



The Road to Strategic Renewal: Navigating the Distance Between Mission, Strategy, and Impact at the Center for Educational Leadership

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The Road to Strategic Renewal:
Navigating the Distance Between Mission, Strategy, and Impact
at the Center for Educational Leadership

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

Submitted by

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Abstract

With the 2017-2018 school year came the full implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The act replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB), transferring decision-making authority away from the federal government and to state education departments. Under ESSA, state and local leaders must invest in “evidence-based interventions” to achieve the goals indicated in their accountability plans, goals centered on educational outcomes for students. This is the context that the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL), a professional learning provider serving school and district leaders across the country, exists within as it seeks to reinvent itself as a national thought leader. With over 17 years of experience as a self-sustaining nonprofit, CEL is trying to figure out how to best meet the needs of educational leaders in an ESSA-driven sector while reversing its recent trend of having operating expenses that exceed revenue. In order to remain both relevant and fiscally solvent, CEL must achieve this while housed within the shadows of a top tier research university, and in the midst of the forthcoming transition of its founding leader. This Capstone details my analysis of CEL as an organization, and my leadership of a series of exercises and tool designs that would serve as a catalyst for moving the organization as a whole towards thinking strategically about its future identity in the K-12 professional learning market. My final reflection offers important considerations for nonprofit leaders seeking to understand the value of intentionally renewing its strategic direction in times of change and uncertainty. There are also important lessons to be learned around the complexity of maintaining mission alignment when the need to generate revenue may seemingly pose a competing interest.

Introduction

“Innovation is not just learning about hard facts such as designing solutions for particular needs. It is also about soft facts, exploring directions that an organization may be uncomfortable with. This requires testing and clarifying an organization’s sense of mission, core values, and identity.”

- Seelos & Mair (2017)

Market Context

According to a 2015 report by The New Teacher Project, school districts spend an average of approximately \$18,000 per teacher annually on professional learning. It is estimated that the largest 50 school districts in the U.S. invest about \$8 billion each year (Jacob & McGovern, 2015). Much of this investment happens internally, where school districts provide professional learning opportunities to the teachers and leaders they employ through in-house expertise. However, studies show that external providers deliver \$3 billion in professional development, with independent consultants the most frequently used source of such services. With such a significant percentage of district budgets allocated to improving educator practice, one would think that quality drives decision making when determining providers. However, most professional development providers are not constrained by market demands, given that the providers and consumers are often the same—school districts. In addition, “most external professional development suppliers are known only within a small number of districts, regardless of their quality” (Gates, 2014, p. 13).

National providers like the NYC Leadership Academy (NYCLA) and New Teacher Center (NTC) have achieved widespread recognition through offering a menu of services, measuring their impact, and scaling over time to serve a variety of districts and education organizations in innovative ways. Both organizations have attracted

philanthropic support from national funders, including contributions from the corporate sector. They each have also evolved over time, NYCLA beginning in 2003 as a regional aspiring principals program, and NTC founded in 1998 as a university-based center out of the University of California, Santa Cruz. Today, both organizations impact over 2 million students with annual revenue exceeding \$10 million. In a market dominated by independent consultants and small-sized providers, they have each maximized their national impact, serving as a proof point for maintaining market relevance and fiscal sustainability over time.

Site Context

The University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization focused on eliminating the achievement gap through increasing the instructional capacity of school and district leaders. This work is carried out in partnership with school districts through which CEL provides intensive leadership development, coaching support, focused institutes, and content licensure. Since its launch in 2001, CEL has supported hundreds of school districts in diverse contexts throughout the country.

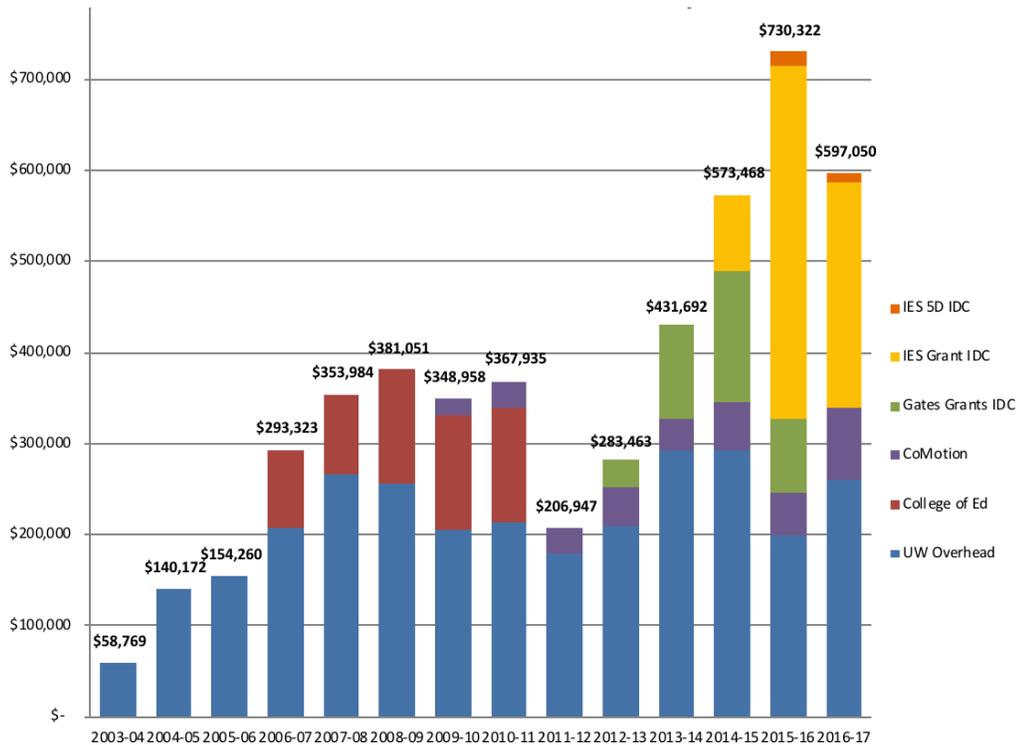
As a nonprofit organization housed within a public university, CEL is primarily revenue driven and reliant on its ability to secure partnership contracts related to the adoption and implementation of its instructional frameworks. Additional revenue comes in the form of licensing its content, including the Measures of Instructional Leadership Expertise (MILE) assessment, a tool developed at the University of Washington and used to identify school leaders' strengths and growth opportunities. While CEL has managed

to be self-sustaining over the past 17 years, the organization is now facing a financial deficit.

CEL generated over \$4 million in revenue across approximately 90 partnerships in 2017-2018. In the past, a great percentage of CEL's revenue was driven by a small number of high value partnerships. Now, CEL is experiencing a shift in which partnership contracts greater than \$100,000 make up just 38.5% (\$1.5m) of the organization's overall revenue. In addition to generating revenue through an increase in smaller sized contracts, CEL's regional focus has shifted away from Washington state. As of December 2017, partnerships with district and education agencies in Washington made up just 23% of total revenue. This is a decrease from 2011-2012, when 41% of CEL's revenue came from the state. CEL's current work in Florida exceeds this, generating 29% of total revenue. Other regions generating significant revenue include Louisiana (12%) and California (7%). While the scope of the work varies across these regions, it is likely to entail multi-year partnerships that engage leaders in a leadership academy and/or cohort model.

Along with this shift in revenue drivers, CEL's operating costs as a university-based center continue to rise. (Figure 1.1) In 2014-2015, CEL returned just under \$200,000 to the university in overhead costs. This year the organization expects to return approximately \$265,000. This cost does not include other fees paid to the university related to grant awards, the sale of licensed content, etc. When combined, CEL's total return to the university was just under \$600,000 in 2016-2017. While CEL has managed to sustain itself through its ability to consistently generate at least \$4 million in program service revenue each year, the percentage returned to the university each year has impacted CEL's ability to exceed its operating costs.

Figure 1.1 Revenue Return to University (as of 6/30/2017)



After 17 years of providing professional learning to school and district leaders across the country, CEL finds itself at a critical juncture in its organizational lifecycle, facing three interrelated challenges that are equally filled with opportunity. First, CEL is less than a year away from its first leadership transition. Its founder, Dr. Fink, will retire in the summer of 2018. Max Silverman, current deputy director, has been identified as his successor. He inherits a staff of just under 20, made up of administrative, marketing and communications support, and project directors who spend the bulk of their time on the road offering customized leadership support to district partners around the country (see Appendix A). With leadership change often comes shifts in organizational vision and priorities. The opportunity lies in the space that now exists for CEL to evolve in new ways.

CEL's second challenge is related to its financial health. The organization's commitment to being self-sustaining has become a burden in some regard. Full-time project directors average at least 73 days in the field, maintaining enough billable hours to ensure operating costs are covered.¹ With the increasing costs associated with operating as part of the university, a market saturated with consultants, and the changing priorities of district leaders, CEL is experiencing difficulty in generating the revenue needed to remain financially sustainable. In addition to this fiscal reality, the relationship between CEL and the university has become more transactional, which has led Dr. Fink to wonder if operating independently would be more fiscally solvent.

Finally, CEL is in the midst of determining ways in which it would like to evolve, both internally and externally. While the organization has identified five broad goals, i.e. "Ensure funding meets or exceeds our costs on a biennial basis," there is less agreement around how it will achieve them (see Appendix K). There are aspirations for securing one to two foundation grants in the next year and selling 1,000 MILE assessments, but there is less clarity around what will drive this and how this connects to a larger vision for CEL's internal work processes, i.e. how it identifies its partners (clients) and/or how it measures its success. The absence of an organizational blueprint that connects mission to strategy, and goals with metrics to measure CEL's proximity to achieving them, underlies the three challenges identified.

Both the historical organizational context and the exemplars of success in the current market beg the question: Who does CEL need to be as a professional development provider in today's landscape to remain relevant, financially solvent, and at

¹ Data from 2016-2017 Staffing Capacity Report [confidential]

the cutting edge of the intersection between K-12 leadership, research, and innovation? In considering this, I must first ask: What does this mean in terms of how CEL works internally? When asking myself these questions, one phrase comes to mind...*strategic renewal*, “a set of practices that can guide leaders into a new era of innovation” (Binns et al., p. 21).

The Project

What follows is my approach to collaborating with CEL in exploring who it wants to be and why. I aspired to serve as a catalyst for the consideration of new practices supporting CEL’s internal and external strategy. In addition to data and document analysis, I designed and led strategic exercises that engaged the organization in self-reflection. In order to influence organizational change, I carefully occupied the space in between the insight and legacy of the founder, and the ambitions and curiosities of his successor. The culmination of this collective work includes proposed changes to CEL’s organizational strategy, each supported by varying levels of analysis, and a set of measurement tools vetted by CEL leaders and other staff.

I. Review of Knowledge for Action

Organization

The Review of Knowledge for Action is organized into four subsections: where, what, why, and how. First, I seek to understand the *where*, the purpose of the research-practice partnership and defining the various forms in which they exist. I connect this to the dimensions of organizational identity, as it relates to what is most central, distinctive, and enduring for an organization. I choose this as a starting point knowing that defining CEL’s existence within the College of Education sets it apart from other education

nonprofits providing professional learning services. Second, I explore the *what*, changes in the sector that will influence CEL's approach, discussing the recent Every Student Succeeds Act and its call to action around the investment in "evidence-based" approaches by state and local education agencies, schools, and other stakeholders. I highlight the opportunities presented in how the language used allows room for interpretation. Third, I focus on the *why*, highlighting the need for a leader to thoughtfully lead change across three organizational levels through strategy management. Finally, I take a step back to examine the significance of strategic leadership for nonprofit organizations seeking to reinvent themselves through the alignment of mission, vision, and strategy to achieve impact and remain relevant. By distinguishing between strategic management and strategic thinking, I identify the levers a nonprofit can pull in accelerating its responsiveness to those whom it is seeking to serve.

Collectively, the RKA supports my belief that how CEL is seeking to be defined externally (i.e. relevant, national influencer) is directly influenced by, and must begin with, how they define and structure themselves internally (i.e. shared mission and identity).

WHERE: University-Based Nonprofit Center

CEL exists within the shadows of a Tier 1 research university, operating offsite and autonomous. Its position as a university-based center, at the nexus of research and practice, would warrant the relationship being described as a type of research-practice partnership (RPP). RPPs are described as, "long-term, mutualistic collaborations between practitioners and researchers that are intentionally organized to investigate problems of

practice and solutions for improving outcomes” (Easton, Supplee, and Tseng, 2017, p. 3). These partnerships exist in a variety of ways, including as “research alliances” who prioritize the establishment of data archives in addressing important topics in policy and practice, “design research-partnerships” where researchers and practitioners design innovative solutions to common challenges, and “networked improvement communities” where improvement science is used to fuel the collaboration of experts across the sector (Easton, Supplee, and Tseng, 2017). The UW College of Education refers to the RPPs housed within it as “research and service centers,” describing them as initiatives where “researchers foster deep partnerships with schools, educators and communities to solve real-world educational challenges and create a more equitable education for all” (University of Washington, 2017). CEL is one of twelve university-based centers, and the manner in which it chooses to exist in the future will be reinforced by how it perceives its own identity as a mission-driven organization.

Dimensions of Organizational Identity

What an organization is designed to do is one element of its identity. The values, belief systems, and behaviors that drive its approach tells us much more about why it exists and for whom. Organizational identity can be defined across three dimensions, “(a) what is taken by organization members to be central to the organization, (b) what makes the organization distinctive from other organizations, and (c) what is perceived by members to be an enduring or continuing feature linking the present organization with the past (and presumably) the future” (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p. 21). Classifying a university-based nonprofit center as a specific type of research-partnership may serve to convey its identity across the dimension of distinctiveness—the “d” in CDE (central,

distinctive, and enduring)—but it doesn't fully capture the elements of how an organization functions that have withstood the test of time.

An organization's identity can be described as being made up of those features that have been a constant throughout its lifecycle (enduring), a combination of internal and external behaviors and practices, along with the core values and beliefs that drive its approach to decision-making (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). For nonprofits, organizations committed to meeting a social need, identity is, "represented by the constellation of substantive issues they address, the activities in which they engage to fulfill their missions, the products and services they provide, and their internal governance and decision processes" (Balser & Carmin, 2009, p. 188). Collectively, each of these features can serve to distinguish organizations from its competitors. For NYC Leadership Academy this may take the form of its flagship Aspiring Principals Program, while for CEL it may be its recently added partnership with the Association for Supervisors and School Administrators (AASA) and the launch of the National Principal Supervisor Academy.

Yet, organizational identity need not be enduring to achieve its purpose. Rather, it can be continuously evolving and still connected to foundational values. "An identity with a sense of continuity, however, is one that shifts in its interpretation and meaning while retaining labels for "core" beliefs and values that extend over time and context" (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000, p. 65). While there may be consistency in an organization's shared values and beliefs, the manner in which they are translated can change over time. This translation both drives an organization's interactions internally and externally but is also influenced by the results of those interactions.

Internally, an organization can experience the existence of a multitude of identities, described as “ideographic identities,” which are specific to subgroups within the organization (Balser & Carmin, 2009). These may be found within organizations that house individual departments or subunits who reflect different areas of expertise, areas of focus, and unique responsibilities. These differences often dictate how individual team members behave and the expectations they have for how others make meaning of their work. An organization can benefit from this in being able to meet the different expectations of team members, in turn attracting a more diverse pool of talent. At the same time, multiple organizational identities can impede strategy when conflicting beliefs arise as a result of competing identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000).

Founder Influence

A nonprofit organization’s identity is often tied to that of its founder, the person who will often, “...shape their organization’s identity by imprinting it with particular structures, practices, and values that staff members perceive as central and distinctive” (Balser & Carmin, 2009, p. 188). A founder of an organization initially establishes a defined vision for the organization and implements a set of practices and expectations that support it in being achieved. S/he is also likely to hire and develop a like-minded team, one who shares this vision and agrees on what achieving it should look like in practice. This founding imprint can be threatened when that founder is succeeded (Balser & Carmin, 2009).

Giving up control as a result of transition poses a threat to both individual and organizational identity. A founder may find their personal identity embedded in that of the organization (Adams, 2005). “For the organization, the challenge is convincing its key publics that it can exist and is sustainable without the founder” (Adams, 2005, p. 6).

This is relevant to what is often described as the founder's dilemma, the tension that exists between increasing an organization's value through giving up control, i.e. choosing to be rich, versus maintaining ultimate control over critical organizational decisions, i.e. choosing to be king (Wasserman, 2008). "Founders motivated by control will make decisions that enable them to lead the business at the expense of increasing its value" (Wasserman, 2008, p. 107). They are likely to serve as sole founders and attract senior leaders who will not pose a challenge to this, while founders motivated by increasing their organization's financial value are more likely to welcome co-founders and funding offers (Wasserman, 2008). The degree to which an organization is successful as a result of either motivation can be disrupted by a founder's transition.

While a founder's influence may dictate an organization's identity, its external behaviors and practices can also be impacted by the larger political context. Recent changes in federal education law are one example of this.

