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**Working Together to Build a Birth-to-College Approach to Public Education:
Forming a Partnership Between the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute
and the Ounce of Prevention Fund**

A Teaching Case Study



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

UEI URBAN
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the **Ounce**

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Introduction to the Partnership

In 2009, the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute¹ (UEI) and the Ounce of Prevention Fund² (the Ounce) embarked on an effort to form a partnership whose vision is to “...build a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and creates success in school, college, and life.”

UEI designed and operates four public charter school campuses offering families a pathway to college for their children that begins with prekindergarten (preK) and continues through high school. The Ounce created and operates the Educare School, which prepares at risk children from birth to age five for success in school. The partnership will initially demonstrate what it means when children begin their education early with Educare, enter UEI’s charter campuses for elementary, middle and high school, advance to college, and persist to graduation. Ultimately, the partnership plans to harness and share the academic expertise and real-world experience of members of both organizations. The goal is to collaboratively and continuously align and create instructional practices, and academic and social supports, to demonstrate a new model of public education that seamlessly and successfully prepares children for college, beginning at birth.

In the United States, early childhood education (ECE) is not publicly mandated. All children in the U.S. receive public schooling that generally begins with kindergarten. As a result, many children do not

have access to sufficient learning opportunities early in life, and may start kindergarten at a disadvantage.³ Given that K-12 attempts at closing the achievement gap are costly and generally ineffective,⁴ calls are being made to prevent the achievement gap from ever occurring. This requires intervention at a very young age, since differences in achievement based on income level can be seen as young as nine months and become larger by kindergarten.⁵ Even children who have been exposed to high quality ECE can experience a “fade” of those benefits upon entering K-12, depending on the quality of elementary school.⁶ For many children, the achievement gap begins to widen once again.

In the city of Chicago, high school graduation rates hover around 50 percent. Of those students who graduate, only 35 percent go on to attend four-year colleges and universities.⁷ The numbers grow even smaller for children who are African American, Latino, or low-income. The achievement gap that opens in early childhood tends to widen throughout K-12, and many children who start with a disadvantage at kindergarten never graduate from high school. If

1 <http://uei.uchicago.edu/>

2 <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/>

3 *Promoting Effective Early Learning: What Every Policymaker and Educator Should Know* (2007). New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.

4 *The Condition of Education 2004* (NCES 2004-077), Indicator 8 (2004). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

5 Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., & Vick, J. (2009). *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

6 Lee V., & Loeb, S. (1995). “Where do Head Start attendees end up? One reason why preschool effects fade out.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 17(1), 62-82.

7 <http://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/Reports/citywide.html>

they do, they are unlikely to attend and graduate from college. Higher education levels are related to higher incomes, lower levels of unemployment, and other positive outcomes.⁸ In order to be competitive in a world where a college degree is increasingly important, the United States must ensure that children graduate high school and are prepared to graduate from college .

Preventing an achievement gap and ensuring that the fade of benefits from high-quality ECE does not occur in elementary school, while at the same time raising the bar to “college for all,” requires collaboration between the worlds of ECE and K-12. In the United States, however, there exists a structural divide between the two fields. Despite the fact that they share similar goals for educating children, policies, standards, and funding streams contribute to a “disconnect.”

The partnership’s goals are to effect change in public education by creating a demonstration model of birth-to-grade 12 education that prepares students for success in college and life. In order to accomplish this, the two organizations will work together to share expertise, and align and co-create practices, to ensure the best possible chance for success for students. The partnership first needed to be established, strengthened, and trusted by key players from each organization—this was not a simple task.⁹ UEI and the Ounce began this effort by developing a roadmap that includes a shared vision and mission, core values, and goals and activities of the partnership.¹⁰ We focus here on the formation of the shared vision and mission, a document that represents the goals and aspirations of the partnership between the two organizations. In the service of creating this document, a working group comprised of educators, administrators, researchers, and teacher leaders

from each organization was formed. The working group used an iterative process, where they revised, questioned, and adjusted the roadmap during a series of ten three-hour meetings that took place over the course of nine months and were facilitated by a specialist. Working group members’ testimonies about their experiences participating in the group are referenced in this study. We will also review iterations of the shared vision and mission as they changed over time.¹¹

About the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (UEI)

UEI is dedicated to creating knowledge to produce reliably excellent schooling for all children growing up in urban America. UEI directly operates the four campuses of The University of Chicago Charter School, prepares teachers and leaders for success in an urban environment through the Urban Teacher Education Program (Chicago UTEP), and conducts research that is connected to day-to-day problems of practice in schools through the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR). UEI also creates innovative tools for literacy improvement and college readiness.

