Spanning Boundaries in Changing Self, Site and Sector: Cross-Departmental Community Engagement in Denver Public Schools

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Spanning Boundaries in Changing Self, Site and Sector:
Cross-Departmental Community Engagement in Denver Public Schools

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by

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Invocation & Dedication:

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.

Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great women and men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being.

And we are now men and women, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay under the Almighty effort - let us advance and advance on Chaos and the Dark. -Emerson (with gender-modernized edits)

To my ancestors who walked north to find a better life in Nuevo México,

…My family who drove across the United States to find hope in California,

…My grandparents who faced discrimination to raise a middle-class Latino family,

…My grandpa, whom I never met, who fought for a better life for farmworkers,

…My Grandma June, who created much of the unconditional love in the cosmos,

…My mom, who leads and teaches in schools of need, modeling service and compassion,

…My dad, who raises buildings into the sky, mentoring me to live as a man of color in world of white,

…My sister, who shows me what fighting for your own life and love means,

…My college advisor Cyrus, who asked me if I wanted to be a real leader,

…My first real manager Darren, who challenged me to be great, not good,

…My friend and colleague Kara, who exemplifies authentic community engagement and leadership,

…My elder Robert, who leads as an anti-racist, anti-colonialist and pro-indigenous advocate,

…My friends and colleagues, past, present and future that inspire, support and strengthen me enduringly,

…To my once and future debate partner, Mitch, and his wife Alicia, who serve as great counsel,

…My students at Church Rock Academy, who taught me more than words could say,

…To my fellow Church Rock teachers, whose shared experience built friendship and love,

…My staff and colleagues at Teach For America, who dreamed and learned with me,

…My colleagues at Denver Public Schools, who accepted and welcomed me with open arms,

…My advisors, who sharpened my skills and asked the tough questions,

To the indigenous people of the world, who spanned boundaries before colonialists drew lines,

To the Future, C3 is coming - to build a better world alongside our communities:

to learn, to love, to laugh, and to lead.

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Abstract

My capstone is an exploration into stages of boundary spanning and the challenges that result from attempting to work at the intersection of a critical power relationship: the school district and the community it serves. Denver Public Schools (DPS) recently unveiled the Denver Plan 2020, a strategic plan to lead the system towards the promise of "Great Schools in Every Neighborhood." To embrace these goals, DPS announced an internal reorganization and committed to dramatic improvement alongside its community partners (charters, advocacy groups, political leaders and others).

As a resident at DPS, I led as a boundary spanner between the Office of School Reform and Innovation (OSRI) and the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to facilitate stronger community engagement to achieve Denver Plan goals. Boundary spanning roles and teams process information, coordinate tasks between groups and represent teams externally, "linking organizational structure to environmental elements…buffering, moderating or influencing the environment" (Aldrich and Herker, 1977). My research concentrated on boundary spanning as an act to manage the relationship between internal and external authorization environments, boundary spanning in systems undergoing transition with "blended boundaries" (Scott, 2000) and developing boundary spanning capacity in myself and others.

During the phases of the residency, I engaged in developmental leadership activities, both planned and unplanned, to build individual, team and networked team boundary spanning ability. The effectiveness of this work is measured by the largest of these projects, the Great Schools Community Conversations, which brought together teams across the district to engage the community.

Various implications include recognition of limited ability to extend boundary spanning authorization to others and mitigated efficacy as activity approached the

power relationship between the community and district without full authorization.

Boundary spanning also represents a potential opportunity to manage fluctuating

environments (with special relevance to portfolio school systems). I contend that given

changes in the education sector and importance of managing shifting authorizing

environments future transformational leaders ought to be deliberately trained to operate

as boundary spanners. I argue that further research is needed to distinguish between

general collaboration activities and boundary spanning. I also conclude that my calling

is to help build and support education systems worthy of the communities they serve.

Introduction: Overview of Residency, Context and Learning Goals

At the end of my second year of the Ed LD as my strategic project for Denver Public

Schools (DPS) was being defined, I was so thrilled to come home to Denver. After

spending my middle and high school years in Colorado, I had departed for the green

hills of Oregon, wandered the rural Southwest and roamed the halls of Harvard.

Thirteen years later, I was finally going home. Residency in Colorado had always made

sense to me for a variety of reasons: the presence of family, friends and an educational

context unlike any other. As Denver Public Schools began to scope my role, people

cautioned me. I was to span the lines between two teams and then help those teams

span the lines between DPS and the community. Many friends and colleagues warned

me that I would get lost in the system, while others suggested it was an opportunity to

explore my next stage development and determine whether I could get things done in a

bureaucracy. My capstone journey and the journey of my residency is a story of

crossing boundaries in self, site and sector to bring groups together across lines of

difference.

My capstone responds to the challenges of managing outcomes in authorizing

environments. I argue that leaders must span boundaries with increasing levels of

organization, originating with self, then team then network of teams to create effective

change in both internal and external settings.   My capstone therefore is a personal and

residency site exploration of developing capacity within an educational organization for

both internal and external boundary-spanning activity within authorizing

environments.

Boundary spanning activity is a set of activities or actions that allow people

between groups to process information, coordinate tasks and be roving ambassadors

between jurisdictions. It involves "linking organizational structure to environmental

elements…buffering, moderating or influencing the environment" (Aldrich and Herker,

1977). While boundary spanning shares many conceptual links with concepts such as

collaboration and coordination, boundary spanning is specifically individuals and teams

who actually are split, move between or are shared by multiple departments or

identities. Boundary spanners "bridge disconnected parties by actively manage

relationships external to the team itself" (Marrone, 2010, p. 911). This is critical

according to Aldrich and Herker (1977), because

> all complex organizations have a tendency to move toward an internal state of
> compatibility and compromise between units and individuals within the
> organization, with a resultant isolation from important external influences…this
> trend can jeopardize the effectiveness and perhaps the survival of an
> organization, unless the organization is effectively linked to the environment
> through active boundary personnel. (p. 219)

I contend through this capstone that given organizational shifts internally and also shifts

within the broader education sector, boundary spanning roles are critical to connect

essential teams to both different teams inside the system and also important external

authorizing environmental considerations. The strategic contingency analysis of power

articulated by Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) explains that power facilitates the relationship

between an organization and its environment, a critical issue. Marrone (2010)

summarizes the research and suggests that "through boundary spanning efforts, teams

bridge otherwise diverse and disconnect parties and act as critical conduits for

information transfer, knowledge creation, and innovation" (p. 913). This capability can manage both internal and external environments, critical for organizational effectiveness.

Internal boundary spanning is activity that occurs inside an organization between teams or units. In the case of my residency, it was initially between two major internal teams and by the end of the project, evolved to span many dozen teams. External boundary spanning activity is defined as boundary spanning between a central organization and outside groups. In DPS these are the boundary spanning relationships between the central office and the schools, community organizations, parents and students we serve. Through the four phases of the strategic project, guided by Marrone's levels of spanning analysis, I sought to build capacity at the member, team and networked team level. I fell into typical traps of boundary spanners such as being lost and forced to build credibility in times of trial. Our teams ran into numerous challenges seeking authorization around engaging the external environment. Boundary spanning helped adjust our course and seek additional authorization in times of challenge. This is especially relevant as I make the case that education authorizing environments are in enormous flux and these "blurred boundaries" (Scott, 2000, p. 210) increase the need for spanning between and within systems. However, as actors approach power intersections or relationships that are critical to the central organization, challenges will result.

Developing capacity in a system to change behavior is an adaptive process that requires deliberate work. Never was my intention in the residency to build a project that would wither as soon as I graduated. Directed by Dean William's (2005) thinking, I used his adaptive developmental framework to guide my capacity to " build new capabilities –competencies, practices and processes – to ensure the survival and progress of the group or organization" (p. 90). At the conclusion of the residency, the developmental capacity of DPS to achieve boundary spanning is emergent, but

beginning to show signs that it is helping to move the management of complex

relationships and potentially suggesting enormous opportunity within the community

engagement team.   As the evidence and analysis are considered at the end, numerous

implications and findings result. These range from personal explorations to me as a

boundary crosser in a place I consider home to considerations around boundary

spanning in portfolio systems.

Developing capacity for boundary spanning in the face of these challenges is

tough, slow work and will not change student outcomes overnight. However, the

changing nature of public sector organizations and external education ecosystems

require approaches that will help them deal with these critical questions. It is my firm

belief that individuals and teams of various backgrounds coming together across lines of

difference is necessary to build the support to achieve strong educational outcomes for

all children.

Context: Mapping the Internal and External Authorizing Environment

As a part of his "Strategic Triangle", Mark Moore (2013) defines three critical aspects of

the management of public institutions: articulating a public value for the work itself,

building operational capacity to achieve the outcomes and building legitimacy and

support for the work you are carrying out (p. 102-103). Building legitimacy and support

requires working within the authorizing environment you are surrounded by. The

authorizers are a "complex set of social actors who were in positions to hold accountable

public managers and their organizations as the 'political authorizing environment" (p.

114) Moore argues that "authorization is what gives legitimacy and support to a new

public value proposition" (p.116). He details that "efforts to connect with these

authorizers could be an important part of strategic management" (p. 116). All public

managers in systems operate within multiple authorizing environments to build support

for their work. This environment consists of various many political actors, all who hold

formal or informal authorization for the work you are trying to achieve. Defining authorizers and the authorizing environment ground the capstone in the internal and external authorizing work that exists at DPS with community engagement.

To build this context for the residency and capstone in Denver, I will analyze the authorization environments across Denver landscape broadly, focusing on the internal authorization environment within DPS (including organizational shifts within DPS and it's new 2020 goals) and then explore the external authorizing environment in Denver set in the context of portfolio education systems around the country. These observations are essential context for the boundary spanning analysis in my RKA and the major phases of the residency.

Internal Authorizing Environment: Denver Public Schools and the Denver Plan

Since 2005, a document known as the "Denver Plan" has guided DPS and other partners towards change in the education system. Very intentionally not titled the "Denver Public Schools Plan" it serves to not only guide the work of the district but also generate a collective vision for all groups in the system. The first iteration of the Denver Plan launched reform work in Denver during the tenure of Michael Bennett and its second iteration in 2010 occurred under Tom Boasberg's leadership. The current iteration was announced in August 2014 after many community meetings and discussions. Led by the school board, it was jointly constructed by DPS senior leadership, community members, and charter leaders in order to explicate clear, ambitious plans for the city.

Entitled the Denver Plan 2020, senior leadership and the Board intends to use the plan to guide the work of DPS for the next five years (See Appendix A for high-level Denver Plan 2020). The plan's top-line goal is "Great Schools in Every Neighborhood" is followed by a variety of other goals: increased graduation rates, closing opportunity

gaps and serving the whole child. In the Denver Plan, the definition of a "great school" is a school designated blue or green, the highest rankings on the School Performance Framework (SPF). The goal is to have 80% of students in blue/green schools by 2020 in every region (See Appendix B for regional analysis). The Denver Plan 2020 contends that all children in Denver ought to be receiving an excellent education and this goal is within reach.

DPS organizes itself into a five-location regional geography: Northwest, Southwest, Southeast, Near Northeast and Far Northeast. These five regions are a combination of cultural, historical and programmatic alignment. Performance by region varies considerably (See Appendix B). In particular, the west side of Denver lags behind every other region while the Southeast region has already attained 100% of students in blue/green schools.

In response to the Denver Plan 2020's release, the district announced a dramatic reorganization.   While before, Assistant Superintendents reported directly to the Superintendent, there was now a "Chief Schools Office" to centralize all the managing of the school-based work. The Academic Office was merged with the Office of School Reform and Innovation to create the Academic and Innovation Office. Two veteran leaders within the district were put in place of these new systems and asked to build a strategic plan that aligned resources, eliminated redundancy and build a comprehensive theory of action to achieve the ambitious goals of the Denver Plan. The shifting toward this new organizational structure produced and generated a change that included personnel shifts, re-orientation of strategies and large scale transition that transpired throughout the length of my residency. Connecting back to the Strategic Triangle, as DPS leaders attempt to call a public into existence, they are building a different set of internal operational capacity to deal with the scope and size of the task at hand inside their internal authorizing environment. As they build this new operational capacity and

adjust their internal environment, the external authorizing environment is also

undergoing flux and change.

External Authorizing Environment: The Denver Ecosystem and Portfolio Systems

The external authorizing environment is always shifting and changing. The reality is

that the Denver system is not only undergoing major shifts and change, but also

provoking these changes intentionally to meet their ambitious goals. Denver is part of

an emerging trend in urban districts, called portfolio districts, where school systems see

diversification of the types of schools and governance structures. Denver differs

slightly from a full portfolio system, by deliberately managing the transition themselves

through a series of actions and functions, namely authorizing charter schools directly.

Portfolio systems posit a fundamental restructuring of the orientation of the public

school system. Mehta (2013) defines the portfolio approach:

> In a portfolio district the role of the central agency is not to mandate programs
> and assure compliance and fidelity but to act as a portfolio manager, whose job is
> it to invest in schools and networks of schools that are working and to close
> schools that are not. The tagline for this movement is a "system of schools," as
> opposed to a "school system." The animating idea is that the central office, rather
> than seek to create uniformity across it's schools, gives them autonomy to run
> their affairs, supports them in reaching their goals, and closes failing schools. (p.
> 283)

The Center for Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at the University of Washington is

an intellectual hub of the portfolio approach. CRPE counts over 30 cities at various

stages of the portfolio approach, including Baltimore, Dallas, Oakland and New York.

CRPE (2012-2013) summarizes the portfolio approach as giving

> …families the freedom to attend their neighborhood schools or choose one that is
> the best fit for their child. It supports principals and teachers—those who work
> most closely with students and frees them to use their best ideas to ignite student
> learning. And it relies on district leadership to support and expand successful
> schools until every child in the district is in a great school. (p. 1)

The fundamental aspects of this strategy are autonomy, choice, multiple providers for

talent and strong accountability systems. The school or grouping of schools in a

network is the unit of change in the portfolio system, not the district. The approach typically consists of granting various autonomies to current or new schools in the system to diversify their program options, teacher recruitment models and other systems. A move towards a portfolio system is a major transformation. Where there used to be one central school system, now potentially a district has networks of schools, boutique charter schools, innovation schools and other actors.

In Denver, this approach has shown growth but also emerging challenges and successes. The overall composition of the portfolio by enrollment currently sits at 68% district schools, 16% innovation and 16% charter (See Appendix C). Charter growth has increased significantly over time, resulting in an increasing share of the district portfolio. Appendix E details the growth of the charter enrollment over time and Appendix F details charter performance by region to achieve Denver Plan Goals.). Performance across these schools varies considerably according to Jaclyn Zubrzycki and Kate Schimel, writers for Chalkbeat Colorado in their article "More schools at the top and the bottom in Denver rankings." The same article noted that overall charters are disproportionately represented in both the bottom and top two quartiles in district performance.

In Denver, local high performing charter networks have emerged, such as the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST), STRIVE and Rocky Mountain Prep. On the past state test, some low-income students at DSST charter network outperformed high-income students on average within DPS overall (Garcia, 2014). DPS has also nearly two dozen innovation schools: traditional schools that are granted certain autonomies around contracts, student time spent in school, and curriculum from the district after a plan is voted on by the school community, including parents and teachers. Appendix D shows the growth trajectory of charter schools by performance and region of the city.

In many cases, the reforms themselves have created mighty and problematic political realities for the leadership of these school systems. In places like New York,

Chicago and New Orleans, layoffs, closures and questionable outcomes have created strong political opposition to leadership that has promoted these reforms. Recent political challenges to charters in Chicago and New York can be seen as tests of the political viability of the portfolio strategy and how "out of touch 'reformers' are regarding the challenges facing public schools" (Dean, 2013).

In education circles nationwide, Denver is often mentioned as an example of strong alignment around reform strategy between district, reformers, community and unions. Others contend that this political alignment is tenuous and over-emphasized; potential strife between parties could undo the current opportunity. Unlike Chicago, New Orleans or New York, the portfolio strategy, while questioned by some critics, enjoys broad political support from advocacy organizations, parents and community members. The most recent school election voted heavily for a Board to continue previous Board's reform policies. Critics had attempted to attack the portfolio strategy as outsiders attempting to change the system, yet failed to convince a majority of voters (Torres, 2013). However, a recent Democratic primary for a state Board election in the city voted against the reformer candidate, showcasing potential change in future alignment between groups and political capital for reform (Engdahl, 2014).

One of the major external authorizing environment events that occurred in the residency was the publication of the ¡YA BASTA! Report (2014) by a collection of advocacy groups including A+ Denver, Democrats for Education Reform, Padres y Jovenes Unidos, Together Colorado, Latinos for Education Reform and Stand for Children. The report and corresponding political events called for bold action to "demand better options" (p. 2). These events and milestones created pressure for DPS to focus on Southwest schools.

In conclusion, it is clear that the internal authorizing environment within Denver Public Schools are in a state of change with a new plan and a new organizational structure. Externally, dramatic growth in the portfolio system and shifts in power

relationships between the district, schools and other groups suggests a system in transition.

Learning Goals & Personal Case of Resident

Dean Williams in his book *Real Leadership* (2005) explores implications for leaders involved in the work of values, culture and social change:

> All of us have a personal case. It includes your factional loyalties, stylistic orientation, natural predilections, unconscious motives, blind spots, and habitual ways of operation that shape your approach to leadership. The task is to appreciate how your personal case can help or hinder the group's capacity to face the reality of their condition, tackle their challenges, and advance. It can be an asset or liability…Your personal case is wrapped up in your history, values, preferences, and identity. It gets manifested in the choices that you make and the actions that you take, particularly under pressure. To exercise real leadership, you need the wisdom to discern in real time when your personal case is an asset in helping the group or a liability and impeding the group. (p. 245)

Therefore, a leader and an agent of inquiry of change needs to examine their "personal case" as avenues for research in their own right. Specifically for my project's success, I need to consider when my personal case is a help or hindrance to the work at hand. Therefore to clarify my personal case and key objectives, I present my three major learning goals for this residency: (1) operating in a bureaucratic system conducting community engagement, (2) how to move between groups of people in multiple environments and (3) how to return home and be a leader at the same time. All of these compelled me to come to DPS to close out my graduate learning in Denver. These will provide major reflection points for my implications for self and analysis of how I helped or hindered the project.

A central learning goal was how to operate in a large, bureaucratic and complex environment with numerous lines of difference crosscutting essential projects. As a good friend and colleague of mine counseled me during the residency interview process, my entire career had been outside of traditional systems. As a leader of a non-profit in rural America, I had no experience working inside education systems (or urban ones) to

produce change. My first experience inside the system was a summer experience

between Years 1 and 2 of the program at the Tennessee Department of Education. I had

enjoyed it, felt productive but knew I had much to learn. DPS represented a large

structure and system I knew could be a tremendous learning opportunity. I especially

was interested in seeing how a large public entity organized and managed community

engagement, a topic of particular passion for me. Therefore, I put my sights on a district

to gain new experience.

A complementary learning goal was exploring boundary spanning overall.   As a

biracial man with heterodox political views who spent his prior career working in a

community not his own, the concept has always been compelling. Indeed, most of my

life's work has been about bridging boundaries between groups and people. Whether it

was between various groups at college, the community of Church Rock in New Mexico

and the school at which I taught, Native serving regions for Teach For America and the

national organization or amongst various groups of allies and critics, I have found

myself often in boundary spanning work. In the case of the residency, I am asked to be

both involved in joint research with our partners but also engage in joint problem

solving. Extending this analysis into the work in DPS, I must operate in investigation but

also in joint problem solving around how to achieve a better system and culture inside

the district. Indeed, the scope of the project implores me to be both a researcher and

problem solver to achieve coordination between OSRI and FACE for community

engagement.   Much of my belief structure rests on bridging connections between a

community and the systems that serve it. But these beliefs are not enough. I seek

knowledge, skills and experience designing, building and generating boundary

spanning capacity in a large public education district and its larger community

environment.

The most exciting and uncertain learning goal for me was whether I could go home. This residency had me returning to Denver after 13 years of absence, having left in 2001 to attend college. My family arrived in Colorado in 1930, after leaving New Mexico during the Great Depression. My dad currently works in Denver and my niece, nearly two years old, may attend Denver Public Schools. My mother worked at Denver Public Schools in the Title 1 office, one of the multiple jobs she held as she worked to raise us. Working in Denver Public Schools at this point in my life is a powerful reminder of the community in which I was raised and now live in again. In one of my last public narratives of Self as a teaching fellow for Marshall Ganz, I described the process of choosing to leave Denver when I was 18. I wanted to be anywhere else but near my family and home in Colorado. It was broken to me; a confusing mess of emotions, divorce and communities shattered due to gun violence. Returning, I now choose to cross another boundary within myself—what does it mean to be a leader in a place you call home? What are your obligations to yourself, your family and your friends? After years of journeying, I seek these answers as a leader.

Strategic Project Design and My Role

My 2014-2015 residency project in Denver Public Schools was designed to operate jointly between two different offices: the Office of Strategic Reform Initiatives (OSRI) and the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE). OSRI's portfolio management team is charged with helping to build and manage the charter and innovation school development within DPS and FACE is charged with working with parents, families and communities in the education system. Brenna Copeland managed OSRI's portfolio management team and Veronica Figoli manages FACE. Both were designated as managers for my project, though at the start Brenna was my official manager. They both were present in the design of the residency, diagnosing the need for this project and providing support and development along the way.

My role was to help facilitate partnership, a shared vision of success, role clarity and lead working groups that would lead to strong outcomes in joint projects between OSRI and FACE. It was argued that OSRI's unique vantage point and capacity to innovate would help me navigate critical questions in the district and FACE's resources and expertise in engagement would help me broaden my experience of the sector. Furthermore, at the early stages of the residency design, district leadership was clear that OSRI and FACE had faced previous difficulties coordinating work together and building shared ownership of outcomes. Both have distinct, unique missions and competing priorities. OSRI is charged with "improving outcomes for all Denver students by recruiting and supporting a diverse portfolio of high-performing charter and innovation schools that are accountable for results" and "producing transformational changes district-wide by identifying, sharing and facilitating the implementation of innovative, best-in-class policies and practices in all schools and central office departments."[1] FACE holds the belief that "family and community involvement is critical to the success of every student and that students with engaged families are more likely to succeed academically."[2] FACE engages community in conversations during tense moments of transition, interfaces with community organizations directly around major initiatives and directly converses with groups of parents around major DPS initiatives.

The two groups, with very different missions and cultures, intersect in a variety of ways during the year. A fact increasingly became clear to me that a central challenge present in the OSRI and FACE relationship is that they were both positioned at the nexus of the internal and external authorizing environments. OSRI's role was to work with internal and external decision-makers to open, close and support the development of a managed portfolio system. FACE had to build consensus in the organization at

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[1] http://osri.dpsk12.org/
[2] http://face.dpsk12.org/

critical moments on how to engage and empower parents and families about these transitions. Simply put, as OSRI provoked the transitions it thought would enable increased student achievement, FACE was responsible for ensuring the smooth nature of the transitions and ensuring community members felt empowered in the process. They worked with different sets of actors in the system, however both works with actors with tremendous influence. OSRI's main external work was with the networks of charter schools authorized by the district and their boards. FACE's external connections mainly focused on critical advocacy groups, parent committees and appointed leaders of district conversations known as "Thought Partner Groups."

With these conflicting roles came a set of shared projects in the managed portfolio system that were deemed essential to the continuation of the district's success of the Denver Plan and required continued community support for high-quality education. The central feature of my role was to lead work spanning boundaries to help these two teams come together in pursuit of dramatic change in the education system that concurrently ensured authentic and effective community engagement.

Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA)

The goal of the Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA) is to build a significant and strong research base from which to operate during the residency's leading, learning and reflection process. The RKA is specifically focused on the strategic project: *bringing groups or departments within an organization together to effectively engage the community*. Interdepartmental and intra-organizational coordination and information sharing is a major challenge to any bureaucracy and system. Facilitating not only collaboration and interconnected work within the boundaries of the internal structure but outside in the external community are both critical needs of the school system the strategic project identifies. I would be managing a set of work that was both internal and external,

boundary spanning in both respects. Therefore, the RKA is designed to explore the themes of boundary spanning in both internal and external authorization environments.

Overall Boundary Spanning Research Questions:

1. *What are the essential components of boundary spanning activities and why is it important? How does boundary spanning operate across individuals, teams and groups of teams?*

2. *How do we differentiate internal and external boundary spanning?*

Internal Authorizing Environment Questions:

1. *How do multiple teams work together across boundaries to achieve shared outcomes?*

External Authorizing Environment Questions:

1. *What are the boundaries between community, organizations and external environments? How are they shaped?*

2. *What happens to boundaries when organizations and systems are in transition?*

In all of these research questions, I explore various concepts and ideas that relate to both my learning goals for the residency and also potential success in ensuring effective and authentic engagement across boundaries. After analysis of both of these domains, I will then present the theory of action that will guide the work of my residency and strategic project.

Boundary Spanning Question 1: What are the essential components of boundary spanning activities and why is it important? How does boundary spanning operate across individuals, teams and groups of teams?

The first question: what is boundary spanning? In one of the earliest texts to define boundary spanning, Alrich and Herker (1977) discuss why we ought to think about boundaries. They assert, "the minimal defining characteristic of an organization is the distinction between members and non-members…thus allowing an observer to draw a

boundary around the organization" (p. 217). Thinking about boundaries helps us think about organizations, their purpose and their relationships. Therefore, boundary spanning is activity that crosses these borders around or inside an organization.