WHAT: Evidenced-Based Interventions

Both internal and external expectations may serve to shape an organization's identity. Temporal comparison theory explains that, "organizations maintain identity through interaction with other organizations by a process of interorganizational comparison over time" (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998, p.21). Education nonprofits simultaneously compare themselves to like organizations, resulting in the creation of education alliances, while also emphasizing what sets them apart. Recent changes in education policy provide room for education nonprofits to benefit from being able to both

maintain a distinctive identity while also positioning itself as a provider offering relevant approaches.

ESSA Guidance and Opportunities

Professional learning providers who partner with education systems to improve instructional practice are expected to offer services relevant to practitioner needs. At times this may be dictated by state and federal education legislation. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides guidance on how state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), schools and other education service providers are to identify strategies to be implemented in improving student outcomes. Defined as “evidence-based” interventions, education entities are expected to invest in and employ activities that either, 1) “demonstrate a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes, as demonstrated by study results or, 2) demonstrate a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes...” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Any education nonprofit seeking to provide services that influence student outcomes will need to prove the validity of their approach through research and results. A nonprofit housed within a research university may have an advantage in meeting ESSA guidelines for several reasons.

First, ESSA provides states and districts with increased flexibility on how to utilize funding in support of interventions and strategies that strengthen school leader quality (Herman et al., 2016). ESSA allows for both Title I funds (allocations that support school improvement efforts) and Title II, Part A funds (allocations that support increasing the quality of teachers and school leaders) to be used in a broad number of ways in accordance with the four identified tiers of evidence-based interventions.

Secondly, ESSA provides space for professional learning providers to introduce and experiment with approaches that are lesser known within the field. A recent report by the RAND Corporation found that, “ESSA provides avenues to consider and build the evidence base for new and underresearched interventions” (Herman et al., 2016, p.1). With this comes an opportunity for education nonprofits to reconsider their approach to meeting the needs of school and district partners, as well as the validity and quality of the practices they employ in doing so.

RAND researchers identified McREL’s Balanced Leadership Program as an example of a professional learning provider whose approach currently exemplifies Tier I evidence (strong evidence). A study conducted on the impact of the program on a group of rural Michigan school leaders identified, “positive impacts in principals’ self-efficacy, lower staff turnover, and improved instructional climate as reported by principals...” (Herman et al., 2016, p.43). McREL’s approach consists of a series of day-long professional learning sessions over the course of four months where principals apply research and practice to their own contexts, receiving feedback and onsite support from McREL trainers. At a glance, the approach overlaps in some ways with that of CEL’s, i.e. the collective group learning followed by onsite assistance. However, a review of McREL’s mission statement shows that the organization’s work is supported by the articulation of a relationship to evidence-based interventions, i.e. “Helping educators flourish by turning research into solutions that transform teaching, learning, and leading” (McREL International, 2018).

The ways in which an organization serves others is certainly influenced by policy, context, and partner/client needs. Yet, before an organization can decide how to

work externally, it must determine the changes needed to work most effectively internally, while being strategic in how change is managed.

WHY: Change Management

For an organization to better position itself to respond to both shifts in leadership, policy, and/or market context, change must be carefully managed across multiple levels—organizational, team, and individual (Heckelman, 2017). It is at the organizational level that a strategy and vision is defined and communicated. At the team level, the vision is translated into goals and the strategy into team-specific actions. This, in turn, determines the roles and responsibilities at the individual level. The three levels are interdependent and collectively will determine the success of any change initiative. While the effort begins with leadership decisions at the organizational level, it relies heavily on the alignment of individual beliefs, organizational mission, and values.

5Cs of Transition Leadership

Heckelman's 5Cs of Transition Leadership model is informative for organizations in transition as it is responsive to both the internal and external shifts that impact approaching change at all three organizational levels (Heckelman, 2017). A leader must initially "commit" to the change by expressing a genuine belief in the need for it and how it will affect their own leadership. "First, in order to sell others on the change effort and manage them through the transition, leaders and managers need to "buy-it" themselves and manage their own reactions to the change" (Heckelman, 2017, p. 19). This process also includes being able to "construct" a plan to communicate change implications and the willingness to "create" an impactful team through serving as a "coach" in building the

capacity of individual team members to manage the change. Each of the 5Cs must take place in order for change to occur (Heckelman, 2017).

Successful change management must be carefully orchestrated across the individual, team, and organizational levels. Referred to in the framework as the ability to *calibrate*, senior leaders can accomplish this by:

- “Determining clear metrics to measure progress (and measure them often).
- Communication of progress (do this regularly and creatively—with a focus on business results).
- Process for addressing issues.
- Recognition of/Reward for effective and appropriate contributions, decisions, and behavior” (Heckelman, 2017, p. 20).

This calibration is of the utmost important when leading change as a new leader following a succession and correlates with Meehan & Jonker’s vision of strategic leadership, the ability to think and manage strategically (Meehan & Jonker, 2017). While the practices they outline, i.e. mission, strategy, organization and talent, represents the core of what successful leaders must invest in and plan for, Heckelman’s 5Cs capture why change is managed best while strengthening, rather than disrupting, these organizational elements.

Strategy Management

The managing of change across organizational levels is articulated through clarity in overall strategy. Kaplan and Norton’s (2000) examination of companies who evolved as successfully strategy-focused organizations found that, “By clearly defining the strategy, communicating it consistently, and linking it to the drivers of change, a performance-based culture emerged that linked everyone and every unit to the unique

features of the strategy” (Kaplan & Norton, 2000, p. 26). In what Kaplan and Norton describe as a strategy-focused organization, a Balanced Scorecard is used as, “the central framework for a new performance management process” (Kaplan & Norton, 2000, p. 29). Before an organization like CEL can determine who it wants to be in the larger K-12 professional learning provider market and what pivots it will need to make in response to the current environmental context, it may need to consider its current narrative around strategy.

HOW: Strategic Leadership

In Meehan & Jonker’s recent book, *Engine of Impact*, the authors identify seven practices that nonprofits must excel at in order to maximize their impact. These practices exist across two dimensions, “strategic management”—organization and talent, funding, and board governance and “strategic thinking”—mission, strategy, impact evaluation, insight and courage. “Strategic thinking pivots around a commitment to fact-based problem solving...” while, “Strategic management involves a keen-eyed focus on execution...” (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 20). Strategic leadership is the ability to do both well.

Organizational Readiness for Impact

According to the 2017 Stanford Survey on Leadership and Management in the Nonprofit Sector, 38% of organizations struggle with strategy. The same survey showed that only 40% of nonprofit executives or staff agreed that their strategic planning process was “fact-based or objective” (Meehan & Jonker, 2017). These results were based on data collected from over 2,000 nonprofit executives, staff, and board members. The

authors of the study used a tool called the Readiness to Scale Matrix to evaluate each of the organizations surveyed across both dimensions of strategic leadership. The study found only 11% of the organizations studied to demonstrate strengths in all seven elements. While this indicated an organization's readiness to scale impact, it can also inform one's readiness to change.

Only 8% of survey respondents described their organization's mission as "very focused," defined by a willingness to decline new partner opportunities that were not aligned. Given the relationship between an organization's mission and its strategy, an incoming leader's strategic thinking has the power to redefine what an organization does, for whom, and why. Mission can inform strategy and strategy can influence impact.

Mission

An organization's mission guides its decision-making and is critical during a time of leadership transition. "The defined mission serves multiple purposes, and the organizations that are true to their mission can survive a leader's departure, because the mission is not dependent upon any one individual" (Easter & Brooks, 2017, p. 29). The determination of mission is a foundational one that informs purpose. Meehan & Jonker identify a set of criteria for a well-thought mission that includes the need to be very focused, timeless, and able to guide trade-offs (Meehan & Jonker, 2017). A clear mission statement can support an organization during a time of transition by guiding decisions to be made for the future.

Succession Planning

Strategic leadership during times of leadership transition requires giving a critical eye to more than just one's mission. It requires engaging a team in analyzing what is needed to evolve the organization. Doing so strategically requires planning for

succession, whether a transition is expected or not. “Succession planning allows for an analysis of what actions may be needed to strengthen the organization—its business model and business strategy, its leadership, its resource base, and its culture” (Easter & Brooks, 2017, p. 30). Given that a key dimension of strategic management is organization and talent, understanding who is leading and why, what that leader needs in order to be successful, and how the team being led should be organized for success should all be clearly defined through a succession plan (Easter & Brooks, 2017).

There are many areas to consider with succession planning and much to be learned from the corporate sector. A *relay succession* is a succession in which an identified member of senior management had been announced as heir well in advance, allowing for a period of overlap (Gothard & Austin, 2012, p. 274). During this period something to consider is whether the existing organizational culture is one that is “founder-centric” or “client-centric” (Hummel, 2016). A founder-centric organization, one in which the leader has managed decision-making according to one’s own beliefs and interests, presents a great challenge to a successor as the leader may have difficulty with transferring power and allowing for a client-centric culture, one that prioritizes the client’s experience, upon departure. As workforce planning experts note, “This model goes against what a founder may be seeking—maximum financial gain upon relinquishing the reins” (Hummel, 2016, p. 22). Within nonprofits, however, the founder may instead be seeking to ensure the organization’s financial health upon departure, while upholding a strong legacy.

In order to ensure that the best interests of an organization are being met during a time of relay succession, a shared understanding of what these interests are must exist between the outgoing and incoming leaders (Hummel, 2016). When both a founder and

successor arrive at a shared agreement around what is in the best interest of the organization and identify measures to be taken in the short-term that supports future success, strategic leadership can guide the next iteration of the organization. As Hummel notes, “Successful transitions share commonalities. Both founders and successors share a vision for a “brand ideal”—why the business exists and how to best serve its clients” (Hummel, 2016, p. 22).

Theory of Action

After considering the relationship between CEL’s business model, its approach to measuring impact, and future aspirations for growth, I arrived at the following problem statement:

As a self-sustaining nonprofit center, CEL’s financial health is dependent upon revenue generation. Given the evolving K-12 professional development provider market, the increased costs associated with operating within a university, and shifting priorities for education leaders, CEL must consider how to maximize its footprint in a way that supports its financial sustainability. In doing so, CEL must develop and align its organizational strategy and business model to allow for the disruption of the year-to-year cycle of reliance on revenue, allowing research and innovation to thrive.

My research and wonderings around the rationale for a strategic renewal that defines CEL’s future identity as a financially strong professional learning provider resulted in the following Theory of Action. In developing it, I kept in mind that, “Strategic renewal is neither an event nor a detailed program” (Binns et al., p. 21). My “if” statements were grounded in two of the key principles of strategic renewal, “Treat strategy as a dialogue as opposed to a ritualistic, document-based planning process” and “Engage a leadership community in the work of renewal” (Binns et al., p. 22-23).

The Theory of Action connects the levers to be pulled through the strategic project that would influence both short-term and long-term success.

If I...

- Engage CEL in examining how it works internally, through analysis of its mission, goals, approach to partnerships, and core businesses to identify both assets and opportunities.
- Collaborate with CEL in considering new approaches to measuring the impact of their work throughout the sector.
- Identify opportunities for growth relevant to current state education legislation, funding priorities, and district needs.
- Design tools to evaluate internal processes and assess external opportunities.

Then CEL will...

- Be better positioned to identify and pursue those market opportunities that match their distinctive assets and align with their mission.

So that in the long-term CEL can...

- Achieve measurable and evidence-based impact as a national K-12 professional learning provider, influencing the sector's approach to improving student outcomes through instructional leadership development.

II. Description, Evidence, and Analysis

Description

As CEL's inaugural Ed.L.D. resident, I was charged with conducting a two-part analysis, one that examined CEL's internal strengths and growth areas within the current context, as well as one that delved deeper into the climate of the larger K-12 professional learning provider market, identifying trends and opportunities for CEL to take advantage of. My deliverable was a strategic roadmap of sorts, not a strategic plan per se, but a concrete, evidence-supported list of recommendations for CEL to consider in moving forward. What I produced would hopefully serve as the catalyst for change in the coming years, with decision-making implications for the new executive director. In order to fulfill this goal, I would have to plan a series of exercises that would begin to yield changes in how the organization, both collectively and as individuals, thought about everything from

their problem of practice to how they assessed the strengths of their current partners. This was the real-time change that would drive CEL's readiness to embrace the recommendations to come.

Stakeholder Engagement

My approach began with investing time in understanding how CEL operated both as an organization, and as a service provider. I conducted over twenty individual interviews with CEL staff, university faculty, and external partners, focusing on questions around their understanding of CEL's history, strengths, and future opportunities for impact. The interview questions varied based on the stakeholder, but a sample interview protocol included the following questions:

1. When you think of CEL, what are some of their greatest strengths and areas of expertise? Based on your understanding of district contexts, what areas of expertise may CEL need to develop in order to sustain or even scale their impact across the country?
2. As we approach a new school year with a focus on ESSA implementation, how can CEL have sustained impact and remain competitive in the professional learning provider market? If you were advising the organization, what are 1 or 2 considerations you would encourage?
3. How does CEL know if it is improving? How does CEL know if its partners are improving? How does CEL tie in the collective impact of all of their services into a compelling narrative? Can you share any insight into what may be the best way to approach measuring impact in the future?
4. Is there an opportunity for CEL to deepen its impact in the Northwest Region? What factors would need to exist in order for it to do so?

These interviews yielded information that provided me with great context around how CEL was perceived both internally and externally. It complimented my overall engagement strategy, which focused heavily on being an active participant in

management team meetings, financial updates, project planning, and Home Days.²

During management team meetings, I provided input and feedback around organizational priorities, including aligning new initiatives with organizational goals, pursuing grant opportunities, and identifying areas of focus for Home Days activities. While engagement at the leadership level of the organization gave me a deeper lens into its mission and vision work, it also provided me with the room to offer new insights.

In order to understand how organizational decision-making translated to how CEL worked externally, I needed to see the work in action. Dr. Fink and CEL's team of project directors scheduled a series of opportunities for me to experience their work in the field, from seeing CEL's ongoing work with the San Diego County Office of Education, to immersing myself in planning with a team in Orlando for the launch of a new instructional leadership academy. I observed the many different ways that CEL worked with district partners, witnessing the complexity of the work firsthand. Most importantly, I served in multiple roles during these visits, i.e. observer, consultant, peer, etc. For example, while in Oregon I was extended an opportunity to provide a district leader with feedback around principal support and pose questions to answer in order to align the district's approach.

These experiences culminated into exercises executed during monthly Home Days. My September focus was on inviting the team to examine my identified problem of practice. November entailed working with the team in an activity around the positive partnership attributes that often translated to success. During December, I focused on impact, facilitating a team dialogue around distinguishing between outputs and outcomes

² Home Days are monthly all-staff collaborative working sessions.

in measuring results. Given that news of Dr. Fink's transition was shared publicly at the onset of the new year, January Home Days provided a timely opportunity for an exercise around examining mission and considering criteria for redefining it for the future. The totality of these activities served to not only further invest the entire CEL team in the scope of my work, but they also influenced organizational conversations.

Thought Leadership

The more I engaged with stakeholders, the more leverage I had in proposing new ideas and opportunities. Seeing a through line between CEL's goals, ongoing initiatives, and desired outcomes, I proposed shifting our focus from outputs (i.e. how many, how much) to outcomes (i.e. measurable changes in adult practice and student results). For example, I translated one of CEL's organizational goals, "Be recognized as a national thought leader, known for making great teachers, school leaders and central office leaders improve outcomes for all students," to a measurable indicator around impact and influence. I defined the indicator as one that, "Measures the outcomes of our work, the influence on our partners, and implications for the sector." I proposed that we measure the degree to which we accomplish either through the percentage of partners reporting evidence-based improvement in student achievement and/or instructional leadership (see Appendix K). As a member of CEL's management team, I was provided with the space to demonstrate leadership in identifying a need and recommending an informed solution.

Using data gathered from a combination of engagements, I shared thoughts on measuring partnership strengths. I used survey polls to elicit feedback on my thoughts around the most compelling criteria for evaluating partnerships, shared language, and the perceived value of formally capturing such assessments. By keeping communication channels and information free flowing, I was able to serve as what I describe as an

internal thought leader, a team member whose opinions exerted a sense of influence on future decision-making.

Identification of Growth Opportunities

Positioning myself in a way that gave me an inner lens to CEL's business practices and operating structures prompted me to conduct outside research on comparable organizations and state legislation. My conversations with local district leaders and external CEL partners provided me with enough common themes to narrow the focus of my research. My analysis focused on three areas - financials, state legislation, and leadership structures. In terms of finance, I worked with CEL's Chief Operating Officer and Finance Manager to understand CEL's financial history, revenue sources, and expenses. I used publicly available tax form data to make comparisons to other nonprofits, looking at revenue diversification and the relationship between compensation to overall expense ratios. Internally, I focused on the experience and expertise of current staff, while externally I focused on the services that generated the most revenue. I felt that understanding both would have implications for CEL and future decision-making around partnership work. Finally, I looked at CEL's history of grant funding and conducted a foundation landscape analysis, identifying recent and current funding priorities of local and national philanthropic foundations. I organized these data points into a variety of easy-to-read tables to inform my final recommendations.