The four campuses of The University of Chicago Charter School create a preK-12th grade pathway for families on the South Side of Chicago.¹² North Kenwood/Oakland (NKO) (established 1998) and Donoghue (established 2005) educate students from prekindergarten to grade five. Carter G. Woodson (established 2008) educates children from grade six to eight and Woodlawn (established 2006) educates students from grade six to 12. In the fall of 2010, the four campuses enrolled more than 1700 students from prekindergarten to 12th grade. 98 percent of the students are African American and more than

8 http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

9 See Appendix A in the supplemental materials to this teaching case study for a calendar of activities completed so far.

10 See Appendix B in the supplemental materials for the roadmap as of June 25, 2010.

11 See Appendix C in the supplemental materials to this teaching case study for a more detailed methodology of the case study.

12 <http://www.uei-schools.org>

80 percent are eligible for free or reduced price meals. The mission of The University of Chicago Charter School is to prepare all students to attend and graduate from four-year colleges and universities. Most of the working group members from UEI have primary jobs and responsibilities associated with The University of Chicago Charter School.¹³

About the Ounce of Prevention Fund (the Ounce)

The Ounce is a champion for children from birth to age five who come from low-income families. It advocates and lobbies on behalf of this population at the local, state and federal level. In addition, the Ounce runs home visiting, doula, and Early Head Start/Head Start programs, offers training and technical assistance to ECE professionals throughout the state of Illinois, operates the Educare School on the South Side of Chicago, and created the Bounce Learning Network to launch Educare Schools across the country. The Ounce also conducts research and evaluation of these programs in order to improve them, as well as share knowledge gained from data, research, and professional experiences. Many of the working group members from the Ounce have primary jobs and responsibilities associated with the Educare School. Educare, a model ECE program that begins at birth or before (through a new prenatal program) and continues to age five, currently serves 149 children who come from 17 different zip codes throughout Chicago. The goal of Educare is to prepare at-risk children for success in elementary school by providing rigorous, developmentally appropriate instruction and family support.¹⁴

Understanding the history of the partnership

UEI approached the Ounce about the possibility of forming a partnership in April 2009. Both organizations share common ground on three points that are key to the partnership: 1) The goal of a unified and coherent ECE-to-kindergarten pathway; significantly, this goal became solidified and expanded into a birth-to-college model during the process of forming a shared vision and mission. 2) A strong belief in the importance of partnering with families for educating children. 3) A desire to effect change within public education that is based on educational practices driven by research, professional knowledge, and evaluation. When approaching these three goals, each organization specializes in a particular age range: the Ounce has expertise and experience in birth-to-age 5 education research and practice, and UEI in preK-12.

Following the initial meeting, teachers and leaders from each of the two organization's schools visited one another. UEI teachers and leaders visited Educare in May and July of 2009. The Ounce and Educare teachers and leaders visited NKO in June 2009 and Donoghue in July 2009.

In June 2009, Brenda Eiland-Williford, the Ounce director of programs and curricula, and Linda Wing, UEI director of schools and community engagement, met to discuss the idea of the working group, and came to an agreement that a facilitator would be necessary for creating the shared vision and mission. In July, Harry Davis, creative management expert at the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago, was identified as a facilitator. In September, appropriate and interested working group members were identified by each organization, and the first meeting was held in October.

¹³ See Appendix D in the supplemental materials to this teaching case study to this teaching case for more information about the members of the working group.

¹⁴ <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/educare/chicago.pp>

Finding common ground

Creating a vision for students

At the outset of the partnership, both organizations shared the goal of a unified and coherent ECE-to-kindergarten pathway. Claire Dunham, the Ounce senior vice president of programs, notes, “To me, this means we’re not sending our kids off a cliff, but we have a line of sight to where are they going. It’s so disappointing when they go to a poorly functioning school. It’s great to have a lot of data about the children together, but for each individual child, this is their whole life—it’s being formed in this early stage, so it makes a huge difference to each one individually and that’s really what the point is.” As the working group meetings progressed, that goal became expanded and solidified into a birth-to-college model. As Nicole Woodard Iliev, director of the University of Chicago Charter School Donoghue Elementary Campus, says, “I want us to break down some of the barriers to access, so that we have all of these resources along the way that help children be successful, and so we have a set of options that are equitable to people who come into the world with more economic resources.”

