc..).	16	33	84		

<b>6. Project Objective: On an annual basis provide teachers and youth program providers with professional development opportunities that encourage connecting the school day with the extended day learning programs</b>					
6.1 Increase teacher knowledge about FSCS, and their participation/ support in after school offerings.	150	7	99	5	0
6.2 Number of teachers and youth program providers that attended a professional development workshop and collaborated towards alignment with afterschool programs and school academic goals.	33	45	29	163	72
<b>7. Project Objective: To increase the % of families with children receiving social and mental health services.</b>					
7.1 Families with children receiving social and mental health services	1835	2606	2167	3760	5312

Figure 10. Individuals who received educational, social, primary and mental health service (2010-2015)

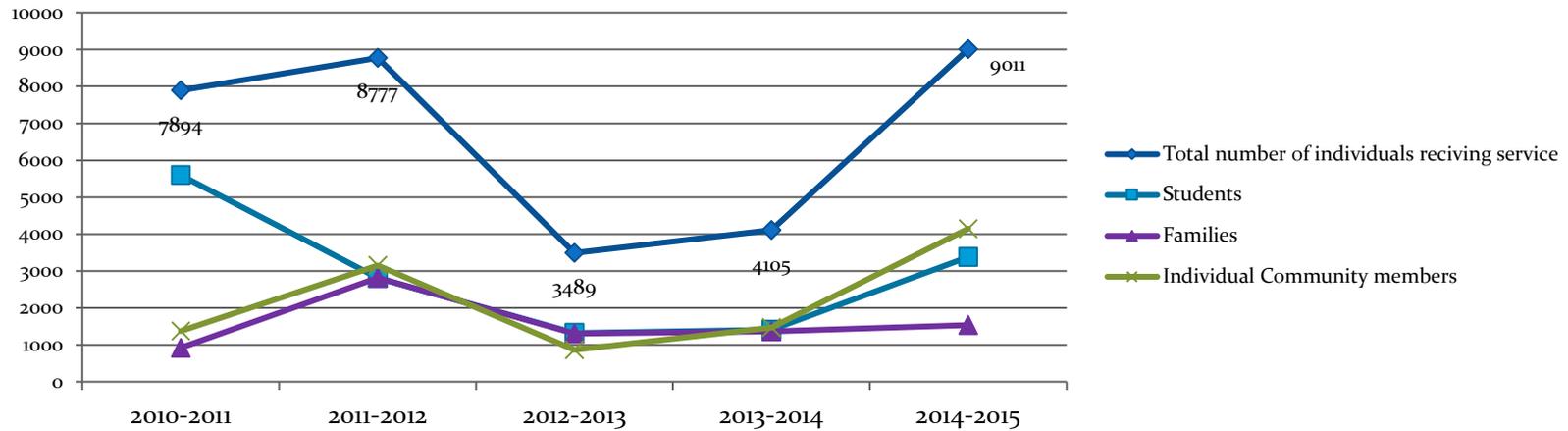
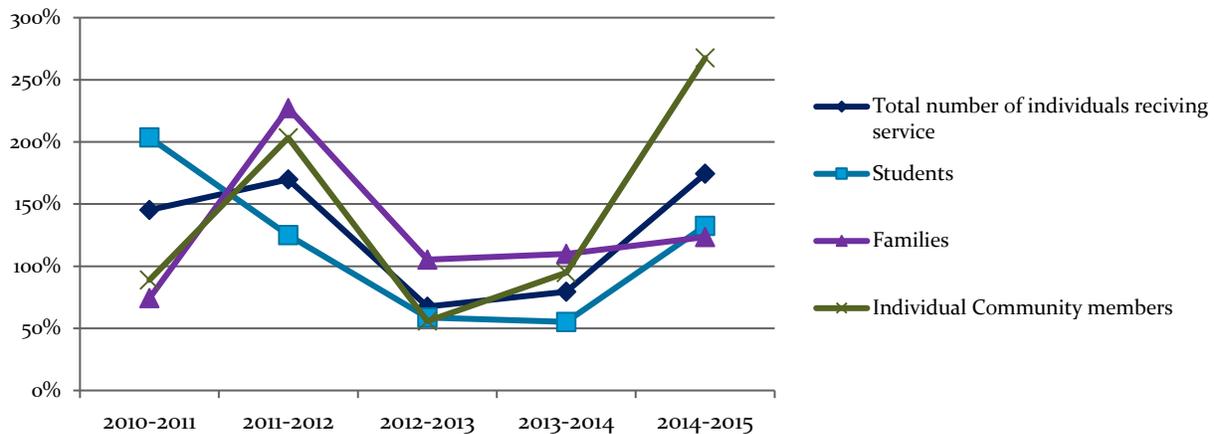