My second area of focus was state legislation. A report released by the Education of the States found that in 2017 over thirty states proposed legislation with an emphasis on school and/or district leadership (Scott, 2017). I felt that it was critical to review policy language for those states currently impacted by CEL's work as well as future

potential partner regions. I compiled key findings in a chart that also included my recommendations and additional details for CEL to consider.

Finally, I conducted an analysis of how other organizations were structured for strategic leadership. The management team reviewed a proposal for a future Chief of Strategy role during an early February meeting. I was given access to the role description and able to offer feedback. Given the agreement that it would be important for this potential leader to lead the right work at the right time for CEL, I offered to construct an overview of what strategy-focused leadership roles entailed at other nonprofit organizations. My overview specifically focused on scope of work, previous expertise required, organization size, number of direct reports, and current salary. Understanding the purpose and potential for this leadership role informed my *Implications for Site*, knowing that a shift in leadership structure and priorities would influence priorities.

Tool Design

A design opportunity emerged from my new insights and, despite dedicating time to understanding the external elements that impacted CEL's work and future, I prioritized focusing on how CEL worked internally. I saw the absence of a strategic plan as an opportunity to create a set of tools that would support CEL in evaluating current efforts. Given that, as a management team, we routinely revisited our goals and the projects aligned with them, I began connecting these pieces into a grid that became a working draft of a Balanced Scorecard (BSC). I identified six indicators as the foundation of the BSC - Impact and Influence, Organizational Climate, Stakeholder Engagement, Financial Strength, Research and Innovation, and Internal Operations. Each indicator was defined, supported by performance measures and target goals. In addition, each was linked to a strategy summary and list of priority projects. Holistically, the BSC was a tool that had

the potential to assess CEL's performance not only in accordance with what the organization valued most, but also relevant to the approach of other organizations.

One of the BSC indicators was Stakeholder Engagement, defined as, "Measures partnership retention, market share, UW connectedness, and external grantor support." Who CEL partnered with and why was an ongoing curiosity for me, given the broad range of district types and regions that shared in CEL's work. Like many nonprofits, the need to generate revenue often drove decision-making, with CEL typically seeking to fulfill new contract requests. Partnership outputs, i.e. partner satisfaction, contract duration, etc. were easy to ascertain as I searched organizational data archives. Understanding partnership outcomes, i.e. changes in leadership practice and student achievement, was more nuanced.

My quest to better understand who CEL's partners were, and the characteristics that potentially drove outcomes, led to the design of an assessment tool called the Partnership Strength Index (PSI). It was derived from my conversations with project directors and partners, resulting in the identification of five critical attributes that strong district partners were believed to possess; a *compelling* narrative, a senior leader to *champion* the partnership, a strong commitment to *collaboration*, a *change-oriented* disposition towards the work, and overall *cohesion* with other district initiatives (see Appendix B). Supported by a detailed 4-point rubric scale, I designed the tool to evaluate current partnerships in an effort to collect data that could be measured against actual results. Long-term, the tool could also inform decision-making around who CEL partnered with and why, while also conveying a shared set of expectations for partners.

In the end, the strategic project was more of an exercise in strategic thinking rather than one in the formal management of change. My efforts served as a precursor to

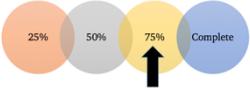
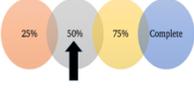
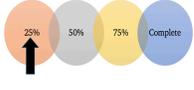
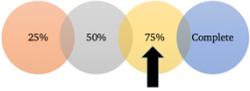
what could entail a significant shift in organizational practice and culture. However, like CEL itself, my project outputs (“if” statements) were clear but my project outcomes (“then” statements) have not fully materialized. I can certainly argue that influencing one’s thinking is a change in itself, however, a change in belief unmatched by action is difficult to measure. The forthcoming curation of evidence is indicative of this, while the analysis that follows makes greater meaning of my project’s impact.

The table on page 32 captures the four ways in which I activated my leadership to achieve impact, including through *stakeholder engagement*, *thought leadership*, *identifying growth opportunities*, and *tool design*. I define how I expected to demonstrate each (“if” statements), as related to my Theory of Action, and the degree to which I achieved the desired outcome. In order to justify the progress made, I identify critical pieces of evidence and tangible artifacts, examples of which can be found in the pages that follow. Collectively, this table provides a visual overview of my project outcomes. It is important to note, however, that measuring whether CEL is now, “better positioned to identify and pursue those market opportunities that match their distinctive assets and align with their mission,” has yet to be determined. As a result, progress in each of the four areas is currently evaluated as less than complete.

The extent to which I achieved project outcomes was greatly influenced by the leadership transition occurring within the organization at the time. My project existed in between two leaders: one credited with evolving CEL from a small start-up to a nationally recognized leader of professional learning, and one that would be moving the organization towards a strategic renewal, with a keen focus on refreshing CEL’s mission and identity. The success of my project could potentially have great implications for the

new leader. As a result, the trajectory of my project was influenced by the conversations we had around his own aspirations for CEL.

Evidence to Date

	If I...	Evidence-to-Date	Supporting Artifacts
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>1. Engage CEL in examining how it works internally, through analysis of its mission, goals, approach to partnerships, and core businesses to identify both assets and opportunities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEL has engaged in conversations to determine outputs/outcomes for current projects, resulting in logic model creation for ongoing work. Project Directors have used the PSI to evaluate current partnerships. CEL staff have crafted personal mission statements to inform larger organizational mission development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sept. staff survey feedback – “Problem of Practice” California Educ. Leadership Initiative Logic Model January Home Days – “We Are CEL” (presentation) Personal Mission Statement – Vimeo transcript (Appendix)
Thought Leadership	<p>2. Collaborate with CEL in considering new approaches to measuring the impact of their work throughout the sector</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEL directors have employed a new approach to entering district partnerships, i.e. Bellevue. Chief Strategy Officer role is in current development. CEL is partnering with College of Education to welcome Community Partnership Fellow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellevue Interview Protocol (Appendix) Chief Strategy Officer – role description (Appendix) Community Partnership Fellow (Appendix)
Identify Growth Opportunities	<p>3. Identify opportunities for growth relevant to current state education legislation, funding priorities, and district needs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed 5+ field visits to observe national partnership work and engage with district leaders. Completed 5+ interviews with UW faculty to better understand needs and opportunities for collaboration. Analyzed CEL historical financial data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview script – Lastinger Center Top Revenue Drivers CEL Grant History Foundation Funding Priorities Organizational Cost Comparison State Policy Legislation Strategy Role Overview
Tool Design	<p>4. Design tools to evaluate internal processes and assess external opportunities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed the Partnership Strength Index (PSI) based on field observations and project director feedback. Created a draft of an organizational Balanced Scorecard (BSC) aligned with current goals and priority initiatives. Collaborated with project directors to design interview protocol and lead district focus groups for new partnership work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Strength Index (PSI) Balanced Scorecard (BSC)

While some of my project outcomes were short-term measures of changes in conversations around strategic thinking, the anticipated long-term outcomes will be dependent on the organization's interpretation and response to the *Implications* section of this Capstone. Overall, I felt that the most immediate impact achieved through my project was that of challenging all levels of the organization to think about who CEL wants to be, what it wants to achieve, and what it needs to consider in holding itself accountable for achieving its purpose.

Stakeholder Engagement: *Engage CEL in examining how it works internally, through analysis of its mission, goals, approach to partnerships, and core businesses to identify both assets and opportunities.*

The first piece of evidence gathered through my work was a result of engaging CEL in an ongoing dialogue around its organizational identity, including its mission, strategy, and impact. Shortly after my arrival to the organization and the completion of a series of partner site visits, I shared the following draft of a problem statement with all staff members and surveyed their reactions.

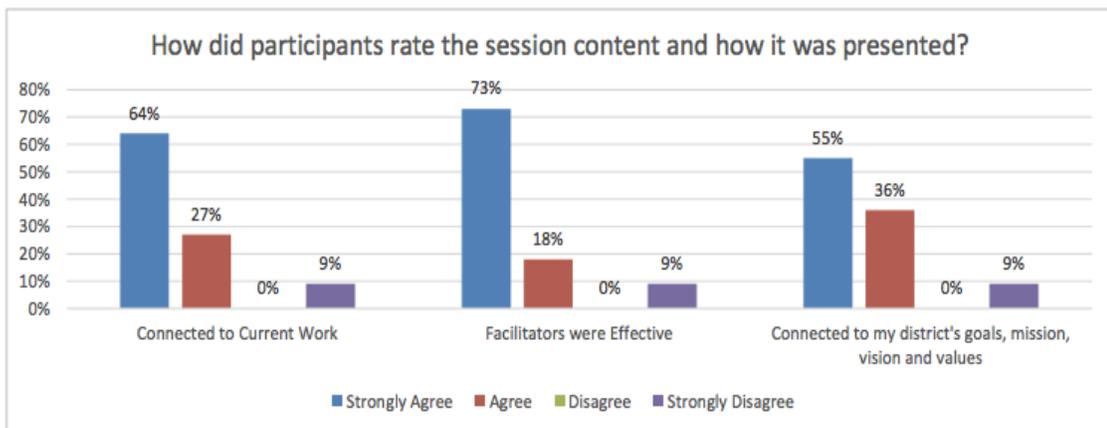
"CEL's key problem of practice is that it is output driven rather than outcome driven. This results in a heavy reliance on fee-for-service work that is not supported by an internal strategy around research and innovation. CEL's approach to revenue generation requires extensive field work, placing great demands on the managers and project directors within whom the capacity to develop new intellectual work exists. As a result, CEL's expertise reflects depth but not breadth. Without an embedded structure that supports the development of evidence-based content, projects, and services, CEL is not maximizing its position in the professional development provider market."

This initial problem statement emerged from studying CEL's information dashboards which capture a variety of data including total partnerships, states and districts served, among other outputs. An output is defined as, "the tangible results of a process or program" (Ralser, 2007, p. 81). CEL has countless outputs, i.e. number of framework downloads from their website, how many leaders registered for the Summer

Leadership Institute, the total number of days a project director spends in the field, etc. CEL is driven by these outputs because, in many cases, more outputs result in more revenue.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are defined as, “the impacts the organization wants to have on people or society” (Ralser, 2007, p. 81). Measuring outcomes can be difficult, but for CEL, what is even more difficult is defining what these outcomes are. While CEL’s mission is to close the achievement gap between student subgroups, student performance data is not collected and analyzed. Instead, there is a greater emphasis on outputs. For example, evaluations are administered to participants following each session presented by a project director at a school or district. Figure 2.1 shows an example of a session evaluation report. While the survey results capture the emotional impact of CEL’s work, it says less about the changes in adult practice and/or student performance that occurred as a result.

Figure 2.1 Sample Session Evaluation Report



The staff’s response to the statement I shared, “CEL’s key problem of practice is that it is output driven rather than outcome driven,” highlighted two important opportunities to consider when examining CEL’s approach to impact: 1) how CEL is

determining and measuring partnership outcomes and, 2) the role of strategic planning in identifying how CEL pursues collective outcomes. Figure 2.2 captures responses from a staff survey I administered after ongoing conversations with members around the outputs and outcomes CEL focused on revealed the need for a common vocabulary. The Impact and Improvement (I&I) team, an internal committee focused on furthering CEL’s approach to how impact is measured, revisited the conversation, posing the question to small working groups, *“What are your thoughts about ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’? Should these concepts be a part of our organizational impact work? Why or why not?”* The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with team members citing the importance of understanding how to measure outcomes over different time intervals, i.e. short-term vs. long-term. Value was also found in defining expectations for multi-year partnerships.

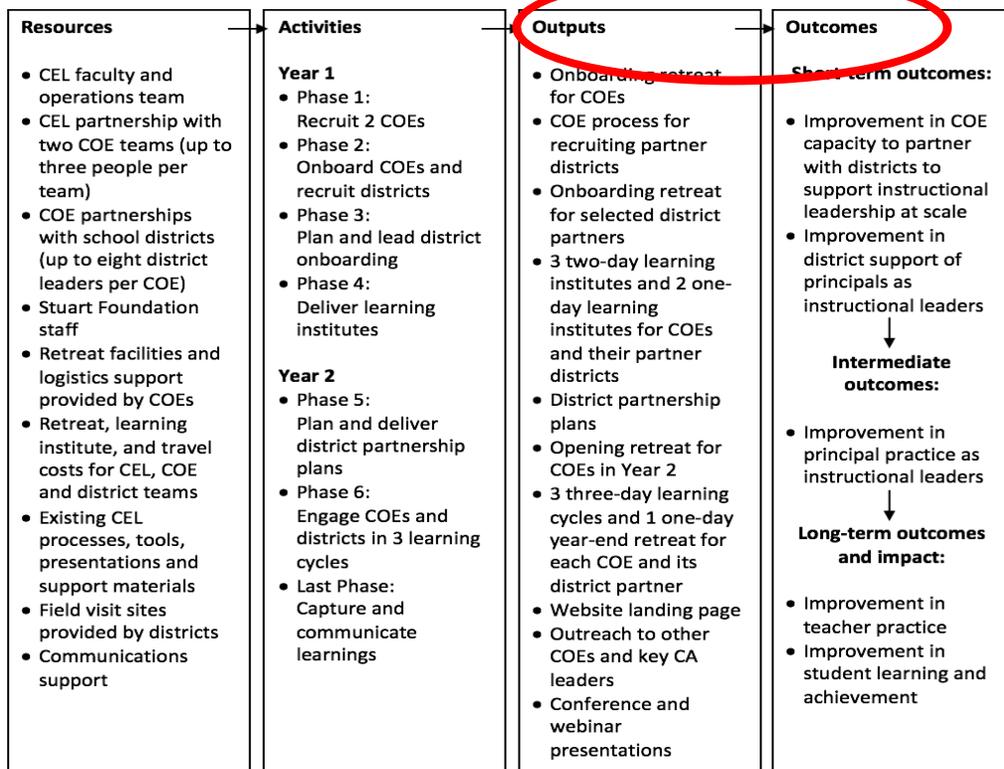
Figure 2.2 September Strategic Project Update – Staff Survey Excerpts

Question: After reading the problem of practice, what resonates with you the most?
<p><i>“We haven’t necessarily structured our partnerships and engagements with standardized and proven methods to deliver and measure progress toward the outcomes...I think our past and current emphasis on output both internally (e.g., sell 1,000 MILE assessments) and externally (e.g., attend 3 whole-group sessions, take part in 4 classroom walkthroughs, receive 2 days of job-embedded coaching) sometimes clouds over an emphasis on outcomes.”</i></p> <p><i>“That focusing on outputs is a short-term outlook/year to year practice. It’s an obstacle to our long term health, strategic planning and innovation. It’s a focus on the band aid not the cure.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think it’s important to understand how time is currently being spent. I don’t think we have a good idea of how much time it takes to do our “work”. Perhaps this will inform what we can stop doing in order to innovate.”</i></p>

The dialogue around outputs versus outcomes has been incorporated into the work of the I&I team, where distinguishing between the two was useful in revisiting desired results for three identified district partnerships – Newhall, CA; Schenectady, NY; and

Milwaukee, WI. Currently, I & I team members are collaborating to create logic models that indicate the relationship between outputs and outcomes in an effort to identify long-term results for these projects. According to ESSA guidance, logic models are, “particularly important when using studies that fall under “demonstrates a rationale” level of evidence” (Lee, Hughes, Smith, & Foorman, 2016, B-1). As a result of this expectation and our conversations, logic models have been used by CEL in creating grant proposals, as was evidenced in CEL’s design of a logic model for the California Educational Leadership Initiative.

Figure 2.3 California Educational Leadership Initiative - Logic Model



The team’s overall receptiveness to how such measures supported CEL’s desire to better measure its impact reinforced the Partnership Strength Index (PSI), a tool designed with input I gathered from field observations and project director feedback (see Appendix

B). The index identifies five indicators – 1) compelling narrative, 2) champion, 3) collaboration, 4) change-oriented, and 5) cohesion – that allow for the assessment of new partnership readiness and/or current partnership strength. Figure 2.4 defines the first indicator, *compelling narrative*, and includes a rubric describing each level of evidence from non-existent to ideal. The language used emphasizes the importance of a potential or current CEL partner being able to articulate a clear purpose for working with CEL.