Sharing a deep commitment to families

Important common ground between the two organizations is the value placed upon honoring and building upon families’ strengths. The importance of families is a standard in ECE because it is impossible to educate very young children without partnering with their families. Debra Pacchiano, the Ounce director of research to practice, describes the language used in ECE to refer to families: “In ECE, a mainstay is the word ‘support’—that you cannot promote child development and learning in an infant without supporting all of the caregivers. From the Ounce’s perspective, when we talk about families, we want to figure out a way to focus on the parent as

the child’s first and most consistent teacher, as well as take an honest look at the barriers in their life that keep them from being the parent that we all want to be.” Nicole Pace, Educare family support specialist, recognizes this as a “requirement of the relationship between the school and the family in ECE,” but notes, “in K-12, that doesn’t feel like it’s a priority. That’s a stereotype and a generalization about K-12, but it’s a pretty deep and engrained one nonetheless. My mother’s a middle school teacher, and she bashes families all the time. It’s part of the rhetoric almost.”

In fact, many partnership members agreed with the sentiment that it is somewhat unique for K-12 schools to partner with families. Anita Harvey-Dixon, Educare site administrator, says, “In [K-12] schools, the importance of family is not always recognized; they’re not always made welcome. Sometimes you just drop your kids off and keep moving. Maybe you do parent-staff conferences and report card pickup and that’s it.” Instead of talking about partnerships or support, K-12 schools might use the language of “family involvement,” or, even more strikingly, they might not welcome families into their schools at all. Eiland-Williford notes, “[K-12] schools sometimes believe that families are not necessary. Some people think you can’t involve the family because you can’t control the family. There are some schools that don’t even want families in the school and that don’t encourage families to come into the schools.” When asked about the attitude schools traditionally have toward families, Tim Knowles, director of UEI, replies, “I can speak more to K-12 than I can to ECE, but public schools have been built to defend themselves, in many cases, from families penetrating them, which is ironic, at best. Because find me a really good public school serving kids growing up in urban America that isn’t engaging parents and families systematically in their daily life. The norm, sadly, is that parents can literally struggle to get through the door. They are kept at bay at the front desk when

they come to talk about their child or meet a teacher, or they're given volunteer jobs that look like sitting and doing security or Xeroxing, instead of actually engaging in teaching and learning."

This attitude often affects how parents and families think about schools and how they interact with them. Woodard Iliev says, "Families have many experiences that make them feel like they're not equal partners in schools or valuable to schools. First, in their own academic histories, they may have had mediocre educational experiences. Our families can speak really articulately about this, and how they've been treated in their children's schools as well. It starts from no one knowing who they are and who their kids are, to policies that reinforce the message that 'we don't want you here.' That's just heightened for families who may not have the same level of academic background that might leave them insecure in thinking about how to deal with school and schooling." Instead of making families feel this way, Eiland-Williford suggests that, "families need to feel like they are really valued and that we want to partner with them, and one foundational strategy we use involves the way that professionals interact with families. We don't want families to feel like we are judging them based on their 'risk factors' (some of which I actually believe are strengths). They have to believe that education professionals believe in and welcome their strengths."

The attitude toward families espoused by UEI and its associated schools is more in line with the attitude of those who provide ECE. "I don't know of a charter school that has a more ECE type of perspective on how they deal with families. So UEI has full-time staff devoted to family/community engagement. They look at families from a strengths-based perspective. That's ECE's standard of how to work with families," says Pacchiano. Knowles tells of how this attitude is

realized in The University of Chicago Charter School: "We eliminated the idea of an assistant principal, who is usually in charge of discipline, bus schedules, etc. We have a director of family and community engagement instead, who leverages the assets that families bring to serve academic and social development of the children in the schools. We have a deep view that this is critical to get it done at a very high level rather than just a superficial level."