Boundary spanning can take on a variety of different forms. Jemison (1984) summarizes some of the earliest research on the subject, explaining the core foundations of how people consider boundary spanning activity:

> Katz and Karhn (1966) see three boundary spanning roles: (1) procuring resources and disposing of outputs, (2) relating the organization to it's larger community or social system, and (3) adapting the organization to the future by gathering information about trends and planning to meet these developments. Aiken and Hage (1977) see boundary spanning roles as those roles that link the focal organization with other organizations or social systems and are directly relevant for the goal attainment of the focal organization. In a similarly general view, Leifer and Delbecq (1978) see the function of boundaries and therefore of boundary spanning activities of an organization) as protecting the organization from environmental stress and acting as regulators of information and material flow between the organization and the environment. (p. 133-134)

From this general research overview, boundary spanning is defined broadly as connecting the organization or group to the environmental factors with a variety of activities. Why is boundary spanning important? Aldrich and Herker (1977) assert that organizations need to be able to respond to rapidly shifting environmental factors for their survival:

> …all complex organizations have a tendency to move toward an internal state of compatibility and compromise between units and individuals within the organization, with a resultant isolation from important external influences…this trend can jeopardize the effectiveness and perhaps the survival of an organization, unless the organization is effectively linked to the environment through active boundary personnel. (p. 219)

Responding to the external environment to remain relevant and dynamic is a key organizational imperative. Jemison (1984) agrees: "boundary spanning units are important in the strategic decision-making because of their ability to recognize and deal with trends or challenges in the environment - an important characteristic of complex organizations that wish to survive" (p. 131). He cites other authors who view boundary

spanning activity as "protecting the organization from environmental stress and acting

as regulators of information and material flow between the organization and the

environment" (p. 134). He connects boundary spanning to the ability to influence an

organization, called strategic contingencies of power. Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) in

explaining the strategic contingency model argue that

> power is determined by the critical uncertainty and problems facing the
> organization and, in turn, influences decisions in the organization, the
> organization is aligned with the reality it faces. In short, power facilitates the
> organization's adaptation to its environment – or it's problems." (p. 5)

Organizations and their ability to relate to the external environment are products of

power relationships. The strategic contingency model of power further contends that all

power in an organization "is shared because no one person controls all the desired

activities in the organization" (p. 7). Jemison (1984) connects directly between boundary

spanning and the strategic contingency model of power when he argues "the process of

boundary spanning (interacting with others outside the organization) gives certain

departments the ability to deal with these strategic contingencies" (p.133). Boundary

spanning is an act of power and authorization management, constantly calibrating

internal and external environment conditions and actions through task coordination,

information sharing and representative actions. Therefore, actors, teams or groups of

teams who engage in the work of managing the relationship between internal or

external groups and their broader environment approach critical power relationships.

Aldrich and Herker's suggest that the main activities of boundary roles (information

sharing and external representation) are critical to managing the relationships between

the organization and the environment (p. 218). They also suggest that organizations in

shifts or change can be more susceptible to boundary spanning activity, a point another

research questions tackles directly (p.224). In regard to information transmission,

boundary spanning actors, by nature of moving between groups of people, "are exposed

to large amounts of potentially relevant information" (p. 219). Through external representation boundary spanners represent different groups to each other, spanning between them to connect around various needs. They articulate that this representative function pushes boundary spanners to "achieve a compromise between organizational policy and environmental constraints, to choose strategic moves over organizational constraints, or to create conditions in which the organization's autonomy is seldom challenged" (p. 221). These two components are often described throughout the literature as the foundational representations of boundary spanning. Therefore, boundary spanning roles have the ability to support the organization in potentially impactful ways as the organization attempts to reconcile information and represent groups to each other and to help resolve current work with external challenges.

Jennifer Marrone (2010) culls, synthesizes and connects a variety of researchers to build a comprehensive view of the current work around boundary spanning at the individual, team and networked team level. She agrees with the previous research, and asserts all teams that are involved in boundary spanning work must include representation, coordination of task performance and general information search (p. 916). She also suggests knowledge creation and innovation as potential effects of powerful boundary spanning behavior (p. 913).

She then moves from her exploration of the essential functions of a team boundary spanning action to an analysis of the levels on which boundary spanning can occur. She frames the research into three different levels, ranging from lowest to highest levels of efficacy in facilitating key boundary spanning functions: Member Boundary Spanning, Team Boundary Spanning and Network Boundary Spanning (p. 919). In each of the levels, she identifies key behaviors that precede the boundary spanning activity and then the potential effects of boundary spanning at that level. For example, before an individual can boundary span, they must gain credibility and self-efficacy in the system

through boundary spanning. They then can gain "enhanced reputation and influence" which can lead to the next level of spanning (p. 919).

Level of Boundary Spanning Activity	Antecedents	Outcomes
Member Boundary Spanning	Self-efficacy	Enhanced reputation and influence
Team Boundary Spanning	Team Leadership, team strategy	Team learning, team goal achievement
Network Boundary Spanning	Network leadership, organizational/alliance goals	Synchronization of efforts, achievement of network level goals

Table 1: Marrone's Level of Boundary Spanning, Source: Marrone, 2010, p. 919

Throughout each of the stages, we see increased potential outcomes for a system. Leadership is critical at each stage to help the groups and teams understand their current position and setting. Marrone says that:

> …the most successful external team leaders consistently engaged in both internally and externally focused behaviors for their team, shifting their attention and effort back and forth between the team itself (e.g. building team trust, diagnosing team member behavior, investigating problems, delegating authority, etc.) and the broader organization in which the team operated (e.g. social and political awareness, seeking information from outside parts, obtaining external support). (p. 925)

The leader of a boundary spanning team focused on outcomes must then toggle between the internal team dynamics and the broader organizational context at all times. This helps groups and teams understand the work they are orchestrating, build team cohesion and achieve the largest set of goals.

Member Boundary Spanning is when a set of individual actors move across boundaries on a variety of projects. In contrast, Team Boundary Spanning is when a full team itself operates as a boundary spanner, moving between other groups, units and organizations. At the largest and most efficacious level, networked boundary spanning is a collection of boundary spanning teams in interdependent relationships. At the

network boundary spanning level, a collection of teams operating across boundaries

with shared members who also connect externally have the highest chance to move a

system in new a different ways. Marrone suggests that networked boundary spanning

teams are a "significant contributor to team performance outcomes, including team

innovation, efficiency, and goal achievement, and higher level outcomes such as

network performance and successful implementation of organization-wide change

initiatives, innovation, and adaptation" (p. 929). A set of networked, linked boundary

spanning teams can not only promote increased efficacy but can push the organizations

key work and pivot the organization into directions previously difficult to achieve,

adjusting to external environmental issues or innovating.

Having answered essential questions about the nature of boundary spanning and it's

relevance to managing the relationship between an organization or department with the

wider environment, the next questions that will be addressed are the distinctions

between internal and external modes of boundary spanning.

Boundary Spanning Domain 2: How do we differentiate external and internal boundary

spanning?

Marrone (2010) defines internal and external spanning capabilities as different strands of

related activity and advises both are analytical opportunities for examination:

> A team's efforts to establish and manage external linkages can that occur within
> an organization (e.g. across marketing and manufacturing teams) or across
> organizational boundaries (e.g. to external customers, suppliers..)…Recent
> perspectives on team functioning thus strongly emphasize deeper examination of
> externally directed team processes…in addition to the internal team processes
> such as conflict resolution and task coordination… (p. 912)

External boundary crossing is when an individual in a boundary spanning role moves

outside of the organization they are currently a member of and engage external

constituents. In an institutional or organizational context, internal boundary spanning is

when a team or actor moves between various groups *within* a larger system.   For the

purposes of this residency, both are critical concepts to be explored as they relate directly to spanning boundaries within the internal environment of Denver Public Schools and spanning outwardly towards external environmental actors in community engagement activities.

Meredith Honig's (2006) work studies external boundary crossing as individuals moving between the central office and schools. She asserts, "collaborative education policies call for new roles and relationships among schools, community agencies, and school district central offices, as well as other public bureaucracies" (p. 358). In this case, she supposes that desire collaboration is the frame for the need for boundary spanning strategies, roles and structures. She argues that boundary crossers are individuals who are able to hold both perspectives at the same time, essential for policy execution and development (p. 358). To achieve success, they must be able to work and speak with and translate between both groups (p. 361). When boundary-spanners who have experience in both worlds hold multiple perspectives filter the information accordingly they build political and trust capital and can positively impact an organization's performance. Honig also describes the constant threat to boundary-spanners' work, given their dual role and the necessity of balancing connections between authority and freedom from that authority in order to preserve their role (p. 379). Ancona and & Caldwell (1992) research an entire set of external boundary spanning group behavior. They identify "15 distinct activities, including mapping, gathering information and resources, scanning, feedback seeking, opening up communication channels, information, coordinating, negotiating, molding, allowing entry, translating, filtering, classifying, delivering, and protecting" (p. 637). They focus in particular on four key activities. First, they describe mapping as "constructing a picture of the external environment, including predicting future trouble spots or potential allies" (p. 637). Molding "involves a group's attempts to influence the external environment to suit its agenda" while filtering "consists of

taking information from outsiders and delivering a smaller amount to the group" (p. 638). They argue that coordination and negotiating is "particularly common because of shifting power dependency relationships" (pg. 638).

Implications of this research suggest that being a trusted broker of information and managing the connections to authority is essential to moving between groups. If both of these boundary-spanner constraints are managed, then the spanner can accelerate their influence and the organizational efficacy of their system.

In the case of internal boundary crossing, Tushman & Scanlan's (1981) research provides excellent examples for considering various teams working together in a lab environment. They describe individuals within organizations who move between teams or departments as boundary crossers. These "internal communication stars" who, because they "are seen by their colleagues as being technically competent…are consulted more frequently because they are perceived to have work-related expertise" (p. 85). These internal boundary crossers "must also be strongly connected to external information areas" and are found often in "other areas in the laboratory, with areas in the larger corporation, and with areas outside the organization" (p. 85). They argue that based on their research, "boundary spanning individuals are an important mechanism by which subunits are linked to external sources of information" and that this work correlated to increased performance in the organization overall (p. 93). Sharing and connecting the overlapping organization groups through their boundary spanning role, according to them, helps the spanner gain more influence as an information filter (p. 95).

This internal and external analysis cross-applies to the strategic contingency theory of power and the internal and external authorization environment frame explicated by Moore. In the quest to seek authorization for their work in both internal and external environments, boundary spanners could garner additional power or approach those who currently hold power for authorization. Aldrich and Herker (1977) submit that

boundary spanners can gather "potential power…through their information-processing function" and is based "on inferences of boundary role incumbents…difficult for anyone removed from the boundary to verify" (p. 226-227). Honig (2006) study "suggested that the political management framework may involve not only representation but also coalition building within the central office in support of their work" (p. 379). This and other positive factors intimate that the longer the spanning sticks around, the more power they will accrue to influence organizational direction, given their knowledge and abilities (p. 362). The approach or gathering or power by a boundary spanning or a group of boundary spanners could cause challenges as organizations see boundary spanning members or teams gathering more information relating to the external environment.

Boundary spanners can also experience challenges in the work. Aldrich and Herker suggest the nature of the work can lead to "stress and conflict in personnel in boundary roles" (p. 227). Tushman & Scanlan (1981) present research that "formalizing the role may be associated with role ambiguity and role conflict" (p. 96). Honig (2006) also warns that boundary spanners, when faced with pressure would resort to "top-down, command-and-control relationships" (p. 358). She argues, similar to Tushman & Scanlan that potentially designating individuals as spanners directly and formalizing the role "may be a recipe for their failure" (p. 379).

In the next section I explore research from different fields that consider how to tactically operate most effectively within an organization before turning to considering how shifts in environmental landscapes promote boundary spanning.

Internal Authorizing Environment Question 1: How do multiple teams work together across boundaries to achieve shared outcomes?

It is important now to shift the conversation away from the larger theoretical understanding of boundary spanning activity and begin to delve into more concrete and real examples of boundary spanners' skills and mindsets and how practitioners think about boundary spanning strategically, even if they don't label it as such. Marrone (2010) suggests it's highly important for the boundary spanning leaders to focus inward on the boundary spanning team at critical moments "building team trust, diagnosing team member behavior, investigating problems, delegating authority, etc.)" (p. 925). The research here builds a knowledge based for this key need. In this section, Schein's research and thinking regarding inter-group dynamics will be considered as well as a practitioner's approach from the United Kingdom.

Schein (2010) discuss how groups evolve and build culture to respond to external threats. Figuring out how to work together in the face of an external threat or internal challenge is a real and constant challenge in the work of organizations. To build a group in response to an external or internal issue involves formation of "groupness—or group identity—the shared patterns of thoughts, belief, feelings, and values that result from shared experience and common learning" (p. 73). Therefore, if a group has been called into existence to deal with some internal capacity issue, has a poor experience and develops negative feelings from the interactions, then the group will have a challenge responding to the problem at hand. Schein proposes that to avoid these problems, groups must build shared assumptions over the following items:

- Mission and Strategy
- Goals
- Means
- Measurement
- Correction (p. 74)

When building a group to achieve a task, creating shared culture and awareness around these five measures are essential for ensuring the success of the work. In explaining each of the categories, he connects back to his frameworks for analyzing culture. In each

section, he suggests that forming these measures effectively helps create the artifacts, espoused beliefs and new underlying assumptions that help groups build effective culture. At the beginning, he also suggests framing two questions: "What is our function in the larger scheme of things? Or, what justifies our continued existence?" (p. 75). These bigger existential questions put before the group help the members wrestle with the first need, establishing a mission and strategy, but also carefully consider why it ought to exist. Schein considers the development of goals as "potential cultural elements" that bond a group together (p. 80). Furthermore, creating common means around structures, systems and processes helps "create the behavioral regularities and many of the artifacts that eventually come to identified as the visible manifestations of culture" (p. 83). Deciding what to measure and how to correct in moments of crisis or challenge ensures that effective groups build shared meaning around indicators of successful work and avoid challenging misalignment when the need to adjust course arises. By having shared metrics and knowledge, groups will then have common cultural knowledge over how best advance with the work. In exploring how to work across boundaries, lines of difference that must be considered can take many additional forms, including racial, class, ideological, departmental and organizational. Schein (2010) discusses how to integrate multiple viewpoints and diverse stakeholders in his research. He cites a set of common principles to guide the integration of groups:

- Creating a common language and conceptual categories

- Defining group boundaries and criteria for inclusion and exclusion.

- Distributing power, authority and status

- Developing norms of trust, intimacy, friendship and love

- Defining and allocating of rewards and punishments

- Explaining the unexplainable (p. 94)

Schein suggests that all groups working to integrate diverse perspectives consider each of these as essential guideposts. Connecting to the previous section referencing his work,

building shared culture around mission, goals, metrics, etc. must involve integrating various viewpoints and perspectives, so that the group can specifically focus on following these principles. Complications will inevitably result from various issues in the group. Without building structures and systems for resolving conflict, groups open up opportunities for potential ruptures. After being able to diagnose, strategize and build culture in diverse organizations and teams, it is important to consider the research around what mindsets and skills the actor at the center of building the culture should consider.

While they never use the word "boundary spanner" and anchor in practitioner experience, Sir Michael Barber, Paul Kihn and Andy Moffit discuss in *Deliverology* the ways public organizations can and should work together to deliver results (Barber, Kihn & Moffit, 2011). They define "deliverology" as "a systemic process for driving progress and delivering results in government and the public sector" (p. vii).   This work is a practical toolkit for the boundary spanner, both internal and external. The delivery unit they speak of is a unit within an organization charged with a central task that is shared by many components of the organization. Their "delivery" is a set of improved outcomes in the sector. They propose a variety of concrete strategies to ensure its success. Using research from their work inside the education ministry of the Blair premiership in Great Britain and across the globe, they to put forth some critical lessons for people working across multiple agencies to come together to deliver results. They propose a set of overarching principles to guide this work:

1. Develop a foundation for delivery
2. Understand the delivery challenge
3. Plan for delivery
4. Drive delivery
5. Create an irreversible delivery culture (p. x)

Within each of these major components, there is set of specific tasks and operations that system leaders operating across multiple agencies need to consider. For example, as

they develop a foundation for delivery, system leaders ought to define the aspiration of the work moving forward. They suggest "common aspirations form the basis for all efforts at delivery because they signify a shared understanding of what success could look like" (p. 3). As one develops a foundation for delivery, they also suggest the creation for a delivery unit, a separate team outside of the traditional structure which "acts as the amplifier of the system leader's authority over the actors in the system, providing a careful balance of support and challenge to those who are responsible for implementation" (p. 22). This delivery unit should be charged with this aspiration and commit to implementing the work moving forward. They also recommend a variety of norms for the unit, including a full-time director and a small-sized unit compromised of the top talent in the system residing outside of the management hierarchy (p. 24). The team should also be sponsored by a guiding coalition of "system leader, key politicians, and other top managers" (p. 37). This is advice directly for managing internal and external authorizing environments through a central team directing the work.

Boundary spanning is a leadership structure and strategic team process to achieve activities distinct from collaboration described in the above sections. More precisely, boundary spanning is a deeper, more expansive building of shared perspective, relationships, accountability and understanding through roles or structures. It is process between teams or groups who build vision, processes, and leadership structures that lead to deeper integration than is possible in traditional collaboration postures. Spanners "position on the margins" (Marrone, 2010) is a strategic and structural shift that differs from traditional collaborative activity of groups working together. This differs immensely from teams who plan meetings, assign tasks and then walk away from the process. Boundary spanning is a fuller exploration and bridging between multiple perspectives, identities and structures. Two groups can act in collaborative ways but still not have shared insight or perspective into the needs or capacities of the other and the ability to work across both lines.

In conclusion, boundary spanning is a powerful set of activities that can exist within an organization. Boundary spanning actors, teams and networks of teams can exist between internal and external borders to help a system or an organization make better strategic decisions. Further, building and developing culture and success in boundary spanning teams requires intentional strategies and tactics. In all of the considerations of boundary spanning activities and potential connections to culture development of said teams or networks of teams, attention must be always paid to the larger environment. To this research we now turn.

External Authorizing Environment Research Question 1: What are the boundaries between community, organizations and external environments? How are they shaped?

A critical external authorizing environment often referred to in school reform is "the community." The term often evades clarity and precision. Warren and Mapp (2011) define community as clearly and broadly as:

> …a group of interconnected people who share a common history, a set of values, and a sense of belonging – in short a culture or identity…Implicitly, if not explicitly, however, most define community define community by local geography, typically the neighborhood…While local ties are important, however, they do not always present the most salient form of identity…People can be members of several communities…Communities can have different degrees of share values, and individual people can have different levels of attachment to those values…What binds a community together can be contested and subject to change…Community implies some level of consensus, but healthy communities are dynamic…In the end, we understand community as a historically shaped and emergent phenomenon, not a static one." (p. 20-21)

This powerful commentary elucidates community in a variety of ways that are essential for my work and the work of the sector. First, Warren and Mapp request the definition to anchor fundamentally in the heterogeneity of a community. Warren and Mapp advocate that we see a dynamic and changing community, not a fixed group. From this explanation of communities, we see why boundary spanning is so critical in this environment. Spanning across boundaries is essential to managing such a dynamic and fluid environment. Aldrich and Herker assert, "heterogeneous environments will have

a higher proportion of boundary roles" (p. 224). It allows the agent or team to be able to span the cultural or identity shifts inherent with community engagement work. Revisiting Moore (date), he speaks directly to the myriad of individuals in your external authorization environment (p. 130). For a school district, this includes a variety of groups, individuals, board members and others – a broad set of stakeholders in your external authorizing environment to consider.

Revisiting the strategic contingency model of power, the connection between the organization and its environment is critical. Therefore, a school district's relationship to community is a major power question. Salanik and Pfeffer (1977) argue that power "is an important consideration that mediates between the environment of the organization and the capabilities of the organization for dealing with the environment" (p. 19). Given this view, they argue that it is not power that needs to be managed but the organizations relationship to its external environment (p. 20). Boundary spanning between the district and the community therefore is a critical intersection of power relations. Honig (2006) argues, "political management functions will likely remain a fundamental part of boundary spanners' work, particularly the marshaling of relevant coalitions" (p. 379). Understanding these critical intersections between the district, parents, community groups, schools and their environment allows leaders and departments to understand what adaptation or adjustments need to be made and "is probably one of the few mechanisms for reality testing in organizations" (p. 20). Community engagement, by connecting directly with the intersection between the district and the people it serves, is in both a powerful and precarious position. By being able to connect and identify with environmental needs, it can gain power to help steer the course of the system. But in a system that is concerned about the environments and its shifts, whoever gets close to that power could be a potential threat. Therefore, power and authorization around community engagement are critical elements to examine further in the capstone.

External Authorizing Environment Research Question 2: What happens to boundaries when organizations and systems are in transition?

The education system and institutions that have been dominant for many years are in a current state of transition. The portfolio model described earlier, the shifts in technology and instruction, and the rise of new systems and structures that have long been bundled together all suggest much change in the education system. Mehta (2013) describes the current shift to a portfolio system not as a cosmetic change but a wholesale shift akin to "inverting the pyramid" implying turning the whole system upside-down from its current model (pg.283). Scott (2000) discusses sector-wide change in his work *Institutional Change and healthcare organizations: from professional dominance to managed care.* He articulates changes in institutional systems and structures in the health care system and effects on boundaries.   This analysis is an especially relevant look at another major social system in the United States undergoing shifts in structures analogous to education's portfolio system shift. Scott analyzes the effect this change has on the boundary lines drawn between different actors and organizations in the system.

In 2000, Scott discusses the changes currently undergoing within the health care system of the United States. These shifts precede our most recent reforms since the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010 but yet mirror many of the shifts occurring in the education space. He quotes Mary Ruggie (1996) who argues that we are moving toward a regime in which "the introduction of marketlike factors is occurring within a strong framework of government regulation" (p. 343). In many ways, this defines the portfolio model and current shifts in education. For many years, government and traditional district were the only major actors in the system. In recent years, as portfolio systems have grown and developed, more actors and more market forces have been introduced into the system. Scott suggests that while this is indeed a new phenomenon in health care,

> Associational and state actors and mechanisms of governance have not been replaced but joined by new actors and logics. In a process referred to as bricolage (Douglas 1986), sector actors, both individual and collective, have constructed new combinations of governance structures out of preexisting forms and logics. The previous institutional regimes provide "a repertoire of already existing institutional principles (e.g. models, analogies, conventions, concepts) that actors use to create new solutions in ways that lead to evolutionary change" (Campbell 1997:22). There are some novel elements but also innovative combinations of old elements. The governance structures, logics, and actors are altered but many of their components remain recognizable." (p. 344)

In this transition state, systems and structures build new associations and identities amongst their corresponding new needs and roles. The recognition of the components is an essential point. While dramatic change is occurring in a rearrangement of current actors, power shifts in the system, most citizens will still recognize the education system they send their kids to. Mehta sees a similar phenomenon in education, suggesting that

> …there are also reasons to think that, in this particular moment, we may be in the middle of a period of serious institutional change in American public education…The result has been, not a transformation or abandoning of traditional institutions, but the creation of parallel institution that seek to re-create many of the same functions as traditional ones…Hence we see charter schools alongside regular public schools, alternative methods of teaching alongside traditionally certified ones… (p. 293-294)

Charter schools may be different in many ways, but they are still more like district schools than not. Even the most radical personalized learning environments, while dramatically different than what parents or others attended in school, still are authorized, supported and maintained through fairly similar mechanisms within the existing institutional frameworks. Dramatic power shifts are at play, new actors emerging but the components are still fairly recognizable. Scott discusses the roles of boundaries as these shifts in organizations and institutions move around the system. He discusses a

> "blending process" where as lines between existing forms become obscured and displaced. In this formulation, then, changed and confusing organizational population boundaries can be considered a hallmark of profound institutional change." (p. 355)

These blending processes are a critical component with additional connections to education and boundary spanning work. These changed and fluctuating organizational boundaries create shifts in the system that allow for more play or flexibility during change. This has implications for both inside a system like a district central office, or in the broader sector surrounding a portfolio of school options. The increased change creates a blend of actors, all assuming new roles and changes as boundaries shift and adjust. Aldrich and Herker (1977) maintain "organizations in rapidly changing environments will have a higher proportion of boundary roles than organizations in stable environments" (p. 224). As boundary spanning is needing to manage the relationships between the organization and the external authorizing environment, these "blended boundary" conditions in education may likely call for more spanning between actors, departments or organizations. Jemison (1984) sounds prescient as he states, "if one believes that organizations of the future will be facing rapid change, resource scarcity and environmental complexity, then environmental interactions will become even more important to the organization's survival" (p. 149). If the management of the relationship between the organizations towards the rapidly shifting environment facilitates corresponding boundary spanning, then it will provoke larger power questions and considerations.

Research Conclusion

As I turn to the theory of action, I will use this collection of research to set the stage for a set of leadership moves, maneuvers and reflections over the course of my residency. Therefore, considerations of internal and external authorizing frames will be critical to build capacity in the system. In the theory of action, this research will help frame up my work to both develop the capacity for boundary spanning activity in the district to engage the community effectively and authentically.

Theory of Action

Building the theory of action was a dialectic effort to balance my learning goals, early research and DPS needs at the start of the residency. In the first residency interview with Superintendent Tom Boasberg and Chief Academic and Innovation Officer Alyssa Whitehead-Bust, the idea emerged. DPS leadership and I held the belief that if OSRI and FACE could coordinate their work more effectively, then DPS and Denver would better engage its community in order to achieve the goals of the Denver Plan. Through the research collection phase of the RKA, I refined and narrowed my theory of action. Additionally, through coordination between the resident, managers and mentors within DPS and Harvard during the early stages of the residency, the theory was scoped to focus on the most essential and effective leadership moves to ensure the project's success.