Figure 2.4 Partnership Strength Index

PSI.1 Compelling Narrative

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
<p>Compelling Narrative <i>Ability to articulate a clear problem definition and commitment to equity that aligns with CEL's expertise and mission-based focus</i></p>	<p>Partnership liaison clearly articulates a problem statement, as well as underlying relevant root causes, and identifies a purpose for partnership with CEL. Use of longitudinal data analysis drives this narrative. The goal of the collective work to be done is aligned to the mission of both partners, with measurable outcomes for students and adults defined.</p>	<p>Partner articulates a problem statement, based on current data, and communicates a vision for their collaboration with CEL. Dialogue indicates an understanding of the work to be done, though success criteria is less defined. Goals may have been indicated for one group of stakeholders, i.e. students or participating educators, but not all who are to be impacted by the scope of work.</p>	<p>Partner expresses an interest in the improvement of leadership capacity in some regard but is less certain around the core organizational needs that exist and how this may align with CEL expertise. There may be a lack of clarity around the expectations held for both CEL and/or the partner itself.</p>	<p>Partner indicates a general curiosity about future collaboration but is unable to provide the rationale to inform a project narrative. Partner would benefit from more data analysis and collaborative planning in conducting a needs assessment.</p>

Related intake questions

- What is the problem(s) you are trying to address? For whom? What quantitative and/or qualitative data tells you this?
- What strategies have you implemented to address this problem? What have you learned from this work?
- What would success look like? For leaders? Teachers? Students? (Insert any and all stakeholder groups to be impacted.)

After multiple rounds of feedback, I arrived at a draft of the PSI that, not only incorporated key questions to be asked during partner intake phone screenings but was also well positioned to support the work of the I&I team. We devoted a meeting to evaluating the three abovementioned partnerships. The project directors leading the work were eager to walk through their rationale and evidence for each indicator rating. When asked about what we could take away from the conversation and exercise, one project

director shared that the PSI, “informs the work to be done in the partnership that is not called out in the contract.” Others concurred, citing that project narratives often lacked concrete outcomes. Overall, the team felt that with additional clarity around the utility of the tool, i.e. monitoring, pre/post assessment, there was a great opportunity for the PSI to become standardized in measuring partnership strength throughout a project’s lifecycle. Dr. Fink described it as having, “great utility from inception, to monitoring, to conclusion.” The receptiveness to the tool is evidence supporting my ability to collaborate with CEL directors in producing a relevant tool supportive of their daily work.

My efforts to engage CEL in examining how it works internally also included partnering with directors in a mission and identity refresh project. The opportunity to co-lead a session, “*We Are CEL: Conveying Identity Through Mission*,” served as the starting point for discussing mission criteria and examining CEL’s own. Feedback gathered from the larger CEL team following the session indicated organizational readiness to begin the work of reimagining CEL’s mission (see Appendix C). A follow-up session focused on the crafting of personal mission statements and allowed me to share how my own had evolved over time (see Appendix D). These exercises evoked new approaches to be taken in the short-term in considering the shaping of a future organizational mission.

Figure 2.5 Sample Mission Statements – Presentation Slide

Sample Mission Statements

- What do these mission statements have in common? How are they different?
- In what ways are they similar and/or different from CEL's mission statement?

Example:

- New Teacher Center's mission is to **improve student learning** by **accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers**, experienced teachers and school leaders. (NTC)

The aspiration (the what)

The lever to be pulled in doing so (the how)

Thought Leadership: Collaborate with CEL in considering new approaches to measuring the impact of their work throughout the sector.

The greatest evidence supporting my theory of action emerged from my collaborative planning and design with CEL leaders. An example of this was being invited to join Mr. Silverman in designing an interview protocol and planning a visit to a returning partner district (see Appendix E). The scope of work focused on designing support for principal supervisors. Not only was I able to play an active role in leading focus groups for school and district leaders, but I was also able to collaborate with our team of directors in taking a new approach to the work. Rather than offering the district a menu of services, Mr. Silverman insisted on taking a design approach which would entail a critical analysis of district needs through data review and onsite interviews. The approach to launching this new partnership work was an outcome influenced by the PSI and my emphasis on identifying partner success criteria.

Given CEL's desire to maintain relevance and financial sustainability as a professional learning provider, Mr. Silverman is currently exploring shifts to leadership structures that would support ongoing work related to my residency focus. His proposal

to create a new leadership position, Chief Strategy Officer, was noted as having been inspired by my work (see Appendix F). In addition, CEL is seeking to welcome a Community Partnership Fellow through the College of Education. According to the project description, the Fellow would, “have an opportunity to support CEL in learning and improving from the collection and use of impact data” (see Appendix G). Beyond the validation this provided for my efforts, it also served as evidence of CEL’s willingness to invest in the evaluation of outcomes.

Identify Growth Opportunities: *Identify opportunities for growth relevant to current state education legislation, funding priorities, and district needs.*

My collaborative work yielded initial outcomes focused on internal work that could potentially better position CEL to pursue market opportunities aligned with their strengths. In contrast, the ultimate impact of my analysis of CEL’s financial state, market context, state legislation, etc. is more difficult to measure. It is important to distinguish between outputs and outcomes here. My outputs included participation in field visits, from Florida to California, in an effort to better understand how CEL engaged partners, as well as interviews with district leaders, comparable organizations, and university faculty. The outcomes were unclear and not immediately actionable, given that the organization’s goal was to use my findings to inform future decision-making.

Through my interviews with leaders from other university-based nonprofits (Figure 2.6), I learned the benefits of having an explicit state-specific service mission for one’s home state and working with local partners, including the state legislature, in serving as an innovation hub. I also gathered recommendations from an interview with a local district leader familiar with CEL’s work around the potential for CEL to, “scale back on fee for service work and focus on how to monetize a resource stream for the

tools,” in addition to developing a research and development arm. While each interview yielded important ideas to consider, without understanding the financial implications of each, they were insufficient in enabling me to arrive at an opportunity for CEL to begin to invest in.

Figure 2.6 Interview Script – University of Florida Lastinger Center

- What does it mean to be a university-based center at UF?
- How would you describe the relationship between the center and the larger university? In what ways are you interdependent?
- What is your approach to strategic planning? Locally? Nationally?
- With so many initiatives, how do you measure impact?
- How do you define innovation as an organization?
- What is your funding structure? What percentage of your work is grant-funded?

with a review of state policy legislation, yielded findings that would support recommendations for CEL to consider moving forward. Of CEL’s top revenue earning contracts, several are leadership academies (Figure 2.7). This aspect of CEL’s work has generated continuous revenue (in excess of \$1 million annually) over multiple years from states such as Florida. Through my research I learned that state legislation had been passed in several other states, calling for this continued work. An example of this is in Georgia, where state legislation calls for, "a joint committee — charged with studying the establishment of a leadership academy — to provide opportunities for principals and other school leaders to update and expand their knowledge and skills” (HB 338, 2017). Given this analysis, I was able to consider whether CEL should replicate its Florida work in places like Georgia, working closely with state education departments (see Appendix H).

Figure 2.7 CEL’s Top Revenue Drivers

Contract Type	FY18 Revenue	# of Contracts	Revenue Per Contract
Regional Leadership Academies (out-of-state)	\$1.3 million	3	\$300,000 - \$500,000
Content (i.e. literacy)	\$787,000	17	\$6,000 – \$14,000
Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program (in-state)	\$350,000	21	\$2,900 - \$55,000

A comparison of CEL’s revenue sources against comparable organizations revealed that, like NYC Leadership Academy, CEL relied primarily on revenue generated through fee-for-service work (Figure 2.8). However, larger organizations, like New Teacher Center, were heavily driven by grant funding. The majority of organizations I compared showed grant revenue accounting for more than a quarter of all revenue. Given CEL’s current size, revenue diversification may be something to consider if CEL is seeking to grow. (Note: CEL’s data in Figure 2.8 reflects FY 2017.)

I also found CEL’s labor to expense ratio to be more compatible to that of NTC, an organization generating nearly ten times as much annual revenue. The financial impact of CEL bringing on more salaried staff (i.e. a recently hired project director, new director posting) on the organization’s bottom line is something to consider. CEL currently contracts independent consultants to support projects around the country. In order to reduce labor expenses, CEL may want to explore the role of consultants in leading additional work streams in lieu of expanding its current team of project directors.

Figure 2.8 FY 2016 Organizational Cost Comparison (IRS, 2015)

	CEL	Learning Forward	NYC Leadership Academy	New Teacher Center	New Leaders
Revenue					
Contributions & Grants	23%	48%	39%	69%	86%
Program Service Revenue	77%	45%	61%	31%	14%
Investment Income	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Expenses					
Labor	58%	25%	73%	62%	77%
All Other Expenses	42%	75%	27%	38%	23%
Labor to Revenue	59%	24%	78%	69%	73%
Profit Margin	-1%	4%	-7%	-10%	5%

Given my review of organizational revenue sources, I found it necessary to better understand CEL’s history of philanthropic support. I learned that CEL had received over \$2 million in Gates Foundation support between 2012 and 2014 and is currently pursuing a multi-year Stuart Foundation grant to support the California Educational Leadership Initiative (Figure 2.9). Several foundations exist right in CEL's backyard, i.e. Raikes, Gates, Ballmer. I learned through my interviews that the efforts involving the application process, reporting expectations, and grant maintenance can prove to be complex for a university center. In addition, government, private, foundation grant awards, etc. each require adherence to different rules and procedures. Despite this, it is important to note that CEL’s largest grant award, sponsored by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., supported a multi-year effort focused on impact evaluation. The results of the study, to be released in the next year, has implications for CEL and the potential to validate its research-driven approach to improving principal practice.

Given the complexity with pursuing grant awards, as well as the reality that funds are managed by the College of Education once awarded, I evaluated whether CEL would benefit from building a regional grants strategy, supported by the development of

regional education alliances. A quick overview of what local foundations have focused on in the past few years shows that Seattle-based foundations have supported initiatives at other universities, allowing me to consider how their funding priorities related to CEL’s current work (see Appendix I).

Figure 2.9 – CEL Grant Award History

Application Title	Sponsor Name	Award Amount	Year
California Educational Leadership Initiative Planning Grant	Stuart Foundation	\$25,000	2017
Providers of Principal Professional Development to Participate in an Impact Evaluation	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.	\$4,026,277	2014
Leading for Effective Teaching Phase III	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	\$941,674	2014
Building CRW District and School Leaders’ Expertise in Implementing the Common Core State Standards	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	\$679,313	2013
Central Office Leadership for Principal and Teacher Effectiveness at Scale: Helping Central Offices Design and Build Their Capacity for Results	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	\$866,769	2013
Principal Leadership Knowledge Development	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	\$196,115	2012
5D Professional Development Modules	Stuart Foundation	\$145,000	2008

Another dimension of my analysis included reviewing CEL’s non-classified salaries, resumes, and tenure. The evidence revealed that directors with longer tenure within the organization, between 10 and 15 years, were more likely to have entered CEL with coaching and professional development career experience, whereas those with shorter tenure, between 1 and 5 years, were more likely to have entered with mainly teaching and school leadership experience (see Appendix J). In reviewing this data, I was able to consider the types of professional expertise CEL may need to prioritize when hiring if statewide leadership academies and content-specific service offerings were pursued in the future. Given that CEL's content work is its second largest source of

revenue, bringing in over \$700,000 in FY 2018, I considered whether prioritizing the hiring of project directors and consultants with literacy and/or math backgrounds would allow CEL to expand these services, perhaps even considering content-specific teacher leadership academies.

In considering CEL's funding sources, revenue drivers, and talent needs, as well as state legislation, I arrived at the conclusion that CEL would benefit from investing further in multi-year leadership academies. As CEL's largest revenue generator, it is a line of professional development that is not only supported at the state level but is also likely to attract continued funding support from both government and philanthropic entities. Several of CEL's project directors have expertise in successfully collaborating with state education departments, district leaders, and foundations. This experience can be leveraged in building new relationships and creative iterations of leadership academies focused on needs of schools in specific regions.

Arriving at this conclusion was certainly aspirational in nature, as there is still much to be understood around how academy expenses would vary by state. More broadly, the complexity of identifying organizational growth opportunities supported by a degree of analysis that indicated positive outcomes proved to be a challenging task, given the scope of the project. As a result, charts compiled on state legislation, and nonprofit leadership structures were more reflective of outputs, with the potential outcomes to be realized only in the distant future.

Tool Design: *Design tools to evaluate internal processes and assess external opportunities.*

In addition to interview protocols and the design of the PSI described earlier, I produced a draft of an organizational Balanced Scorecard (see Appendix K). By linking

CEL's current organizational goals to relevant performance indicators – impact and influence, organizational culture, stakeholder engagement, financial strength, research and innovation, and internal operations – I was able to identify potential target goals and benchmark measures that could benefit CEL in assessing impact. The BSC was shared with the management team, who suggested that it may benefit from further socialization with the larger staff in the future.

Overall, the evidence gathered indicates that the extent of my impact rested in engaging CEL in the examination of how they work internally, and less around considering new ways in which to respond to market needs. The forthcoming analysis delves deeper into the impact and relevance of this evidence in relation to the research provided in the RKA.

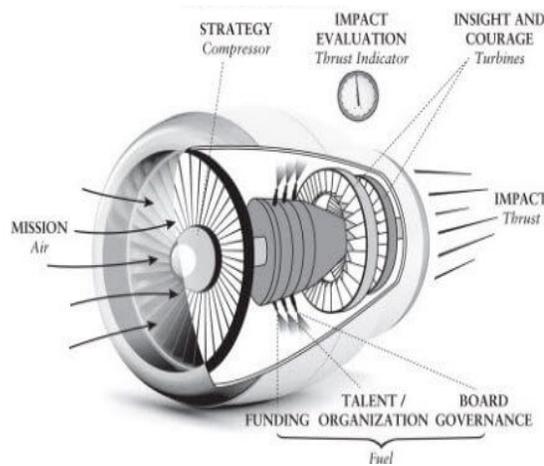
Analysis

Introduction to Framework

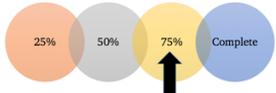
In analyzing the outcome of my strategic project, I utilize Meehan and Jonker's *Engine of Impact* to examine elements of the organization, how I leveraged each in my work, and the degree to which I achieved my desired outcomes. The engine of impact challenges nonprofit organizations to demonstrate impact by comparing strategic leadership to a "high-performance engine" (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 19). According to this framework, an organization's engine of impact begins with its mission, followed by its strategy, resulting in, "an actionable set of goals that will govern the design and implementation of programs" (p. 20). This allows for performance to be measured (impact evaluation). An organization is described as being powered by insight and

courage, attributes of the people who drive it, and fueled by funding, talent, and its governance structure. While CEL ultimately reports to the College of Education and is not managed by a board, I believe its relationship with the university to be a source of fuel. Given the role of mission and strategy in relation to all the other elements of strategic leadership, my project was nestled between understanding how CEL defined this and the implications for how it evaluated itself at the organizational, team, and individual levels.

Figure 3.1 Engine of Impact (Meehan & Jonker, 2017)



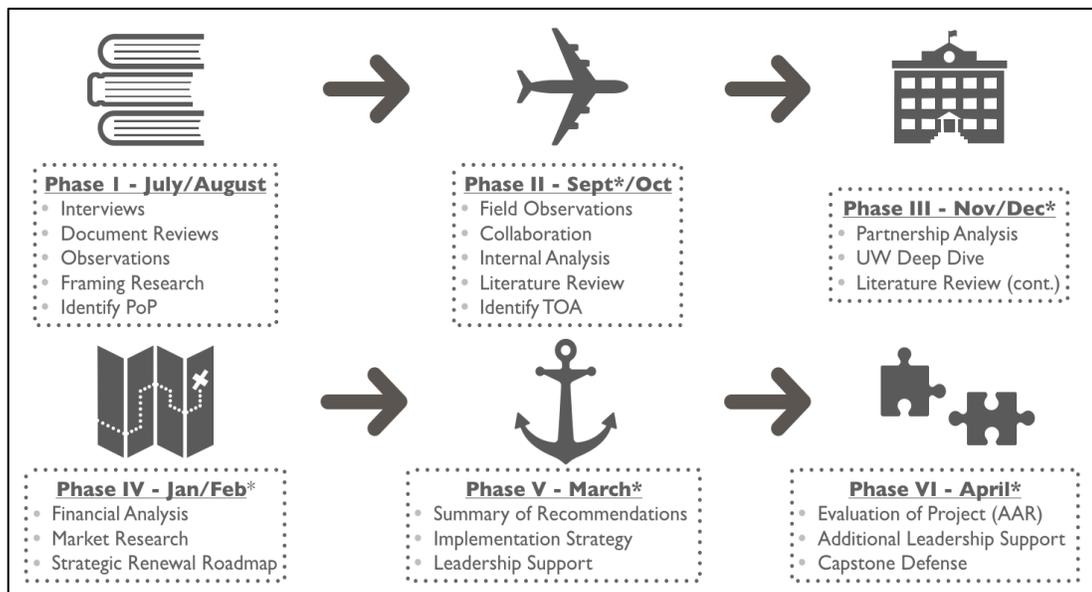
Stakeholder Engagement

Output	Outcomes
<p>CEL has engaged in conversations to determine outputs/outcomes for current projects, resulting in logic model creation for ongoing work.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Directors have used the PSI to evaluate current partnerships. ▪ CEL staff have crafted personal mission statements to inform larger organizational mission development.