Working toward large-scale education change

Based on data and professional experiences, individuals from both organizations believe that all children in the United States would benefit from a seamless, publicly funded birth-to-grade 12 education. They hope that, by providing information about the process and outcomes of the model they create, they will be able to help and encourage others to form such partnerships and ultimately change national attitudes about education. Diana Rauner, the Ounce executive director, says, "The thing I think we really have an opportunity to do here is to demonstrate to the larger field that 1) [a successful partnership between ECE and K-12] is possible, and 2) that there are more commonalities [between the two fields] than differences. If we can embrace a real birth-to-18 perspective, that a lot of the practices that both the birth-5 world and K-12 world have been assiduously cultivating can be shared and can flourish in either setting."

There are also goals for teachers, particularly within the field of ECE. Eiland-Williford says, "One hope I have is that the partnership will help to professionalize ECE. Even within the field of ECE, some of the teachers don't see themselves as professional as K-12 teachers. I see this as an opportunity to gain recognition and help professionalize teachers."

Overcoming challenges and stereotypes

Despite the fact that the fields of ECE and K-12 share many common goals for children, one major challenge facing the partnership involves the historical separation between the fields. “ECE and K-12 have been two separate silos. ECE is viewed more as childcare and tending to children’s social and emotional development, but [it isn’t always associated] with cognitive development. Childcare includes all three of these things. This is an important partnership because ECE programs don’t often communicate and partner with K-12 in a comprehensive way,” notes Eiland-Williford. Rauner suggests, “The difference between K-12 and ECE is really a construct of different funding streams. There’s really nothing from a human development, child development, cognitive development, or pedagogical standpoint that should cause differences. Philosophically we’re both trying to do the same thing.”

Perhaps as a result of this separation, misconceptions about each field have developed and become prevalent. “The U.S. views ECE not as school, not as a place where the ‘important skills of learning’ math, reading, science, and social studies occur. People think the kids are playing, and the real learning starts when they get into kindergarten. Some families even prefer to put their kids into a preschool that’s attached to an elementary school because at least then they’re ‘in the system’,” says Eiland-Williford. Conversely, those in the field of ECE may see K-12 education as a behemoth that might try to swallow them up.¹⁵ There are also sometimes sentiments expressed that, when ECE does a good job with the achievement gap, K-12 later allows it to re-open. Establishing trust so that these and other misconceptions and stereotypes can be called into question is an essential first step in establishing a working relationship where the two organizations, coming from “separate galaxies” (as Wing puts it), merge to form a true partnership.¹⁶



15 A discussion about using the term “align” in the shared vision and mission follows later in this case study and focuses on this particular misconception.

16 Working group members’ reactions to the shared vision and mission, when asked during interviews for this case study, are captured in Appendix E of the supplemental materials to this teaching case.

Building a Partnership: Growing from “Us” to “We”

Lessons learned from past failure

A previous unsuccessful attempt to build a partnership with a different ECE organization provided UEI with some key lessons about what is required to successfully build a working foundation for such a partnership.

In 2005, when UEI opened its Donoghue elementary campus with prekindergarten for three- and four-year-old children, it did so in partnership with a community-based organization (CBO). The CBO had access to the four funding streams necessary to launch a prekindergarten program at that time; UEI did not. It was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; Donoghue was a start up endeavor. The CBO had staying power as demonstrated by its 100-year-long history as a social service agency on the South Side of Chicago. And even though the history of the University of Chicago on Chicago’s South Side is equally extensive, three years later the partnership ended.

The partnership was unsuccessful for three key reasons: 1) Instead of engaging in dialogue and in-depth discussion leading to the co-creation of a common language and a shared vision, UEI and the CBO made assumptions. The two organizations assumed they shared precisely the same vision because they were both committed to serving families in the same neighborhood. This would prove to be a misconception. The CBO’s big picture was framed by federal, state, and city rules and regulations; that of UEI was not. 2) Instead of collaborating, aligning, and addressing the challenges that separate the fields of ECE and K-12 areas, UEI delegated responsibility for ECE to the CBO, while the CBO delegated K-12 to UEI. Rather than doing the hard work of

proactively studying the sectoral divides and developing a plan for addressing them, both organizations believed division of labor and the good intentions of the partnership would be enough to enable them to address the structural and cultural differences that characterize ECE and K-12, if and when they surfaced. 3) Instead of working intentionally to ensure an equitable partnership, the two organizations operated on perceptions. UEI worked under the assumption that a merger was occurring. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to UEI, the CBO saw the partnership as an acquisition. The perceived and real power differentials were not addressed honestly and early enough to ensure they did not occur. As a result of the missteps, the partnership was unable to work successfully through unexpected costs, differing organizational perspectives and structures, and policies that disconnect ECE and K-12.