Figure 11 below shows the same information as Figure 10, in relative numbers; that is, considering the target population expected to be served each year. Notice that the proportion of community members served increased visibly with respect to students and families.

**Figure 11. Percentage of individuals targeted for services that actually received educational, social, primary and mental health service (2010-2015)**



The survey included an open ended question inquiring about how partners think that MBAES benefits students, families and schools. Answers gravitated between the different populations targeted by the alliance. Depending on the kind of client served in the community, some partners made emphasis on schools, others on families and the community, and others on students. Few partners considered the three types of beneficiaries in their responses.

Figure 12 summarizes the responses given by partners in the survey and focus group.

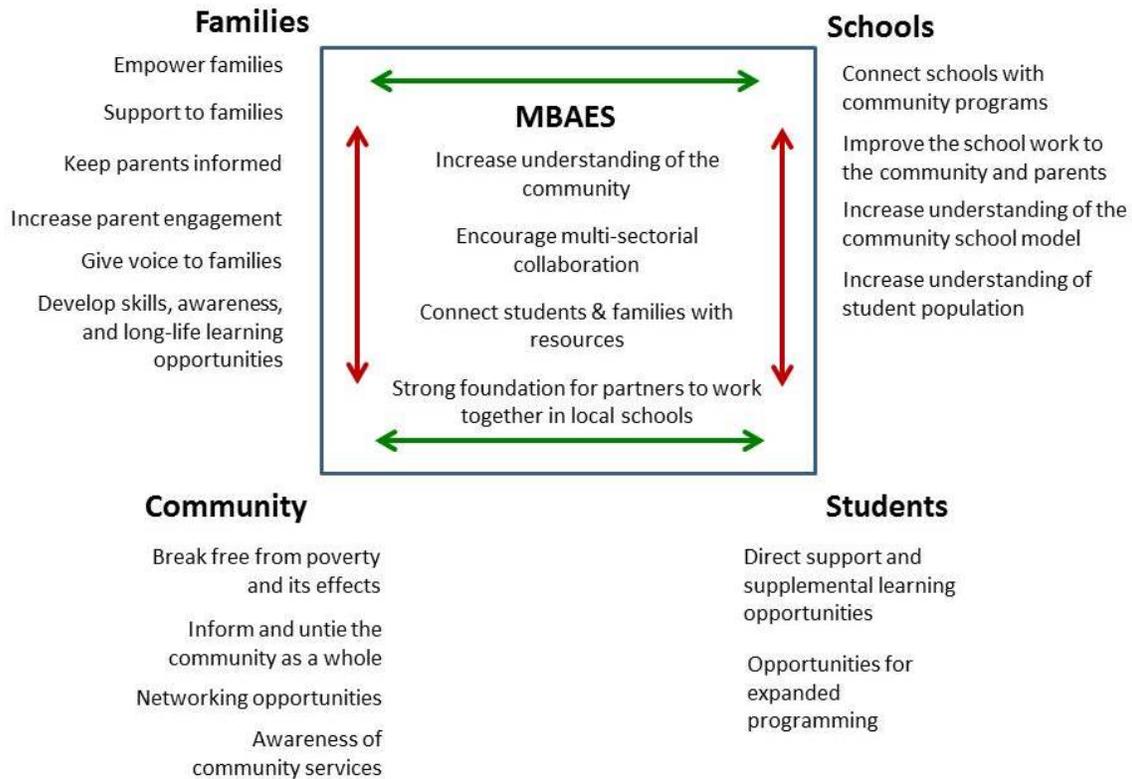
Information collected in the focus group refers to impact on adults, on parents, on students, on teachers and on schools. Following are three of the several stories told by partners to show impact:

Impact on adults:

*I want to share a story of a parent we had in our Martindale Brightwood family stability program...Um, we met her at the [inaudible] and [she] was there and the night she was there wasn't well attended, well tons of stories, but no well attended, but I noticed her because she had three children and they were so well behaved and they kept their coats on the whole time and it was hot. ... But afterwards I went up to her and told her about the program in Martindale Brightwood ... So she filled that criteria, we talked and she came to our orientation and decided that the program could be a good fit for her. She was really good about coming to everything we would ask her to do, you know classes and she worked the program well to the point where*

*we graduated her recently up to the center for working families program where she could get more in depth parental coaching and so far. But she took a welding class, she I believe got her certificate ... and then just recently she also got the patient access specialist.*

**Figure 12. How has MBAES benefitted students, family and schools?**



**Impact on teachers and students:**

*... as a result of being in the relationship, um, we got the talks that deal directly with the girls, um, fifth grade girls we followed them and we saw over a year just a tremendous difference in behavior and attitudes in how they interacted with their teachers, again because our facilitators understood the setting. The teachers, you know, some of them had some experience just didn't have some of the missing skill sets to deal with some of these girls and so as a result I think there were 20 girls last school year were taken up to another group this year they were still in contact with junior high we're still in contact with. And several of them end up going on a three day retreat over the summer they got a chance to spend three days away with other 24 girls from the outside the community and they were able to open up about what was really going on most of all their lives and one facilitator who came back from the retreat she had been in this type of work for over 15 years, and these are her words that had never seen anything like this in 15 years. Express what was going on without*

*any barriers, and so from 69 that you can see... I don't know how to describe this, but you know you can see growth, I mean you can't say... you can't put it in writing but you can see just a major shift that takes place in the girls. And there was this just one girl who is now going to a junior high school that lived, um, Oh my goodness you would have never known the conditions that she lived in and when she spoke it was like, where did that come from? How were you able to articulate the way you do when you don't hardly speak, you know. And she, she was from 69. And, um, I mean, um, it was just amazing. And all of that had just been bottle up inside because she didn't have an outlet.*

#### Impact on teachers:

*Last year this particular kid had a fairly new teacher new to the urban setting, um.. and just was pretty green on how to deal with a urban classroom setting. And after going and monitor sit there in the class for a few days observing, and then coming back talking with the teacher, she was able to absorb, you know, what are the things that I need to do as a teacher to really get better control of the classroom so from that she was like, hey can I just, you know, connect with you directly and so we did that. And as a result I would get a text message "Hey, having a great day, or hey, maybe we'll come visit" You know, and so that way I would know what was going on immediately or a couple of days after the fact.*

Partners also reported unexpected outcomes, like when some programs emerged from specific needs such and become something more powerful and stable. Such is the case of the Latino Group:

*... One year we had two public allies in Becky and Isaias and they were all tasked to different parent groups in particular. Becky was pursuing grandparent raising grandchildren and Isaias was pursuing the Latino families, Britney was doing single moms, and then Joe was doing dads in general, and they all did study circles with those particular demographic groups of people and then the groups that kind of gelled from that continued on and the PAC or PFC was one of the groups that gelled and continued on. Partly because Isaias was so dynamic....They are together but they are not with us. What they are doing now that John Hope's closed, they have graduated from our ESL classes and all that together as a group and are going as a group to the ESL classes at John Hope.*

## What are partners’ opinions about MBAES challenges and strengths?

Table 5 summarizes the main strengths and weaknesses expressed by partners in the survey, focus group and interviews.