The Theory of Action is: *if I work to improve effective and strong working relationships across boundaries between OSRI and FACE, including leading shared work teams, activities and projects (which includes developing a shared vision of success, key strategies, working agreements, structures and systems) THEN shared Denver Public Schools efforts to engage school communities will be more authentic and effective as measured by both Denver Pubic Schools and the community.*

The "if" and "then" components mirror my research on the internal and external boundary spanning and authorization environment activity. The "if" part of my theory of action will be focused on creating interdependent relationships, boundary spanning activities, and culture to facilitate the working relationship across these diverse departments. It will include the "internal" team work of Schein – vision, working agreements, etc. and also key boundary spanning activity like sharing information and coordinating tasks. Constructing the "then" part of my theory of action is critical to the success of the boundary spanning activity in the external authorizing environment. If the internal boundary spanning activity can authorize us to engage with the external

authorizing environment, then the work of DPS will be more effective at managing the relationship and the outcomes of community engagement in the system.

In terms of measurement, the research suggests that boundary spanning activity is effective through information transmission, shared coordination and external representation. Therefore, measuring information filtering, connections and representation of that information between internal and external boundary spanning relationships will be the guide. Using analysis and reflections from the largest of our community engagement efforts, the Great Schools initiatives, I will measure the success of this critical component across areas of boundary spanning activity.

Description, Results, and Analysis of the Strategic Project

The What and the How: Into the Residency

This section is organized into four distinct phases aligned to a set of activities informally called the "Great Schools Arc" (See Appendix G for overview). These four phases represent a clear sequence of events, but also an evolution of my leadership and capacity to be a boundary spanning agent and team networker within Denver Public Schools and the overall Denver community. The larger framing for my work and research shows my work evolving from myself as a boundary spanner, to building and developing a team of boundary spanners to helping create a number of boundary spanning teams.

This yearlong sequence is a set of analytical framing and community conversations to generate political will and focus internal decision-making regarding new schools and current school supports. Aligned internal communication and strong external community engagement is essential to the success of these efforts. The table below summarizes the major phases of the residency, associated timelines and developmental work occurring during those times.

Capstone Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3 / Phase 4		
Portfolio Milestones /Work Tasks	Initial exploration of DPS, FACE Capacity building	School Performance Framework (SPF)	Tiered Support Framework (TSF)	Strategic Regional Analysis (SRA)	The Call for New Quality Schools (The Call)
Timeline	June-July	*July-October*	*September-June*	*November*	*December-June*
Resident Activity Summary	Interviewing key DPS leaders, building credibility within the organization and working with FACE on key needs	Building first interdepartmental team to support SPF conversations, building first OSRI-FACE working group	Building renewal working group and starting the School CommUNITY Team	Building community meetings to explain the SRA and forthcoming Call; dubbed "Great Schools Community Conversations"	Continuing Great Schools Community Conversations and identifying other interdepartmental work associated with community engagement

Table 2: Phases of residency, major DPS milestones and development

As a set of boundary spanning activities, this work is rich with opportunity. None of these processes are fully linked to one team. Indeed, as the district reorganized in the summer, even more departments than FACE and OSRI shared these activities. Among major stated goals of the re-organization of DPS into an Academic and Innovation Office (AIO) and a Chief Schools Office (CSO) was increased interdepartmental coordination around these and other processes.

There is a set of personnel who it will be important to identify as major actors in my residency. These are all essential people in my internal authorization environment, but do not include a full list of other senior leaders who hold authorization over the work.

Name	Role	Relationship to Resident
Alyssa Whitehead-Bust	Chief Academic and Innovation Officer (AIO,	Mentor, Resident's initial contact

	OSRI)	
Veronica Figoli	Chief Officer, Family and Community Engagement (FACE)	Direct Manager
Brenna Copeland	Executive Director, Portfolio Management (OSRI)	Direct Manager
Jennifer Holladay	Director, School Development (OSRI)	Colleague
Amber Callender	Director, School Community Development and Change Management (FACE)	Colleague
Jack Becker	Coordinator, School Community Development and Change Management (FACE)	Colleague
Nicholas Bucey	Manager, Tiered Quality Support	Colleague

Table 3: Individuals in my residency at DPS

Phase 1: Building Credibility Within the System as a Boundary Spanner

Timeline: June-July

At the early stage of my residency, with the project still being defined, I struggled to

define the work directly. It was an early challenge to get both sets of teams to agree on a

common date to start the project. My two managers were Brenna Copeland (OSRI) and

Veronica Figoli (FACE). Brenna came to DPS after working on charter issues in

Washington, D.C. Veronica came to DPS after working in foundations and leading a

firm providing multi-cultural consulting. They were very different individuals with

distinctive perspectives on the projects we shared. Both were supportive of my

residency and were instrumental in helping me adjust course over the length of the

strategic project.

Given the challenges of launching the project and the desire to build credibility

within the system, I sought out work on the FACE team directly. During this time, I also

came across the first other boundary spanner in the work; a half Communications, half

FACE embedded employee, charged with putting together communications materials

that are family friendly and externally facing. She would be a key contributor to not

only the work but also my learning about boundary spanning moving forward.

Over the course of the summer, I was able to work on a set of projects, step backs

and retreats with the FACE team to not only build their capacity internally but also

reframe how they wanted to operate within DPS. My partner in this was Amber

Giauque Callender, whose previous experience was in policy, legislation and

neighborhood/community affairs for the Mayor and City Council for 14 years who

began her career as a community organizer. She brought a wealth of knowledge about

the Denver system. At a series of retreats, we were able to produce a "Guiding

Commitments" document (see Appendix H) that helps illustrate all the various pledges

we wanted to make to the community. For example, an important guiding commitment

generated was: "We commit to clarity with community members over who are the

decision-makers during a process and how they work with them." This arose from

multiple sources that often felt that community members were sometimes in-

authentically given more power to be decision-makers and DPS would take this power

away somewhere during the process. Another important commitment was, "We

commit to attempting a minimum two-week advance notice for all community meetings,

or faster when relevant for community processes." While seemingly a small technical

point, the lack of advance notice was a major concern for partners and internal FACE

members. People felt short timelines created challenges for authentic engagement and

challenged our internal process alignment, therefore creating tensions between teams.

To further encourage accountability, we included the surveying of these commitments

into the evaluation goals for FACE. All of these processes served to "level-set" the

relationships between all the teams, building common language for the dialogue and

processes moving forward. An added benefit of the process is that also helped me map
out various partners that would become essential in the internal authorizing
environment moving forward.

Department	Role	FACE Partnership
Choice and Enrollment	Managing student choice and maintaining strong enrollment at DPS schools.	FACE works to support transitions in choice zones or other shifts in enrollment.
Chief of Staff	Managing the overall communication, political management and system within DPS	FACE partners to ensure the success of high profile initiatives.
Chief Schools Office (CSO)	New department, charged with overseeing all the schools within DPS.	FACE works to support turnaround or other school transitions.
Multi-cultural	Responsible for translation and outreach to communities of color	Working to provide translation for community events
OSRI	Support, developing and managing the charter and innovation schools	Community meetings around charter schools and the Call

Graph 4.0 – Key Internal Partners

During the course of this phase, I was able to spend more time with the OSRI
team, though it was still unclear what my direct work with this team would be. In
particular, I became close colleagues with Jennifer Holladay, who was the Director of
School Development.   A lifetime social equity champion, Jennifer came to DPS from
working on turnaround in a neighboring school district after spending the majority of
her career at the Southern Poverty Law Center. Our relationship became a foundational
element and counsel during challenging times to help me understand the various
dynamics at play within DPS and the broader education system overall.

At the launch for the strategic project, many issues came forth. Competing
visions of what was needed and communication challenges complicated the framing. To

create the agenda and vision for the meeting, I had to shuttle between the two leaders of

FACE and OSRI. They had different visions for what the work should look like during

that meeting. One wanted to spend time looking at how the year went and where there

were challenges. Another wanted to establish a shared vision for success and map

backwards from there. It was hard for me to create a compromise that had coherence

and would make sense for participants. My challenges as a boundary spanner agent in

this moment were supremely evident: I lacked a central home, a mission, a purpose and

clarity to ensure that I could succeed. Differing visions emerged for what was possible

and I was attempting to thread the needle between them. In this task, I attempted to

merge all the different visions in service of the meeting but defaulted to my direct

manager within OSRI, given that she was my technical manager.

The central and most controversial piece of the meeting called to establish a

vision of success for us working together. As our leadership debated the path forward,

the challenges in the background of the relationship move into the foreground.

Everyone in the room had a front row seat into the dysfunctional relationship between

the teams and between the leaders' differing visions. During the meeting itself, there

was lots of evidence of frustration: people stepped out of the room multiple times and

showed visible signs of frustration. Toward the end of the meeting as the friction

mounted, FACE effectively abdicates and accepted the OSRI leadership's vision. While

we emerged with something of vision, it's not a shared vision of both teams. To acquire

data around how people feel we are operating against the vision, I collect e-mail

reflections from participants about how we are helping or hindering this shared work.

The data collected from the e-mails represents a powerful cross-section of the initial

thinking about the relationship between the two departments (See Appendix J).

I was struck as a leader at the perceived failure and loss after the meeting. The

clear failures and pitfalls of boundary crossing played out directly before me during the

meeting: inability to achieve leadership alignment before the meeting, deep frustration on the teams and the limitations of working together. The meeting and the feedback made the challenge, lack of trust and the lack of understanding between the OSRI and FACE clear. Torn between wanting to retreat and digging in deeper, I reached a low point in my residency and my efficacy as a boundary-spanning agent.

In the qualitative data and amongst reflections with others, I started to see the underlying problem of my residency. The relationship between OSRI and FACE was challenged for a variety of reasons: competing visions, goals and lack of deep relationships. Most fundamentally, there was a power imbalance. In this power imbalance, I was an inauthentic boundary spanner. On paper, I was split between two teams to support their work but in management structure, I was reporting to an OSRI Executive Director. Specifically, FACE needed my capacity and resources, which felt "on loan" from their more powerful colleagues with connections to Harvard. A senior FACE leader shared that this created a sense I was an operative from OSRI, attempting to "help FACE out", creating potential resentment.

OSRI was perceived, and was in reality, a more powerful and influential force in district decision-making. OSRI had the dollars, influence, grant funding and "innovation" cache in the district and FACE was often held responsible for the political challenges within the system and perceived itself to lack resources to fully meet these challenges. Along racial lines, the leadership of FACE was nearly entirely people of color (African-American, Latino, etc.) and the leadership of OSRI was almost exclusively white. Based on previous work experience, the OSRI team held lots of "content" knowledge and experience in education while the FACE team was full of leaders who had no previous education content experience. In many ways, the groups were speaking difference languages, seeing different realities and often feared the power and authority held by the other to influence the external environment.

I examined my options amid this realization of the power dynamic that my
residency was perpetuating and the potential to have a real boundary-spanning role.
After analyzing the challenges, it seemed critical to be able to re-orient the power
dynamic imbalance and allow me to focus on the strategic project while building out
work within FACE. I proposed re-scoping the role to be fully split between FACE and
OSRI, reporting fully to both teams (See Appendix K).

Leading Indicators

Phase 1 was marked by significant challenges and corrective action. I initially faltered,
considered an "inauthentic" boundary spanner in the work. I was lucky to have had
guidance and authorization enough to steer in the ambiguity of the internal
authorization environment. Spending time building credibility within FACE allowed me
to have insight into the internal authorizing environment that would serve the boundary
spanning teams and me in future phases. Finally, the restructuring of my residency to
eliminate the "inauthentic" boundary spanning and fully split between both teams
positioned me much more positively.

Phase 2: Building the OSRI-FACE Working Group, Renewals
Timeline: August-September
A key feature of this phase is the building of the OSRI-FACE working group, which
brought together both teams to move on the theory of action. It also includes the first
experience we had working in both the external and internal authorizing environments,
charter renewals.

OSRI-FACE Working Group

With a re-scoped residency, I sought and received authorization to begin forming a
working group of members from both FACE and OSRI to move forward the work at the
center of the my strategic project: systems and structures to promote boundary spanning

activity to prepare for shared work between FACE and OSRI. The membership of the group was a collaborative effort between my managers and I. We were very aligned about the individuals needed to bring the teams together, insight I had gained during Phase 1. We agreed on three individuals: Jennifer Holladay, Amber Callendar and Nicholas Bucy. Jennifer and Amber had been strong partners in Phase 1 of my work. Nick, the Manager of Tiered Quality Assurance, was new to OSRI. A previous charter school principal, he brought strong external experience and knowledge of the Denver system to the team. His insight into schools and his relentless commitment to focused action was immensely helpful.

At our first meeting, we began to piece together the unique roles and perspectives of both teams. As Schein suggests, building shared learning is essential for bringing groups together. We reviewed key documents and materials to build shared understanding of each of the teams. I created a Venn diagram that showcased respective work and assumptions and began to uncover the key challenges. At the end of the meeting, we agreed to have the focus of the next meeting be about building a vision of success for the work that was different from the one built at the challenging launch meeting. A major breakthrough occurred when we decided that the ultimate vision of the team was completely aligned to the vision of the Denver Plan 2020 – Great Schools in Every Neighborhood. The resulting vision, read aloud by all participants, was something that we all felt ownership of:

> We strive for equitable engagement with diverse stakeholders and perspectives, through coordination, clear roles & responsibilities and shared ownership of our work, in order to realize the promise of great schools in every neighborhood. (See Appendix M)

We committed to revisiting this vision during all of the upcoming projects to serve as a basis to evaluate the success or failure of our work.

Renewals

Each year, after the School Performance Framework (SPF) data is released, the charter school Tiered Quality Assurance (TQA) team ranks schools of concern based on qualitative and quantitative data. This year during four schools immediately rose to the top. Bringing a new boundary spanning team together internally to manage this external environment was the first test of the theory of action.

The OSRI-FACE working group started working on a timeline, key milestones and actions that needed to be taken. It became clear the Chief of Staff's office, focused on political implications and the communications team, focused on the external dialogue with media, would also be involved. The external environment was shifting rapidly with various actors weighing in and potential implications from closure having real effects in other schools in Denver. At the same time, my role started to become nebulous and unclear. While I had built initial credibility as boundary spanner in the first phase of my residency, I was in uncharted waters. Was I also responsible for the management of the community engagement work or gaining strategic clarity for others? This confusion surrounding ownership was also challenging in the early part of my role and was especially difficult given my new re-scoped role and as a boundary spanner agent. I was questioning my role and my purpose. What was my role—to bring people together, to ensure planning success or some other outcome entirely?

The working group convened with all of the functional partners. The engagement plan FACE produced called for community engagement in the next two weeks and OSRI objected right away. They were deeply concerned about the timeline given that they still needed to conduct final observations and visits to conclude their qualitative reviews. At one point, an OSRI team member asked for the FACE team to respect the "integrity" of the OSRI process. A FACE member, triggered by this word choice, pushed back hard on the term integrity and questioned the lack of urgency from OSRI members given district leaders were already meeting with community leaders about the process. As a

facilitator and a member of both teams, I was deeply torn in this meeting and felt the internal tension in my strategic project. I had empathy for both sides' perspectives and didn't know how to resolve the challenge without choosing one side.

The meeting ended with a commitment from everyone to seek more information about the real timeline we needed to operate on, but the damage was done. The senior leadership of FACE and OSRI quickly heard about the conflict and started to ask what had gone wrong. Immediately afterwards, I was involved in multiple conversations where leaders from both teams asked whether or not the FACE-OSRI partnership was possible given the lack of trust between groups. During a late night phone call, I shared this concern with Veronica, the head of FACE. She spoke directly to me. "Landon," she said, "maybe we haven't authorized you to completely figure this out. I authorize you." Her trust, confidence and empowerment bolstered me in a tough moment as a boundary spanner. Therefore, I set up two separate and distinct meetings: one to analyze in the OSRI-FACE working group what had happened and another to come back together to the new larger reconstituted renewals working group.

At the smaller corrective meeting, I asked team members to bring in an artifact that explains why they do the work. As each team member went around and shared, it became clear how much we shared and how much we valued the work. A colleague suggested we use a protocol called CRIP (Content, Identity, Relationship, Process) that allowed us to expose the root of the challenge (See Appendix E). Through my facilitation of this protocol, our group uncovered the power of word choice. For OSRI, "integrity" was about the process and its validity while for FACE, "integrity" was about living up to the core values of DPS and being authentic to the community. Indeed, even a definition of integrity in the dictionary includes a variety of meanings and context that are hard to tease apart. I recommended to the group that moving forward, when describing a need to hold true to a process we would use the word "fidelity" instead.

We also committed to splitting the renewal working group and the OSRI-FACE team, to allow the both groups to fully maximize process. We also developed a clearer protocol for when tensions flare—to commit to a cooling-off period and then finding 1:1 time to reconcile. By giving the team the chance to refine its working theories, to build in corrective processes and shared language, I had helped the group move forward to build trust internally and then pivot back to the main organizational questions of how to engage externally.

Soon afterwards, we came back together in the large renewal group. I facilitated a conversation that started with the OSRI/FACE shared vision of success and discussed how this process will align or be challenged by this process. With the OSRI-FACE team on the same page, I was able to push the conversation forward. All of the OSRI-FACE working group members in the room used language with more focus, empathy and understanding and avoided the loaded terms from the previous morning. Challenges from the previous meeting surfaced, namely the disjointed perception of timeline. Unlike the previous time, consensus was reached quickly and swiftly without major disagreements – trust from the OSRI-FACE meeting had moved into this meeting to steer it directly. Both teams gave a week up on the timeline: FACE was able to start working sooner and OSRI could finish up their process. The broader set of teams, recognizing this new alignment, adjusted course alongside OSRI-FACE. We had managed the internal authorizing environment and had also steered key work of DPS in the external authorizing environment in a critical time.

Leading Indicators

Phase 2 saw the building of the first internal boundary spanning teams to address the internal system (OSRI-FACE) and the external environment (renewal). The deploying of the corrective mechanism and the utilization of the OSRI-FACE team to help steer the renewal working group separately was a powerful learning. Moving into

Phase 3, as a boundary spanning agent, I was more careful to avoid challenges to the shared space of the "anchor team."

Phase 3: The Unity Team, Great Schools Community Conversations
Timeline: October-December

This phase is marked by the solidification of the boundary spanning activity of the OSRI-FACE working group into a formal entity. This phase also includes our joint innovation project, the Great Schools Community Conversations: my strategic project's main test to push for authentic and effective community engagement in the internal and external Denver environment.

The Unity Team

Representing new accord and integration between the two teams, our focus on schools and communities, the OSRI-FACE team rebranded as the "School CommUNTIY Team" or "Unity Team." The name illustrated the progress and trust that had occurred in Phase 2. In our emergent sense of the need to focus on internal boundary spanning, this team would serve as the anchor or "delivery unit" to help coordinate the interdepartmental work around school development and community engagement issues and the following components would be essential. Increasingly, the work looked even broader then OSRI and FACE, especially as other teams such as Chief of Staff, Chief Schools Office (CSO) and Academic and Innovation Office (AIO) started to exercise influence in the our shared work under the reorganization. With our restructuring, we often didn't know how to include the CSO in critical projects relating to community engagement so we sought to bring them into our work.

Great Schools Community Conversations

The Call for New Quality Schools ("The Call") is a document produced by Denver Public Schools each December based upon the sequence of events and analyses that

occur during the fall. It includes the school-based report cards of the School

Performance Framework (SPF), the demographic and capacity trends articulated in the

Strategic Regional Analysis (SRA) and the current state of schools in the Tiered Support

Framework (TSF). The document frames the need for new or turnaround schools in

certain regions or neighborhoods where the need is the highest and/or growth calls for

them.

A key component of The Call is the soliciting of feedback from community

members about their needs. Out of early dialogue within the Unity Team, there began

to emerge a vision of a broader conversation that would inform the call, build clarity in

the community around DPS decision-processes and engage key stakeholders in the

community around our vision.   The initial idea started as a way to be share district

decision-making and processes like the Strategic Regional Analysis and the School

Performance Framework in an open way to the community. These demographic and

performance trends were two parts of the calculations around supporting and

developing great schools and were opaque even to folks within FACE and OSRI, so we

knew our parents and community members likely needed framing. We also knew that

the proposal for new schools would also be met with some questions, as the idea of new

schools was not always warmly received and made some people fear potential loss. This

represented the first time the Unity Team stepped away from district precedent directly

and began to innovate a new vision for the work separate from the previous traditions

that came before it. Critical to this process was the addition of new member of the FACE

team, Jack Becker. Jack, a recent Syracuse graduate student with expertise in public

deliberation and policy, quickly became an exceptional thought partner to the group and

provided needed capacity. We branded the meetings "Great Schools Community

Conversations" to align with the Denver Plan 2020's vision of great schools in every

neighborhood.

Our first major dilemma with authorization occurred in Phase 3. As we progressed closer to getting the materials and presentations ready, internal authorizers questioned the work. The Chief of Staff Office questioned why the Unity Team had not included them more in the planning and Board of Education members felt as if we had scheduled dates and developed a key community project without them. Our initial representative from Chief Schools was a powerful ally but some of her new partners in the work, instructional superintendents, felt left out of the process. All these things were real oversights on our part. Lacking their support created another authorization challenge in the process. We strategically pivoted towards other authorizers in the system, which belonged to these teams and could influence our internal environment.

We hosted a dry run for many departments to generate more buy-in and solicit their input. The dry run allowed us to jettison content that did not align to other departments' vision of key information, filter key data from a variety of sources and build authorization. After this, we presented our revised plan and were authorized to move forward. Veronica, the head of FACE, helped advocate to critical members of the staff, shuttle between Board members to allay concerns and filter additional frames that helped insure authorization. Clearly, we had touched on something – our first attempt to manage DPS' relationship with the broader community - and had nearly lost course.

Over five nights in December, in all regions of the city, over a hundred community members, political leaders, board members, senior leadership team members, parents and students attended Great School Community Conversations. We solicited feedback from the community on what they thought made a great school and we were tasked with feeding this information back into the system. In the Near Northeast meeting, residents of Park Hill questioned why Stapleton needed new schools and they didn't. They felt as if the system was changing too fast. In the Southwest, parents wanted to know if a green school was really serving their kids well. The

coalition of advocacy group's publication of the *Ya Basta!* Report and their demand for a system-wide plan for the Southwest put enormous change and transition in the Southwest in contention. In the Far Northeast, a group of extremely active leaders questioned the whole approach of the district and schools in general. They angrily pushed the district about hiring teachers and leaders of color. The Great Schools Conversations had opened up an external information channel through the boundary spanning of multiple teams working together to engage the community. As we engaged the external environment of Denver, we had garnered an important power resource: information.

As I presented at our last meeting in Northwest Denver, I felt I was on the other side of a vision I had before moving to Denver— being included in a community dialogue in my home about building great schools. At the last meeting in the Northwest, my father attended and I spoke to how my great-grandparents lived in this community. At the opening frame, I stood of Denver residents and made it very clear that DPS was accountable for its failure to serve kids in the Northwest adequately. As I asked people directly to tell us what to do better, I wondered to myself, "Maybe this is what it means to be a leader in a place I call home?" Yet, with the turnout low, people disengaged and senior questioning our ability to do the work, I also had to ask myself: where did we fail in building the right opportunity span boundaries between our internal and external authorizing environments?

Leader Indicators

In Phase 3, we encountered our first dilemma with authorization in the internal authorizing environment. To avoid this challenge, we employed our first attempt to expand the boundary spanning team at the feedback session to seek broader authorization. We succeeded but came under questionable authorization. The Unity

Team alone was not sufficient and the Great Schools project needed to be expanded even farther to include more teams.

Phase 4: Networked Teams, Great Schools 2

Timeline: December-March

Phase 4 carries the capstone to the end of the residency. In this phase, representing the need to expand the work broadly to meet additional demand for community engagement in the system, the Unity Team begins to anchor the work of even more internal boundary spanning between various departments in the system and external environments.

Networked Teams

Toward the end of Phase 3, numerous other projects that required interdepartmental spanning and community engagement began to materialize. A plan stewarded by Ed LD graduate Katherine Casey was looking at a full overhaul of graduation requirements. Additionally, there was discussion of school-based turnarounds and redesigns based on performance. Multiple schools began to undergo politically fraught and complicated transitions from one language support model to another. It became clear that each of these presented a separate but interlocked opportunity to coordinate inter-departmental boundary spanning activity aligned with the Unity Team's vision, our culture and our norms. This amount of community engagement that was not or was occurring around external shifts warranted attention. The Unity Team could help anchor the work, but could not hold all the work in one team—it lacked the expertise and relationships to ensure success. Using the boundary-spanning networked framework, I worked with a variety of leaders in DPS to identify membership for the boundary spanning teams where work would be genuinely shared in vision.

Great Schools 2

At the end of the last round of Great Schools Conversations, Board members and senior leadership at DPS committed to doing another round of conversations in January/February. The primary reason for this commitment was Board members wanted to be more involved in these conversations than the first round of conversations. Additionally, some leaders felt that there might be content necessary to present to the community and others felt a need to "regionalize" the conversations even more then the first round. I, along with the Unity Team and Great Schools group believed this would increase our overall authorization in our internal authorizing environment. We had met with external advocacy groups and attempted to align content to them as an attempt to build stronger connections externally. As we had diagnosed the challenges from the first round of conversations, we also assumed a major challenge to our authorization was not having enough inter-departmental membership (i.e. enough boundary spanning capacity) so we dramatically expanded the membership of the Great Schools working group.

About two weeks before the start of the first meeting, the internal authorization challenges returned more dramatically. Our topics seemed too provocative and leaders questioned the regional structure of the meetings entirely. Clearly questioned our approaching of the external authorization environment, senior leaders put the entire slate of meetings on hold. While we had gained authorization after the first round to do internal spanning and light external engagement, the deeper level of engagement brought a new series of questions. For a nearly a week, people questioned whether or not the meetings would happen. After a series of high-stakes meetings, key support from CSO leaders and leveraging the authorization given to us by Board members, we aligned on a set of content that both represented DPS needs and community feedback from the previous set of meetings. At one of our last meetings before she departed,

Brenna gave me clear and direct feedback, assuring me I had accomplished much here but had much to learn about seeking senior leader authorization. I agreed.