Wing explains: “At the highest level, at 36,000 feet, the two organizations did have a common vision and mission, but it was in global terms. However, instead of building shared knowledge and understanding, each organization relied on the other’s expertise. Eventually we realized, on the ground, that we were using the same terms but we did not mean the same things by those terms.” In other words, definitions and connotations associated with certain terms were not co-created or even discussed by members of both organizations involved in the partnership. Wing notes, “We learned it’s very important not to assume anything and that it’s essential to co-create meaning with those we enter into partnerships with.” Building shared meaning, then, is an integral building block in the foundation of this type of partnership. Wing says, “This time, we are forming the partnership much more carefully and with support, including

having a facilitator at our working group meetings. Every time we have a meeting we look at every single word again. Each iteration has been important and has revealed something new about each field and the specific people and organizations.”

Moving from creative tension to trust

Rauner conveys the importance of working hard to build the foundation of a partnership over time. She says, “Most healthy organizations have strong cultures of one kind or another. Merging culture, getting to a place where people can work together while they live in different cultures—that’s hard work. So taking the time to do that in a way where everyone feels valued is, I think, critically important.” Woodard Iliev notes that the process gave the working group “a level of buy-in that came from going through the process, which was long and sometimes painful.” For the two groups coming from disparate fields, Pacchiano says that the meetings “allowed us to see the similarities in each other, and that was a metaphor for the bridgework that had to happen [to connect ECE and K-12].” According to Schwartzman Zimmer, UEI director of strategic initiatives, “We’ve worked extremely hard at building trust, and met with large success at this point. But it’s been going on for a while; we started almost a year ago. We had to work through all of these different kinds of skeptical concerns, about who’s going to be the main influence, what change are we talking about, what do certain words mean . . . Linda [Wing] knew from early on that we would need a facilitator.”

Harry Davis facilitated the working group meetings. Davis, an expert in creative management, is neutral to ECE and K-12, and is from a different field altogether. According to Pace, “To really do the work, you need a neutral person who can bring the two value systems to the table and let them be heard. No one from one field or the other could lead that in a way that would be perceived as unbiased.” Davis

asked working group members to clearly verbalize their own meanings of jargon and other terms during discussions. Pacchiano notes, “I think it was very important that that facilitation came from someone not in the field of education, but instead from someone who understands bargaining and innovation in business. Because he didn’t know the field, we got chances to put something tacit into words.” Davis also often posed a hypothetical situation of a person discovering the shared vision and mission from a lay perspective. He asked the group to discuss and evaluate whether it would be understandable to the person and whether it would accurately convey their intentions. “Harry [Davis] helped us to think about how we would share the vision and mission with other people and with each other,” Teyona James, primary literacy coordinator at Donoghue, notes.

At an early meeting, in October 2009, the facilitator had everyone create a pictorial representation of her or his idea of what the partnership would look like. Pacchiano says, “I would say, for 90 percent of us, [representing things artistically] was not how we go through life. But he insisted that there was no wrong way of trying to channel our words into a picture or image. That happened in the first session, and I think because we all had to move through our own anxieties about that, there was a baseline of experience from where to begin to share our experiences. It was unsettling and a kind of shared vulnerable experience for all of us.” Everyone shared their drawings and explained them to the group. The drawing that the group chose as a particularly good representation of the partnership, as envisioned at the outset, is shown below. Three circles represent one organization on the left, the other on the right, and a third circle (the partnership) interlocking them in the middle. Within the spaces created by the lines of the circles, different colors represent shared ground between the organizations, areas of tension between them, and areas where new ground will be created. The whole structure rests on a colorful, energetic, electric foundation, and the working group is responsible for building that foundation.

During typical working group meetings, the facilitator started by having the members simply check in with each other, according to Harvey-Dixon. “It’s very caring. We just check in [with important events happening in each other’s lives] and re-establish the relationship... He helped us to move into a [personal] relationship with each other,” she says. Eiland-Williford said that the methods Davis used to help members see common ground were “strategic and intentional. Even he would ask about what’s going on in your life, and I would just talk about my daughter because she’s about to start high school and I’m so proud of her. We could start to see how we were similar. That helps you build a commonality. These kinds of discussion are relevant—you can’t do this work with a group of strangers.” James comments, “Because there were two separate organizations with the same goals but getting there in different ways, the facilitator was a definite plus to have because he helped us to meet in the middle. He helped us to get to that common ground.”