**Table 5. MBAES Challenges and Opportunities**

	<b>POSITIVE</b>	<b>POTENTIALLY NEGATIVE</b>
<b>I N T E R N A L</b>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	1. Collaborative inputs in problems & solutions	1. Lack of evaluations that reflect diverse outcomes
	2. Leadership	2. Irregular attendance to meetings
	3. Engaged community	3. Difficulty to show impact in such a short time
	4. Diversity & experience of partners	4. Need to increase awareness of opportunities to support community and families
	5. Willingness to meet the needs of the community	5. “Longevity”
	6. IUPUI support	6. Build support that is already in place and sustain needed resources
	7. Focus on students and families	7. Getting more school staff & parents involved in conversations surrounding education.
	8. Networking possibilities	8. Low capacity to advocate as a group
	9. Personal involvement with partners	9. Not a full understanding of MBAES goals
	10. Understanding of, and interest in the issues that affect the community	
	11. Good rapport with families	
	12. Visible to the community/ stronger sense of community	
13. Values: Transparency, Reciprocity, Trust, Mutual benefits, information sharing.		
<b>E X T E R N A L</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	1. Community resources	1. Competitive funding and support
	2. The community cares about what happens to children	2. Lack of funding/support to schools
		3. Uncertain/inconsistency in school policies and decisions
		4. Different school contexts demand more effort
		5. High turnover in school staff/ Difficult to access teachers
		6. Training of personnel in the schools
		7. Keeping people engaged overtime/high mobility
		8. Need of more resources available to the community (jobs)
	9. Lack of buy-in from important stakeholders/ District	

Some of these challenges (threats and weaknesses) exert a direct influence on partnership sustainability; but also many of the strengths listed can be used to make the case to achieve sustainability.

## Are partners likely to recommend MBAES to other organizations and remain as MBAES partners?

Figure 13 below shows that satisfaction with the alliance was rated high in a scale 1 to 5. Even though we were not able to find a significant positive correlation between overall satisfaction and perceived benefits or any of the other variables included in the survey, we believe that partner satisfaction adds to the equation of sustainability. When satisfaction is high, it somehow reflects the value partners give to the alliance and may influence their intention to remain and advocate for the alliance.

Figure 13. Overall Satisfaction

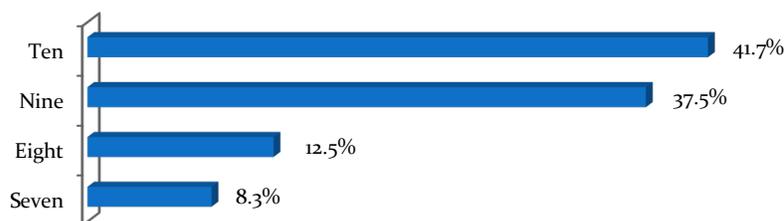


Since satisfaction judgments can be influenced by differences in perceptions, expectations, values, and past experiences it is rather difficult to explain why partners showed these levels of satisfaction. We can only assume that in their responses they value not only the benefits brought to their organizations for being partners, but also the group relationships, leadership, and resources of the partnership, as well as its effectiveness.

The last two questions in the survey were aimed at measuring if partners were likely to remain in the partnership and recommend other organizations to participate in the alliance. We believe that partner willingness to talk to others about the benefits and results of the partnership can influence others' perceptions, awareness, and attitudes towards the partnership (Buttle, 1998), positively influencing not only donor behavior, but also community support. Donor behavior involves important factors like volunteering hours, donations, donor recruitment, grants, event attendance, or fundraising engagement (Wymer & Rundle-Thiele, 2014) and together with internal functioning features, it may become an important drive to growth and sustainability.