Analysis of Outcomes

Engaging CEL in self-examination of its mission and goals was well aligned with the engine of impact framework and is where I invested a majority of my efforts. While I had an initial sequence for my approach (Figure 3.2), there were no pre-determined benchmarks and/or deliverables that would indicate what this engagement or the related outcomes would entail. This ambiguity made it difficult to keep the scope of work within the realm of what was achievable within the project timeframe. In addition, the degree of analysis that was expected was never clearly defined, by myself nor the organization. While my Theory of Action indicated that an analysis would better position CEL for decision-making around its future, this outcome was far too vague to prioritize my analyses and define its tangible results.

Figure 3.2 Strategic Project Approach (shared with staff at August retreat)



Quarterly “State of CEL” addresses at all-staff gatherings addressed CEL’s assets and celebrated CEL’s accomplishments, including new partnerships and positive organizational health survey feedback. I took this shared knowledge for granted and

focused more of my energy on identifying organizational challenges and the opportunities that existed. In hindsight, this limited my understanding of CEL and hindered my ability to objectively consider the strengths that positioned CEL as a university center with national recognition. In relation to the engine of impact, I didn't spend a sufficient amount of time understanding the fuel. This was one of my greatest missteps. Devoting critical time to a SWOT analysis centered on the three types of fuel – funding, talent, and governance – would have served me well. However, I often found it difficult to navigate CEL's information management system, with limitations on data availability, i.e. organizational impact, performance evaluation, factors influencing retention. This resulted in my arrival at assumptions around what CEL needed, i.e. a Partnership Strength Index, a Balanced Scorecard, etc. and the gathering of evidence to confirm this.

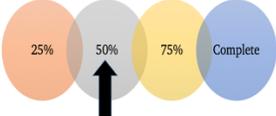
As I provided input in planning conversations and led presentations to staff, my identity as a resident felt less like a leader or change agent, but more like a consultant and thought partner. The expectations for my project were high, with the anticipated outcomes to serve as guidance around future investments for CEL to consider. While I had no intention of producing a formal strategic plan, my final Capstone was expected to answer the questions that would inform one.

Meehan and Jonker identify three unique challenges that come with strategic planning design. These include underestimating the time and effort required for the process, being bound by a calendar as opposed to issues, and the failure of beginning with a fact-based, objective situation analysis (Meehan & Jonker, 2017). I set out to analyze an organization's financial position without any formal business management preparation. The financial managers whose expertise I had at my disposal were seeking to

answer the same questions as myself. In addition, my prioritization of diagnosis led to me moving forward with exercises and experimentations before the completion of a thorough analysis. This led to assumptions being made with incomplete data. For example, I initially proposed that CEL offer a statewide instructional leadership academy after confirming Washington state budgetary support. Later on, I learned that the funding referred to in the Senate Bill was being allocated to an academy that had already been in existence for the past decade.

As Meehan and Jonker note, “It might well require two years of task forces, meetings, surveys, and fact-finding for a large, complex nonprofit organization like a university or museum to start and finish its strategic planning process...” (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 73). While my larger project approach was a collaborative one that engaged others at various points, the analysis component was often done in a silo, leaving much room for greater meaning to be determined.

Thought Leadership

Output	Outcomes
<p>CEL is exploring new ways to organize for impact at both the organizational and team levels.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CEL directors have employed a new approach to entering district partnerships, i.e. Bellevue. ▪ Chief Strategy Officer role is in current development. ▪ CEL is partnering with College of Education to welcome Community Partnership Fellow.

Analysis of Outcomes

While conducting analysis in a silo yielded limited measurable outcomes, my collaboration with CEL team members in exploring impact evaluation did result in initial commitments to changes in strategic management. This was a direct result of the manner

in which I partnered with the team in grappling with challenges that there were no clear answers to. Working closely with project directors enhanced my understanding of CEL's fuel, its organizational talent, and well as its insight and courage.

Leading with inquiry, a CEL mantra, served me well in understanding how the organization assessed partnership strength. Asking questions afforded me more engagements with external projects in studying impact as opposed to making assertions, as with the creation of the Balanced Scorecard where I dictated how impact should be evaluated. The nonprofit sector lacks "...a common vocabulary of measurement and evaluation, or common systems for classifying organizations or standardizing data across information systems" (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 81). Insisting that CEL should invest in one particular framework bound my work to what already existed rather than what could be created by activating CEL's insight and courage.

The multitude of questions my project sought to answer, and the conversations and exercises it generated, served as a catalyst in creating the necessary momentum for conversations around mission and strategy. Considering shifts in leadership structure that could support this resulted in the proposal of a leadership position focused on strategy and a student fellowship opportunity focused on impact. Leadership roles and responsibilities were a sensitive issue during a time of uncertainty and leadership succession. No significant changes would take place until Mr. Silverman transitioned into the role of executive director later this year. This timeline influenced the extent to which my project would achieve its outcomes. The absence of a formal succession plan that named the decisions and actions to be taken during the period of leadership overlap, the time period from January (when the transition was shared externally) through June, limited the extent to which my results were actionable. Given that one of Mr. Silverman's

goals was to embark on a mission and identity refresh, this would need to happen first, as indicated by the Engine of Impact framework. Yet, it wasn't until seven months into my residency that I was able to join a project director in leading an initial organizational dialogue around it. In a sense, I had been working backwards all along, seeking to evaluate and enact a strategy before examining CEL's true purpose, its mission.

Collaborating with CEL in considering new approaches to measuring impact was hindered by my ability to identify a clear narrative around CEL's approach to fulfilling its mission of closing the achievement gap between student subgroups. Hence, determining ways to evaluate their efforts toward doing so, and measuring impact through outcomes generated over time, were difficult results to achieve through my project. "A mission-driven organization should pursue its mission like a lodestar that will always keep it on course. It would therefore benefit many—perhaps most—nonprofit organizations to start any strategic planning effort with a review and assessment of their mission and mission statement" (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 29). Given where CEL was in its organizational lifecycle, defining who CEL wanted to be and for whom, was a foundational part of my work that should have occurred during my entry into residency. Yet, the organizational shifts occurring at the time, and the resulting uncertainty, didn't allow for this critical work.

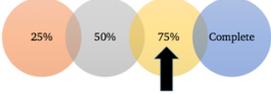
Identification of Growth Opportunities

Output	Outcomes
<p>Completed field visits and leadership interviews. Conducted internal and external analysis, including but not limited to: financial history, state legislation, revenue, and operational expenses.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified competing factors for CEL to consider, i.e. revenue diversification, staff expertise, funding priorities, state legislation, when deciding on future service offerings, staffing, and sources of revenue.

Analysis of Outcomes

For me to identify future opportunities for CEL, I needed to understand CEL’s identity at the onset of my residency. Without understanding who CEL wanted to be, my initial analysis was driven by my own assumptions and aspirations. My culmination of interviews, field visits, and document reviews was more of an exercise in gathering new information rather than a strategic effort to support CEL’s goals. I missed opportunities to share concrete findings during management team and financial meetings. Building in a regular structure during these leadership sessions where I was expected to share evidence, receive feedback, and determine next steps would have focused my analysis. In the end, I was unable to organize enough compelling evidence, supported by an understanding of financial impact, in making concrete claims.

Tool Design

Output	Outcome
<p>Collaborated with project directors to design interview protocol and lead district focus groups for new partnership work. Served on management team and supported the identification of 2017-2018 organizational priorities.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed the Partnership Strength Index (PSI) based on field observations and project director feedback. Created a draft of an organizational Balanced Scorecard (BSC) aligned with current goals and priority initiatives.

Analysis of Outcomes

While identifying growth opportunities was a broad mission, I achieved much greater impact when leveraging the team’s insight and collaboratively designing something tangible and ready-for-use. This was evident with the PSI. Rather than being prescriptive, I gathered projector directors’ thoughts, wonderings, and experiences. Again, I relied on CEL’s fuel, engaging the administrative support team who screen potential partners during intake calls, in helping me revise the metrics and challenging the language used. The shaping of the PSI was a collective effort, one that evoked CEL’s mission to improve student outcomes and goals around increasing impact and internal capacity. Embedding the piloting of the tool within the ongoing work of the I&I team leveraged organizational talent. The difference between my approach to conducting analysis and my approach to collaborating in considering new approaches to measuring impact was that I was complementary in my effort. I was not suggesting that something was missing, instead I was demonstrating my ability to listen to and make meaning of current needs.

The Balanced Scorecard, in contrast, *was* prescriptive and rooted in my own beliefs around impact evaluation, rather than those of CEL. Undoubtedly, the urgency I placed on this particular tool was influenced by two factors. One influence was my own orientation towards action. I certainly recognized that Mr. Silverman should first formally share his vision for the organization before identifying the metrics through which CEL would measure its impact. While I had thought a Balanced Scorecard could support CEL in shifting to a strategic management system, a single tool is not capable of shaping strategy or translating vision.

The second influence was the framing of the strategic project itself, as alluded to earlier. The scope of the work was rather ambiguous and neither CEL nor myself established clear metrics in an effort to track or measure incremental successes. CEL's aspirations for my work were informational and geared more towards the service an external consultant would provide. There was no shared agreement around any particular change to occur within the ten months as a result of my efforts. Rather, any change that resulted from my recommendations would be forthcoming and determined by Mr. Silverman's priorities as the new leader. In crafting the BSC, I felt that I had created a tangible tool that could serve as a guide in making both short-term and long-term decisions. The defined goals and target benchmarks could reinforce elements of my strategic project. However, the leadership transition underway posed a barrier to any immediate shifts in performance measurement and accountability.

Analysis of Theory of Action

The extent to which I achieved my intended outcomes was directly influenced by my theory of action, which included a long-term outcome that was difficult to measure through project outputs. "The best way to derive maximum benefit from a theory of

change is to deploy it – in combination with a mission statement – as a filter to justify every project and program area...” (Meehan & Jonker, 2017, p. 56). Throughout my time at CEL, I devoted time to projects that I could not always justify, i.e. planning team building activities, providing feedback on job descriptions, reviewing staffing projections, etc. Such projects didn’t have a clear through line to my outcome of better positioning CEL to identify and pursue market opportunities and would have been filtered out with a more clearly defined theory of action.

In hindsight, mobilizing a strategic planning committee to support the direction of my project may have positively impacted my achievement of outcomes. Attempting to answer questions critical to CEL’s future presented an opportunity for me to meaningfully engage staff in my project trajectory from start to finish. Organizing a team of influencers with defined roles for supporting this collective work may have supported this. Preparing for a strategic renewal is certainly a group effort that must activate the insight and courage of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, identifying ways to achieve this both formally and informally early on in my project timeline would have allowed for more powerful collaboration.

Analysis of CEL’s Assets

CEL is an organization that has thrived off of its ability to build and sustain relationships both within the organization and throughout the larger sector. CEL team members, project directors in particular, have great autonomy in how they structure their time and design partnership work. Placing a value on self-efficacy, which is echoed through frequent affirmations of collective work, has contributed to a great sense of self-confidence as an organization. Project directors collaborate on a variety of field work experiences, acknowledging one another’s expertise and demonstrating a willingness to

learn. CEL's ability to consistently generate annual revenue in excess of \$4 million reiterates a general sense of collective success. This sentiment not only serves to strengthen the comradery throughout the organization, but it also contributes to CEL's ability to retain talent. CEL's future decision-making should build upon these organizational values of trust, autonomy and self-efficacy. While a team rooted in strong relationships can allow for an organization to thrive, it can also pose a challenge to managing change in a way that will not disrupt the very values that has sustained it. Yet, the power of what these organizational assets have meant for CEL over its lifecycle must be acknowledged when considering its longevity and ability to sustain itself through fee-for-service revenue.

III. Implications

Implications for Self

As with any educator who has experienced leading a school or team under the constraints of high accountability and compliance, I navigated CEL with a critical lens. I arrived at assumptions about CEL's revenue deficit, approach to measuring impact, and innovation process rather early in my residency. I viewed the amount of project director time spent in the field and the blurriness of outputs and outcomes as barriers to organizational sustainability. I initially operated under the assumption that CEL simply needed to make different business decisions and was challenged to determine what these could be. However, careful analysis would later indicate that my observations were only byproducts of a larger underlying issue, one that began with mission, identity, and strategy. The degree of urgency I felt to arrive at concrete solutions led to me filtering

information in a way that informed my conclusions. There is much for me to reflect on when considering how I responded to this.

The first implication of this experience on my future work as an education leader is the importance of finding balance between product and process. My work at CEL demonstrated my ability to work within an organization experiencing a great deal of change and uncertainty. The complexity of the questions around relevance and financial sustainability that shaped my understanding of the project required that I place a greater value on process than product. Still, I found myself drawn to arriving at something tangible, i.e. PSI, BSC, that would enhance the organization's ability to measure its impact. This speaks to the value I place on both accountability and clarity around where the ownership of a team's success rests. However, the manner in which I organize my team, and myself for that matter, around learning will be just as critical to my success. Moving forward, I'd like to prioritize how I structure my learning to the degree that I prioritize the ultimate outcome of my efforts.

The next implication for my practice is making the critical decision around what change I want to lead and for whom. I believe in more of a collective impact approach to student achievement where local business, government, nonprofits and education providers partner to collectively address the many different community needs that both impact and arise from inequitable education opportunities. The Purpose Built Communities model has achieved success throughout the country in revitalizing historically underserved neighborhoods by focusing on a three-pronged approach to change that includes, "high quality mixed-income housing, a cradle-to-college education pipeline, and community wellness programs..." (Purpose Built Communities, 2018).

Ultimately, I want to position myself at the nexus of policy and practice, partnering across sectors to scale successful change initiatives that impact communities holistically.

Given this aspiration, I must also consider how I define my own Engine of Impact. In reflecting upon past leadership experiences, I realized that my *fuel* has always been my core values around excellence and equity, my adaptability in reinventing myself to thrive outside of my comfort zone, and the manner in which I've utilized people resources in the form of collaborators and mentors. I leveraged each of these at CEL, joining a university nonprofit across the country for a fixed period of time and managing to create a legacy for myself within the organization. As I transition to a leadership role within a new organization, one that will entail leading district partnerships, it will be my insight and courage that gives my Engine of Impact *air*. My own mission must be one that is internal while my strategy will be influenced by the needs of those I serve. It is important for me to remember that this internal mission may be translated in different ways, shaped by the complexity of all the other engine parts and the larger vehicle (regional context) within which it is housed.

The final implication for my future self is the importance of setting boundaries that prioritize self-preservation and growth. The expectations that I set for myself must be both meaningful to me, relevant to my organization, and in accordance with what I am realistically able to accomplish. At CEL, I spread myself thin, engaging in work with cross-functional teams, i.e. marketing/communication, impact and improvement, etc. I was so eager to position myself as an influencer, that my own learning goals were deprioritized. Rather than focusing on what I hoped to gain from the project, I emphasized what I would achieve for CEL. I missed an opportunity to share my professional goals upon my arrival to CEL. This is something that should have been

clearly articulated and regularly reinforced to Dr. Fink, Mr. Silverman, and the larger staff. Doing so would have allowed everyone to better focus any feedback they had for me. It would have also held me accountable for my own learning. With all the measurement tools I prided myself in creating for CEL, I neglected the most important one...the one that would assess the progression of my own leadership.

Regardless of where my post-Ed.L.D. journey takes me, what will ensure my success is my ability to be honest about where I want to position my influence, while setting measurable goals for the evolution of my own leadership. These goals must not only be centered on *outputs*, i.e. what I do, how much I do, but also on *outcomes*, i.e. what I've learned, how I've changed, and the degree to which this has translated to achieving impact on those I serve, including my own self.

Implications for Site

As described in the RKA, change for CEL must occur at three levels—the organizational, the team, and the individual. The recommendations below are organized accordingly, reinforcing the work suggested to be done across levels and the implications of such changes for CEL.

Recommendations for the Organization (Strategy and Vision)

While continuing to engage in a deep examination of organizational belief systems, CEL should remain focused on asking itself, *what is it that we are doing, for whom, and why?* The evaluation of CEL's mission, review of guiding criteria, and staff exercise in crafting personal mission statements is just the beginning of CEL's journey to reimagining its identity. From these exercises should emerge a refined mission that guides

all future work. This mission should be internalized and used to reintroduce CEL to the sector. It has been powerful to see the CEL team embrace this dialogue and actively participate in beginning to develop a shared vision for the organization. Based on this vision, CEL will be able to identify its target audience, including those it intends to serve as well as those it wishes to engage in partnership with towards moving its vision forward, i.e. building education alliances. CEL may want to consider refining the PSI into a tool that can support the identification of both.

There is an opportunity for CEL to adopt a clear set of metrics for how it will measure its achievement of its mission and related organizational goals, shifting to a *strategic management system*. This system should incorporate a Balanced Scorecard (or a comparable measurement tool) that aligns CEL's overarching organizational goals, benchmark success metrics, and initiatives. This should be an internal document, vetted by a working committee representative of all CEL teams, and a direct reflection of the shared vision. Grounding how CEL measures its performance in a Balanced Scorecard will allow the new leader to manage CEL's strategy through four critical processes— 1) translating the vision, 2) communicating and linking, 3) business planning and, 4) feedback and learning (Kaplan and Norton, 2007). Establishing this at an organizational level, will support a system-wide approach to employee performance management.