Working norms were established over the first few meetings, according to Wing. She says, “We have a constant core of people at every meeting. Our working norms call for us to actually review the work that we have done before, literally word for word. There is really thorough discussion... Everybody has to put forward the logic and values behind what they’re proposing.” The facilitator encouraged group members to acknowledge creative tensions arising from the discussion, and to work through them together as honestly as possible. Wing provides a specific example of this: “At certain points, we did experience creative tension about what is meant by the term ‘accelerating student learning.’ The facilitator was the one that could tell that some tension was starting to happen. He’s the one that can bring it to the surface, because he doesn’t have a vested interest

in either viewpoint. So he can do it objectively. If there’s an elephant in the room, he’ll point it out or if he senses someone is being silent—and everyone can sense it—he makes it safe for that person to speak by prompting them in an appropriate way.” Woodard Iliev notes, “He did a good job not letting us leave places where there was still tension, discomfort, or difficulty for anyone in the room. Because we didn’t leave those places, we were much more willing to go there in the next conversation, knowing we could get through it and come to some decision.” Harvey-Dixon says that the nature of the discourse within the working group meetings changed over time. She says, “He pulled in areas where he identified tension. He pressed us to really have open and candid conversations. At the beginning we were very reserved and quiet. If we had maintained that type of relationship we couldn’t move to where we needed to be.”

During the working group meeting, Eiland-Williford says, members were encouraged by the facilitator to “open up our thinking and react to each thing. It encouraged us to differ about things and to ask questions of each other and be respectful even when we disagreed.” Harvey-Dixon notes that, “[The facilitator] helped us to go against some of the myths we have about each other’s organizations by making us face and discuss it. We began to vocalize and acknowledge stereotypes. He was always acknowledging the elephant in the room. So you acknowledge it and then get over it. Once you say it, it becomes disempowered. So then you can move further from there.” This process of intense discussion relied on, and also strengthened, both professional and personal trust within the working group. Says Eiland-Williford, “As we did the work, as people talked, I could trust that people knew what they were talking about. I was in a group of people who were just as passionate and knowledgeable, all in different

ways, so that I can even learn from the experience. Over time, I became excited about wanting to be there and be part of the group.” As this trust grew, it became increasingly easier for the group to have difficult or potentially uncomfortable conversations in an environment of honesty and respect. Pace suggested that this climate ensured that, “everybody at the table could admit that better was possible, that no one is doing it perfectly.”

Embodying the goal of alignment

Over time, participating in the working group led to a feeling of a true partnership: a “we-ness”, as Eiland-Williford calls it. According to her, “All those meetings helped us to get to know each other. Where we were struggling over words, it helped us to get to know personalities. To be in the same place, struggling with the same thing, helps to develop the working relationship. Resolving and compromising is part of the process, which will help you work together better later. Going through this builds a relationship, a togetherness and “we-ness.” Schwartzman Zimmer notes that this “we-ness” has been noticed by the leadership of the organizations at meetings where leadership and working group members are all present. “Now we’re at the point that we know and trust each other so much that we feel really as one and are very comfortable at expressing our concerns. We recently had a meeting with the leaders of UEI and Ounce and they were struck by the sense of unity and camaraderie that had been created,” she says.

The goals of the partnership center on the creation of a seamless transition between schools operated by each of the two organizations. Working group members believe that the group “needs to be at the ‘we’ in order to be able to do that,” says Eiland-Williford. By this point, says Pacchiano, “No one in our group would really care who goes first or who goes second in the line-up, because we’re just so past

that in our group. The important thing is that where we move to will be a joint project—it will always be a ‘we’. We’ll embody our own alignment.”

Taking part in the iterative process or journey as a single group and becoming a “we” is reflected in the way the working group members came to represent themselves over time, particularly between iteration 6 and 7, presented below.

Iteration 6: 02.04.10

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model...

Iteration 7: 03.22.10

We will create a model...

Harvey-Dixon notes, “In the vision, you can actually see the changes in our relationships with each other. We started out as very formal and so each were formally named separately. When you get down to the ‘we’ it is when we’re in a relationship with one another; we’re doing this thing together. We still identify the agencies but the people who are doing the work are a ‘we’—something brand new. We no longer think of it as separate work. We have established the respect for each other and the relationship that we are a ‘we’.” Upon noticing the change in wording between iteration 6 and 7, Schwartzman Zimmer noted, “I realize, in looking at all of these iterations, you just see how dramatic that looks. But it didn’t feel dramatic when it happened.”