Following are the results of both questions (Figures 14 and 15):

Figure 14. Likely to recommend other organizations to participate



As we can see, in a scale 1 to 10, partners are very likely to continue in the partnership. However, they are not as likely to recommend other organizations to participate in the alliance. In a partner meeting, used by the evaluation team to triangulate the data, members of MBAES theorized why they were not likely to recommend other organizations to participate. First, some partners explained that they were unaware that they held the authority to invite new partners into this effort. Secondly, a lack of clarity on the mission and duties of MBAES beyond their own organization prevented them from inviting other organizations. Therefore, many partners commented that they were confused on why they would be inviting them to participate in MBAES and what role that organization would play.

**Figure 15. Likely to continue being a partner**



### **How can partnership functioning factors affect partnership sustainability?**

Project sustainability can be influenced by three different kinds of factors: project design and implementation; factors within the organizational setting; and factors in the broader community environment (Schediac-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998). In the first group of factors stand the project negotiation process with the community and partners, project effectiveness, project duration, external support, project type, and the development of strategies to build internal and external capacity. The second set of factors relate to partnership functioning: the strength of the organizations that support the alliance and effective leadership. Finally, the third group of factors includes community involvement in the development of the project and socioeconomic and political factors. Most recent literature (DiVa Consortium, 2011; Devane, 2007; Shea, 2011) supports the statement that sustainability is influenced by the capacity of a project to make results visible and relevant to stakeholders, keeping them involved and committed to the project. Effective management and leadership; active participation of target populations; availability of resources and a clear sense of direction have also been found to influence project sustainability.

The evaluation team ran some statistical analyses to understand the factors that could affect MBAES sustainability based on survey results.

Bivariate correlations applying Spearman’s rho coefficient were used to calculate the relationship between years in the partnership and group relationships, overall satisfaction, likelihood to recommend, and likelihood to continue in the alliance. A positive significant correlation was found between years in the partnership and partner’s likelihood to remain in the partnership

( $r_s=.627$ ,  $p < .01$ ), meaning that partners who have remained more years in the alliance are more likely to continue being partners.

We also found that partners who had been partners for more time are more likely to have a clear understanding of the what the alliance is trying to accomplish ( $r_s=.678$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a clear sense of the role and responsibilities of their organization in the alliance ( $r_s=.540$ ,  $p < .01$ ). They also perceive that their organizations have invested the right amount of time and resources in this project ( $r_s=.464$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

We also tried to understand how the different dimensions included in the survey relate to each other to create sustainability. Sustainability is understood in this study as the likelihood to recommend and the likelihood to remain in the partnership.

The correlational analysis showed that in MBAES there is a strong connection between leadership and the way the group interacts. Partner engagement with the partnership goals and mission is also related to partner perceived benefits and with the way the group interacts. Partners who perceive that their organizations benefit from being part of this partnership are also those who are more likely to recommend other organizations to participate and to remain as members in the alliance. Also partners who experienced positive group relationships are more likely to recommend and remain in the alliance. In the case of MBAES satisfied partners are not the more likely to recommend to others or to continue in the alliance. The fact that satisfaction is not significantly related to willingness to recommend and retention, contradicts previous findings (Buttle, 1998; Gustafsson, et.al, 2005; Hayes, 2011; Waterfield, 2006); but supports earlier studies that suggest that willingness to recommend is not related to satisfaction judgements (Westbrook, 1987).

This analysis demonstrates that in order to increase engagement and therefore build the case for MBAES sustainability, leadership has to be more intentional in showing results to partners and make them more aware of the benefits brought to their organizations through MBAES. Results also suggest that MBAES leadership should pay attention to the internal organizational factors that support positive partner relationships and influence partners' decision to recommend the alliance to other organizations and remain as members in the alliance.