CEL staff currently complete an annual Performance Review and Self-Evaluation (see Appendix L). The four-question tool is subjective in nature, as it asks staff to identify what they perceive to be their greatest accomplishments and challenges. The tool doesn't measure actual performance and is more of a pulse check, figuratively speaking. There is an opportunity for CEL to replace this tool with one that links the Balanced Scorecard to individual goals, professional learning plans, and cycles of improvement

supported by ongoing coaching and feedback rounds. A formal performance evaluation tool should be used to measure employee growth and success, while identifying areas of improvement. Language used should be consistent with the Balanced Scorecard or any organizational evaluation tool. “All nonprofits—even very small ones—must have tightly focused processes to ensure that they attract and retain great people. These include: a regular feedback process that allows employees to gain perspective on their colleagues’ view of their performance, an annual performance evaluation process that involves rewarding an organization’s best performers and adding to their responsibilities, a process that identifies and removes low performers and that assesses the professional development needs of other employees” (Meehan and Jonker, 2017, p.135). Not only will this approach support organizational clarity around performance expectations, but it will allow leaders to better focus the support they are providing to those they manage. In addition, this evaluation can be used to determine how to distribute annual pay increases.

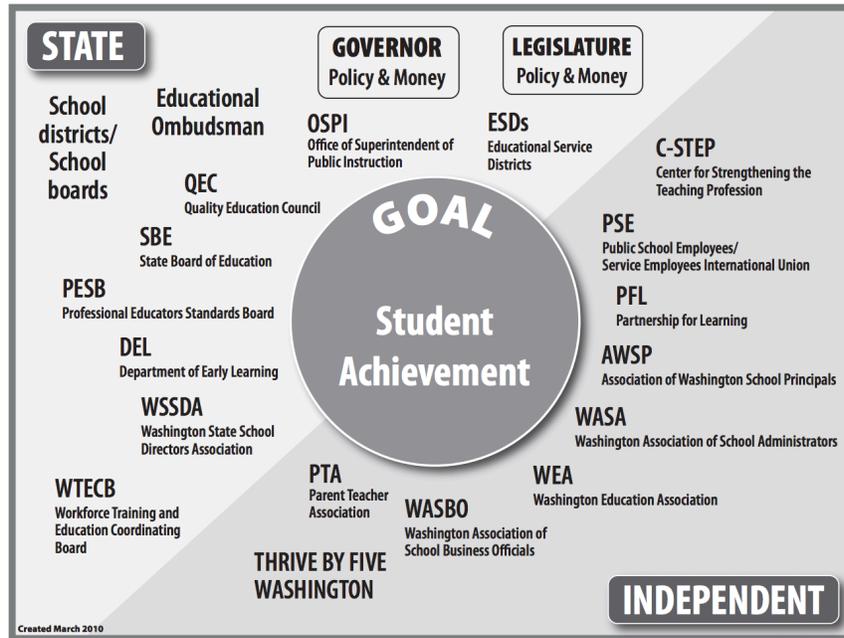
Finally, in adopting a strategic approach to what it offers, CEL should consider one or more regionally-focused strategies. With the two-year California Educational Leadership Initiative, CEL is seeking to build the capacity of county offices of education to support district leaders. This systemic approach to leadership development has served CEL well in retaining district partners through long-term statewide leadership academies in Florida, as well as the success of its first national inaugural AASA cohort. When considering these proof points, as well as the Gates Foundation Request for Proposals for Networks for School Improvement, there is an opportunity for CEL to increase its focus on multi-year, regional partnerships.

State legislation has been passed in multiple states calling for collaborative approaches to improving education leadership. For example, Nevada recently enacted

Senate Bill 155 which, “appropriates funds to design and implement educational leadership training programs as a cooperative effort between the state department of education, the Clark County Public Education Foundation, school districts statewide and other partners.” As CEL considers ways in which to replicate its education leadership initiatives, it may want to focus on the Northwest – Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana – areas in closer proximity, and where there exist many rural districts, a demographic that CEL has years of experience with.

In Washington state, there are a number of state-level and independent organizations committed to increasing student achievement. CEL has a longstanding partnership with The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the main entity responsible for providing oversight to Washington’s K-12 public school system serving just over one million students. Like CEL, OSPI’s focus for the upcoming year is to identify a new mission, vision, and statement of values. (OSPI, 2018) CEL currently serves at least 27 districts within the state, impacting over a quarter of the state’s students. Given CEL’s location, history with regional districts, and proximity to the work, I would encourage CEL to prioritize establishing relationships with organizations on both sides of the state’s K12 education landscape. Doing so would position CEL as a state level influencer and collaborator, in addition to a service provider.

Figure 4.1 K12 Organization Chart (OSPI, 2018)



I recommend that CEL accomplish this by conducting a deep dive into the priorities of each K12 education organization in the above chart, identifying learning opportunities and new ways of collaborating. If CEL were to pursue a regional strategy, it would benefit from having a variety of reciprocal relationships and investments from a wider education alliance.

In 2014, Teach for America launched its Rural Leadership Academy to meet the demand for highly qualified leaders in remote areas. The academy serves educators in over 14 U.S. regions, including Washington state, by supporting aspiring rural leaders through summer professional development, onsite visits to rural school communities throughout the year, and mentorship. In Washington, a study examining school data from 2004-05 to 2011-2012 found a five-month learning gap between students in the state’s large cities and those in remote rural schools (Campbell, DeArmond, and Denice, 2014). The data showed rural school leader turnover rates as high as 20%, with principals more

likely to leave rural schools altogether than to move to other district schools, like their suburban and urban peers. CEL currently supports over 25 Washington Public School districts, including a number of Education Service Districts (ESD) on which many schools rely for professional development support. There is an opportunity here for CEL replicate its statewide work with Florida districts, with an intentional focus on rural leaders. Much like my previous recommendations around leadership academies for targeted audiences, there exists an opportunity for CEL to introduce a new, local signature service that increases its foothold as a professional learning provider in the state.

For CEL, focusing on rural schools presents an opportunity for deepening its impact. According to a 2017 report by The Rural School and Community Trust, “More than 8.9 million students attend rural schools—more than the enrollments of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and incredibly, the next 75 largest school districts combined” (Showalter et al., 2017, p.1). The report identified ten high priority states in which the needs of rural school and districts were urgent, which included the state of Florida, a longtime CEL partner. Florida was identified as having some of the nation’s largest rural schools and districts as well as some of the lowest spending on instruction. With CEL’s current relationship with the state, leading multiple statewide leadership academies, it is well positioned to expand its work to focus explicitly on rural leaders.

CEL’s work in its home state, one of eight in which the gap in high school graduation rates between all rural students and those from low-income households is greater than 20 percent, may have led to lessons that can be applied here and in other high priority regions (Showalter et al., 2017). If part of CEL’s mission remains to close gaps in education, this is one that can’t be ignored both locally and nationwide. In addition, with

CEL's successful history of securing grant funding, it may be well positioned to partner with rural districts in securing federally-funded competitive grants, a resource, "which many rural districts don't have the capacity to pursue" (Showalter et al., 2017, p. 6).

Finally, CEL has an opportunity to invest in its relationship with the university as a type of research-practice partnership, defining what this means in a mutually beneficial way. I encourage CEL to begin with listening to learn, attending faculty meetings and events to engage with current College of Education priorities. A recent public event, EDU Talks: Raising Washington, highlighted the work of university researchers focused on increasing access to high quality early learning opportunities. Events such as these can serve to provide CEL with a lens into current faculty work, innovative approaches to improving student outcomes, and access to an extensive community of researchers and practitioners. Not only would CEL benefit from building local education alliances, but the organization can also identify new relevant areas of focus to pursue when working with local districts.

CEL project directors have published a number of blog articles in recent months, highlighting strategies that have led to success with current partners. In reviewing many of these articles, I see an opportunity for CEL to hold a series of "community coffee" events where university faculty are invited to engage with CEL project directors around their work in the field, new learnings, and the implications for the larger sector. Considering that CEL's learnings from the field will also serve to inform this year's Summer Leadership Institute, a two day leadership series focused on improving teacher professional learning, offering the College of Education a few complimentary seats would also serve as a way to engage their expertise while also acknowledging the value of this thought partnership.

There is great value for CEL in pursuing the strengthening of its interdependence with the university. The College of Education is seeking to enhance its partnership with Washington schools and communities with support from a \$1.7 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The two-part strategy will include Unite:Ed, “a community-embedded design lab that convenes education practitioners and leaders, community organizations and research faculty to co-design and test solutions to problems of practice in early learning, K-12, and transitions to higher education and the workforce,” as well as a “UW-community partnership hub in South Seattle that will provide teaching, co-working and meeting space designed to facilitate partnerships throughout the region.” (University of Washington, 2017) Both approaches provide an opportunity for CEL to leverage its expertise in a way that influences dialogue and design work. Doing so effectively may serve to increase the depth of CEL’s local partnerships, perhaps attracting new sources of revenue. Given CEL’s ongoing work with Washington school districts and recent re-entry into a nearby district, it is important for CEL to play a role in this strategy.

Recommendations for the Team (Goals and Actions)

At the team level, there is an opportunity for the management team to prioritize its talent pipeline, both diversifying its staff and its leadership structure. One of the risks CEL faces in evolving as an organization is its talent pipeline. CEL’s current team is culturally homogenous with shared expertise, which can be attributed to CEL’s challenges around attracting a wide range of talent who is diverse along the lines of race/ethnicity, professional experience, cross-sector expertise, career level, region, etc. Many of CEL’s employees are from the Northwest region and/or previously affiliated with the organization. As a result, CEL is likely missing out on new perspectives and

creative ways of challenging their current practice. CEL is a relationship-driven organization, where employees have long-term ties to its founder. In order for CEL to break new intellectual ground, it will need to break old habits of attracting the type of talent it may be most comfortable with.

In considering talent needs, CEL has an opportunity to reimagine its leadership structure to include a role specifically designed to lead strategic efforts. Currently, there are pockets of what one project director describes as, *informal innovation*, occurring throughout CEL. The I&I team is focused on measuring the outcomes of select partnerships while a pair of project directors are exploring future professional lines of service. At the same time, new technology is being introduced, i.e. Zoom, I: drive replacement, staffing processes, etc. These are all necessary changes that will serve CEL well moving forward. However, they are happening independently of each other, rather than interdependently. The current approach is what I would describe as being led through an *execution frame*, one in which a leader presents oneself as an expert and acknowledges other contributors to the project as supporting actors. Moving forward, I would challenge CEL to lead change projects through a *learning frame*, where leaders, “frame themselves as interdependent with others in accomplishing important changes...” (Edmondson, 2012, p. 102). My recommendation here is less about establishing another I&I-like team, but rather identifying a new scope of leadership responsibility to foster this shift.

Recommendations for the Individual (Roles and Responsibilities)

CEL was recently offered an opportunity to host a doctoral student as part of the College of Education’s Community Partner Fellow initiative. The four-year partnership is designed to support organizations with research and evaluation efforts centered on equity.

This couldn't have presented itself at a more opportune time for CEL. In considering ways to advance elements of my own project, CEL may want to engage the fellow in any one of the following projects:

- Grant Funding Strategy - CEL is striving to secure 1-2 foundation grants in the coming year. What will it take to sustain this source of funding in creative ways over time? While organizations often focus on nationally-recognized foundations, like Gates or Walton, it is important to understand the opportunities that exist at the state and local level. A fellow could work on building out a formal strategy that includes identifying potential grantors, understanding their aspirations, and developing an approach to generating proposals. This could also entail designing a strategy to partner with other organizations in securing funding for collaborative projects.
- Seattle Cross-Sector Collaborative - UW is one of Seattle's largest employers, along with Boeing, Amazon, and Microsoft. There are over 250,000 people working in tech-related jobs in Seattle and about 90% of them are in King County. There is an opportunity to engage cross-sector leaders in supporting innovation in local school districts. My vision would be for a fellow to engage with the education teams of local tech companies in understanding how they are investing in education. The fellow would work with them to identify a particular problem of practice in local schools, with the goal of mobilizing a working group and implementing a strategy in partnership with a local school district.
- Partnership Readiness If the PSI was enhanced to become a standard tool CEL used in partnership evaluation, a fellow could work with project directors to measure all existing partnerships. This data could be compared to partnership outcomes to gather

supporting evidence for the performance indicators identified, or rationale for new criteria.

The ultimate implication of CEL's investment in the strategies above is the organization better positioning itself as an impact-focused nonprofit with a clearly defined mission and vision for its work. CEL's ability to implement and manage change across all levels will determine the degree to which it remains relevant as a professional learning provider.

Implications for Sector

Throughout the K-12 education sector there remains the absence of a shared definition of outputs and outcomes, and the ability to distinguish between these two critical yet different indicators of impact. For district leaders, outputs may include student attendance, while outcomes often equate to student performance on standardized assessments. For professional learning providers, the lines between outputs and outcomes are often blurred. *If x number of goods and services sold, is that an output or a business outcome that helps us meet our bottom line?* This is further complicated by who an organization holds itself accountable to. Nonprofits who are governed by boards and supported by philanthropists run on a different grade of *fuel*, to quote the Engine of Impact (again). These organizations must often deliver on a clearly established set of outcomes, as they are bound by funding parameters and board member interests. Organizations like CEL, without a board and driven primarily by fee-for-service revenue, have a different type of responsibility. They must have a degree of self-accountability that prioritizes both creating positive impact for those whom they serve directly, adults in

CEL's case, and the ultimate beneficiaries of their work, students. The ability to do so lies in how grounded an organization is in its identity.

Organizations with the level of autonomy and self-governance that CEL has, as a small center within a web of other university-based entities, must be unapologetically mission-driven. This is no easy feat, as financial health relies on generating revenue and there lies great rationale in welcoming all available sources, especially in a competitive market. However, the benefits of sacrificing mission for financial gain are often short-lived. In a sector with increased access to information, alternatives to traditional face-to-face professional development, and modes of transparency (i.e. online user reviews), it is important for education nonprofits to allow their mission to drive their decision-making, especially when determining outputs to employ and outcomes to pursue. What the field can learn from the outcome of my project experience is that an organization's mission is critical to establishing parameters for its work and that the more granular a mission is, the easier it is for an organization to assess the relevance of what it offers and for whom.

I believe that, in the long-term, an organization's degree of influence is determined by what it has taught others through achieving mission-based outcomes. And in order to be a source of learning for the larger sector, one must first examine and learn from its own experience. An organization should remain focused on its belief to avoid the pitfalls of chasing new trends. At the same time, it should explore new ways in which to achieve its mission without deviating from those values that are enduring. In a sector often misguided by inconclusive data around current practitioner needs, CEL offers a lesson in sustainability through remaining committed to one's research-driven approach and responsiveness to partner needs, rather than reactive to market trends not aligned with its expertise.

A final thought for professional learning service providers is the importance of first working internally to achieve new results externally. The more I sought to answer Dr. Fink's questions around CEL's future relevance and market position, the more I was led back to examining CEL's organizational behavior. I couldn't begin to consider a new line of service for CEL to offer without considering the strength of its current research and development process. This is something to consider in the ongoing dialogue of outputs and outcomes. Every output is the result of one or more inputs and should be supported by a commitment to organizational learning. As is often said, different results require working differently and this must occur across all three levels—organizational, team, and individual.

VI. Conclusion

CEL's ability to achieve its aspirations as a professional learning provider with relevance, national influence, and fiscal sustainability, will be first determined by how it works internally. Before an organization can measure impact and consider penetrating its market more deeply, it must have well defined systems in place to measure its performance across various levels. CEL should intentionally invest in itself as it considers how to further invest in new or current partners. This will need to occur simultaneously and should be reinforcing, as CEL's internal development will enhance its external approach. I recently experienced this firsthand while joining Mr. Silverman in the field. While meeting with a district leader, he shared how in the past research was used to determine the services prescribed to a district partner, whereas he was now

seeking to embark more on a shared design approach. What he learns from this project will inform CEL's planning and design efforts, benefitting both CEL and its partners.

Historically, CEL has successfully built a national brand, influencing school systems and education agencies throughout the country. This is an accomplishment to be proud of. With almost two decades of experience, there is an opportunity for CEL to share more of what it has learned from its work in an effort to influence both a regional and national conversation. Looking internally includes being attentive to local context and being able to improve outcomes for the leaders, educators, and students in its own backyard. Given the history that many of CEL's leaders and project directors have both as service providers and former practitioners throughout the region, investing in local leadership in new ways may yield outcomes that enhances its national appeal. For example, NYCLA was initially established to meet the need for high quality principals in New York City schools, and later expanded its service offerings to different regions. CEL's ability to meet a current local demand may provide it with the outcomes it needs to experiment with new service models relevant to an even greater national audience.