Unification through documentation

The final shared vision as of June 25, 2010 reads: “We will build a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and creates success in school, college, and life.” The final shared mission as of June 25, 2010 reads: “Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches, and academic and social supports, to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve.”¹⁶

The shared vision and mission of this partnership serves to provide a document to situate practical, technical aspects of the work in large-scale, long-term goals that emerged from common ground and extensive discussion between the two organizations. “Because we’re so used to being on our own turf, and we’ve been separate and are coming together, we need a foundation and common thinking to together go forward and work. It anchors you and gives you a basis for being together in what you both jointly believe,” Eiland-Williford says. As Woodard Iliev puts it, the shared vision and mission as a document will hopefully help to avoid “getting stuck in the little things and losing track of where you’re going. Without a common understanding of where we’re going, it would be kind of easy to get stuck in any one of these goals or values and not really accomplish anything.”

Part of co-creating a vision and mission that will guide a partnership includes ensuring that members of all organizations in the partnership agree on the meaning of the words and phrases used in the document. Wing notes, “Because we have a bold

vision and the two organizations come from almost different galaxies (even though we’re dedicated to the same goal), we use totally different structures and policies. Because of this, we think of things from different perspectives. We have to make sure that every word is clear to everyone in terms of the common understanding that we have about the concepts and the sentences, phrases, and words we use.”

Additionally, the shared vision and mission as a final product has to work to clearly and succinctly demonstrate the goals and activities of the partnership for people and agencies that are not involved in the working group. As Wing says, “We’re articulating something that most people have not thought of before—it’s so new that we need to be as clear as possible in order to get other people’s investment.” Additionally, staff and teachers “all have different opinions about each field. But the vision and mission help us to move forward. It’s something for the teachers and staff to hang on to. It has to be simple, and easy to share, easy to grasp,” according to Harvey-Dixon.



Evolution of the Partnership’s Shared Vision and Mission¹⁷

Agreeing on a common goal for students

At the outset of the partnership, the Ounce’s goal for Educare students was kindergarten readiness, while UEI’s goal for charter school students was college readiness. Over time, the thinking of the group expanded, and the common goal of a birth-to-college model of education emerged and solidified. All eight iterations of the vision and mission refer to building a model that will help children to succeed in school, college, and life. However, the way the shared vision and mission refer to the model’s role in this success changes over time. The iterations first name the goal of “providing the scaffolding” for success (iteration 1 and 2). Then, the wording changes to “lead[ing] to” success (iteration 3 through 6), followed by “ensuring” success (iteration 7). Finally, iteration 8 uses the phrase “creates success in school, college and life.”

Toward the end of the process, the group worked to remove and edit parts of the shared vision and mission to create a product that was concise, exact, and not redundant. To that end, in iteration 7, they removed a sentence that referred to a goal that their students achieve at high levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. Some working group members initially believed this was the ultimate goal, rather than college for all. After many conversations, the working group came to the consensus that while not all students will choose to go to college, the aim should be to prepare all students for the opportunity to do so.

A point of creative tension and discussion within the working group centered on whether or not ECE and K-12 should together strive to “enable student learning” or “accelerate student learning.” In iteration 2, the initial goal to “enable student learning”

was altered to “accelerate student learning,” which then remained through the rest of the iterations.

Iteration 1: 10.09.09

We will... [align] instructional approaches and academic and social supports that enable student learning...

Iteration 2: 10.20.09

We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports that accelerate student learning .

According to Pacchiano, “We started out with ‘enable’ because, all children can learn and we’re going to enable that learning to unfold. After we looked at the data, it wasn’t about letting learning unfold anymore. It became about accelerating.” Woodard Iliev notes, “There was a lot of conversation about this term [accelerate] [at every meeting], but we made that decision early on.” Working group members felt that the term “accelerate” also expresses the belief they hold that they, as adults who provide education, are responsible for student learning.