### **What can be recommended to improve partnership functioning and sustainability?**

In the survey, partners were asked to recommend strategies to improve MBAES outcomes. These were their responses:

- Share resources and provide collaborative programs
- Increase external/public support
- Conduct periodic assessment rather than only annual reports
- Determine if new partners should be added to the alliance
- Research best practices in similar programs
- Procure continued presence of District to gain buy-in

- Increase residents awareness of the forces that impact their lives
- Get more school staff , students and families involved in conversations about education
- Expand the network of schools (KIPP-Indy, PSOE, IAE, Charter, private schools)
- MBAE: become a vocal advocate for education reform

Additionally, after presenting the results of the study during the February, 2016 Advisory Committee monthly meeting, the evaluation team asked partners to discuss partnership sustainability taking into consideration the results presented to them during the meeting.

To guide the discussion the evaluation team used The Goals Grid (Nickols & Ledgerwood, 2005). The Goals Grid is a strategic planning 2x2 matrix used to facilitate the discussion about conditions, strategies, and qualities needed to improve MBAES sustainability. Partners identified what MBAES needs to have (Achieve); what the alliance wants to preserve (Preserve/Keep); what partners want to avoid (Avoid); and what needs to be eliminated to create better conditions for te partnership to continue over the next years.

Table 6 presents the results of the discussion. Partners were encouraged to continue the discussion to extend and refine their list of conditions for sustainability.

**Table 6. Goals Grid developed by Partners**

		STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY	
		No	Yes
Do you want it?	Achieve	Do you have it?	Preserve/Keep
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation packet</li> <li>• Cross-cultural faith based participation</li> <li>• Community voice</li> <li>• Better highlight achievements consistently</li> <li>• Consistent communication</li> <li>• Increased meeting participation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom supports</li> <li>• Collaborative funding relationships</li> <li>• Collaborative spirit</li> <li>• Alignment with quality of life plans/goals</li> </ul>
No	Avoid		Eliminate/Reduce
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management take over</li> <li>• Partner loss</li> <li>• Doing harm to the community</li> <li>• Deficit thinking</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty/staff loss (principal/teacher)</li> <li>• Misinformation</li> <li>• Limited funding interest</li> <li>• Apathy among partners</li> <li>• Barriers to participation</li> </ul>

## Conclusions

Following are the conclusions of the study:

1. Main aspects that characterize MBAES functioning:
  - Partners consider that MBAES leadership has been successful in building a collaborative environment either by promoting collaborative work, promoting participation, or sharing information. The lowest rated item was “evaluating and refining partnership actions”, (3.44/5.00).
  - Collaboration in MBAES is combination of powerful commitment and effective communication between partners. It entails knowing the context and being able to come up with solutions specifically tailored to specific problems; solutions that sometime require taking innovative routes.
2. Partner organizations contribution to MBAES goals and objectives:
  - “Leveraging resources to support students and families” and “facilitating access to target populations” were the items where partners perceive their organizations contribute more to MBAES. The lowest rated item was “bringing other organizations to the alliance”.
3. MBAES impact on partner organizations
  - Building connections with the community and making connections with other organizations are the two main perceived benefits. Partners also value the access to non-financial resources -like new ideas, knowledge and best practices- through MBAES. The lowest rated perceived benefits were access to new clients and the possibility of enhancing organizational capacity, implying that partners do not perceive that MBAES necessarily increases their organizations’ productivity or population reach.
4. Perceived benefits of MBAES to students, families and schools
  - Families: empower and support families; keep parents informed; increase parent engagement; give voice to the families; develop skills, awareness and long-life learning opportunities
  - Schools: Connect schools with community programs; improve school work to the community and parents; increase understanding of the community school model; increase understanding of student population.
  - Community: Disrupts poverty and its effects; inform and help understand the community as a whole; networking opportunities; awareness of community services..