As the meetings occurred, we saw the potential realization of more authentic community engagement through our boundary spanning activity. Attendance increased dramatically at each meeting: nearly twice to three times as many attendees than the first round of meetings. Communities had more relevant content for their schools based off of the previous round and feedback from surveys was stronger and more positive. The southwest coalition attended the meeting and started to hear emerging answers to their questions around supports for schools broadly in the region. In the Far Northeast, the conversation about diversity in hiring was the most well attended meeting of the entire series. The conversation around diversity and hiring was not explosive as anticipated, but actually led to dialogues between the community and DPS and internal DPS departments. Other agenda items arose from that meeting that would not have surfaced without it (including a previous DPS commitment that had been ignored). However, challenges remained. People questioned that while we had seen an uptick in engagement and had responded to community needs, that the amount of time and untenable authorization was not worth the effort.

Leading Indicators

At the end of Phase 4, the networked boundary spanning team seems a mixed result in producing effective outcomes. Much of the work took longer than usual and the overall boundary spanning was not as strong at the initial stages. A few successes emerged from the networked effort and sometimes long after I had thought they would bear fruit. The results from the Great Schools conversations were in some ways enormously positive along our goals to effectively engage the community but in other ways, our internal authorization remained questionable as an overall effort.

Results to Date: Looking at the work of internal coordination and external community engagement

To analyze the results from the strategic project, I will focus on each strand of my theory of action and then present evidence that supports the level of success. Through both a qualitative and quantitative data analysis, a picture will emerge that shows that while my theory of action was necessary to producing better outcomes between teams and with community engagement practices, it was not sufficient.

Theory of action "if" statements…	Success to date	Major results
…If I work to improve effective and strong working relationships across boundaries between OSRI and FACE…	75%	• Qualitative data suggests that working relationships between the teams is stronger than at starting point in previous summer • Quantitative data suggests that both teams are aligned on shared vision of success • Relationships are still limited to a few individuals on the teams and not the broader teams
…including leading shared work teams, activities and projects (which includes developing a shared vision of success, key strategies, working agreements, structures and systems)	100%	• Developed School CommUNITY Team • Guiding Document houses lessons learned, norms, strategic directives, working agreements and systems for collaboration • Data from step backs suggest tremendous positive movement between teams on key initiatives • Coordinated development of additional boundary spanning teams aligned to vision
Theory of action "then" statement…	Success to date	• **Major results**

…shared Denver Public Schools efforts to engage school communities will be more authentic and effective as measured by both Denver Pubic Schools and the community.	50%	• Community engagement during high-impact transitions data remains mixed by both internal and external stakeholders • Overall turnout and impact are unclear • Success around authentic and effective engagement more pronounced during Round 2 of Great Schools where community feedback channeled right back into DPS responses and dialogue • Limitations from this section seem to suggest that the If section is a necessary but not sufficient contributor to this then statement. Other factors must be considered in the revised theory of action • Additionally, measurement of "authentic" community engagement is challenging frame and requires more exploration

Table 5: Evaluation of Evidence

Strand 1. If I work to improve effective and strong working relationships across boundaries between OSRI and FACE…

Result: 75% Effective

My capstone's initial "if" statement is focused on building relationships across departments and boundaries of the system. To capture evidence of this, I will first examine the data collected at the beginning of the residency through the helping/hindering protocol at the onset of my time at DPS from the strategic project kick-off meeting. I will then compare it to the Unity Team step-back conducted in December. This step-back occurred toward the end of Phase 3 of the residency and before the Great Schools round 2.

At the kick off meeting in July, I collected a set of qualitative data to understand the current state of the relationships between the two teams. As shown in Appendix J, the state lacked strong relationships across a variety of indicators: phrases such as "lack clarity," "focus" and "disengagement" permeated the hindering analysis. Analyzing these current state factors was essential for the initial design work and facilitation

leadership work I was involved in. From this analysis and general guidance, building

strong relationships, culture and clarity were central to my solution building and

leadership moves during the first three phases of the residency. There was some

inconsistent information from this data analysis (see communication examples in both

helping and hindering). It was clear from this analysis and additional interviews that

the state of the relationship lived more in the hindering examples against the vision. The

helping side was more bright spots, not representative of the full relationship. I decided

to use these bright spots as "desires of best practices" and employed them in my

strategy throughout all phases.

Helping	Hindering
Clarity on what level of contribution each team can make based on capacity	Lack of clarity on roles (e.g. who "owns" the agenda for a particular meeting/process)
Consistent communication	Lack of trust
Clarity on desired level of community engagement (educational/informational, informing decisions, decision makers)	Lack of consistent communication as/when things change "on the ground" and among decision-makers leading to different understandings of what is supposed to be happening
Presuming positive intent, competency and shared commitment to DPS values of equity, students first, etc.	Lack of clarity on outcomes, theory of action and therefore on strategies that we will pursue as individual depts. and jointly

Table 6: Strategic Project Kickoff, Helping/Hindering Sample, July 2014

At the end of the semester, the Unity Team came together for a reflection and

feedback session to reflect on the progress made throughout the year, why it occurred

and why it didn't. This feedback loop included quantitative and qualitative analysis

holding to certain processes against the Unity Team's shared vision of success built at

the onset of Phase 2. We used the same helping/hindering protocol that we mapped

against during the kick-off.

Helping	Hindering
Shared ownership of materials	Permission with framing?
Grew in coordination (CSO, BoE, Thought Partners)	Diverse stakeholders: how to maximize?
Clear roles	Small vs larger meetings and making them diverse

Table 7: December Step back, Helping/Hindering Protocol, December 2014

With our new vision, people definitely agreed that we had build clear roles and shared ownership in the work. They also agreed that the coordination capacity of the teams had increased and that we were beginning to work even better with additional teams, managing the internal authorizing environment more effectively. Reflecting against the vision, they still believed we had a ways to go until we figured out how to achieve better authorization for our shared work and how maximize our processes. The December meeting also considered the major improvements in the relationship and what was still left on the table. The chart below catalogs both.

Wins	Still Left / Challenges Remaining
Collaborative process	Analyzing data and user feedback
Allows us to work	Across processes
Waiting less	Understanding the feedback loop; when do we know this?
Knowledge we're working together now between OSRI/FACE	Managing up and around
Building capacity	
More lines of sight into each others work	
Relationship building	
Flexible with changes to materials and process	
Distributive leadership among the team	
Putting on our parent hats	

District vs. the people	

Table 8: Wins/Remaining Challenges

In the improvement section, the team notes a major improvement in the collaborative process between the teams, working on projects together in a productive fashion, building stronger relationships and trust increases alongside increased distributive leadership amongst the entire team to take responsibility for certain projects. A clear area that people identified is knowing what each team is working on, both during projects and just in general—a huge jump in clarity of role, process and content. While wins definitely outnumbered challenges remaining, these challenges were still present. Information sharing and dissemination, a key component of boundary spanning, was still an ever-present challenge. Questions around how to fully map the environment and broaden investment remained. Still left on the table was doing deep data dives into the results from our user feedback, coordination with other departments and being able to move it "up, down and around," our colloquialism for managing information flow in the system. We reviewed this data at subsequent meetings in January to inform the next round of Great Schools conversations.

Conclusion

I suggest this data set is 75% effective because while we identify gains in relationships across the boundaries between OSRI and FACE, we find that it is still limited mostly to people on the Unity Team and not the complete OSRI and FACE teams. There still are relationships to be developed within both teams across boundaries. However reflection with other senior leaders outside of this data set suggests the broader relationship in a much stronger place overall but the point remains. The results and analysis from the Unity Team suggests that we lack additional internal relationships with other departments, which prevents the work from being achieved to its maximum level. The

management of the internal authorizing environment, while increased and effective in some ways, was still not fully maximized.

Strand 2. …including leading shared work teams, activities and projects (which includes developing a shared vision of success, key strategies, working agreements, structures and systems)

Results to date: 100%

In my RKA, I detailed clearly that key to building internal boundary spanning teams was bringing best practices around how to bring together groups of different backgrounds. Essential to the building of effective and strong relationships between the two groups, based on my research from Schein and others, is the establishment of a shared vision, strategies and working agreements to in order to build the work together. Schein argues that these elements are essential for groups to come together to do productive work and build shared culture for common outcomes. The *Deliverology* (2011) *text* also makes it very clear that common purpose and mission are essential to ensure multi-departmental delivery. Early in Phase 2 of the strategic project, the Unity Team focused on building these components deliberately. The vision for success between the teams is detailed below:

> We strive for equitable engagement with diverse stakeholders and perspectives, through coordination, clear roles & responsibilities and shared ownership of our work, in order to realize the promise of great schools in every neighborhood. (Unity Team Vision of Success)

At the beginning and at the end of each shared process, the Unity Team would analyze alongside others to what extent this vision of success could be achieved or was met. These were critical components of folding in our learning over how to build boundary spanning functionality within the system overall. The learning was then captured into a guiding document that was shared and revisited with all members. Included in this guiding document are the other working agreements created by the Unity Team. These

working agreements were developed both in anticipation of challenges and "in the

crucible" during challenging times. Stepping back on these over time allowed us to

ensure effective collaboration and coordination, which was measured during our step-

backs. A few examples below:

- Moving it "up, down and around" the system to ensure effective authorization
- Collaborative responsibility to share information
- Presuming positive intention
- Striving for in-person contact when possible (Unity Team Working Agreements)

We also developed and iterated structures over time to ensure effective

implementation of the working agreements and vision. This included what membership

of the team meant, how the work was included in the variety of other teams and how to

coordinate broadly. Additional opportunities to leverage these working agreements

appeared throughout the emergence of the networked boundary teams. As each of

these groups began to operate, they were guided by the Unity Team's vision of shared

collaboration and the working agreements that we had utilized. This internal boundary

spanning guidance was the foundation for our learning cycles and management of the

increased needs of multiple teams attempting to work within the broader internal

authorizing environment to manage external relationships.

Essential to this component was the building of the systems and structures in

FACE. In this respect, the commitment to the "if" statement was met during Phase 1 of

the residency during the construction of the Guiding Principles and establishment of

quarterly step backs to monitor the outcomes of the community engagement work.

While the systems have not all been operationalized to their maximum degree, they all

continue to guide FACE projects with other teams. An example of this was a step back

in November with all the FACE partner organizations. All of the original partners

present during the July meeting reconvened to step back against the guiding

commitments that had been constructed and developed. A pre-survey went out to

measure each team's reflection on the guiding commitments and how FACE had lived

up to them. This provided a system and structure to measure FACE against. On

balance, partners agreed that FACE and DPS were living up to the guiding

commitments while suggesting ways to improve practices.   FACE, through this process,

built significant boundary spanning capacity and credibility to be able to manage across

internal systems and partners.

Conclusion

This component of the theory of action was achieved by the direct creation, utilization

and development of the vision of success, working agreements, systems and structures

to connect the teams. During regular intervals and at the close of processes, the Unity

Team or FACE would utilize these systems to ensure effective collaboration and

development. Both team's work in the internal authorizing environment benefitted

enormously from the various team systems and structures that we managed to put in

place.

Strand 3. *THEN shared Denver Public Schools efforts to engage school communities will be
more authentic and effective as measured by both Denver Pubic Schools and the community.*
Results to date: 50% effective

The most persistently challenging aspect to this capstone was the consideration and

measurement of the "then" part of my theory of action. To guide this, I am anchored in

the boundary spanning measures of effectiveness presented in the research - that

boundary spanning activity ought to be measured in information collection, task

coordination and external representation. To evaluate the effectiveness of the

information transmission and external representation in this instance, a variety of

qualitative and quantitative data presents itself to be measured. In an effort to both

suggest progress in this analysis and also to highlight the challenges, I will focus on the

clearest example of the OSRI-FACE relationship interacting and engaging with

communities intentionally, effectively and authentically: the Great Schools Community

Conversations. The largest and most innovative effort to arise from the Unity Team, the

Great Schools Community Conversations strove to open up a broader dialogue and

discussion between DPS and the community, build strong feedback loops and engage

DPS and community members across boundaries.

There were two major data sets from the first round of the Great Schools process.

At the meeting, we asked all participants (over 100 in all five meetings) to suggest

criteria for great schools along five factors: teachers, governance, leadership, educational

program and culture. These "five factors" are the foundation for evaluation of new and

current schools by OSRI. We also asked participants to evaluate the meetings broadly.

Community members providing feedback on these indicators this allowed us to direct

the feedback more specifically back into the system. Much of this aligned to Ancona &

Caldwell's (1992) external activities. We were filtering the information we received and

"delivering a smaller amount to the group" and "molding" perceptions of the outside

group regarding the community topics (p. 638) Overall, we collected a tremendous

amount of community feedback data on what makes a great school. After digging into

all the comments, we developed the major themes:

Synthesis of Responses to the Five Factors
• Need for diverse staff
• Need for prepared, qualified teachers/leaders
• Support for students
• The opportunity gap

- Parent engagement

- Creating a safe, high-performing school

  Accountability and transparency

Table 9: What makes a good school program (FACE Synthesis of Feedback forms)

These synthesized responses formed our immediate impression around the major topics that were being requested by the community and were of concern. Beyond this synthesis, in the open-ended question section, a few powerful comments stood out to the team:

Selected Open Responses
• What is your plan for the FNE? I know you have one. Start listening to black communities like you listen to white communities.   • This is the same process used five years ago. The results were ignored then and instead we got district reforms that has failed the FNE. We need the action that we asked for. SRA and SPF data are flawed methods for assessing our students and informing parents of their child's performance.   • Thank you for the invitation. Issues of making SW schools of high quality are very important to me as a community member.

Table 10: Great Schools December Feedback, Open Responses

The feedback from these open-ended questions suggested a lack of faith, especially in the Far North East of Denver and an appreciation for the conversation in the Southwest. This data also compelled us to avoid the mistakes of the past and in the next round address these themes. Both of these sets qualitative feedback provided rich internal conversation that we utilized to frame the work in the second round of Great Schools.

We also had a set of quantitative feedback to understand how we were accomplishing our task of engaging the community. Reviewing the overall feedback, it shows that only 38% of participants agree that they knew how their feedback would be utilized and only 37% understood the performance trends in their region. In the overall feedback category, participants clearly gave us tons of feedback that we distilled down

to the above categories. On the positive side, 77% of participants agreed that they had

given feedback on what makes a great school and wanted to stay engaged. This

feedback was collected and posted alongside the entire set of qualitative

recommendations (see Appendix P).

Great Schools Round 2

At the second round of Great Schools conversations, we folded in the information we

had collected and wanted to represent to the community that we had learned from the

first round of conversations. To maximize our boundary spanning capacity externally,

we focused on content from a variety of departments to represent externally and push

for dramatic attendance growth. In an effort to be authentic and effective at boundary

spanning externally, we proposed to engage the community on the issues that mattered

to them from the first round and transparently show how their feedback had informed

our second round of conversations. Most particularly, we wanted to work closely with a

critical Southwest advocacy group to link their sharing of concerns through us to the

Southwest conversation. We felt this was a powerful way for us to influence the

external environment, by spanning to engage them on content they needed and present

it to the community. We also adjusted course from the previous round where we had

static topics of educating broadly and focused on regional needs and context.   We also

made a strategic move to divert from our traditional orientation of considering the

"Near Northeast" one large regional bloc and created a new and separate event for the

Park Hill/Stapleton community. All of this was a major internal boundary spanning lift,

given challenges around scheduling and coordination. Among the large tasks:

information alignment from a variety of internal DPS teams, drive attendance from

multiple sources internally (school-based staff) and externally (advocacy groups) and

present to the community in a digestible way for feedback and conversation. The topics

of the conversations and the attendance results are below.

Region	Topic	Attendance Rd 2 / Attendance Round 1	Increase
Southwest	Supports for existing schools, turnarounds and lessons learned	30 / 20	1.5x increase
Far Northeast	Diversity in hiring	60 / 20	3x increase
Northwest	Supports for existing schools, current school leader discussing efforts of district	35 / 15	2.3x increase
Southeast	Opportunity gaps	20 / 10	2x increase
Near Northeast 1	Supports for existing schools, opportunity gaps	25/10* rescheduled because of weather
Near Northeast 2 (Stapleton/Park Hill)	Current supports, growth	20/ *New regional grouping

Table 11: Great Schools Round 2 topics and attendance comparisons

The results from the Round 2 experiences are especially fascinating when considering stronger internal and external boundary spanning behavior, for which the Great Schools Team and Unity Team helped to be an information and external conduit. In the Far Northeast for example, we decided to respond to community concerns and focus on diversity in hiring and in the Southeast and Near Northeast, to look at opportunity gaps. To do this, we had to work with the Human Resources team to help them filter critical information they had never had to present externally. In the Southwest, we wanted to come back to the community with much clearer plans for schools in need and showcase innovative ways we were preparing to launch our newest round of turnaround efforts. This required close work with a changing CSO department, and helping them produce documents and materials that aligned a variety of content to not only focus external audiences forces but internal audiences as well. In both cases, we had an opportunity to help change that dialogue by bridging that gap. We were, as Jemison (1984) suggests: "acting as regulators of information and material flow between the organization and the environment" (p. 134). Additionally, we were developing the knowledge creation Marrone (2010) suggests occurs between boundary teams: as the year progressed, the

material from the conversations found their ways into a variety of other settings. A

video produced for Great Schools 1 and 2 was used in to presentations to Southwest

advocacy group leaders. Our boundary spanning team, by working with internal and

external information channels had created materials needed for groups to manage their

relationship to their external environments.

Conclusion

Measuring the authenticity and effectiveness of this information and external

representation is a challenging task. By narrowly measuring effectiveness and

authenticity by attendance and content alignment to community concerns, then the

second round of the Great Schools Conversations was tremendously more effective and

authentic then the first round. To focus directly on information sharing, task

coordination and representation, both rounds of Great Schools suggest improvements in

the system through internal coordination and external authorizing environment

relationships. We utilized the feedback and information set from the first round to

promote an internal DPS response, which we then filtered and transmitted back to the

community through our external representation. We also increased the attendance,

turnout and participation of key community members during the second round. While

this suggests that we definitely increased key boundary spanning activity through the

combined work of these teams, there still remains strong questions regarding the full

"authenticity" and "effectiveness" of these outcomes. Attendance, while higher, was

still not large. At the Northwest meeting, we did not have a racial or socio-economically

diverse group of attendees. While content was delivered that was aligned to community

needs, our ability to measure its effective use is limited at best. We also still ran into

major authorization challenges both times we approached the external authorizing

environment. While succeeding eventually in getting the meetings rolled out, questions

still lingered about their overall efficacy.

The Why: Analyzing the Residency

Developing boundary spanning internally and externally to engage the community

effectively is the heart of the capstone and strategic project. Using the previous section's

evidence analysis and the leading indicators at the end of each phase, a variety of

considerations begin to explain to what extent this happened. Two different frameworks

will lead my analysis. First, I will use Marrone's (2010) border crossing levels

framework to analyze the various stages of boundary spanning activity built. Second, I

will use Dean Williams' (2005) work on adaptive leadership in developmental

challenges to analyze how I did or not build capacity within the system around internal

and external boundary spanning. In both sections, I will bring in other boundary

spanning research to support this analysis. These frameworks will help uncover the

dynamics at play, revise the theory of action and consider implications for self, site and

sector.

Both frameworks are essential for analyzing the strategic project because they

take on different components of the analysis. Marrone is the "What" analysis and

Williams is the "How" analysis. Marrone illuminates the building boundary spanning

capacity (member, team and network of teams) while Williams describes the adaptive

work of developing changes in the system to cross boundaries internally and externally.

The results from the analysis show emergent networked boundary spanning teams that

run into major power dynamic issues the more efficacy they develop and span

externally. They also show emergent developmental ability of the system to operate in a

boundary spanning manner, with challenges around extending the authorization

beyond myself.

Marrone's Level of Boundary Spanning

Marrone's (2010) framework creates a three-part structure for boundary spanning activity. She begins with illustrating Member Boundary spanning, then Team Boundary Spanning and finally to Network Boundary Spanning. Marrone describes antecedents and outcomes for each level of the process that should show up in the development of these teams and activities. These levels of boundary spanning activity correspond to the phases of the residency over time. These are detailed and cross-applied in the table below for clear reference. Through this analysis section, I will describe to what extent I was able to build this boundary spanning capacity.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Stages of Boundary Spanning	Member Boundary Spanning	Emerging Team Boundary Spanning	Team Boundary Spanning	Emerging Networked Boundary Spanning Teams
Antecedents	Self-efficacy	Team Leadership, team strategy		Emergent networked leadership
Outcomes	Enhanced reputation and influence	Team learning, team goal achievement		Emerging synchronization of efforts & task coordination

Table 12: Marrone's Level of Boundary Spanning Cross-Applied Against Residency Phase, Source: Marrone, 2010, p. 919

Phase 1 | Member Level Boundary Spanning

Marrone describes member level boundary spanning as being preceded by the need to balance "between internal and external demands" and that the team member needs to display "motivation competency, and task-appropriate strategies" to begin true boundary spanning activity (p. 919). Phase 1 of my residency illustrates how my actions over the summer and early on during FACE capacity building phases allowed the resident to claim some modicum of these competencies. Marrone also says that tenure and experience in the system often lead the beginning of boundary spanning activity.

Her research suggests that "role stress, conflict, and ambiguity" are often signs of member boundary spanning roles (p. 924). Indeed, Phase 1 of the residency was marked with strong examples of these challenges. I felt enormous stress regarding my role, conflict around how to move forward and real ambiguity in my job at DPS.

Even further adding stress to my role was the realization that I was an "inauthentic" boundary spanner reinforcing a challenging dynamic between the two teams. On paper, I was split between two teams to support their work but in real management structure, I was reporting to an OSRI Executive Director. Boundary spanners need to be credible information sharers and external representatives to build trust (Honig, 2006, p. 361). More than one person commented that potentially that we needed to focus on other things or issues and let OSRI take over, given that was where I was placed initially. Boundary spanners need to be trustworthy and truly grounded in both contexts and I realized that without this, I was considered to be "inauthentic."

Marrone also shows research that suggests "member self-efficacy, member role responsibilities and team external focus positively predicted individual boundary spanning activity" (p. 924). I lacked experience and tenure in the organization to play a strong boundary spanning role initially may have contributed to the initial challenges. Over time, the role's scope and design as a bridge between teams likely allowed me to move past the challenging start towards clarity that furthered the boundary spanning role. At the end of Phase 1, I was able to use the re-scoped residency to adjust course and maneuver into being a real boundary spanner. My ability to work with the FACE team to build their capacity to span boundaries internally and externally likely helped build my credibility and sense of effectiveness. This allowed me to position to gain the enhanced influence that Marrone describes, which positioned me well to enter Phase 2 and the team boundary spanning level. Therefore, during Phase 1 of the project I was

very much in a member-level boundary spanning role. The challenges and outcomes
associated highly align with Marrone's framework.

Phases 2-3 | *Team Boundary Spanning*

Phases 2 and 3 of residency were ground firmly in team boundary spanning stage.
Events included with the building of the Unity Team (the anchor for all the work
moving forward), the renewals working group and the first round Great Schools
meetings. These two phases represent the largest section of the residency and the lion's
share of the learning, challenges and successes. In these phases, boundary spanning
activity such as information sharing, task coordination, representation and potentially
innovation emerge more robustly on the various teams. Challenges around team
formation and holding authorization at the intersection of the internal and external
authorizing environments manifest dramatically.

The building of the OSRI-FACE working group and the formalizing of the Unity
Team were central components of the team level development in Phase 2 and 3 of the
residency. In this stage, the analysis suggests that the boundary spanning teams are
preceded by team leadership and strategy and if executed effectively, lead to team
learning and goal achievement. (p.919) Marrone's offers that outcomes from successful
team boundary spanning are team learning and team development (p. 919). This
describes the continuous improvement and development processes put together in the
Unity Team Guiding Document over the course of the phases. The creation of these
teams allowed the information sharing and task coordination that allowed the renewal
process to move forward fairly smoothly (with a team formation challenge) and
innovate to create the idea for the Great Schools conversations and then execute on them
across the city. Additionally, the spanning teams created knowledge through
synthesizing diverse content and building a variety of materials previously not available
to the public.

There was much environmental uncertainty in Phases 2 and 3. Aldrich and Herker also noted was that "environmental uncertainty" was likely to accelerate boundary spanning activity (p. 224). Internally, the reorganization causes many questions about how to seek internal authorization. Both the Unity team and the various other teams often wondered which senior leaders to include given all the shifts internally. The Chief School Office, a critical partner, was always a struggle to include given their fluctuating structure and competing commitments. Marrone describes a solution to this at the team level is "increased ambassadorial activity" and indeed, the teams were forced to go wider and cast larger nets for members and decision-makers to further approve or validate the decision-making (p. 926). External environments were also highly uncertain. In the case of renewals, there was tremendous uncertainty about the path foreword. The broader new schools climate surrounding Great Schools created much uncertainty about what would be proposed in each community. Marrone notes the external representation of the work leads to better outcomes with boundary spanning teams (p. 927). In both renewal and Great Schools conversations, processes directed the work of the multi-departmental teams to span towards external authorizing environments: schools, communities and other departments within DPS. This external orientation was also present in the variety of new projects that emerged toward the end of Phase 3 and the beginning of Phase 4.