At the team level, cross-functionality will help drive cohesion across organizational initiatives, reinforcing Mr. Silverman's vision. While investments in technology allow for easy virtual collaboration and monthly staff gatherings bring the larger team together, more integrated research and development efforts will foster a shared responsibility around organizational impact. Clearly defined metrics and desired outcomes, articulated through logic models, will enhance the feeling of team success and collective purpose. Individual accountability, with leadership support, will also reinforce a personal sense of accomplishment.

At the individual level, there is great opportunity in the willingness to spread one's intellectual wingspan, broadening one's understanding in order to meet the greater needs of partners. Team members have named a culture of quiet innovation, occurring through the customization of support according to partner needs. As CEL is able to make more connections between outputs and outcomes, I anticipate innovation will emerge in new ways, as the organization explores different means to achieve its ends. The question remains as to whether the concept of research and design will be approached in a formal or an informal manner.

Ultimately, CEL must look deep inside itself before tasking itself with meeting tomorrow's market demands. Expenses will continue to rise and increasing revenue may not always be an option. Seeking independence from its university relationship would eliminate rising overhead costs, but only at the expense of being burdened with the ownership of an infrastructure that includes benefits, healthcare, insurance, information technology, etc. This would require increased staff capacity, resulting in talent recruitment and hiring efforts the organization is currently not in the best position to entertain, given a recent administrative team member transition and the void soon to be left by Mr. Silverman's current role. Furthermore, there would be the loss of an intellectual partnership with unrealized potential. My travels and conversations throughout the region have confirmed that the College of Education's vision is to enhance university-community partnerships. CEL has a foothold in both worlds, as both a provider to local districts and as an early university collaborator in the design of several frameworks. As a result, there is an opportunity for all stakeholders to benefit through CEL's ability to solidify its presence as a pillar of research-based practice in the region.

CEL's road to strategic renewal will have the same degree of directional clarity of that found in Mr. Silverman's vision. This will be a long-term process with room for short-term gains. In the end, the organization's arrival at sustained impact will be determined by the distance between its mission, strategy, and impact. The closer the relationship between the three, the greater the speed at which the organization will advance towards its future.

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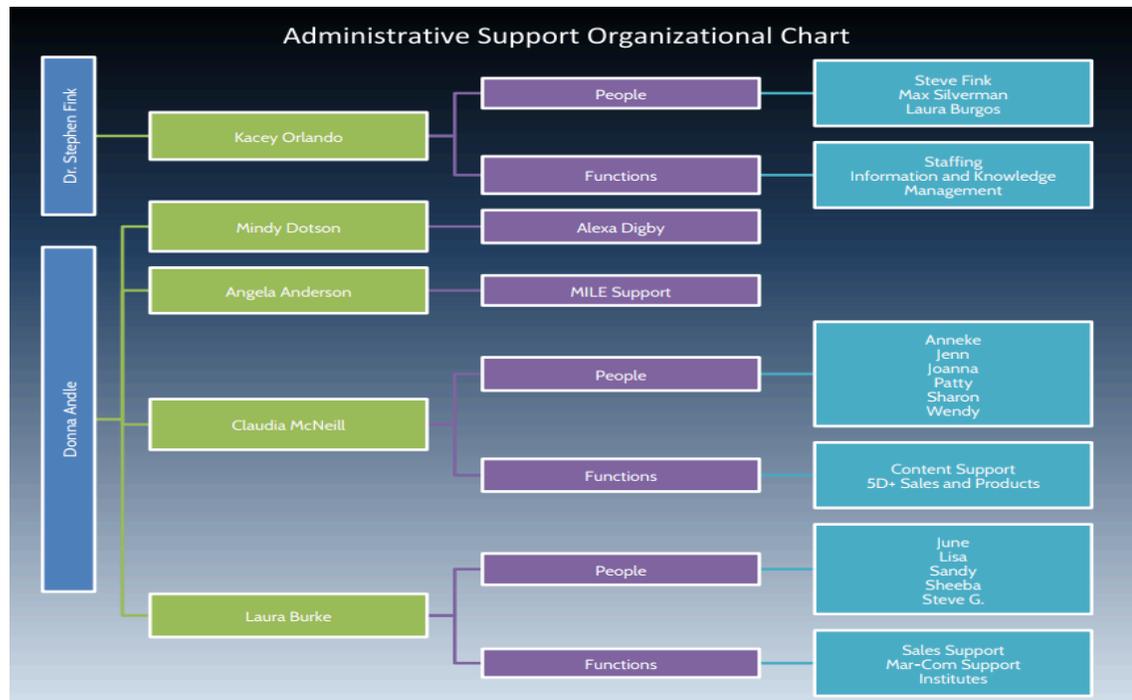
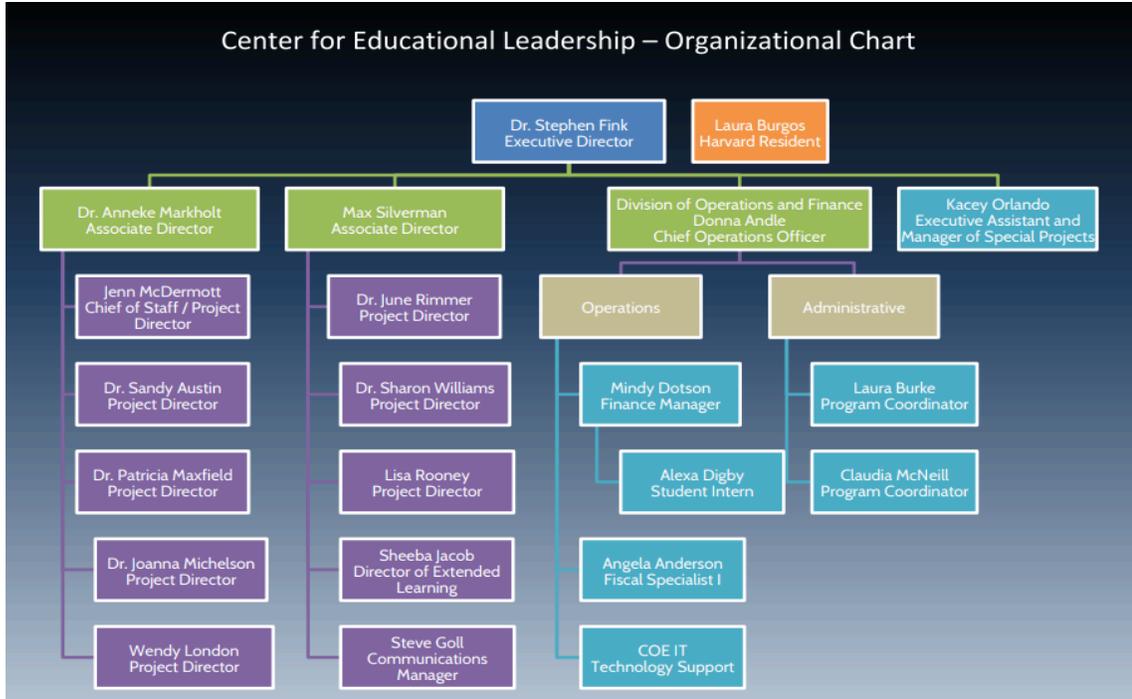
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Appendix

Appendix A – Organizational Charts



Appendix B - Partnership Strength Index

PSI.1 Compelling Narrative

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
<p>Compelling Narrative <i>Ability to articulate a clear problem definition and commitment to equity that aligns with CEL's expertise and mission-based focus</i></p>	Partnership liaison clearly articulates a problem statement, as well as underlying relevant root causes, and identifies a purpose for partnership with CEL. Use of longitudinal data analysis drives this narrative. The goal of the collective work to be done is aligned to the mission of both partners, with measurable outcomes for students and adults defined.	Partner articulates a problem statement, based on current data, and communicates a vision for their collaboration with CEL. Dialogue indicates an understanding of the work to be done, though success criteria is less defined. Goals may have been indicated for one group of stakeholders, i.e. students or participating educators, but not all who are to be impacted by the scope of work.	Partner expresses an interest in the improvement of leadership capacity in some regard but is less certain around the core organizational needs that exist and how this may align with CEL expertise. There may be a lack of clarity around the expectations held for both CEL and/or the partner itself.	Partner indicates a general curiosity about future collaboration but is unable to provide the rationale to inform a project narrative. Partner would benefit from more data analysis and collaborative planning in conducting a needs assessment.

Related intake questions

- What is the problem(s) you are trying to address? For whom? What quantitative and/or qualitative data tells you this?
- What strategies have you implemented to address this problem? What have you learned from this work?
- What would success look like? For leaders? Teachers? Students? (Insert any and all stakeholder groups to be impacted.)

PSI.2 Champion

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
<p>Champion <i>High-level sponsorship that ensures financial sustainability, cross-collaboration, and the prioritization of communication</i></p>	One or more organizational leaders with decision-making authority have been identified to champion the collective partnership work through providing oversight, resources, and regular feedback. The sponsors have a sense of urgency, as well as realistic aspirations for the impact to be achieved. In addition, they have the credibility within the organization that is needed to move the work forward.	A key liaison has been identified and charged with approving the scope of work. This person is regularly accessible and offers input on the project. However, this person may not have the authority, legitimacy and/or bandwidth to ensure that all project supports are in place as needed. They may also lack clarity around how the work connects to other organizational initiatives.	The actual person responsible for championing the work is unclear and/or may have changed since the initial planning phase. They are not easily accessible and/or may have a different understanding of the rationale for the work, and desired outcomes. This person may also lack decision-making authority and/or credibility within the organization.	No sponsorship has been identified. Those who initiated the partnership may lack understanding around the sponsor's role. There may also be some internal confusion around how to navigate the organizational structure in moving the work forward. More guidance and direct communication is needed.

Related intake questions

- Which organizational leaders will provide oversight to the work? What do you envision their role to be?
- Is there anything to consider regarding organizational structures and norms that may impact our collaborative work?
- Specifically, what types of support and decision-making will this leader be held responsible for? By whom?

PSI.3 Collaboration

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
Collaboration <i>Shared ownership over the problem of practice, the journey towards solution-based outcomes, and reciprocal learning</i>	There is a shared sense of ownership by all stakeholders over the implementation of strategies that address the problem of practice, as evidenced by ongoing progress monitoring and discussions focused on impact and improvement. A relationship rooted in reciprocal learning has been fostered through the regular sharing of new insights.	Onsite project leaders and participants view themselves as equally accountable for project success, but at times place a greater responsibility on the project director for evaluating progress and initiating modifications. Project leaders generally prepare materials and communicate with participants, but are less likely to identify needed adjustments.	Project leaders and participants are very much hands off and heavily reliant on direction from the CEL team. Agreed upon actions are not always implemented with fidelity. Efforts to offer new learning to the partnership are minimal and there are often gaps in communication around future iterations of the work.	Project leaders and participants are often disengaged from the scope of work, relying on members of the other group to make meaning of CEL-led content. There is no accountability for the agreed upon project outcomes nor are there mechanisms in place to measure success.

Related intake questions

- Who will be involved in the work? What are your expectations for participants and onsite leaders?
- What is your vision for monitoring progress, sharing feedback, and making adjustments to improve outcomes?
- How will you ensure that the agreed upon scope of work is implemented with fidelity? What systems may be put in place to support this?

PSI.4 Change-Oriented

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
Change-Oriented <i>Willingness to change current systems of practice, based on new learning, in the pursuit of continuous improvement</i>	Project leaders and participants display a positive disposition towards changes in practice and may have previously engaged in cycles of continuous improvement in other areas. They demonstrate a growth mindset and are willing to adjust behaviors and beliefs as a result of new learnings. The need for both adaptive and technical change is understood.	Project leaders recognize the need for change in areas to be addressed through work with CEL, but may view certain barriers to change as insurmountable. Both project leaders and participants may focus more on the need for others to change in lieu of examining the factors that are within their own control.	Project leaders and/or participants demonstrate behaviors that indicate they are resistant to change, i.e. blaming factors outside of their control for the root causes of their problem. They may also exhibit a heavy emphasis on technical changes rather than adaptive ones, with the expectation of immediate results.	Project leaders and/or participants lack a desire to change practice and may view the goals for the scope of work as aspirational, but not realistic. They may often speak negatively of the capacity of both the adults and children they serve, lacking a positive mindset around continuous improvement.

Related intake questions

- Tell me about the leaders who will be engaging in this work. Are they responsive to feedback? Do they welcome change?
- What are some ways in which leaders currently receive feedback? (i.e. one-one-coaching, evaluations peer observation, etc.)
- Please share any examples that would help us better understand the change culture within the organization.

PSI.5 Cohesion

Indicators	Rubric Descriptors			
	Clear Evidence (3)	Some Evidence (2)	Limited Evidence (1)	No Evidence (0)
<p>Cohesion</p> <p><i>Recognizes the relationship between the project and the larger organizational strategy, clearly aligns the work with ongoing initiatives</i></p>	<p>Partner liaison/project leader can articulate where CEL's work fits within its larger strategic plan and why the scope of work is essential to ongoing projects and initiatives. There is a clear understanding of how the work with CEL is expected to evolve over time, and the impact this will have on other strategic efforts.</p>	<p>Partner liaison/project leader is able to connect the scope of work to other current priorities. There is evidence that working with CEL is part of a larger vision. Additional data is needed to understand how the partner's various initiatives influence each other and the modifications that may need to be made in order to achieve competing goals.</p>	<p>Partner liaison/project leader provides some rationale around how the project enhances other initiatives, but is unable to articulate a cohesive vision for how they will collectively drive the desired outcomes. The goals and objectives for other initiatives may also be unclear.</p>	<p>Partner liaison/project leader is unable to articulate how partnering with CEL supports its strategic vision and how achieved outcomes will reinforce other initiatives. The partner may lack a clear strategic plan and ongoing organizational efforts may be independent of each other.</p>

Related intake questions

- How will the proposed scope of work with CEL fit into the organization's larger strategic plan?
- What specific goals and objectives will our collective work address?
- What are some other initiatives currently being implemented that may serve to reinforce and/or be influenced by our work?

Appendix C – Feedback on Mission Exercise

What are your hopes and/or fears, if any, around this notion of a “mission & identity” refresh?

“I hope that we will be fearless in stating what we believe we're about and not shy away from words or phrases that may make some uncomfortable.”

“I hope that we really focus on who we are, why our organization exists, and who we really want to serve given our expertise and that these truths about us drive our mission and the way we shape our work and structure moving forward. My fear is that we just come up with a statement and keep doing what we are doing.”

“No real fears. My hope is that our revised mission is emotive and resonates strongly with our partners in the field.”

“I fear that we won't have the "difficult" and "crucial" conversations that need to take place in order to have an authentic mission that fully captures what we want the organization to be. I hope that the new mission will guide our decision making and measures of impact. I hope that everyone will participate and feel fully involved in the process.”

“I hope that we're able to really get clear on what we do and how we do it. My biggest fear is not getting clear or specific enough about what we do. I really want to refresh to impact on other work that rests on getting clear about our mission.”

“Hope: That it will energize our staff - be broad enough to be timeless yet list our particular levers so it can not just inspire and guide our day to day but we can all feel impactful. Each of us knowing the role we play in bringing the mission to fruition. Fear: Striking the balance between not taking too long and yet devoting the appropriate amount of time to do it right.”

“I hope that our new mission will be one that we can be fearless about. I also am hopeful that through our logic modeling, or other methods, we will be able to measure our impact!”

“Hopes - recommitment to our work and why we are here. Clearer focus on students throughout our work.”

“I am hopeful that the process of refreshing our "mission and identity" allows the people who work at CEL to speak their opinions, to learn from each other and to create a mission and identify that will provide hope and inspiration to our partners. I heard at Home Days that there may be an untapped wealth of knowledge and that all skills of the people who work at CEL may not be acknowledged or leveraged to the benefit of the worker and the organization. I do not know of any fears that I have. Thank you for doing this work.”

“My hope is that we take this as an opportunity to think deeply about what kind of organization we want to evolve into. I hope that we hold a mirror to ourselves personally and organizationally to candidly discuss who we are and what we want to become.”

“No fears! Looking forward to developing a true mission statement. Our current mission statement, as I think everyone acknowledges, is actually a pretty good vision statement -- it has served us well!”

Appendix D – Personal Mission Statement Exercise (Vimeo Transcript)

I'd like to take the next 60 seconds to talk about my personal mission statement and how it has evolved.

Before my doctoral program, I was leading programming for Citizen Schools where we partnered with local public middle schools to provide students with career-based apprenticeships. This included coding, web design, publishing, investment banking, and more.

If you would have asked me what led me to this work I would have said my personal mission statement was to: ***Provide students with access to experiential learning experiences that would influence post-secondary decisions.***

Um...that's a mouthful. Restating this in 5 words (something that I was challenged to do during a recent CoMotion workshop) - ***Create meaningful student intern opportunities.***

My time at Harvard changed this focus. After spending 3 years with education leaders and engaging in cross-sector projects with students from various disciplines, my personal mission has changed. I firmly believe that we cannot discuss impact and innovation in K-12 education without discussing housing policy, neighborhood change, healthcare, our justice system, higher ed, the corporate sector, etc. Therefore, my focus is now on collective impact.