- Students: Direct support and supplemental learning opportunities; opportunities for expanded programing.

5. MBAES challenges and strengths

- Major strengths: Collaborative inputs in problems and solutions; leadership; diversity & experience of partners; willingness to meet the needs of the community; iupui support; networking possibilities; understanding of, and interest in the issues that affect the community; good rapport with families; visible to the community/ stronger sense of community; values: transparency, reciprocity, trust, mutual benefits, information sharing.
- Major Challenges: Lack of evaluations that reflect diverse outcomes; irregular attendance to meetings; difficulty to show impact in such a short time; need to increase awareness of opportunities to support community and families; build support that is already in place and sustain needed resources; getting more school staff & parents involved in conversations surrounding education; low capacity to advocate as a group
- Threats: competitive funding and support; lack of funding/support to schools; uncertain/inconsistency in school policies and decisions; different school contexts demand more effort; high turnover in school staff/ difficult to access teachers; training of personnel in the schools; keeping people engaged overtime/high mobility; need of more resources available to the community (jobs);lack of buy-in from important stakeholders/school district.

6. Likelihood to advocate and remain as MBAES partners:

- Overall partner satisfaction with the alliance was rated high.
- Partners are very likely to continue in the partnership. However, they are not as likely to recommend other organizations to participate in the alliance. In the meeting to present the preliminary results of the evaluation they expounded that this hesitancy to recommend others steamed from a lack of clarity on the role others would play or their place to do invite others.

7. MBAES sustainability: In order to increase engagement and therefore build the case for MBAES sustainability, leadership has to be more intentional in showing results to partners and make them more aware of the benefits brought to their organizations through MBAES. Results also suggest that MBAES leadership should pay attention to the internal organizational factors that support positive partner relationships and influence partners' decision to recommend the alliance to other organizations and remain as members in the alliance.

## Further Recommendations

Using the same scheme used by partners to analyze partnership sustainability, the evaluation team offers further recommendations based on the evaluation results:

### Achieve:

- Systematic collaboration/ synergy/resource & knowledge sharing. This means creating mechanisms to facilitate collaboration more frequently and systematically, and follow-up results of collaboration. This also implies extending collaboration outside the alliance.
- Periodic/comprehensive assessment: Collect information about the outputs, short and long term outcomes of the partnership at all levels specified in the logic model: school, community, adult individuals, families and children.
- Visibility/relevance of results to stakeholders: Together with collecting data and determining results, MBAES must show these results to stakeholders with adequate frequency. The number of agencies incorporated into the partnership, the diversity of services they offer and the differences in the population served call for a monitoring and evaluation system to keep track and report changes periodically.
- Goal & roles reinforcement: Leadership must consider the gaps of information in new partners and create mechanisms to include them by giving information about MBAES, the role their organization plays in the alliance and what is expected from them.
- New/diverse partners: The alliance can be extended to new partners to widen the range of services currently provided and gain more support and credibility for sustainability.
- Improved networking capabilities
- External support/alliances: It is important to find support for the alliance as a whole. Combine efforts and find funding opportunities to support the mission and goals of the alliance.
- Diversify funding sources/strategies
- More teacher training opportunities: The alliance should be more involved in teacher training to promote the community school model.

### Keep:

- Current partners and diversity
- Collaborative efforts and values that support collaboration and team work
- The values that bring partners together like trust, respect for the individual and love for the community
- Collaborative leadership: Open participation, transparency and shared leadership
- Participatory decision-making
- One-to-one relations with partners
- Informal communication channels
- Consistency in communication
- Tailoring strategies to community, student and family needs

- Annual evaluations
- Member capacity to leverage resources
- University support

**Reduce/Eliminate:**

- Effects of school staff turnover by focusing more on teachers and parents
- Inconsistency in meeting attendance by using alternative methods to meet like conference calls.

**Avoid:**

- Lack of partner involvement

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