Challenges emerged as the boundary spanning approached the intersection between the internal and external authorizing environments. First, during the renewal conversation and then second, as the authorization for Great Schools 1 was questioned. As the renewal conflict between OSRI-FACE created disequilibrium in our teams, many surfaced deep concerns whether or not it was worth it and questioned the whole project. In the boundary crossing framework, we had skipped a step - we had attempted to enlarge the team without preserving the central, unified group at the center. Linking but

not combining the OSRI-FACE team to the Renewal Team would give each more power

and more opportunity to navigate the system and preserve the relational safe space in

the OSRI-FACE group. Marrone suggests that key to success of the groups is "shifting

their attention and effort back and forth between the team itself (e.g., building team

trust, diagnosing team member behavior…) and the broader organization" (p.925). As

leader, I needed the core OSRI-FACE work to continue to build trust during this

challenging moment and see themselves as different from the specific concerns of

charter renewal. I attempted to resolve the issue by pivoting towards the central group

where we had built the most trust. Marrone recommends research on the attempt to

create a space of "psychological safety" would better "the likelihood of members taking

on interpersonal risks and challenges" (p. 925). Schein's focus on corrective actions

through our corrective protocol and course correction around key language allowed us

to create this space, toggle between the spanning behavior and the team building.

External boundary spanning began to emerge more strongly in these phases,

although with minimal effect. Our teams began to depart our traditional central office

roles and cross boundaries to schools, external advocacy organizations and other charter

networks to collaborate through increased information sharing and task coordination,

while building deeper connections and credibility. As Marrone (2010) suggests, these

"linkages can occur within an organization…or across organizational boundaries" and

indeed much of the work in this phase began to see activity within the internal

authorizing environment that would extend externally to greater crossing of lines of

authority with external agents or actors in Denver (p. 912).

In an effort to adjust to the second challenge, membership in teams was often a

substitute for authorization. Marrone suggests that adding, subtracting and shifting

people in and out of the team creates pain points in the system, leading to inefficiencies,

stress on the team itself and reduction of team identity (p. 926). This was a major lesson

learned. The first Renewal blow up and then some of the Great Schools challenges illustrate pitfalls of shifting team composition as a substitute for authorization. In both cases, failures to hold the Unity Team as a separate and strong "anchor team" apart from the other emerging teams complicated processes and also failed to ensure authorization effectively. As boundary spanning agents and teams tasked with managing information flow, we often struggled to include key departments or leaders "up, down and around" DPS. We would move forward aggressively, channeling various content from departments and then have to run back to make sure all the leaders approved then work to revise materials, starting another cycle.

Our task performance combined with team learning helped generate improvements at the team level. While attendance and investment was low in the first round of Great Schools conversations, we coordinated task performance across many departments and were able to collect information from over a hundred community members that would feed back into the system. The second ground of Great School showed that we learned how to invest more internal and external groups in the process, increasing attendance and aligning content more specifically to environmental needs. These were some of the team goal achievements that resulted from the work in Phase 2 and 3.

Phases 2 and 3 illustrated the challenges of boundary spanning internally and externally with groups of teams. These phases were moderately aligned to Marrone's vision of boundary spanning team(s) having capacity to work in complicated environments and produce strong learning and outcomes. The formation of the Unity Team provided a powerful anchor to continually reflect on the challenges and successes, a key finding. The Unity Team as both an "anchor team" or "delivery unit" to borrow from *Deliverology*, would provide a center to steer the work in Phase 4, protected from the turbulent work dynamics of other boundary spanning teams. Challenges around

team formation and authorization as the work approached the intersection between
internal and external authorizing environments were very evident and the major
learning from Phase 3 and mitigated some of the work in achieving goals. However, in
Great Schools 1, actions to utilize all of our internal authorization capacity to span
externally (i.e. personal meetings with key individuals and the dry-run) suggest that
boundary spanning teams are able to maneuver effectively in order to produce
authorization in both internal and external authorization environments, at least in an
emergent and rocky way.

Phase 4 | *Emergent Network Level Boundary Spanning*

Phase 4 of the residency begins with the realization towards the end of the first Great
Schools process that one set of boundary spanning teams and relationships was not
enough to effectively manage the intersection between internal and external authorizing
environments. Marrone posits that the highest level of boundary spanning activity is
the act of creating a constellation of boundary spanning teams to produce "innovation,
productive and adaptation" within internal and external context (p. 928). These teams
are preceded by increased connections and alliances in the system around shared goals
and increased awareness of the activities of others. Moving into Phase 4, this was a
stated, clear objective and need within the system with increased demands for
coordination of activity that meaningfully engaged the community around critical
issues. Phase 4 aligns with Marrone's framework as we see the emergence of networked
boundary spanning teams and relationships with the ability to span. However, Phase 4
does not fully align to Marrone's framework as it implies reaching network level goals
and outcomes and leadership across the teams to model boundary spanning. While in
some ways the networked teams manifested some alignment to the overall system goals,
their failure to engage much higher levels of authorization will likely challenge their
effectiveness in the long-run, though they may emerge with some small wins. A

potential implication from this analysis is that successful and fully authorized networked teams may be able to name network-level goals for themselves, a power generating technique at the intersection of internal and external authorizing environments.

In Phase 4, there were some of our largest examples of external boundary spanning attempts. In all the networked teams, they all found some additional need to cross outside of DPS and work across line of difference. All of these external boundary actions were not nearly as formalized as our internal processes and did not include clear individuals or teams to span the boundaries, a critical element of the internal boundary spanning work. This limited the effectiveness of the external spanning and could more accurately be described as one-off attempts and opportunities to cross external boundaries. One major example illustrates our spanning of boundaries between DPS and the broader external authorizing environment: our work with external advocacy groups in Great Schools 2.

"Ya Basta" advocacy groups had been demanding detailed plans from DPS for increasing performance for Southwest schools. For many months, these groups had been frustrated and stymied by lack of access to this information and through our increased coordination we had begun to align actions. By building internal spanning capacity to then form informal and one-off external boundary spanning teams, we were able to transparently share information with them across our DPS boundary. The information we shared included detailed plans for all schools, turnaround plans and clearer explanations of language services changes for English Language Learners. Our work to build connect across external boundaries with these groups allowed for greater sharing of information and task coordination for the Great Schools 2 event in the southwest. By meeting with these advocacy groups to meet their demands and also explain our current work, we had built stronger shared roles and relationships during

these critical conversations. One of the greatest examples connected to the measurement

of outcomes in Great Schools 2. These groups, through our previous meetings and

relationship building, coordinated with us to drive increased membership attendance to

the event, previewed external concerns and helped guide internal DPS actions to

respond to their needs. Unlike boundary spanning activity from central office to schools,

this external spanning increased information sharing and task coordination with

completely autonomous organizations. This sequence of external boundary spanning

activity showed the Great Schools boundary team's ability to span across internal DPS

systems to share information, coordinate tasks and create knowledge with external

groups across boundaries. However, the lack of formalization of these structures and

processes mitigated external boundary spanning potential. This remains a major need in

the system: to build something akin to the Unity Team between internal DPS actors and

external groups.

The emergence of the networked teams began the moment the amount of data

and information came back to the Unity Team from the first round of Great Schools

Conversations. This showed us right away our limited boundary spanning capacity.

Additionally, the increased effectiveness we were showing, while nascent, was

attracting the notice of other teams that were interested in partnering around internal

coordination to serve external engagement in the authorizing environment. As

Appendix N shows, network boundary activity is emerging within DPS during Phase 4

of the residency. It not only connects internally inside the system, but potentially to

other already existing systems and structures, like Regional Thought Partner Group and

through deeper relationships with advocacy groups. In each of these teams, I focused

on intentional involvement of other community groups and organizations and

attempted to map the broader environment. While some of these existing external

boundary spanning structures had already been developed by the system to promote

information sharing and facilitate connections, they had not been connected to this new

work or become routinized. Through increased power of influence, which Aldrich and

Herker suggest is an inevitable outcome of boundary spanning activity, boundary

spanning members and teams were asked to connect with these more authorized

structures and facilitate them (p. 226-227). Table 11 below showcases the broad segment

of teams the Unity Team began engaging with:

Topic	Area of Focus	DPS Departmental Coordination
Great Schools Community Conversations	Continuing regional meetings across Denver	FACE, Chief Schools, Chief of Staff, OSRI, Board of Education
Graduation Changes	Community engagement planning around upcoming graduation shifts	FACE, Imaginarium, OSRI, Chief of Staff, Post-Secondary Readiness, AIO
Turnaround Schools Community Engagement	Aligning FACE resources towards turnaround and redesign schools	FACE, Chief Schools, OSRI, Communications
Renewals/Closures	Continuing to monitor critical renewals and closures	FACE, OSRI, Communication, Chief of Staff
Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)	Building a technological platform to facilitate the inter-departmental coordination between groups	OSRI, FACE, Chief Schools, FACE, Imaginarium
School Language Transitions	Coordination community engagement work around schools going through language development transitions	English Language Acquisition (ELA), FACE, OSRI

Table 13: Emerging Networked Boundary Spanning Teams

Chief of Staff, Chief Schools Office, English Language Acquisition and Communications

became common partners in the work. The Unity Team was the "anchor" for the

networked set of teams, attempting to align the efforts. As the Unity Team built

credibility for the internal and external boundary spanning work to achieve information

sharing, accomplishing tasks and other projects, other groups became attracted and sought us out to help with their respective community engagement coordination needs.

In the deployment of these multiple networked teams both old problems of authorization, new problems distributed leadership emerged. All of these projects required significant internal coordination and collaboration to fulfill the promise of their objectives. However, given their varying levels of build-out, I often struggled to identify the clear authorizer within the system. I also faced sustainability problems in ensuring leadership of the work beyond myself. I found it extremely difficult to empower others to act in boundary spanning manners, at least right away. This created serious energy and time sustainability questions for myself and I hesitated to create more "inauthentic" boundary spanners who would run into the problems I had in Phase 1.

This process of developing others' capacity is very challenging and demanding and exists at the learning edge of my ability to build within the DPS system. Each leader and project is at a different stage of development and vision formation. To complicate matters, I had no official management relationship over all of these individuals. Managing these challenges to produce the "innovation, productive and adaptation" that Marrone suggests is hard (p. 928). While networked boundary spanning teams are helping move the work forward with information sharing and basic task coordination, they presented new challenges in managing workflow to others as well as me. As a resident charged with boundary spanning, I was not always able to "lend" my boundary spanning credibility to others leading the other work. I believe this stemmed from others not operating in the same dual structure I was in and also my inability to significantly devote time or resources to develop them appropriately (which I discuss in the next section).

The most significant analysis of the work in Phase 4 resulted from a challenge that emerged as an opportunity. In each of these projects, challenges resulted as we

attempted to approach the intersection between the internal and external authorizing environments. The first round Great Schools Conversations, in a powerful boundary spanning information processing capacity, had opened information channels to engage community members around key issues that mattered to them. Much of the feedback from the community in the first round of conversations showed that people wanted to know more about the local and current performance of their schools, alongside a set of other topics. The Great Schools Team used this feedback to formulate the proposal for the next round of conversations. In Great Schools 2, we garnered significantly more input and membership, but still struggled given the topics and content. These topics caused much consternation and questioning as we approach the community engagement event. Ancona & Caldwell (1992) "mapping…a picture of the external environment…trouble spots or potential allies" is a critical activity (p. 637). We did not do this nearly intentionally enough and when we did step back and propose a set mapping strategy to get the work done, we ran into similar roadblocks, suggesting our mapping wasn't reaching the right people. Moore's suggesting of a strategic manager having the ability to manage the authorizing environment was a powerful warning but proved very challenging in practice (p. 116). Only through direct appeal, utilization of previous commitments from Board members and leverage around "commitments" to the community were we able to proceed forward with our engage around these topics. Much of this was the molding activity Ancona & Caldwell describe, as we had to shape our influencers perceptions of our project in a rapidly shifting space. While our molding and mapping out of the authorization space produced results in the end, it caused much challenge.

Far more than any other set of learning, this realization sparked considerable reflection. The realization emerged that networked boundary spanning teams were able to synthesize this various content and information, coordinate these events across the

city and double the amount of attendance broadly. Each event also provoked internal

discourse around critical community issues. The realization may be even more

substantial than anyone could have anticipated: boundary spanning teams with internal

authorization and a strong map of their environment can *name* network level goals and,

through the design of an external authorizing environment event, provoke internal

alignment and change in the system.

The Development Challenge – Building Capacity in the System for Boundary Spanning Activity

In his book *Real Leadership*, Dean Williams (2005) expands and builds on previous work

he and Ronald Heifetz began on distinguishing between technical and adaptive

leadership. Technical leadership is the work of the quick fix, the solution that fixes a

problem but doesn't change the system itself. Adaptive leadership is the work of

changing mindsets, values and helping to move systems or groups to new realities. The

development challenge is "when the group or organization must build new

capabilities—competencies, practices and processes—to ensure the survival and

progress of the group or organization" (p. 153). This adaptive challenge assumes that

"raw material is available in the people and the enterprise but needs to be developed"

(p. 91). A leader in the midst of a development challenge must produce "orchestrating

processes to enhance the capacity of the entire system to make it more resilient,

responsive, and relevant" (p. 91). This building of "raw material" latent in the system to

make it stronger and more effective speaks directly to the work of my resident: building

capacity for internal and external boundary spanning activity to engage the community.

Williams recommends four strategies for leadership in a development challenge and I

evaluated the execution of these strategies to ensure effective boundary spanning

capabilities. In each section, I will focus on boundary spanning activities and to what

extent they were developed. I consider these strategies along an application continuum:

to what I extent I applied them successfully to develop boundary spanning capability.

Development Challenge Strategies	Application Analysis
Create a robust holding environment to keep people from getting distracted	Applied successfully
Develop in stages: give the people time to discover what works	Applied moderately successfully
Find the right combination of levers to develop new values and capabilities	Applied but neutral impact
Give people a stake in developing their capacity	Applied variably; not successful yet

Table 13: Development Challenge Strategies and Application Analysis, Source: Williams, 2005, p. 114

Create a robust holding environment to keep people from getting distracted | **Applied**

successfully

A holding environment "serves to hold people through the difficult and disorienting

work of developing new capabilities and adjusting to new contexts" (p. 97). There were

two holding environments created and applied within the course of the residency, one

internal and one external that suggest emergent capability to produce boundary

spanning activity. Internally, building a holding environment was a central component

to the creation of the working group that evolved into the Unity Team. My initial

impulse to build the Unity Team was not necessarily to build a holding environment,

although I had a suspicion that it may serve this purpose at some point. This was a

group that was dedicated with holding all the various pressures, challenges and

problems from the system. The membership included the two teams I was directly

tasked with leading the evolution in values, skills and capacities for activity. As we saw

in Phase 2, when major challenges flared up between the teams, people wanted to be

distracted from the work at the center and focus on the problems. The Unity Team,

however, served as place where honest dialogue could occur and various individuals

could surface the issues that were pulling them away from the work. As the work

continued in attached or coordinated working groups, the Unity Team, as a holding

environment anchor, was processing the lessons, developing their capability and building trust.

Externally, the Great Schools Community Conversations in Phases 3 and 4 served a holding environment for the external boundary spanning learning experience between the district and the community. It was here that feedback loops were essential to pushing system action, pressure was raised and lessons were learned. The pressure was raised because internal stakeholders felt as if the information filtering and challenges presented were not warranted and our external stakeholders were putting joint pressure on DPS to present critical information. At each round of Great Schools conversations, we connected with key advocacy groups in the community who were invested in pushing the district. Great Schools became a holding environment for them to bring their membership to the table to ask the questions of the district they wanted answered. While not an especially daring act of public dialogue, it is an innovation in one respect: the way OSRI, FACE and other teams imagine new work together. Before the Unity Team generated this capability a project on this scale was not considered. We learned serious lessons about attendance, internal investment and the limitations of our internal authorization to engage. The lack of major turnout to any of these (with a couple notable exceptions) taught us lessons about managing outreach. Throughout the Great Schools work, multiple departments and stakeholders learned lessons about aligning critical content and information, setting and building events that were responsive to the information and developing responses to the needs of the community. This strategy was applied successfully and evidence suggests success in the Unity Team and Great Schools in the building of this ability to boundary span across teams to engage the external authorization environment. However, as mentioned earlier, we failed to fully capture an opportunity to build a similar holding environment across boundaries with other groups even while we applied it successfully internally.

Develop in stages: give the people time to discover what works | **Applied moderately successfully**

Williams argues "human beings and their organizations change very slowly…people have to try things out and discover, often through trial and error, what works in practice" (p. 102). Over the course of the residency, I attempted to apply this strategy and scale out the boundary spanning work over time. However, at the end of the Phase 4 I have lingering questions about the sequencing of the final stage into networked sets of boundary spanning teams.

The first phase of my development was focused on my role as a boundary spanner at the individual level, to gain credibility and insight into the work of DPS. The next phase was building the capacity of the boundary spanning team, the Unity Team, and the last phase was expanding the network of interrelated teams. Sequencing this work over time allowed both the system and myself to adjust the role of this new boundary spanning agent and team before moving toward greater authorization of the team and its work. I continuously attempted to stage that work intentionally to avoid problems from moving too fast. However, at the end of Phase 4, I have concerns about my ability to manage and maintain this boundary spanning capability in the system. While it had been paced out and developed over the course of the year, the current state seems unsteady and not fully developed. For example, I'm not clear that the leadership internally of each of the networked boundary spanning teams has a clear idea about the internal authorization environment. Given that in Phases 2 and 3 we never quite mastered the full scale of internal and external boundary spanning authorization, Phase 4 often felt a bit rushed. I think it may have behooved me as a boundary spanning agent to break the work of establishing networked boundary spanning teams into two or three sub-phases. This would have allowed me time to dig into with more focus to help each team directly. Additionally, a major component of the leading indicators suggested that

many other teams needed to be involved beyond the OSRI-FACE team. Our typical solution, membership expansion, proved wholly insufficient over time. This challenge will be detailed more in the final analysis component. The Unity Team at times wondered why we were expanded our work so dramatically and how they could keep up. It never became a major dilemma and their anchor development allowed them to help steer the process. To compensate I would attempt to narrate the stages of development to illuminate my process and strategic thinking.

In conclusion, the strategy to manage the pace of change was applied moderately successfully. The development that occurred in Phases 1-3 showcased ability to build member and team level boundary spanning capacity, both internally and externally, albeit with challenges. The major challenges around the final phase of the roll-out into networked boundary spanning team suggest that the final phase of development may need to be revisited and adjusted in succeeding projects.

Find the right combination of levers to develop new values and capabilities | **Applied but neutral impact**

Williams argues that "leaders must find the right combination of levers in the organization or society that can ignite and accelerate a developmental process, that gets the people dealing wit the reality of their predicament and adjusting their views to accommodate a changed condition" (p. 107). In the course of all four phases, multiple levers were pulled to develop the new capabilities and values. However, oftentimes the levers were pulled reactively in response to an authorization dilemma and boundary spanning teams did not understand the complex power relationship between the internal and external authorizing environment fully.

Evidence of development exists from the building of working agreements and shared vision to guide the work. It also exists from our work in building trust in the

Unity Team, even when things got complicated in other correlated working groups.

However, many of the values and capabilities developed were in response to urgent

needs, corrective strategies and insights rather then proactive strategies. Most of the

antecedents Marrone (2010) describe were not intentionally developed in my residency.

The establishment of reflective strategies and the construction of pivot points for

feedback such as the dry run or the step backs allowed the group and teams to begin to

develop capabilities and coordination capacities they previously did not have.

Intentionally focusing people to moving information "up, down and around the system"

through intense external ambassadorial activity delivered some movement in helping

generate buy-in which aligns to Ancona & Caldwell's (1992) research findings. By

utilizing shared learning strategies, task coordination and alignment processes, we

attempted to bring both teams together to accomplish the task of engaging the external

environment. The Ancona & Caldwell molding and mapping capacity was always in

high demand but moderate efficacy. This was an area of struggle in the effectiveness of

the Great Schools initiative most directly. However, we built internal feedback

mechanisms to process the information and present it relevant teams once acquired.

Marrone (2010) discuss clear skills and mindsets for boundary spanning leadership and I

was not nearly as intentional as I needed to be to help those around me master these

skills and abilities. As we continued the work, we often found ourselves building new

knowledge, sharing information and then awaiting decisions. When these decisions

arrived, we had to pivot back and then revise the knowledge and information. The

boundaries spanning teams helped us during these challenges but were mitigated by a

shifting and complicated decision-making apparatus within DPS. While I applied these

strategies, they were applied reactively as a coaching response to the challenge, not as a

proactive development strategy.

In each of the phases, evidence suggests we are neutral in pulling levers around a critical boundary spanning capability – the management of the intersection of the internal and external authorization environments. In both rounds of Great Schools and in a variety of networked boundary spanning teams, our authorization from internal stakeholders was precarious. While in the case of Great Schools, we used our boundary spanning capacity and broad investment strategy to succeed; it often felt we had the same problem over and over. I believe this is from not sufficiently understanding the deep power relationship that lies between the district and the community. We felt, as representatives from the community engagement and innovation teams, as if we were authorized to do this work without formally exploring who was currently also authorized and how were we intruding on their space. Upon reflection, I also believed I often felt more authorized than I actually was as a boundary spanner externally. Internally within our authorizing environment, I had wide latitude that did not extend as far externally. In my Implications for Self, I consider how my feelings of "being at home" may have impacted this. As Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) argue "the fact that power revolves around scarce and critical activities, of course, makes the control and organization of those activities a major battleground in the struggles for power" (p. 9). In DPS, community engagement, especially proactive community engagement such as the Great Schools, is a rare event. Therefore, using the strategic contingency model of power, it clearly would become a major battleground internally within our authorizing environment. Everyone had opinions about the meetings, how they should be conducted, how key information should be presented. In a rapidly shifting environment, this probably made the battleground especially treacherous. As boundary spanners, we were uniquely positioned to process this information and then represent it back to the group or the community. In places like Southwest Denver, our boundary spanning activity and work with advocacy groups connected us to deep community wants and needs. The transition and work there forced us to build stronger connections

externally that helped internal DPS work and external groups manage change. As leaders internally though, we were unprepared and not fully considering the immense power dilemma we were engaging. After treating each episode as a learning event, we began to understand the challenge we were provoking in the system. We began to understand even more the power that was within our grasp and how, with additional authorization capability internally and externally, we could do much in service of the goals of DPS. In the future work I do not have confidence that the teams or I have learned this skill set fully. Understanding how to pull this lever is clearly underdevelopment. An additional area of underdevelopment is the formalization of boundary spanning teams and structures between internal DPS agents or teams and external agents or teams. The Unity Team and associated networked teams, while spanning boundaries externally to engage external groups in the authorizing environment, failed to include them robustly in our networked teams. For example, in the case of the Southwest effort, we never formalized a true boundary spanning team or structure between external advocacy groups. While we achieved some information and task coordination across boundaries, this limited our full external boundary spanning development. Moving forward, this remains a major underdeveloped lever in the system. While we built capacity in the system to work across boundaries, internally and externally, we struggled to fully apply this strategy to pull strong levers and to build this capacity within our teams or ourselves.

Give people a stake in developing their capacity | **Applied variably; not successful yet**

Williams' states "a leader…should be constantly searching for the right balance and distribution of stakeholding" (p. 111). As a leader, this is an area I believe personally is essential to the success of a project, an effort and my definition of leadership. The developmental effort needs to turn the work over to the people and let people lead the work when they have developed the capacity. In this capability development, I

attempted to apply this strategy in empowering others to take on critical work in the

building of the networked boundary spanning teams. I faced a deep challenge in

passing along my boundary spanning capability to others and establishing clear

developmental opportunities. I also faced challenges in building larger buy-in around

boundary spanning externally. Some recent successes suggest that this may be more of a

long-term than a short-term developmental strategy.

As I moved to the end of Phase 3 and into Phase 4, I began to both directly and

indirectly to empower others to lead certain projects or work. This distribution of

leadership is emergent. While intentionally attempting to promote the leaders around

me in greater roles in the work, I found that they often struggled with exercising the

same boundary spanning capacity. I realized that myself, who had been authorized as

an internal spanner, simply could not pass the baton of boundary spanning to another

actor who is not similarly authorized. Tushman & Scanlan (1981) argue that

organizational should promote boundary spanning actors because it "recognizes and

rewards that critical activity" (p. 96). In my efforts, I had put the cart before the horse. I

was enabling others to take ownership of boundary spanning teams before they had

fully garnered this skill set. Additionally, Tushman & Scanlan argue that fully

formalizing these roles for people could lead to role clarity and challenges (p. 96). I saw

this behavior first hand as people grappled with leading the work. This is why I've

come to realize the team structure is so critical – it allows the distribution of power and

boundary spanning to be shared collectively. Over time however, some "victories"

resulted from the collaboration. The information sharing and coordination of tasks,

especially in the school language work between English Language Acquisition (ELA)

team and OSRI produced some important moments that avoided troublesome

challenges for the district in the external authorizing environment. The co-leader I had

been sharing with in the project had spent enormous time building strong relationships

in the community at critical schools and with the ELA team. Over time, he acted and

operated as a boundary spanner both between our internal district and the external

authorizers of parent advocacy groups. In another internal and external case, the

management of the new Year 0 Turnaround work began to build strong, district wide

momentum to innovate on the turnaround project that would eventually be managed by

incoming C4 resident Brittany Erickson. An example of major change in the system

located in one region, many of these projects were occurring in Southwest Denver (4 of 5

turnarounds and nearly all language transitions). The external environmental shifts and

changes in the region produced a tremendous amount of our external and internal

spanning activity. In other cases, the other leadership and I failed to exhibit strong

boundary spanning activity to sustain energy and momentum and the work failed to lift

off dramatically or dragged on without critical milestones.

More of a challenge was getting senior authorizers to see themselves as having a

stake in building this capacity. They were skeptical of the work at multiple phases.