Sounds great! But still too ambiguous. Reframing it into a statement...my personal mission is to... ***Design and lead cross-sector initiatives that foster academic success, social emotional well-being, and self-empowerment for historically underserved students.***

Stated this way, I've included...

The value you create + who you're creating it for + the expected outcome

I'll leave you with this. This is not an exemplar, but an example. I'm hoping that it feeds your learning and I look forward to hearing your own personal mission statement. Thank you.

Appendix E – Bellevue School District Focus Group/Interview Protocol

1. Describe your role as it currently stands. What are your priority buckets of work? Who sets these priorities?
2. Think in terms of a pie chart. How is your time spent? For example, how much of your time is spent supporting teachers, communicating expectations, school culture, etc.
3. Currently, what would you describe as the greatest needs of Bellevue principals when it comes to improving student outcomes?
4. How is your success as a principal evaluated? How do <i>you</i> measure your success? How do you receive feedback on your performance? In what ways are you able to measure positive changes in your own practice?
5. What are some of the school-based protocols or processes you have in place for both providing and receiving feedback?
6. Describe the ways you are supported in your professional learning. In what ways do you learn (what structures, who leads, why)?
7. To what extent is the central office a partner in your efforts to achieve equitable outcomes for students? a. In what ways does the central office add value to your efforts? b. In what ways does the central office need to improve to better support you?
8. One of the goals that has been shared for Bellevue’s collective work as a district, is strategic alignment. What does this mean to you? Any thoughts on the steps to be taken in achieving this?

Appendix F – Chief Strategy Officer Role Description (draft)

Working title: Chief Strategy Officer or Strategy Officer,

Job Class:

Center for Educational Leadership (CEL)

College of Education

100% FTE

Description:

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) at the University of Washington College of Education is a nationally recognized thought leader providing research-based services to schools and school districts. From instructional leadership, central office transformation, school turnaround, content coaching solutions, CEL partners with school systems to address achievement gaps by developing the capacity of leaders and teachers to improve instruction for all students.

The Center is a self-sustaining, non-profit organization located in the Northgate area of Seattle with revenue of five million dollars. The staff consists of 22 people supplemented by an extensive staff of outside contractors.

The Center has an outstanding opportunity for a Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) with proven success in working with others to develop and execute critical internal and external strategies. The CSO will work closely with the Executive Director to provide strategic leadership and management to the organization.

This new position comes at an exciting juncture in the Center's evolution. Joining a new Executive Director and leadership structure the CSO will play a lead a role in developing strategic direction to deepen our impact and broaden our scale based upon 17 years of successfully working side-by-side by with teachers, leaders, and state level officials.

This position reports to the Executive Director and is a key member of the Center's executive management and leadership teams.

Responsibilities:

- Collaborate closely with the Executive Director and the Leadership Team to develop short and long term strategic priorities along with annual measures of success.
- Develop and implement an approach, tools, and processes that support disciplined organizational focus and includes clear goals, tactics, milestones, metrics for tracking success.
- Lead the Center's efforts at impact and improvement through leading efforts to measure and document impact along with developing continuous improvement and organizational learning processes.
- Oversee and support the development and implementation of a project management system.
- Oversee the marketing, communication, and partnership development functions to ensure alignment with the Center's strategic goals.
- Serve as key member of Executive Management Team with a strong voice in determining strategic direction and staffing of the organization. Ensure Executive

Management Team is provided with relevant information needed to make informed decisions.

- Act as a liaison to critical stakeholders including foundation program officers, state department of education leaders, and UW COE faculty.
- What else, if anything, makes sense to add here??

Key Qualifications:

The Chief Strategy Officer should possess the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- Significant experience leading and supporting complex change in a national or regional organization.
- Experience in strategic planning, strategy implementation, and continuous learning and improvement.
- Strong knowledge of project management principles.
- Ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously: reliable and competent at prioritizing and adjusting timetables based on demand and circumstances.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and develop others to become strong strategic and tactical leaders.
- Experience in a role requiring a collaborative attitude and behavior in a complex organization and working with external organizations.
- Proven ability to achieve results. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Possesses active sense of curiosity and proven ability to work with ambiguity.
- Strong interpersonal skills including excellent writing, oral, and presentation skills.
- A passion for CEL's mission and a desire to support the Center's work in the field.

Appendix G – CEL Fellow Project Description

Scope of Work:

Year 1: Working closely with CEL project directors you will:

- Develop an understanding of CEL’s theory of action, partnership stance, key frameworks and tools, and services.
- Create a database of CEL’s partners including demographic and student achievement data.
- Create protocols for CEL staff to learn and improve from partnership progress data and problems of practice.
- Determine criteria for and study and internally report on the impact of two CEL partnerships.
- Publish an analysis of key findings from the project and recommend next steps and actions for Year 2.
- Conduct literature reviews of the research underlying CEL’s key services.

Year 2:

- Develop a prototype and pilot a method(s) for CEL project directors for gathering and reporting interim progress data.
- Develop methods and approaches for capturing progress and impact data in the form of case studies for internal learning and improvement.
- Create methods for sharing and displaying CEL impact data to support thought leadership, grant applications and general marketing purposes.
- Report on findings through a variety of medium including blog posts and local public forums.
- Support the development of logic models for CEL’s key services.

Impact:

Through this Fellowship, you will have an opportunity to support CEL in learning and improving from the collection and use of impact data. Doing this within a nationally recognized organization will support the broader field in better understanding the role that external technical assistance providers can play in addressing achievement disparities. Additionally, the Fellow will have opportunities to develop and share findings with potential to impact local school districts.

Supervisor:

Dr. Anneke Markholt, Associate Director

Appendix H – State Policy Legislation: School and District Leadership Development

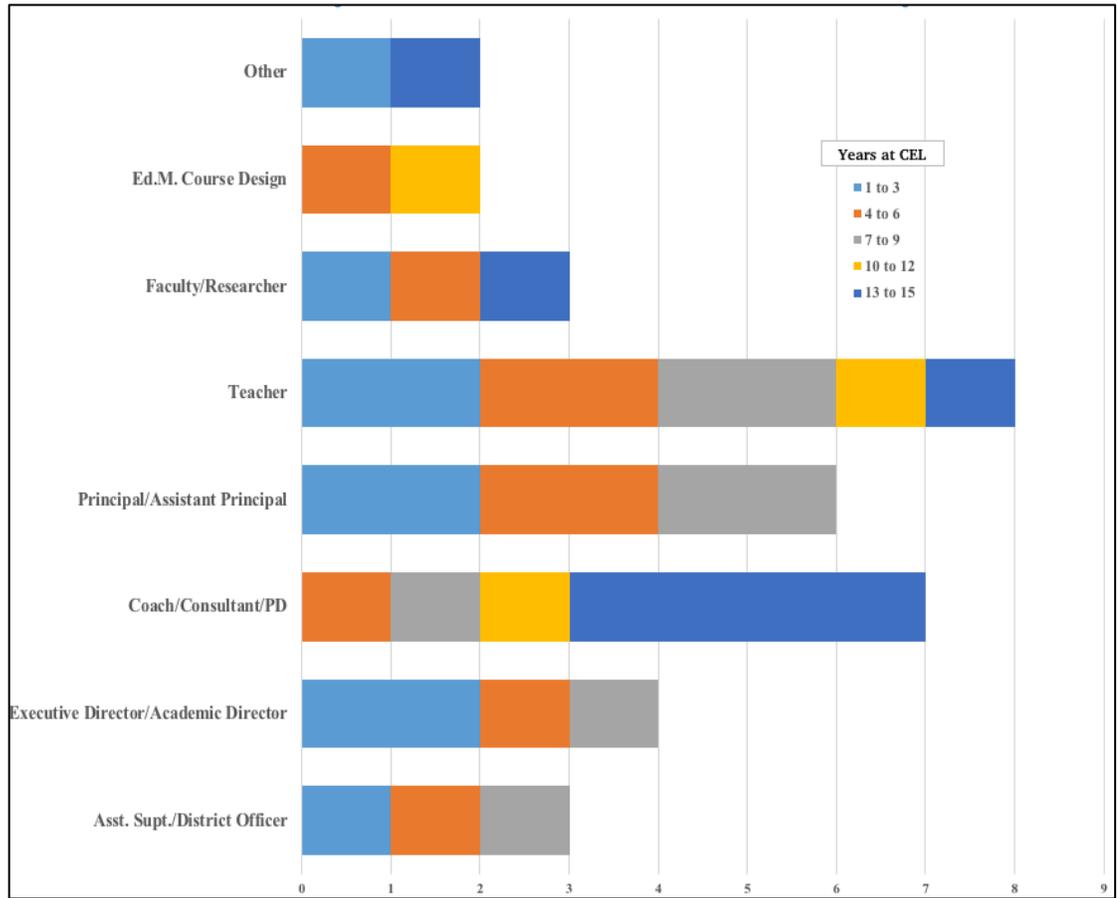
Legislation/Date	Requirements	Questions & Considerations
<p>California Senate Bill 113 Aug. 2017</p>	<p>Appropriates funds to provide grants to support districts in providing continued learning for principals and leaders in high need schools “up to \$11,327,000 shall be provided to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing through an interagency agreement for a competitive grant program that assists local educational agencies in attracting and supporting the preparation and continued learning of teachers, principals, and other school leaders in high-need subjects and schools”</p>	<p>How will this influence the districts CEL chooses to work with in the future? How does California define “high-need school” and how does this compare to the schools/districts CEL is currently partnering with? To ensure that CEL remains true to their current mission, should CEL consider criteria for district partners that includes those with disparities in student achievement.</p>
<p>Georgia House Bill 338 April 2017</p>	<p>“establishes a joint committee — charged with studying the establishment of a leadership academy — to provide opportunities for principals and other school leaders to update and expand their knowledge and skills.”</p>	<p>Who will build the capacity of Chief Turnaround Officer to lead a team of turnaround coaches? Does this present an opportunity for CEL?</p> <p>Emphasis is placed on identifying “all state resources and supports available to the lowest-performing schools in the greatest need of assistance.” This presents an opportunity for CEL to build relationships at the state level, i.e. State School Superintendent and the Office of Student Achievement, in an effort to achieve maximum impact across districts.</p>
<p>Nevada Senate Bill 155 June 2017</p>	<p>“appropriates funds to design and implement educational leadership training programs as a cooperative effort between the state department of education, the Clark County Public Education Foundation, school districts statewide and other partners.”</p>	<p>\$500,000 appropriated for each of two consecutive years. Recommendations for use of funds includes virtual learning and data system design. NYCLA is partnering with Clark County. What can CEL learn from them?</p>

<p>Washington Senate Bill 5883 June 2017</p>	<p>\$4,892,000 - Misc. - Federal Appropriation for ESSA\$477,000 of state appropriation for 2019 are “provided solely for the leadership internship program for superintendents, principals, and program administrators.</p>	<p>During an OSPI meeting, feedback was shared around the disproportionate number of educators of color being limited to non-instructional leadership roles. There is an opportunity for CEL to look at equity through a much broader lens by considering a local leadership academy, one year or multi-year, with an emphasis on leaders of color. Several districts have expressed challenges with attracting and retaining leaders of color. There is an opportunity to partner with UW’s Brotherhood Initiative, a collaborate partnership with the COE and other departments.</p> <p>In response to ESSA funding appropriations - consider statewide/Northwest leadership academy for school and district leaders. This should include a cohort model and be supported by virtual learning opportunities and job embedded strategic projects.</p>
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Appendix I – Local and National Foundation Priorities

Foundation Areas of Focus	Recent Grantees (w/emphasis on universities and PD providers)
<p>The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation <i>Grants are not made outside of current funding priorities</i></p> <p>Education Focus Areas/Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Education pathways</i> ▪ <i>Early learning</i> ▪ <i>Teacher and principal evaluation</i> 	<p><u>University of California, Los Angeles</u> - \$1,500,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To support student engagement (11/2017) <p><u>New York University</u> - \$2,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To explore higher ed. applications of AI/VR, to solve challenges in for 1st generation, low income, and underrepresented minority students (11/2017) <p><u>Puget Sound Educational Service District</u> - \$1,650,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To support Educare and high-quality programming and supports for children and families in the Road Map region (11/2017) <p><u>New Leaders</u> - \$1,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To support model to develop transformational school leaders (10/2017)
<p>Raikes Foundation <i>Must be classified as 501(c)(3). However, UW CEL is considered a public organization designated under section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.</i></p> <p>Education Focus Areas/Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Science of learning</i> ▪ <i>School system redesign</i> ▪ <i>Education policy</i> 	<p><u>Transcend, Inc.</u> - \$1,000,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Equitable Learning Environments Network (9/2017, Year 2 & 3) <p><u>The University of Chicago</u> - \$300,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Equitable Learning Environments Network (9/2017, Year 2) <p><u>Indiana University</u> - \$333,895</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moving Beyond Changing Mindsets: Creating a Culture of Growth in Schools (7/2017, Year 2)
<p>Ballmer Group <i>Applications for grants are by invitation only.</i></p> <p>Focus Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Washington State</i> ▪ <i>Los Angeles County</i> ▪ <i>Detroit Tri-County Region</i> 	<p><u>StriveTogether</u> - \$60 million (over 6 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cradle to Career Network (10/2017) <p><u>College Possible</u> - \$20 million</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Catalyze (support for coaching and mentoring low-income students) 9/2017 <p><u>Communities in Schools</u> - \$15 million over five years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dropout prevention (7/2017)

Appendix J – CEL Staff Experience



Appendix K – Balanced Scorecard

Performance Indicator	Performance Measures	Target (by June 2018)	Strategy	Priority Projects
Goal 1 Be recognized as a national thought leader, known for making great teachers, school leaders and central office leaders improve outcomes for all students.				
Impact & Influence  <i>Measures the outcomes of our work, the influence on our partners, and implications for the sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of partners reporting evidence-based improvement in student achievement % of partners reporting evidence-based improvement in instructional leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify metrics to measure change in student achievement and leadership effectiveness in ___% of partnerships ___ percentage point increase in MILE sub-dimension averages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect longitudinal data on s performance Build an internal dashboard that captures growth over time Anticipate IES results and develop plan for marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission & Identity Refresh Balanced Scorecard Partner Case Studies (?) IES Impact Study Impact & Improvement Team
Goal 2 Be a great place to work that attracts, develops and retains the best and brightest people.				
Organizational Climate  <i>Measures employee satisfaction, team culture, commitment to diversity, and demonstration of core values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of positive agreement on health and wellness Survey indicators % of employee retention % of employees from underrepresented groups, both on staff and in leadership roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___% increase in positive statements along key areas (3) 90% employee retention 100% of employees complete PLPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase goal transparency Identify opportunities for organizational learning, innovation, and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning Plan (PLP) Succession Planning Talent Mapping
Stakeholder Engagement  <i>Measures partnership retention, market share, UW connectedness, and external grantor support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of partnerships retained Avg rating of CEL-led sessions # of grants funded projects # of new markets explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___% partnership retention rate Two (2) grant-funded initiatives Entry into 2-3 new markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase partner retention Secure grant funding to support professional service lines Identify target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Strength Index
Goal 3 Ensure funding meets or exceeds our costs on a biennial basis.				
Financial Strength  <i>Measures the relationship between revenue, operating costs, and reserves</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of \$100K+ contracts generated # of MILE Assessments sold # of new license agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure at least three (3) \$100K+ partnership contracts Sell 1,000+ MILEs Contract 1-2 new licensees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure multi-year partnerships Foster increased interest and investment in MILE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AASA Stuart Foundation MILE system launch
Goal 4 Innovate products, programs and delivery methods in the k-12 marketplace in order to stay competitive and increase our impact.				
Research & Innovation  <i>Measures knowledge management, product design, and implementation of practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of opportunities for cross-sharing new learning # of service field tests # of evidence-based practices driving initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of staff shares new learning Field test 1-2 new curricular tools and/or service lines (i.e. CSILA) Introduce 2-3 new, research-based strategies at SL1 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a multi-layered process for cross-sharing new learning Design a system for connecting current research to CEL practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Home Days Professional Learning Project Summer Leadership Institute
Goal 5 Be a learning organization where new knowledge is generated, captured and shared in order to increase our impact and internal capacity.				
Internal Operations  <i>Measures quality and efficiency of systems and processes, as well as degree of implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of accessibility and utilization % of reduction in processing time % of staff trained in new systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___% reduction in completion time of targeted operational tasks ___% access and engagement in training launch of new interface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop comprehensive information management system Upgrade employee website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal website development Landscape analysis Transition from I-Drive

Appendix L – Performance Review and Self Evaluation 2016-2017

NAME:

DATE:

1. As you reflect on this past year, what do you consider to be your most outstanding achievements?
2. What do you perceive as the biggest challenges for your work in the coming year?
3. Identify areas where you feel you need to improve. Then, identify what steps you are going to take to improve these areas.
4. How can your supervisor continue to help you achieve a higher level of performance?