

# StriveTogether Theory of Action™

Getting better results for every child, cradle to career

## Gateways

### EXPLORING

### EMERGING

### SUSTAINING

### SYSTEMS CHANGE

### PROOF POINT

### SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network is guided by the StriveTogether Theory of Action™. Built on lessons from network members, the StriveTogether Theory of Action™ helps communities build and sustain cradle-to-career civic infrastructure. The theory of action consists of six gateways: exploring, emerging, sustaining, systems change, proof point and systems transformation. Within each of the gateways are a series of quality benchmarks that are key to developing and sustaining a partnership.

Meeting the quality benchmarks in the first five gateways puts a community on a path to systems transformation and improved economic mobility.

#### The Four Principles

Partnerships implementing the StriveTogether Theory of Action™ effectively demonstrate four principles as they move from building a partnership to impacting outcomes:



#### ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

The work of partnerships must be grounded in the context of the community. Partnerships engage a broad array of community voices through building awareness and information sharing; involving and mobilizing the community toward improvement; and co-developing solutions and strategies with community members.



#### ADVANCE EQUITY

Systemic inequities and opportunity gaps are defined by each partnership using local data and context. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data is used to highlight inequities to shift mental models, change power dynamics and establish more equitable policies in the community. Partnerships ultimately work to eliminate disparities in achievement and change systems to advance more equitable opportunities.



#### DEVELOP A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Partnerships use local data, community expertise and national research to identify areas for improvement in a constant and disciplined manner that ensures that partners invest in practices that work.



#### LEVERAGE EXISTING RESOURCES

Partnerships build on existing resources in the community and align them to maximize impact.



#### PILLAR:

**Shared community vision**

A cross-sector partnership with a defined geographic scope organizes around a cradle-to-career vision

A cross-sector leadership table is convened with a documented accountability structure

The partnership formalizes a set of messages that are aligned and effectively communicated across partners and the community



#### PILLAR:

**Evidence-based decision making**

The partnership selects community-level outcomes and core indicators to be held accountable for improving

The partnership prioritizes a subset of core indicators for initial focus based on disaggregated data



#### PILLAR:

**Collaborative action**

The partnership has committed to using continuous improvement to improve community-level outcomes



#### PILLAR:

**Investment & sustainability**

A backbone is established and capacity to support the daily management of the partnership is in place

The partnership has identified what role to play in policy, advocacy and/or mobilization

The partnership has engaged investors to support the operations and collaborative work of partners to improve outcomes

The partnership operates in alignment with the accountability structure

The partnership publicly releases a baseline report card to the community with disaggregated data

The partnership refines key messages to cultivate community engagement

The partnership collects and disaggregates baseline data by key demographic groups for core indicators and regularly shares data with partners

The partnership prioritizes a subset of contributing indicators of initial focus

Partners use disaggregated data and community voice to understand the root causes of disparities and identify and implement strategies to improve community-level outcomes

The partnership has in place the necessary capacity to support the daily management of the partnership as well as data needs, facilitation, communication and community engagement

The partnership engages with local, state or federal leaders who influence policy

Partners support the operations work of the partnership

The partnership structure enables action

The partnership maintains effective two-way communication with partners and the community

The partnership facilitates the collection and connection of academic data across the cradle-to-career pipeline and among partners to enable continuous improvement

Partners take action to improve contributing indicators using rapid-cycle continuous improvement as a means to improving core indicators

Action is taken to address opportunities and barriers by pursuing systems-level strategies to advance more equitable outcomes

The partnership mobilizes the community to improve community-level outcomes

The partnership develops a sustainability plan for operations and staff capacity

The partnership takes action to change local, state or national policy to improve community-level outcomes

Partners allocate and align resources to improve community-level outcomes

LEADS TO SYSTEM CHANGE

Organizations, institutions and community members align their work to support the cradle-to-career vision

Partners effectively communicate in ways that demonstrate shared accountability for results and build community engagement

Student-level data is accessible and used regularly by relevant partners to inform actions to improve outcomes and reduce disparities

Partners use a variety of data to continuously improve and implement strategies that intentionally accelerate outcomes for populations facing persistent disparities

Collaborative action efforts are sustained to improve outcomes and reduce disparities

Community members are involved in the co-development of solutions to improve outcomes

Partners consistently build capability and staff are supported with sustainable funding to implement the evolving partnership strategy

Public and organizational policies change to support improvement of community-level outcomes and reduce disparities

Public and private dollars are targeted to spread and sustain data-driven practices

**PROOF POINT:**

- Partnership meets four benchmarks in the systems change gateway across four pillars
- Four core indicators of the seven cradle-to-career outcomes are maintained or improved

#### ONGOING PROOF POINT:

- Partnership is in the systems change gateway with additional examples of systems change
- Four core indicators of the seven cradle-to-career outcomes are maintained or improved
- Two disparity gaps of the seven cradle-to-career outcomes are reduced or eliminated

LEADS TO SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

Multiple sectors have aligned efforts in service of economic mobility

Youth, families and community residents are empowered to make decisions about education and economic mobility

Real-time data, disaggregated by race, gender and economic status, is shared across sectors in pursuit of better, more equitable results

Cross-sector partners implement concurrent strategies to advance better, more equitable outcomes

The community organizes mobilization efforts to influence practices and policies necessary to improve outcomes

Partners sustain actions to support systems change across sectors

Partnership recruits, engages and builds the capability of diverse staff and partners to advance equitable outcomes, cradle to career

Partners and institutions in multiple sectors adopt practices and policies that advance equitable outcomes

Public and private funding is aligned to strategies that advance equitable outcomes, and/or positive policy changes occur along multiple points on the cradle-to-career continuum

#### SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION:

- Partnership has met the threshold for systems transformation
- Four core indicators of the seven cradle-to-career outcomes are improving
- Four disparity gaps of the seven cradle-to-career outcomes are reduced or eliminated
- One adjacent sector outcome for families, youth or community residents is improving