Once more, looking at the strategic contingency of power approach, what we were

doing was actually very challenging to get them have a stake in – we were approaching

a power center that they had direct ownership over. The relationship between the

district and the environment was something they had enormous and legitimate claim

over. But, with honest reflection, we did not attempt to invest them directly in our work

as much as we needed to and preferred to work within normal chains of command.

Harkening back to *Deliverology*, (2011) ensuring you have clear sponsors with power that

commit to your work is critical and we should have been much more intentional about.

This was a major misstep of both Phases 3 and 4 of Great Schools. Without spending

time at the beginning investing critical senior stakeholders in our internal authorizing

environment, we had failed to really help them understand the potential positive impact

of this boundary spanning internally and externally. I am not convinced at the end of

this capstone that many senior leaders beyond a few are committed to robust and effective engagement, and I take responsibility for that.

As a strategy, I applied this variably and with limited short-term effect. If giving people a stake in the development is a critical way to build capabilities in the system for boundary spanning activity both internally and externally, then this is an area where application is not yet successful. I am concerned that after my removal from my role some of this work will discontinue unless I am able to truly adjust course in the next few months remaining.

Revising the Theory of Action

The initial theory of action had the resident building working agreements and systems/structures across boundaries with the FACE and OSRI team to ensure that community engagement would be more effective and authentic. As the year progressed, it became clear that this was a necessary but not sufficient set of actions to ensure the outcome. The previous analysis from both the adaptive change and boundary spanning frameworks showcases the need to build more authorization inside the system, distribute leadership towards others more effectively and be more specific about the key internal authorizers. The emergence of the networked boundary spanning teams is a critical component that needs to be supported and built out further, if added specificity of key stakeholders to promote buy-in is included.

A revised theory of action needs to be more explicit about these previous analyses and the changes in the system. The scope of the district, community members and the broader system was so large that coordination and work between OSRI and FACE was only the start of the internal and external boundary spanning effort. The establishment of two new centers of power in the Academic and Innovation Office (AIO) and the Chief Schools Office (CSO) meant that the work of coordination and connection

needed to be broader and more interconnected. The move of FACE into the CSO and OSRI into the AIO meant that internal structures were being moved and shifted around us. Externally, groups calling for or against new schools created turbulence in the processes. During these internal and external shifts, the Unity Team became a center to attempt effective community engagement and work, surrounded by a variety of intersecting and aligned boundary spanning teams. In the future, the theory of action needs to clearer about critical new players in DPS, specific actions to promote internal and external authorization and how to fully maximize the networked boundary spanning teams.

Therefore, the revised theory of action would be: *if I work to improve effective and strong working relationships across boundaries between AIO (including OSRI), CSO (including FACE) and other critical teams including shared working teams, activities and projects (which includes developing a shared vision of success, key strategies, working agreements, structures and systems)) AND then build developmental capacity for additional interlocked networked boundary-spanning teams across internal DPS departments and external teams or agents while investing internal authorizers (senior and junior) THEN DPS efforts to engage school communities will be more authentic and effective as measured by both DPS and the community.*

As stated in the beginning of the capstone, my intention is not to have a strategic project that ends with my residency. This new theory of action is built upon the lessons learned from my residency experience and showcase a potential path forward at DPS, in a time of internal and external change, to effectively manage it's relationship with the external environment. The intention is to build additional capacity for more effective boundary spanning activity internally and externally, to ensure that DPS can maintain a strong relationship to its external environment. It also incorporates strong lessons learned about focusing on securing deeper levels of authorization from senior leaders of

all types and investing in the leadership capacity of others. This revised theory of action illustrates how to potentially maximize internal and external boundary spanning activity. The addition of networked boundary spanning teams is the sufficiency condition to ensuring the innovation, information filtering and processing and external connections required to maximize the activities both internally and externally.

Implications (Self/Site/Sector)

At the onset of this capstone, I framed that my orientation towards this project was not testing and trying out something new for a year, but building capacity within site, the sector and myself. Taking the lessons from the evidence, analysis and data sections, I now consider multiple implications for self, site and sector. These implications fall directly from the application of my revised theory of action and what it has taught me about coordinating an effort to build these capabilities and what I've learned broadly.

Implications for Self

To gather implications for self, revisiting my initial learning goals and personal case set at the outset of this capstone is an important starting. In Denver Public Schools and my time in Ed LD, I was able to test and search what I always wanted to learn, to achieve, and to stand for. The three learning goals and guiding personal case of my residency were: (1) learning to function in a bureaucracy, focusing on community engagement; (2) gaining a deeper understanding about boundary spanning skills and activities; and (3) being a leader in a place you call home, were in many ways my learning goals as I entered the Ed LD program. In this section, I cross-apply these learning goals against the analytical analysis from previous sections and reflect on the goals as helping or hindering my future path.

Self-Implication 1: Personal Boundary spanning challenges and opportunities

After many years outside the system, I learned that I can be inside of it and can feel effective. This feeling of self-efficacy in the work is essential for thinking about a career system level change. The development and conceptualization of the boundary spanning framework gives me the prior, current, and outcome level actions that will serve me both inside and outside the system. Using Marrone's (2010) framework, William's (2005) development challenge frame and Salancik and Pfeffer's strategic contingency of power framework, I will be able to use these considerations into future projects. Ancona & Caldwell's (1992) typology of external spanning activity and measurement of effectiveness is a major opportunity to explore more. The coupling of this with the developmental strategies enables me to consider how to build further ability within others and myself.

For many years, I've considered this to be a potential possibility, but the residency allowed me to fully explore this state at multiple levels. I was initially attracted to the themes of boundary crossing because I felt like it not only represented the work I was doing but also my identity. As a biracial man who has lived in both rural communities and cities, who spent most of his early leadership development in debate, where pros and cons are weighed constantly, I have often found myself straddling lines of difference. This has never been a fully explored theme in my life and this residency has allowed me to build a intellectual and practical skill set and tool box to understand how to maximize and develop the capacity in myself and others.

It is also a challenging state. There were many times during my residency where I felt like a walking contradiction, operating on two teams with divergent cultures and perspectives and maneuvering through the complex departmental labyrinths to produce small wins. The major challenge during Phase 1 of being considered an inauthentic boundary spanner almost derailed my residency. On a daily and sometimes hourly basis, my residency tasked me with splitting between my head and heart, education

policy and politics and sometimes, my Mexican and Anglo sides. I also found myself

torn between "ed reformer" and "community organizer" camps in discussions,

sometimes clearly divided across race lines. It means that I had no one "home"

department my entire residency, and often felt the tug and pull of both teams in the

system. Both teams' ideas, visions and systems compelled me. This can create a lost

feeling during complicated moments (like the ones held up in Phases 1 and 2). As the

year progressed, I realized that there were other boundary spanners around me and I

began to bring them closer to the teams I worked on. This meant I wasn't just attempting

to train or extend to all other boundary spanners, but also attempting to attract them to

the projects I was working on. It also meant we could problem solve with common

language and understanding around challenges that arise in boundary spanning work.

One of the major implications for me in this section is that I now have pressure

tested and interrogated this a set of skills to deploy in future roles and projects, as a way

to manage the interaction between the internal and external authorization environment.

Being labeled as an "inauthentic" boundary spanner is a problem I do not want to repeat

and will look to ensure future opportunities present clear authentic structures. Indeed,

upon reflection, I had some authentic boundary spanning abilities externally in the

reform community (i.e. DSST) that came naturally that I never formalized, systematized

or capitalized. In other external spaces, I did not truly cultivate abilities to share

multiple identities or span to other groups in a fully authentic way (i.e. with external

advocacy groups). I had many challenges in implementation, like moving too quickly

sometimes, failing to extend this capacity to others and failing to seek authorization

(which I explore more fully in the next section). These lessons learned will help me

become more skilled in this practice in future states. I still have much to learn and

overcome but I'm beginning to understand how I can lead, be effective, and span

boundaries in a system

Self-Implication 2: Leading at home

I've achieved a remarkable task that once seemed impossible in my life: coming back to a place I called home. After four years in school, seven years in rural New Mexico, two years in Boston, I've returned to a place where I grew up. As I spent time getting to know Denver and stakeholders, my framing of "I grew up here" would turn attention, change tenor of meetings, and warm people in a way I never expected. I was often involved in community events and activities that made me feel even more connected. Spending weekends with my dad and family brought calm to challenging personal and professional moments. Meeting local students at debate tournaments where I once spent high school weekends restored me in meaningful ways. However, a few remarkable things also happened during my time of my residency – I realized I had really never grown up in Denver and I had many other homes. During the Great Schools conversations, I had to learn about so many neighborhoods in Denver it was clear I really didn't know as much as I needed to. My previous life in the suburbs was not really Denver – it was not Mars - but it was not the urban city life that kids in DPS live in and experience. Personal issues surfaced that pulled me to California early in my residency. My grandmother's passing in early 2015 and the birth of my nephew in Oakland pulled me away from Denver towards family in California. Amazing progress in education in New Mexico and in the previous work I had done there pulled me back routinely. I came to realize, that as a boundary spanner, I had many homes. The truth is I am home in many places, with many people, and with many ideas.

One of the major components of analysis was the failure to achieve substantial internal support for the work at various stages and our challenges working at the intersection of the internal and external authorization. Given my ability to span boundaries, I felt often stymied and frustrated by this process. In reflective space, I asked myself honestly why this was the case. After much reflection and writing, I think

in some ways it was because I felt at home, this was my community and I felt authorized to engage in the honest conversations and information sharing. This aspect of my personal case was a hindrance to the work. Comparing to my previous experience in New Mexico where I was a more cautious community leader, my experience in Denver showcased a desire by me to strike out towards the community boldly and sometimes too quickly. This is both an opportunity and complicating factor for me moving forward. It means if I work in a place I call home, I may be hindered by assumptions about *my* authorization to engage in the external authorizing environment. It may mean I am bolder or more confident in this process, but could come with inherent risks of getting too far ahead of the system and organization I'm working for. Given how critical the power relationship is between an organization and it's external environment, I come away with an implication that my being in a place I consider home can come with professional risks.

Self-Implication 3: I stand for building of public spaces worthy of the communities they serve

The learning goals also helped me understand what I stand for as a leader. As I found myself reconciling the work between OSRI and FACE, I found myself increasingly compelled by community development, engagement, and empowerment as a personal theory of action. To me, the boundary crossing became increasingly compelling when we started to understand the power that community engagement provoked in internal discourse. This was a belief that was forged for me on the Navajo Nation as our new group of teachers held math nights for students and families. No one believed they would come, but they did. It was tested when we held a brunch for community veterans and tears were shed because they had never been invited to speak their truth. I chose to help push Teach For America in this direction, not because I believed it looked good politically but because I believe organizations and institutions are only powerful when responsive to the needs of the people they serve, not the other way around. For

too long in our public system and for too many system leaders, the latter is the more

salient truth. I reject this. Through my residency and continual reflection, I now know

that community engagement and empowerment aligned to the work of school reform is

to be the calling of my life. It may take different forms, different jobs or different

approaches, but it will be the central thread of the leader I intend to be.

A major take-away from my analytic reflection of the networked boundary

spanning phase is that the community engagement team, when sufficiently authorized,

has enormous power because it lives at the intersection between the district and the

community. When it is not sufficiently authorized, it is in danger of being blamed for

problematic dynamics. When we span internal boundaries and gather information

around important questions under the frame of "needing to go in front of the

community," we were asserting a claim on a power space. When we received authority

to deliver on that claim, the gears of the organization could crank to work. In multiple

instances, oncoming community engagement opportunities causes previously static

issues become live and previously unresponsive departments leap to life. Throughout

the year, community organizations had answers to certain questions got attention and

resources because our internal boundary spanning met their needs and our work would

incite internal alignment or reframing of key issues. In these cases, the FACE team or

the Unity Team was the internal boundary spanning conduit for this work and I got a

front row seat on how to work internally to connect to the community. With sufficient

authorization internally, we were able to bring strong engagement, information and

coordination towards our external authorization environment. This is a powerful

ability and if wielded correctly, could lead to the naming and leading of network level

priorities alongside the external environment.

The effect that our engagement externally had was minimal in full boundary

spanning development but very powerful for me personally. The potential to transform

the conversation about the reform proposed is immense in complex political

environments. The questions that were asked about the nature of the engagement

externally and the lessons learned from senior leaders collectively provided tons of

opportunities to think deeper about engagement and empowerment at deeper levels.

Towards the end of the year, some of the networked boundary spanning work was able

to lead deeper trainings and leadership development with parents and families. Indeed,

it has pushed me to consider how I must think about deeper and more formalized

external boundary spanning relationships needed to develop beyond my context inside

DPS. As we began to partner more extensively with external organizations and schools

that wanted to build more understanding and empowerment of their communities, but I

never fully built the same holding environments for external action as I did internally.

The capacity for this work to transform the dialogue at some schools is immense and

represents the next stage of my career for me.

Implications for Site

To develop the implications for site, I considered what would have the maximum value

moving forward for the district to consider and reflect upon. These are examples that I

believe would have the most opportunity to steer the course of DPS and Denver schools

to succeed in the realization of Denver Plan goals.

Site-Implication 1: The Denver ecosystem ought to invest in broader boundary-spanning activity
between DPS and other power centers

Much of capstone sought to showcase both internal and external boundary spanning

from the lens of DPS. However, as the year progressed, it became clear that due to the

high nature of transformation within the Denver ecosystem, sector leaders should

serious consider what it would mean to build structures and functions to promote

boundary spanning.   The reality is that there is not serious ecosystem investment in

middle or lower level boundary spanning activity and development. My analysis of

system change from Scott (2000) and Mehta (2013) compels me to argue that

fundamental change is occurring in our portfolio system, creating blended boundaries

and this needs to be capitalized upon. The manifestation of external political pressure to

produce change in Southwest Denver and the corresponding transitions is clear

evidence of this. Because of both advocacy groups' work and internal DPS alignment

and focus, many schools in the Southwest are embarking on significant change efforts

either in language programming or school turnaround, or both. This called and

continues to call for boundary spanning to manage the relationships between these large

changes and central efforts. This is a challenge given there are few strong external

boundary spanning structures of shared accountability or information sharing. Indeed,

external advocacy groups, like mentioned earlier, have no formal and regular shared

work with the district. Efforts to build formal and regular interactions with these

groups are often met with skepticism. Current groups that represent charter leaders and

district leaders to consider "collaborative" charter-district efforts are few and exist

mainly at the senior level. More examples and groups like this need to be created in the

system to build shared credibility, insight, share information and coordinate tasks.

However, just collaboration is not sufficient to build shared leadership, team identity

and further connections between groups. As I detail in further implications, there is a

need for another group akin to the Unity Team to build the holding environment to

build the capacity, mindsets and capabilities between internal and external actors in

both authorizing environments. Moving forward, I will seek to create such a holding

environment as an external companion for the internal work of the Unity Team.

It is my argument that to sustain this work, roles and groups must be created for

the express purpose of cross-connections externally between DPS and other emerging

parallel structures in the system. To some, this would be a somewhat-radical

redefinition of the autonomy created in a portfolio system. The current structure of the

portfolio system in Denver already violates some of the "strong" autonomy tenets of a portfolio system. OSRI and DPS provide coaching and data support to charters, English Language technical assistance, and free facilities for its charters including help with operational costs. To continue to assume autonomy is a complete given is a fallacy. Rather, both charter and district leaders in Denver ought to realize the system is successful because it promotes this healthy and authentic connection across the internal and external boundaries. However, it would create an enormous information and task-coordination opportunity. Denver education leaders in a blended boundary environment ought to embrace this more directly and invest in boundary-spanning roles, activities, information synthesizing and task-coordinating behavior. The book club hosted by current and former Ed.L.D. residents at the home of Alyssa Whitehead-Bust are an example of this. It brings together leaders at DPS, DSST and a variety of other groups to talk about shared problems and solutions. This is small scale of a boundary blending space allows groups to come together to build shared identity. If Denver intends to hone what makes it special, it should double-down on the true spirit that will enable the Denver Plan to succeed: the relationships and connections of the talented people and structures across the city.

Site-Implication 2: The DPS Reorganization creates enormous boundary spanning opportunity; therefore the current CSO-AIO strategic plan ought to intentionally promote boundary spanning.

The current reorganization and strategic planning process within DPS creates an opportunity to seize. As AIO and CSO are in a state of flux, shifting roles and creating opportunities for partnership and alignment, it is likely that intentionally building boundary spanning teams and roles could be a highly productive affair. As previously stated, Aldrich and Herker's (1977) work supports the conclusion that lean and changing environments promote additional spanning (p. 224). Senior leadership at DPS already

recognized the challenges of OSRI-FACE departments working together and identified

the need for a shared spanning role and shared teams. The reorganization allows for

fresh and original thinking to support Denver Plan goals that are not siloed within any

one department. The movement of FACE under CSO and OSRI into the AIO showcase

the desire for deeper alignment. These events, more than anything, signal that DPS

leadership already exhibits a boundary spanning mentality and mindset. This mindset

potential is essential to intentionally fostering the ability for boundary spanning work to

occur and be authorized. However, the lack of initial steering of the strategic project

suggests that while this is valued, this may not be always clear how to intentionally

structure this behavior in the system. Given the critical nature of the AIO and CSO

departments in the DPS context, they are the central focus of this implication. AIO and

CSO have been building a strategic plan for the past six months in an effort to

coordinate and reorganize their work. Therefore, the reorganization and their strategic

planning process represents an opportunity to bind together the two most central and

newly aligned departments within DPS.

Honig's (2006) suggestion that leaders consider boundary spanners in "building

central-office coalitions" shows a rich space for exploration (p. 379). Therefore, leaders

within DPS should pay close attention to building and bridging roles that span

departments and arrangements that ensure information flow and task alignment. The

current thinking of the re-organization attempts to create and foster collaborative

opportunities for alignment and the building of clear roles and responsibilities, which is

different than boundary spanning.

The opportunity presented at present in DPS is very explicitly the building of

roles and structures across boundaries to generate internal alignment for effective

system development. Roles like the Communications-FACE embed or the OSRI-FACE

work of my residency intentionally build and develop capacity to achieve common goals

and give people broader perspective on the organization. Instructional Superintendents

should be more closely aligned to FACE senior leadership and to the senior leadership of AIO. They are a critical linchpin of the external boundary spanning capacity of DPS yet often have very informal and fluctuating relationships with these other critical functions within DPS.   Furthermore, DPS leadership currently considers senior level teams the ones with the responsibility to boundary span and coordinate internally. Current groups lack full boundary spanning orientation and capability. They are coordinating workgroups with shifting, fluctuating and porous borders, creating instability in the trust relationships critical for developing capacity for boundary spanning capacity. While the leadership of the CSO and AIO should look at their shared outcomes and think about how to build shared roles that span between them to build information sharing capacity, task coordination and potential innovation in the system, the task is for the broader DPS organization to build this capacity.

A major challenge of the internal boundary spanning work was a tension between the facility and nimbleness of the internal boundary spanning teams and their lack of decision-making authority. Political and organizational decisions often move inside and outside the organization at lightning fast speed. Boundary spanning teams were able to maneuver with an adroitness and quickness given their information sharing and task coordination capacity, but would be often revising, revamping or rearranging plans given the changes in environments lack of formal authority to make decisions. Potential developmental considerations must be established as DPS considers further boundary spanning activity and implementation. Senior leaders would need to be clear with boundary spanning teams or leaders whether they have limited role in decision-making ability or granted more decision-making ability to execute on their unique position within the system. Unless this clarity is established or authority granted, these teams will find themselves in a purposeful yet enormously frustrating role of bouncing between various considerations and decision-makers in such a rapidly shifting internal and external authorizing environment.

Site-Implication 3: External boundary spanning requires additional build out of capacity and systems and further exploration

During the team and networked round of boundary spanning activity during the residency, the Unity Team and the Great Schools conversations filtered information and built pressure in the internal DPS system for tough questions like diversity and hiring and opportunity gaps in our schools. Existing at the intersection of the internal and external authorizing environments and spanning between both is a challenging affair. Internal spanning is challenging enough but can often be anchored in a common set of goals or values. In contrast, building capacity to span boundaries externally, with individuals or teams to share information or coordinate tasks (or even innovate together) is even more challenging given the lines that are drawn between them are brighter and clearer. These internal boundary spanning activities to engage our external authorizing environment faced resistance in the system and authorization from senior leaders at times. The ability for the networked boundary teams and FACE to share critical information with the external community pushed to focus DPS attention on external authorizing environment concerns. The realization that FACE or another unit similarly authorized could operate within this intersection and could name critical priorities for the district to engage the community with is a profound thought and immensely powerful. Few actual structures exist for formal boundary spanning collaboration or activity between internal and external DPS actors.

Engaging the external authorizing environment through boundary spanning will require additional theoretical and practical considerations given the challenge it entails. As mentioned earlier, while we had some limited external boundary spanning activity (during Great Schools 2) we had never formalized these teams and processes to the degree our internal spanning development occurred. This is desirable because while increased internal spanning gives capacity to manage the internal authorizing

environment, the real need for an organization lies in ensuring effective alignment with the external authorizing environment, and therefore some level of external boundary spanning. Like the example showcased earlier of the work in Great Schools 2 with external advocacy groups, external boundary spanning and the internal capacity to support the building of information and knowledge to respond to the environment's needs potentially may be the most critical and challenging of all boundary spanning. Sharing "internal" information is hard enough across teams, but sharing information with "external" groups or teams requires even more risk of exposure or trust. At various times, I had enormous authorization difficulty ensuring the information we would share with external groups, critical to meeting their needs and accelerating task coordination, was be approved by senior leaders. This is why external boundary spanning, the movement of an individual or group outside of the walls or lines of the organization, expands significantly from simple "engagement." It involves the movement between structural authorities and gathering or sharing of information needed to then return to the internal organization. Once returned to the internal organization, the team or member can use the information to help adjust the course of organization based on the work done beyond the lines of the organization and begin the hard or difficult work of coordinating tasks both internally and externally.

External boundary spanning will also requires additional considerations and potential areas for exploration. Four major strands of work need to be built up to deepen the understanding and impact of external boundary spanning: formalization of external boundary spanning structures, measurement of outcomes, assessing readiness and distance/magnitude considerations.

First, as mentioned in previous sections, to fully maximize external boundary spanning will likely require the building of formalized roles, teams and structures between internal and external actors and organizations. External boundary spanning can be achieved modestly, like in the case of the Southwest advocacy groups, with one-

off processes but the lessons from the internal Unity Team showcase a different need.

To fully span externally, systems, roles and structures will need to be built to build the

holding environments akin to the Unity Team process. Second, more consideration will

be need to be made to measure impact of external boundary spanning to build authentic

and effective community engagement. In the limited scope of my project, I narrowed

the measurement to focus on attendance and information sharing, two relevant and

highly evident examples that require boundary spanning activity. In future interactions,

we will need to build more effective instruments and tools to measure external authentic

interactions and effectiveness. Potential measurement options could include more

detailed surveys of key stakeholders, qualitative interviews with parents and

community members, tagging key words and ideas and measuring strength in

responses over time. Additional ideas could be results from key public votes, processes,

deliberate feedback groups developed to ask the question of key community members

and then the building of additional metrics. This infrastructure does not currently exist

in FACE or within DPS, but through additional work and design could become ways to

build measurement of impact.

Other process considerations must be made before considering boundary

spanning activity. Additionally, the Unity Team or other teams need to build

knowledge and insight about "readiness" of projects before assuming them, either

internally or externally. These projects often are critical and urgent right away but is

extremely time consuming to build capacity over time. More work needs to be thought

through the implications for assessing the readiness of projects that will require

significant internal and external boundary spanning. Critical to this is assessing the

readiness of the leaders and the projects separately. Assessing the leaders to help steer

the work, their boundary spanning authorization limits and their willingness to share

information "up, down, around" the system is essential. The projects must also be

weighed for capacity considerations and the risk of provoking power challenges in the

system. Both are critical needs that need to be considered in the development of additional boundary spanning activity. Spending time on both of these should also prevent the problems resulting from dramatic acceleration of networked boundary spanning teams and leaders of these teams failing to meet the needs of boundary spanning roles.

Finally, more work and analyzing needs to be paid to the nature of external boundary spanning. I propose initial considerations of various degrees of external boundary spanning from the central organization into categories of "near", "adjacent" and "far." In a school system, one could consider what Honig (2010) calls boundary spanning between internal districts members and external schools as "near" boundary spanning. While the instructional superintendents are crossing boundaries between a central office and schools, they are still a part of the same school system, with similar goals, objectives and cultural mores (although perhaps this sometimes feels like different worlds). Another example would be spanning between divergent but related power structures, or "adjacent" external boundary spanning. In the Denver context, this would be spanning between DPS and charter network, like DSST or Rocky Mountain Prep. DPS authorizes charters, share facilities and are aligned on central Denver Plan goals but they diverge on key aspects around autonomy, public responsibility and have different organizational priorities related to that granted autonomy. "Far" boundary spanning could be advocacy groups who work in the Denver system, who share a desire to push DPS or charters to different objectives, related from their internal and external boundary spanning in the diverse communities they operate but are working in schools to organize parents. Considering these various levels of boundary relationships in the external environment are likely to be critical to develop increased awareness of boundary spanning as a force for change.

To achieve Denver Plan goals will require building increased support in the internal and external authorizing environments. This requires leaders who are willing to

raise the pressure and ask tough questions inside the system and other leaders who have a willingness to answer. This is a major developmental question DPS must wrestle with to achieve the outcomes of the Denver Plan. FACE, with additional authorization both internally and externally, holds large potential power because they are a relatively authorized gateway to the community. As the power analysis thread around community engagement told us throughout the entire capstone, power manages the internal and the external environment. This is why community engagement is so high stakes and why FACE should consider this capability as a critical component of their charge. FACE could internalize the external boundary spanning elements described by Ancona & Caldwell (1992) to dig into potential ways to build this capacity intentionally and structurally. In all the near, adjacent or far boundary relationships, FACE is a critical lever and partner with these groups. Few departments have this natural mission, connection, leverage and capacity. This charge, matched with strategy, additional capacity and the current leadership of Veronica Figoli, the FACE team could be a dramatic agent for change in the Denver education system. As someone who believes the energy and power to achieve the transformational change our students deserve rests within the neighborhoods and communities of our city, I believe a path to create a better Denver education system runs through FACE and it's partnership with essential departments.

Implications for Sector

Sector Implication 1: Boundary Spanning Leadership As a Force for Change

Central to the Ed LD theory of change is that leadership matters in the education sector. The work of my capstone, residency and learning inside the system indicates to me that boundary spanning leadership is central to success in the education sector. More than collaboration and coordination, boundary spanning is the work of bringing divergent

people together. Building the ability to share information strategically, build common

bonds is a critical skill. Developing one's ability as a leader to cross boundaries of

difference and divergence is essential to becoming an agent of change. Building

connections across race, gender, class and identity lines is vital to leading in our multi-

dimensional world. I'm reminded of Jemison's forecast of the future of a world of

increased "environmental complexity" that led to his argument for boundary spanning

groups as "important to strategic decision-making because of their ability to recognize

and deal with trends or changes in the environment" (p.132). As my capstone contends,

boundary spanning both internally and externally can be a powerful force to manage the

relationship between an organization or group and its internal environment. As an

agent for change, the leader must be able to navigate bureaucratic boundaries of

institutions, internally and externally. This includes seeking like-minded others,

building networks of teams to innovate and push the system. This is essential whether

you are outside or inside the system.

Boundary spanning is not inherently a positive force or a negative one entirely,

but as described earlier a deeper and unique strategy that is sometimes called for and

other times not. It is a method and any method for information collection; coordination

of interests and coalition building is entirely dependent on the context you are

surrounded by and the means to implement the method. On the positive side, boundary

spanning can be extremely valuable during periods of organizational change or

environmental heterogeneity. As the strategic contingency power analysis suggests,

there may be times where the current structure is not meeting the needs of helping the

external organization respond to the external environment in ways in situations critical

to the survival of the organization. Indeed, boundary spanning internally and externally

is critical when misalignment between the internal system and the external environment

creates tension that could threaten the value creation that the organization seeks to

build. The analysis from this capstone suggests that the current structure of boundary

relationships internally between FACE & OSRI is a great example of all of these context

conditions. First, both groups were not meeting the current value creation needs of DPS

and had conflicting views of how to influence the internal DPS system to adjust to the

external needs broadly. Second, they even had different conceptions of what the

internal and external needs were. Their misalignment and broader DPS challenges

around internal coordination prompted the need to develop internal and external

boundary spanning capacity and skills.

Boundary spanning could be problematic and challenging to both the member

and team, prompting conflict and confusion around strategic contingencies needed to

approach. Three examples will illustrate the pitfalls of boundary spanning behavior and

even suggest arguments against accumulating boundary spanning capacity. First, using

a school district example, we could imagine a world where the power to engage the

community externally and coordinate responses was facilitated by a large office that was

tasked directly with this responsibility and did not share this responsibility with others.

This office and the nexus space between internal boundaries and external influence

positioning would hold the dominant power in this model. Pushing this example

farther, we could imagine that the district and this office was fairly adept at managing

the voluminous information streams pouring into it and had a variety of external

indicators that suggested it managed this relationship well. Therefore, an individual or

team in the system starting to assume this power on their own would not only be a

threat to this functioning body could create dangerous misalignment in the system

between the high-functioning central apparatus and the new, upstart boundary

spanning power. As this new boundary spanning member and teams of boundary

spanner began to influence the environment directly, it could cause wider disruption in

the management of the external authorizing environment. This creating of multiple

information flows could be problematic in many ways. In this "strong, unified nexus" example, individuals and teams that would attempt to boundary span internally and externally would be not only under threat themselves but also threaten the alignment in the system. I could imagine this is how a few departments felt sometimes about the upstart work of the Unity Team. Our claim on their coordination and external engagement authority represented a challenge to their ability to influence the external environment. However, the situation in this capstone and residency differs from this example. While there is centralized authority in the Chief of Staff, Academic Innovation Office and Chief Schools Office (including FACE) in Denver Public Schools, none claim sole discretion or maintenance over the ability to influence the external environment. All claim some ownership over various topics and content. In some ways, this "tragedy of the commons" example describes the intersection between the internal and external authorizing environment illustrates demand in the DPS system for boundary spanning and the Unity Team.

The other scenario that warrants discussion is boundary spanning without authorization, either through the building of self-efficacy that Marrone (2010) suggests, the tenure or credibility that Honig (2006) describes or the deliberate promotion and development that Tushman (1981) articulates. Throughout the course of my experience in DPS, focusing on building credibility, support from key senior leaders and gaining credibility by working alongside with others on so many projects that were never articulated in this capstone. Even in this experience, my boundary spanning capacity and our authorization as a team was challenged often. If another individual or team attempted to inject themselves at the intersection of the internal and external authorizing environments without following the guidance or warnings from these authors, then immense challenges would build.

The final example is a warning to others in the field regarding boundary spanning is also well-documented in the power and boundary spanning literature, but touches on the intersection of two timeless and external human challenges: hubris and jealousy. Honig (2010) discuss how much boundary spanning, through the building of coalitions and as critical information brokers can gain enormous power in the system. My experience suggests this. At times, I felt like I was holding a lot of cards from a deck that few others got to play with. However, as the literature often notes, boundary spanners are under constant threat due to this power accumulation and role-ambiguity. If mentors or other leaders do not insulate potential boundary spanners from this ambiguity, it can lead to challenges. This is deadly combination, especially in organizations where the ability to gather information to influence the internal and external environment is a powerful ability. As boundary spanners gain power and influence, they must be wary of hubris in their ability and the jealousy of others who see the power accumulation as a threat (for a variety of factors). Boundary spanners should heed Dean Williams's advice about their "personal case" and consistently reality test their current boundary spanning work against what they really care about. This has the opportunity to expose blind spots (like my "home" challenges) or rethink purpose as power accumulation grows. More tactically, boundary spanning teams and agents must deliberately attempt to diffuse and share information and knowledge creation as widely as possible to share, open-up and bring more and more folks into their space and power. Ironically, this sharing of power likely creates more and more networks of boundary spanning information, causing additional power dynamic challenges, but it may be the only way to truly intentionally display the positive intentions in your work.

My experience in my residency suggests building these skills in real-time is a complex and challenging affair. My initial complications as an initial inauthentic boundary spanner, initial team conflict and major authorization dilemmas suggest that

is can be a high-stakes affair. I was able to have the advantage of writing and

researching this capstone, reflecting on my progress with mentors and having leaders

supporting my work within the system. Giving leaders training in the ability to operate

in boundary spanning ways could help them avoid encountering these problems in

more challenging or combustible environments.

Institutions such as Harvard and our program, who intend to create the

transformational leaders of tomorrow, must then endeavor to build this skill set in their

leaders. If indeed boundary spanning leadership can help manage critical power

intersection and relationships, then this applies directly to the work of the leaders of

tomorrow. I applaud the program for taking the first step in building intentionally

diverse and dynamic cohort experiences. The program must take the next step and

examine research about critical boundary spanning skills, stages and mindsets. It then

must train leaders to operate in these highly multi-dimensional and complex system

environments. Practice, open dialogue, reflection and intentional development are

essential to building this capacity. Other organizations and structures that train leaders

or attempt to scale change must follow suit. Being able to connect, work with and build

strong outcomes across lines of difference and manage complex power arrangements are

essential for leadership in our era.

Sector Implication 2: Portfolio strategies may require more intentional boundary spanning
Throughout my residency, I've been struck by the dynamic nature of change in the

external authorizing environment within DPS, much more than I could ever write about

in this capstone. Throughout my time in Denver, each week unanticipated events

created new power structures or power vacuum in the external authorizing

environment. DPS, as a portfolio system, also accelerates this by proactively identifying

needs to be addressed with school closures, turnarounds or new schools. Near the end

of my residency the largest charter network in Denver, DSST, put forth an application

for 8 new schools with no regions specifically identified that would eventually have

them serving nearly 25% of the students in the DPS. This has profound implications for

the structure of central office, school supports and the future of education in Denver.

Their gathering of parallel structures, credibility and power also allows them to

influence the future of the education in Denver. As I experienced all of this, I often

thought about Scott's (2000) "blurred boundaries" and the re-arranging of the familiar

into a new-familiar: not radically different, but structured in a way that re-orders power

and relationships in the external environment.

The very nature of a portfolio system, which promotes diverse options and new

schools as a solution, may actually require higher levels of boundary spanning activities.

In traditional districts, schools are organized into hierarchies and structures that

promote alignment and coordination through a command and control approach. A

managed portfolio system creates multiple avenues for engaging school communities

and managing quality effectiveness. For example, if OSRI manages charter schools, CSO

manages traditional district schools then any sort of joint collaboration and work

together must include boundary spanning activity.

Therefore, building capacity and developing skills and mindsets for boundary

spanning activity within a portfolio team may be more required.   This is a major

implication for both the current and future state of Denver Public Schools, the broader

Denver education system and the sector overall. Aldrich and Herker state,

"organizations in heterogeneous environments will have a higher proportion of

boundary spanning roles than organizations in homogenous environments" (p. 224). A

portfolio model holds heterogeneity and diversity at the heart of its theory of change.

As new power structures emerge, networks of schools grow astride districts or schools

redesign to support students differently, boundary spanning roles will be required.

Organizations within a portfolio system or portfolio management districts will need to

think deliberately about the key boundary spanning activities: information sharing, task

coordination and representation across both internal and external lines.

Sector Implication 3: Boundary Spanning Beyond Education

Boundary spanning literature surveys health care, the private sector, education, and international organizations. The education sector should think of themselves as not limited to their own sector and truly embrace their position as embedded within overall society. More than just lessons learned from other sectors, this would be meaningful work connecting across boundaries to share information, innovate and coordinate on shared goals. Connections, relationships and working agreements with other sectors that serve children or society can only increase the effectiveness of the education sector we serve.

I applaud the Ed. L.D. program for holding exploration into other sectors as a serious component of their leadership development program. However, my personal experience suggests not all leaders or organizations within the sector consider other sectors as worthy avenues for research and partnership. Further, the nature of the structure our current graduate system asks people to be a "health leader", an "education leader" or a "public policy leader." In an increasingly interdependent world, thinking about the boundary spanning lens beyond the education frame will be increasingly essential. Leaders in the education sector should see beyond sectionalism and embrace all sectors as places to span boundaries to reach common ground for the betterment of all. As potential sector transformers, we ought to think beyond the education system and into the superstructure we are surrounded by and operate within. After we build these connections within ourselves, we must develop boundary spanning capacity within the communities we serve and states and nations we work beside.

Additional Considerations for Research

Potential Avenue 1: Further Distinguishing Collaboration and Boundary Spanning

An essential question of the conclusion of this work is the full distinguishing between boundary spanning activity and general collaboration. Additional research and thought is needed to further define the difference between the two. Some of the central research I utilize (Maronne, 2010) describes boundary spanning activities with terms like collaboration and coordination. So while they exist in related veins of organizational behavior, the research I've culled failed to fully distinguish explicitly. Moving forward for additional considerations, two essential questions need to be asked: 1) what are the critical distinctions between basic collaboration and boundary spanning and 2) when is general collaboration preferable or boundary spanning preferable? The paragraphs below attempt to engage both of these questions.

Collaboration is a core value of Denver Public Schools and encouraged by all staff members and teams. Midway through my tenure, I received recognition for collaboration between FACE and OSRI. At this celebration, my manager discussed how often she felt like collaboration was sometimes just "getting groups in the room to agree without producing results" and that my work had built strong and authentic connections, leading to effective outcomes for both teams. In this example may lay the heart of the potential distinction. While collaboration is often a value and promoted activity within organizations, boundary spanning is a strategy and structural orientation that creates firmer collaborative structures different from general and "basic" organizational collaboration that leads to stronger internal and external linkages. In the next sections, I draw out this example and consider more distinctions between boundary spanning and general collaboration.

First, boundary spanning may connate use of deepening relationships and membership between distinct groups by connecting deeper through structures that promote higher order goals. A boundary spanning agent works between groups and

other individuals while a boundary spanning team includes members of various teams while it also spans outwards towards external environments. Collaboration may not always include these components, situated between lines of difference either through mindset, skill or knowledge. This may mean an expanded use of the theory of boundary spanning or a constrained definition of collaboration.

Boundary spanning may also be a deeper and more coherent strategy that shares leadership between divergent agents or teams that need to build bridges across stark boundaries that seem impassable in relationship when they have shared interests or opportunities. Boundary spanning, utilizing the Marrone and Williams frameworks, may be a powerful adaptive leadership strategy. This strategy has individuals or teams serve as the various holding environments to "ramp up" deeper and more effective cooperative activity in situations lacking or in need. Marrone argues that boundary spanning actions allow "success, above and beyond any single component team's internal team processes or performance" which seems to suggest an effectiveness and promotion of higher-order goals distinct from general types of collaboration (p. 928). The increased task coordination and information sharing in boundary spanning can help build shared capacity or insight to build coalitions for activities larger then the combined sum of both of their parts. Perhaps boundary spanning is preferable in a space where information needs to be shared at a rapid pace and need to build coalitions internally or externally to move critical work is essential? This may explain the work between the OSRI-FACE relationships where simple collaborative activity did not suffice. A year or two of FACE-OSRI joint activities had never produced shared vision, resources, insight, strategies or capacity because no one person or team was ever meant to "hold" both perspectives across boundaries. Indeed, the Great Schools events would likely never come from a simple collaboration activity process until multiple perspectives and insights had bridged and synthesized across boundaries to produce a higher-order network goal or activity.

Another distinction may be times of increased organizational or environmental change, as discussed earlier and in various implication sections. In these cases, general collaborative activity is not sufficient for the shifting circumstances. Internally, organizational change may require deeper structural and empathetic connections between groups and people to weather the changes. Externally, central institutions or organizations may need to not just collaborate towards mutual needs, but also build boundary spanning relationships to achieve higher order goals. Jemison (1984) describes the need for boundary spanning when organizations become divergent from their external environment. The deeper sharing of information found in boundary spanning during these changing times may help organizations adjust course with the external environment, potentially a more dramatic and pivotal power shift than general collaboration with outside actors.

Another distinction could be the knowledge creation aspects of boundary spanning teams that create knowledge that is genuinely shared by all parties. We found in our work that the creation of knowledge was not always a "planned" activity and often spontaneous. In a general collaborative function teams may come together to plan deliverables they agreed upon. However, in our boundary spanning team, knowledge creation seemed to often appear out of the complex information flow we were channeling. Items like the public facing Call or TSF video or various other materials were created because of the shared insight and need in the system rather a specific plan; a by-product of deepening boundary spanning relationships. The production and creation of this knowledge from this boundary spanning activity created materials and resources that the teams would not have thought have produced together. While collaborative activity could indeed produce this work, the focusing nature of the boundary spanning teams and need to respond to shifting external situations may produce this knowledge at different rates. Additionally, in a general collaborative activity, teams would have been representing each other's interests and no one

individual or team would have been charged with moving across the boundaries to ensure the creation of shared knowledge that may or may not have been identified.

These avenues are just the beginning of how I can draw out the distinction between collaboration activities and deeper and more thoughtful boundary spanning activity and structures. Moving forward, additional insight and exploration is needed to fully distinguish these related but distinct notions.

Potential Avenue 2: The Anchor Team.

There was little found in the literature about "anchor" boundary spanning teams. In the case of the work of this strategic project, the anchor team was the Unity Team who generated the vision, norms and relationships that enabled positive functionality for the other teams. The closest is came was the text *Deliverology* (2011) that would describe the Unity Team as "the delivery unit" or the main body to coordinate interdepartmental action. As the new teams spun up, Unity Team members were key contributors and were therefore able to gain the required insight and knowledge to help facilitate even greater information sharing and ambassadorial activity. Marrone (2010) highlights research that suggests a benefit of networked team boundary spanning is "synchronization" of efforts and that this usually involves inter-team coordination. (p. 928) While inter-team coordination might be a solution, the "anchor" element of the Unity Team allowed us to continue to build central capacity, develop a robust holding environment for changed behavior and oversee various task performances with membership from key groups. The *Deliverology* authors would argue that much of that applies to their experience inside the education ministry. As others considers the member-team-network model to build developmental capacity in order to increase boundary spanning activity, it ought to also consider the anchor team as a critical element of that effort to preserve and protect critical skills, values and ideas alongside

information dissemination and other key boundary activities. The anchor team allows

the development of the progression of boundary spanning capacity in a central holding

space to build shared meaning, learning and orientation to the work. In the case of the

Unity Team, it continues to serve as a "safe space" for all parties to engage in open

dialogue before critical decisions are made. This "boundary anchor team" or "delivery

unity" continues to learn the lessons of the other networked teams, build strong

connections and coordinate critical internal authorization tasks to engage the

community. Social scientists and practical research should meet together to consider the

overlap and exclusion behind the concepts.

Conclusion

At an early morning meeting toward the end of my residency, I sat down with two

colleagues. Our topic was to discuss the changes occurring at a small Southwest

elementary school in Denver that had previously been a dual-language school and was

now moving to another model of language support. This had initially caused enormous

political difficulty for the district but we had found a path forward with the community.

The two men I sat next to were instrumental in helping to build this path forward. Both

of them were central office employees and with strong relationships at this school. One

had seen change happen for many years at the school and knew the parent community

quite well. Another was new to the district but had invested enormous time and energy

in building relationships at the school level. Both of them worked in primarily FACE

and both had built strong relationships with the English Language Arts department for

different reasons. Their dual roles and relationships were hallmarks of how they had

helped prevent broader challenges at this school. In the case of one of the employees,

his years of experience with the school helped sooth the tension. In the case of another,

we had worked closely to lead the language transition boundary spanning team over the

past few months. As we sat down to discuss the issues of the meeting, I realized that I

was the only person at the table who didn't speak fluent Spanish. Acknowledging this, I

asked both of them to conduct the meeting in Spanish entirely. They both looked at me,

surprised and shocked. I had asked this once before of them, earlier in the year and they

had demurred. This time however, they smiled and laughed. They gave me high fives

and jumped right in.

The story of the boundaries crossed above and the relationships is the story of

my residency. At the beginning of my time at DPS, I wanted to cross so many

boundaries. I wanted to cross the Colorado border to come home. In Denver I wanted

to live in both Latino and Anglo worlds and have social functions where my family and

professional friends co-mingled. As my residency struggled, I wanted to jump across

the lines that separated FACE and OSRI and help them see each other in the way that I

saw them. When conflict erupted between the teams, I felt genuinely torn and helpless.

How could I cross boundaries when I felt so stuck in the middle? When the Unity Team

planned Great Schools conversations, I wondered how to cross further boundaries in

our community. As work started to mount and requests to engage the community

mounted, I wondered how to manage it all and ensure effective community engagement

in all these new arenas. It felt like so many boundaries to cross and not enough time,

energy or people to help me cross them. But then, as often happened in DPS, the people

around me came to the rescue. I realized early that DPS and Denver is full of amazing,

talented and thoughtful leaders who are deeply committed to building a better world for

students. The boundary spanning activity that I led, coordinated through teams and

connected into the external authorizing environment with was only possible because of

the amazing people I was working with.

Boundaries are concepts surrounding organizations and nations, lines drawn for

the purposes of defense, analysis and reflection. We have boundaries and identities

within ourselves that we draw to make sense of our world. They are both held

inviolable by people and spanned by people. As I conclude this capstone, I wanted to

begin with a story about people and a full realization that none of this work could have

been possible without the remarkable people I worked with in Denver Public Schools.

It was the people in the Unity Team (Jack, Amber, Nick, Jennifer) who made that

boundary spanning between OSRI-FACE possible. It was the talented leadership of

Brenna Copeland and Veronica Figoli who helped me maneuver the boundaries within

DPS to understand how to succeed when authorization to engage the community

faltered. The ability to span boundaries was nascent within me, but they authorized me

to lead in that way, to gain their trust and to grow as a leader around them. They

allowed me to take them on a journey of shared experimentation, challenges and

growth. Along the way, we learned so much together.

Boundary spanning, the idea at the heart of this capstone, is based on decades of

research around how to move internal and external systems. Working inside large

education systems, in this case a school district requires management of the internal and

external authorization environments. This was the premise that attracted me to the idea

of boundary spanning and community engagement at a district. Learning about this

process, how community engagement operates in a high-performing district and how to

span boundaries anchored me throughout the learning experience. To be a future

system leader, I wanted to understand and practice this skill, exploring it in a learning

stance and be supported by leaders who could guide me.

The residency supplied me with many learning opportunities. It allowed me to

explore the Marrone (2010) framework that would eventually guide my residency and

consider the Ancona & Caldwell external spanning skills (1992). It also provided many

opportunities to experiment with Schein's (2010) research on how to bring groups

together as challenges mounted or teams needed cohesion. It provided real-time

opportunity to apply adaptive development strategies. The failures I experiences

provided many opportunities to reflect and learn. The implications from the capstone

and the revised theory of change explain the need for deeper levels of internal

engagement and buy-in, clearer ideas of who needs to be involved in key boundary

spanning activity and further ideas about how to encourage effective community

engagement.

Following from this revised theory of action and analysis of this application of

boundary spanning activity, questions remain for myself, DPS and the sector about how

to best apply this learning most effectively. For Denver Public Schools, they should

deeply consider the implications proposed here which suggest boundary spanning in

their new organizational structure. The Denver ecosystem and proponents of portfolio

systems should think about what it would mean to build boundary spanning capacity as

they seek to build the education system of the 21st century in a increasingly blended

boundary space. Education and system leaders broadly should study organizational

dynamics around the power that lies at the intersection of the internal and external

authorizing environments. My hope from this capstone is that potential future leaders

will make community engagement and the management of the external authorizing

environment a priority and crossing boundaries as an essential strategy to build in

themselves and their teams.

My reflections on my learning goals and personal case were strong reflections for

me. I intend to think about roles moving forward that allow me to even more fully

explore these boundary spanning strengths and limitations. I see gaps in my skills and

potential leadership that I need to explore. I hope to find roles and opportunities that

span boundaries allow me to learn more about community development, engagement

and empowerment.

Departing New Mexico for Harvard was the hardest thing I've ever done. It was emotional, severe and called for a re-examination of whom I as a leader, friend and colleague. I felt selfish; as if I was abandoning all of the work and people I had been with for years. As I drove across the continent, I spoke with many of my family and friends along the way. I was reassured that if I applied myself in this amazing opportunity I could be a better person and leader for any community I choose to work.

To exit this program knowing I've started to explore these major learning goals is a great source of pride and accomplishment for me. I credit the Ed.L.D. program, my advisors, friends and colleagues in the program, who consistently helped me throughout the experience. As I begin my next journey, beyond the red brick buildings of Harvard and into a new stage of life, I know I will always cross back across the boundaries of time to my period in Appian Way to re-center on what it means to be a transformational leader in my life, in my work, and in *all* the places I call home.

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Appendix A : The Denver Plan 2020

Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix B: Denver Plan Goals and Current Regional Performance
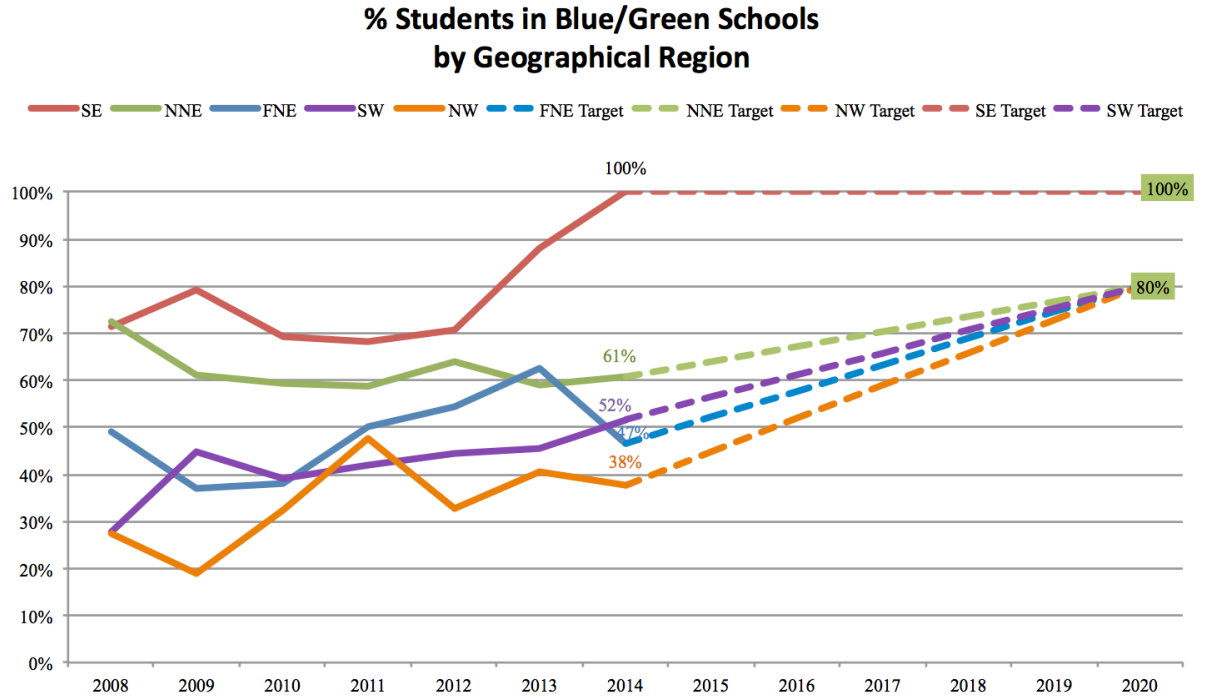
Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix C: Map of Current Portfolio School Districts
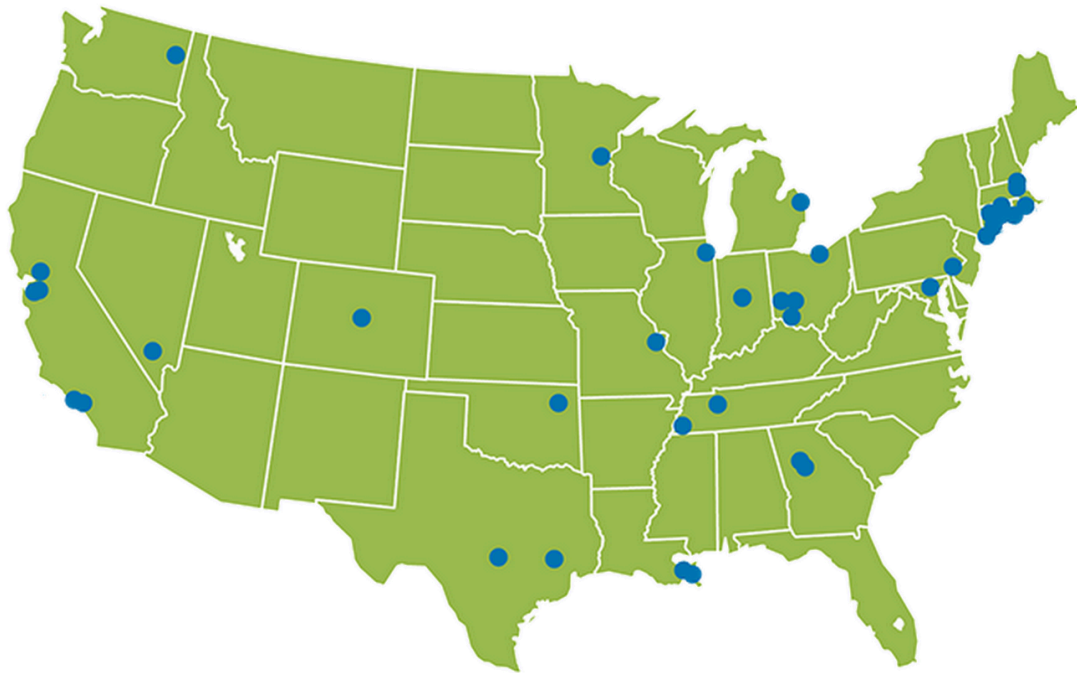
Source: Center for Reinventing Public Education,
http://www.crpe.org/research/portfolio-strategy/network

Appendix D : Overall District Portfolio Composition

Enrollment in Charter & Innovation Schools
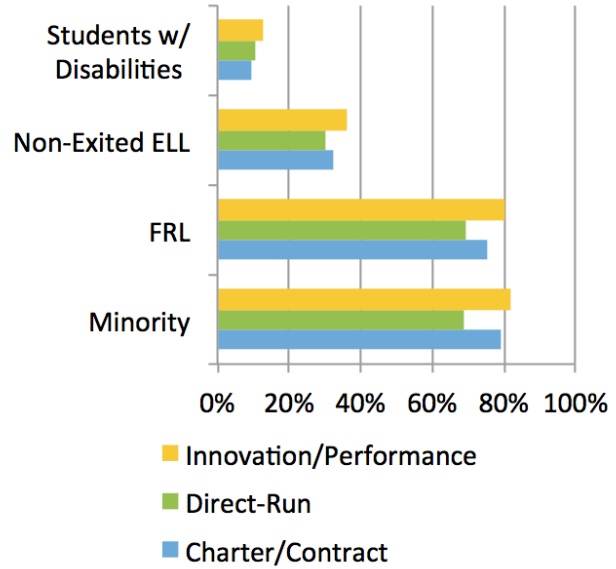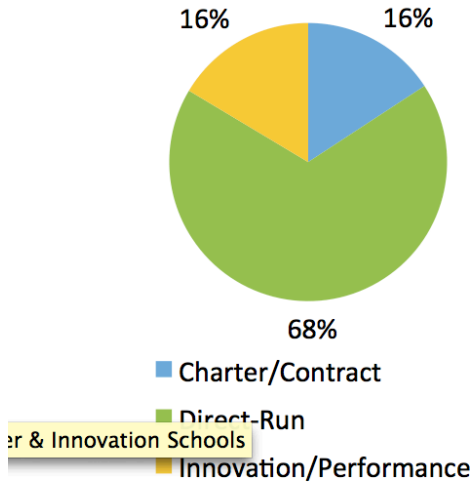
Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix E : Growth of Charter Sector over time

Charter* Enrollment Growth

From 2010 to 2014, charter enrollment growth has averaged 15% annually with a net increase of 6,342 students, many of whom are new or returning to the
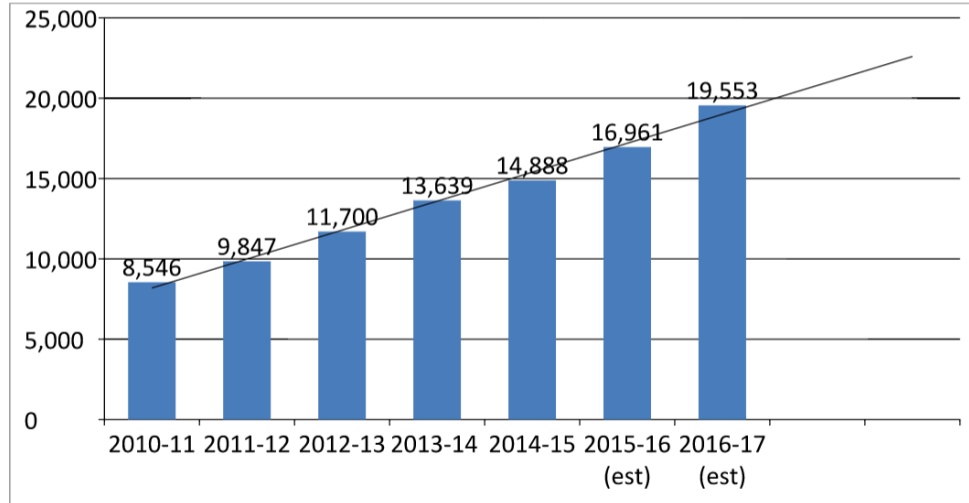
*Excludes contract (Escuela) and BOCES (RMSEL) that were referenced on prior page.

Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix F : Current performance of charter sector and projected performance to

meet Denver Plan Goals
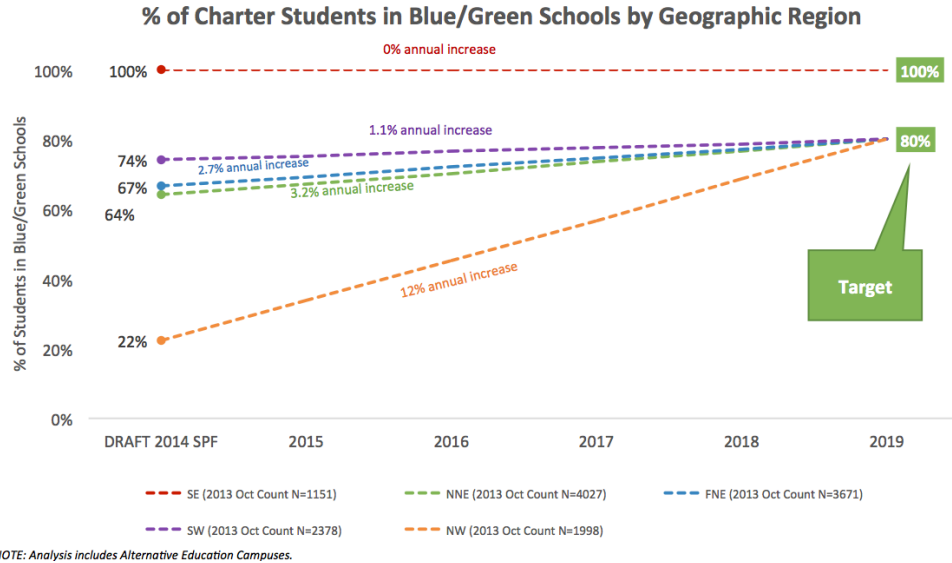
Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix G: Overview of Portfolio Milestones "The Great Schools Arc"
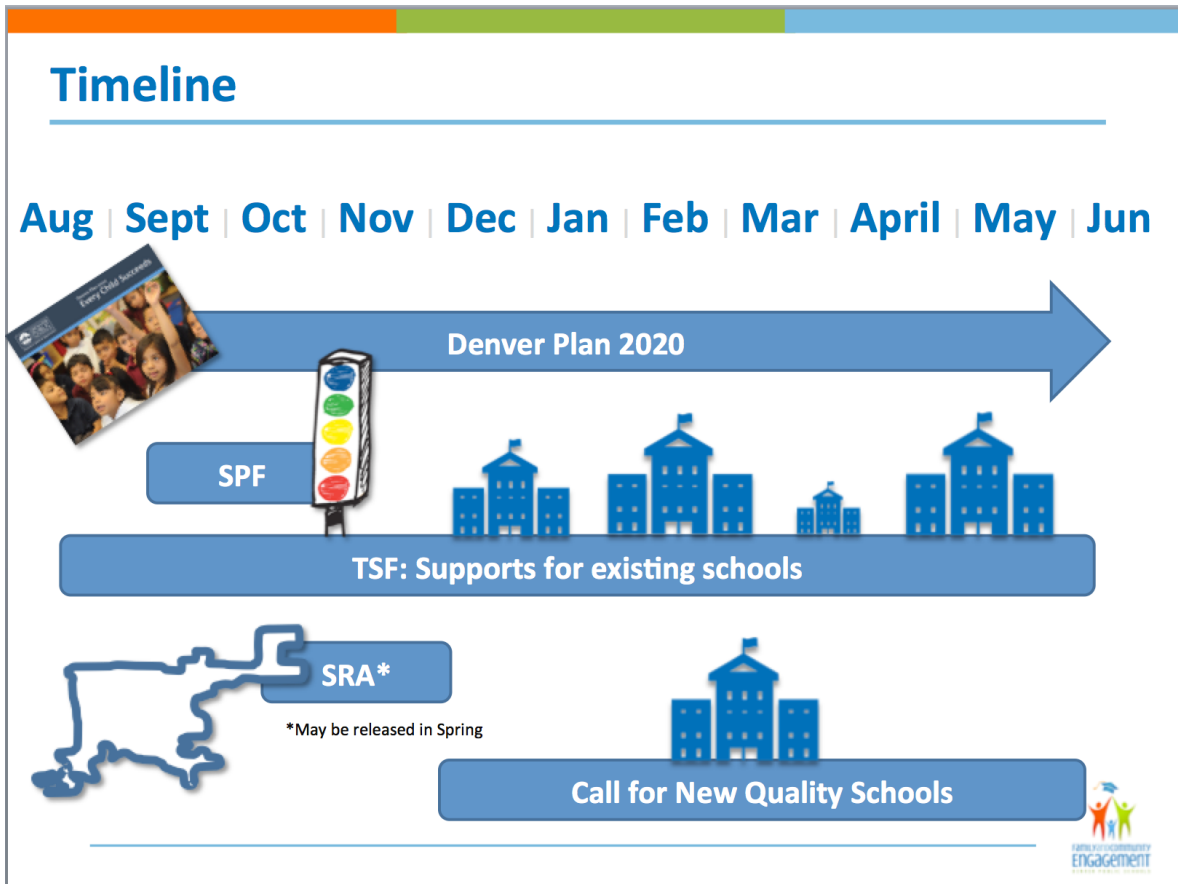
Source: Denver Public Schools, Public Materials

Appendix H : FACE Guiding Commitments


Guiding Commitments

Family and Community Engagement

- We commit to authentically working with community to achieve the best possible outcomes for students, communities and Denver Public Schools.

- We commit to ensuring our processes maximize community voice.

- We commit to honoring all voices during tough conversations.

- We commit to including students and relevant stakeholders in our decisions

- We commit to clear expectations of time commitments, charge and scope of participation.

- We commit to transparency and discussion of the type and manner of engagement our work will entail.

- We commit to clarity with community members over who are the decision-makers during a process and how they work with them.

- We commit to making all important and relevant context accessible and available for community members.

- We commit to attempting a minimum two-week advance notice for all community meetings, or faster when relevant for community processes.

- We commit to using all available, relevant means to communicate community meetings consistently.

- We commit to meeting the needs of our diverse community (language, location, schedule, etc.) in our engagement methods.

Source: Denver Public Schools, FACE Public Materials

Appendix I : FACE Organizational Model
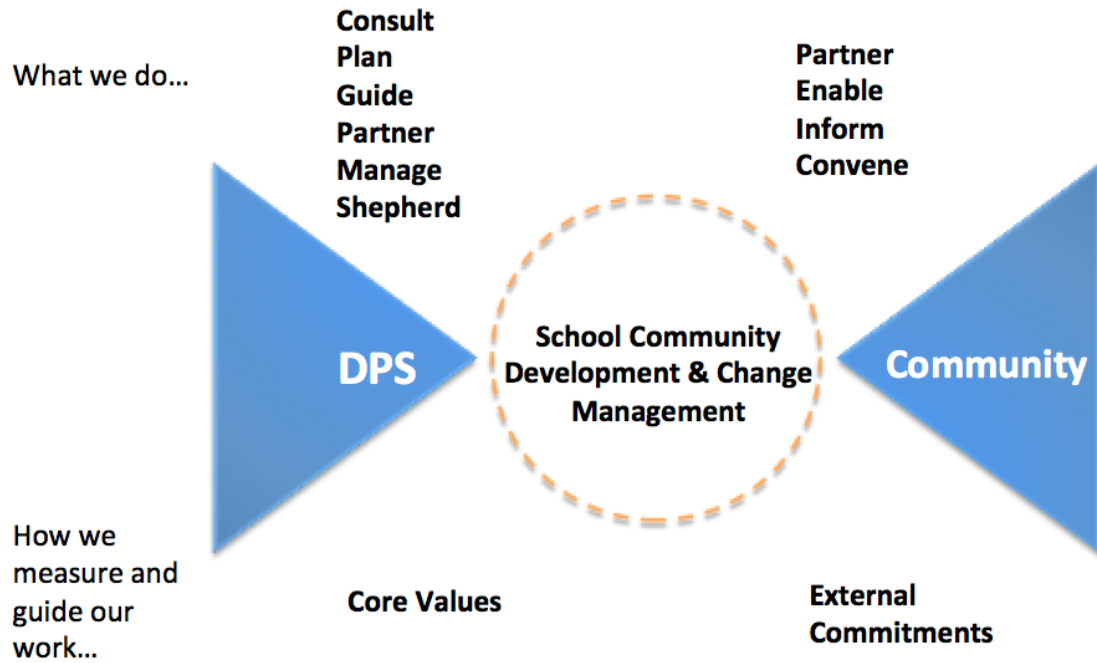
Source: Denver Public Schools, FACE Internal Strategic Planning Materials

Appendix J : Helping/Hindering Protocol

Helping	Hindering
• Adequate time for shared planning	Lack of clarity on roles (e.g. who "owns" the agenda for a particular meeting/process)
• Clarity on desired outcomes, theory of action and clear and agreed upon strategies	Lack of trust
• Clarity on timelines and internal roles	Lack of consistent communication as/when things change "on the ground" and among decision-makers leading to different understandings of what is supposed to be happening
• Clarity on what level of contribution each team can make based on capacity	Lack of clarity on accountability (e.g. who is responsible for particular outcomes)
• Consistent communication	Perceived lack of cultural responsiveness and/or feelings that the other team is implying a lack of cultural responsiveness without direct feedback on specific concerns
• Clarity on desired level of community engagement (educational/informational, informing decisions, decision makers)	Perceived lack of valuing particular team members or roles
• Presuming positive intent, competency and shared commitment to DPS values of equity, students first, etc.	Lack of clarity on desired level of community engagement and/or lack of communicating with community the desired level of engagement
• Good will and desire to work together and strengthen the collaboration	Lack of clarity on outcomes, theory of action and therefore on strategies that we will pursue as individual depts and jointly
Having regular check-ins during the planning phases of the CNQS	Not having clear roles and responsibilities on who is making decisions and leading on key community engagement events and feedback
· Having regular check-ins throughout the CNQS	Not knowing what level of feedback we want from the community
· Being friendly and in the work together	Disengaging from challenging tasks, or long response times when minor decisions are held up.
· When talents are leveraged	· Requiring process/management decisions to go to SSD or SLT because leadership is not on the same page with key outcomes/decisions.
· Outcomes are clearly defined	
· Roles are clearly defined	
· Weekly check-ins on projects	
· Scheduling calendar of community events as soon as possible	· Not having strong community partnerships throughout every region for the district to tap into.
· Respecting all assets	· Not having a clear project management plan.
· Priorities are aligned	
Going through this process of examination of the partnership	· Not having clear communications publically available (i.e. updated websites)
· Putting a fellow in this critical intersection (and onboarding an amazing fellow)	· Responding to the whim of the SLT and revising processes mid-stream.
Getting to know one another as individuals	· Outcomes are undefined or unclear
· Beginning to trust one another enough to express frustrations with work	· Lack of communication
	· Roles are undefined or unclear
· Being flexible in approach to processes (changing mid-stream when necessary)	· Trying to take on too much
· Tremendous customer service and response from OSRI when requested	· Lack of accountability for project
· Assigning a point of contact on FACE	Not including FACE staff early on in planning

processes from OSRI to help trouble-shoot (ex: Jennifer Holladay being assigned to Manual)	· Perpetuating "us vs them" in terms of skillset, knowledge, "savvy" · Lack of understanding between teams about full scope of work · Very different language used in respective work (internally and externally)

Appendix K: Mascareñaz Residency Proposal

Proposal: Full Split between OSRI and FACE

Resident would move into a true 50/50 split between OSRI and FACE, with specific

work in each but with an overall focus on collaboration.

Proposal

- o Resident to full split between OSRI and FACE
- o Resident is managed by both Veronica (FACE) and Brenna (OSRI)
- o Veronica mentors resident on community engagement needs and priorities
- o Resident serves as an advisor to Veronica as she seeks to build capacity in her department
- o Brenna mentors resident on portfolio management within DPS and how she thinks about managing the system
- o Resident serves as an advisor to Brenna on how to navigate organizational issues within DPS, including the new re-organization of DPS
- o Resident manages step-backs, reflection processes, joint learning opportunities and trust building events for each or between the two groups.

- *Why?*
  - o OSRI-FACE positive interactions and relationships are essential for the work of DPS
    - ▪ There is a clear need which inspired the original design of the resident
    - ▪ There is clear work that needs to be done to ensure a productive relationship
  - o Splitting oversight equally between OSRI and FACE both symbolically and functionally balances the residents focus and function
  - o Continuing some oversight work with OSRI ensures the resident continues to work in functions that will extend and enhance his experience with broader district work
  - o Adding an explicit work function focused on FACE addresses real strategic needs in that department
  - o Resident seeks personal and intellectual growth that is found with development in both areas

- **Risks/Challenges**
  - o Coherence of direction
  - o Management coordination
  - o Losing sight of the overall vision

- **Mitigating Strategy**
  - o Monthly meetings to coordinate work broadly and focus on the relationship between the departments
  - o Need an information management strategy to share and establish clarity between Brenna and Veronica
  - o Establishing strong categories for work allocation/management
  - o Addressed likely disconnect between FACE, CSO and CAIO
  - o Need to check in authentically to ensure success of the residency

Appendix L : CRIP Process for Conflict Resolution

Content
- signal when alignment doesn't exist

Relationship
- signal cool-off periods
- Balancing 1on1s and whole group building

Identity
- Word choice: Fidelity and Integrity (check out the synonyms and antonyms)

Process
- Clear plan review expectations
- Role-clarity
- Messy vs process
- "Competing" processes identification and exploration

Appendix M : OSRI-FACE Vision for Success

We strive for equitable engagement with diverse stakeholders and perspectives, through coordination, clear roles & responsibilities and shared ownership of our work, in order to realize the promise of great schools in every neighborhood.

Source: Denver Public Schools, Unity Team Guiding Documents

Appendix N : Networked Boundary Spannning Teams
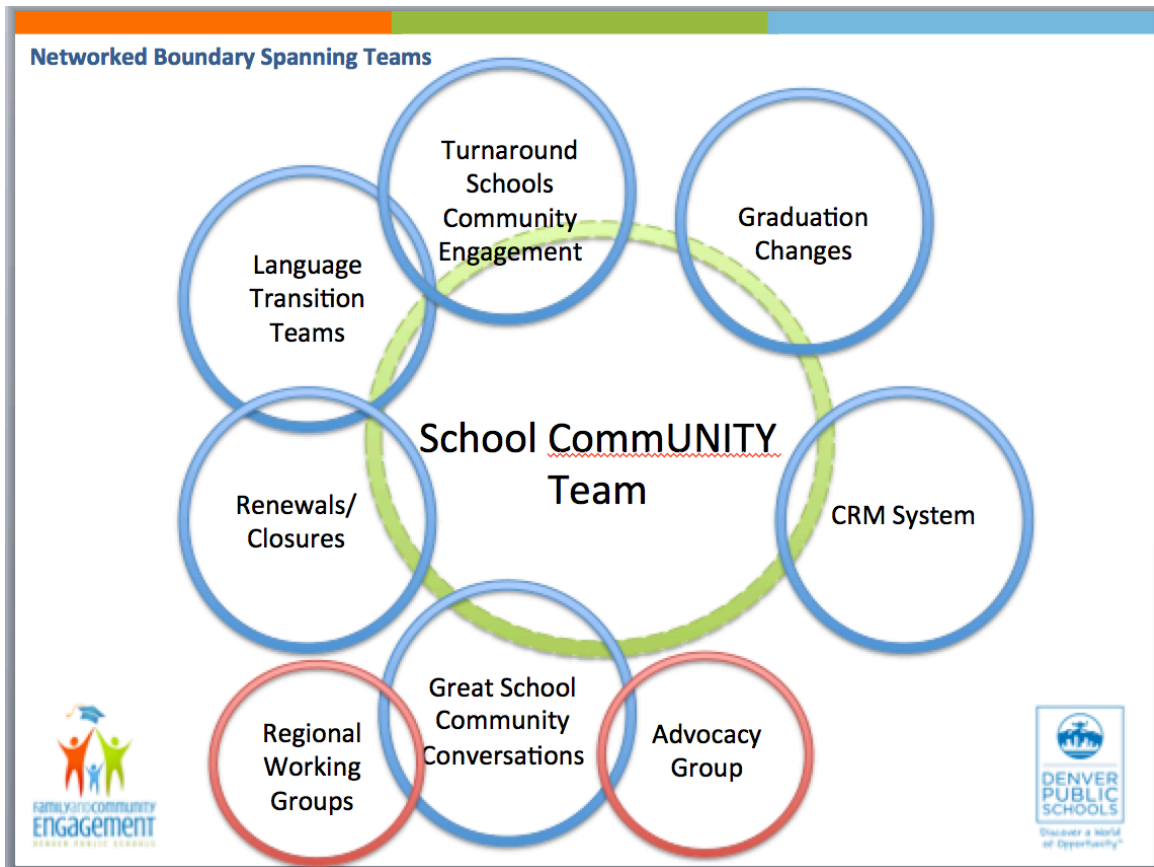
Appendix O: Tuesday December 16, 2014 Unity Team Semester closeout

Win	Still left	Outcomes
Collaborative process	Analyzing data and user feedback	SPF Meetings at 90% of DPS schools
Allows us to work	Across processes	
Waiting less	Understanding the feedback loop; when do we know this?	Renewal process occurred without major political flare-up, with inter-team coordination and preparedness
Know we're working together now between OSRI/FACE	Managing up, and around	
Building capacity		Great Schools hosted 5 regional conversations, with over a hundred participants, aligned and informed around DPS decision making content
More lines of sight into each others work		
Relationship building		
Flexible with changes to mateirals and process		
Distributive leadership among the team		
Putting on our parent hats		
District vs the people		

Helping	Hindering
Shared ownership of materials	Permission with framing?
	Diverse stakeholders: how to maximize?
Grew in coordination (CSO, BoE, Thought Partners)	Small vs larger meetings and making them diverse
Clear roles	

Clarity around shared role	

Why have we had these changes?

- Jen: the team really bonded when we regrouped after East.
- Jack: rallied together; turned attention to ownership; Process work
- Jen: Heather helping making thing parent family friendly
- Nick: doing the run through

What does our work look like in the spring?

- We will have two rounds: January and April
- Whole child indicators for the Denver Plan
- Specific conversations around turnaround
- Graduation
- School choice as a future consideration?

What do we need to do?

- Brainstorm the small group teams for individual projects
- More BoE involvement (survey Board?)
- Pull in thought partners more appropriately—thought and outreach
- CRM

Source: Denver Public Schools, Unity Team Reflection Materials

Appendix P: Great Schools 1 Quantitative Data

	(Agree) 1	2	3	(Disagree) 4
"I learned how Denver Public Schools makes decisions about great schools."	46%	23%	8%	23%
"I explored the performance and growth trends in my region."	38%	38%	0%	23%
"I gave feedback on what I think makes a great school."	77%	15%	8%	0%
"I understand how the information collected will be used."	38%	31%	8%	23%
"I found the small group exercise engaging."	62%	15%	23%	0%
"I plan to participate and stay engaged in future conversations."	77%	8%	8%	0%

Source: Denver Public Schools, Great Schools Feedback, Public Materials