Harvey-Dixon characterizes the nature of the conversations surrounding the word “accelerate.” She says, “Trying to accelerate student learning from the ECE perspective is usually seen as a no-no because when you use terms like ‘accelerated student learning,’ it has a feel that it might include developmentally inappropriate practices. So some of us were hesitant to embrace that type of a term.” Although Eiland-Williford comes from the ECE world, she had no problem accepting the term “accelerate.” “I was firm on the point of ‘accelerating student learning’. We had quite a bit of discussion

¹⁷ Appendix F in the supplemental materials to this teaching case study provides iterations of the shared vision and mission as they changed over working group meetings held between October 2009 and May 2010. Relevant information from appropriate iterations is provided in the text.

over ‘enabling student learning’. We wanted to be more explicit—what we write is what we are going to do. What does ‘enable’ mean? ‘Accelerate’ means you’re going to move faster with it,” she says. Pace also comments on the differences between the two terms. She says, “In one of them, you’re letting it happen and in the other, you’re literally pushing the gas pedal. It’s my understanding that ‘accelerate’ is a K-12 term, piece of culture. We don’t use it in [the ECE] setting though. But we adopted it.”

Eventually the group came to a consensus that, in order to ensure that an achievement gap does not remain for young children with differential access to learning opportunities, acceleration of learning is necessary. As James puts it, “Because our children face so many challenges—even early on, because they’re at-risk—we cannot just have them meeting the norms. In order to get through college, they have to have the thinking skills necessary, and they have to have standards that are accelerated. This is the only way that we’re going to meet our vision to create this success in life.” “You only have so much time to work with students, so you have to accelerate. If a child has two years of bad education, it’s impossible for the child to catch up. If they go to a school where there is acceleration and they have rich opportunities to learn, they can thrive,” says Wing. There were recurring discussions about what the term “accelerate” means in ECE and in K-12, and according to Wing, “the last time the question [of the term ‘accelerate’] was raised, it was raised by one key figure in Ounce and responded to by someone in Ounce. It was a key interaction.”

The working group also had several discussions about what would be meant by the term “align.” Some working group members from the Ounce expressed concern that “aligning” structures and supports might mean that much of the alignment work would fall on their shoulders—they might

be asked to “align” with what K-12 is doing. Over several discussions about the term, the group came to an explicit realization that its Ounce members respected UEI’s K-12 expertise while its UEI members respected Ounce’s ECE expertise. This led to the development of a consensus that the group would use the wording “align and create” when referring to their goals for sharing and matching up their different academic, institutional, and social practices while creating a new birth-to-college model of public education.

Iteration 6: 02.04.10

We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning...

Iteration 7: 03.22.10

Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning...

According to Knowles, “It’s important that both sides learn equally from each other, just like the high school teachers learn from the elementary school teachers. It’s not that we have to do everything the same way. Evidence will drive the answers about how we align things.”

One early point of tension involved using the term “prekindergarten” to refer to ECE. According to Wing, “At the very beginning [before these iterations], we used the term preK, but we stopped using it because it defined ECE relative to kindergarten on up. Finally someone said we shouldn’t use that term and here is why. It suggests that one is more important than the other—when that fell out, it made everybody think about how words do signal differences of power, and that’s not what we wanted to do.” Woodard Iliev describes the interaction similarly,

and says that the working group eventually came to “a good understanding, a sort of ‘of course’ place after we were done having those conversations.”

Putting families first

Pace, a social worker at Educare, notes, “To the credit of the team, [the importance of families] really is a driving force for us. Since that’s the role I play, I adore that about everyone. Someone is always saying, and it’s not always me, ‘Where are families in this?’” This common belief was instantiated by early activities that the partnership completed. “When we started to get involved together, we went into joint programs where our parents were invited to UEI’s family activity nights and that happened almost immediately,” says Harvey-Dixon. Woodard Iliev notices of the shared vision and mission, “The way we refer to families actually stays the most stable over time, compared to the other [two main themes].”

The phrase “honoring and building upon the [assets/strengths] of the families we serve” remained quite consistent across the iterations. The only change to the phrase was that the word “assets” was used for iteration 1 and 2, at which time it was replaced with the word “strengths.” Pace explains, “What we always know is that our families are incredibly resilient, which is something for us to keep in mind and honor. Everybody wants to be a good parent. We need to express to them that this is a belief we really hold, that they’re a valuable parent and they know their child better than anybody does. So the piece about honoring that is almost more important than building on strengths. We have to honor how good we are at something first, and that makes us want to get better.” Dunham also suggests that, beyond asking parents to partner with the schools, there is a necessity to “be respectful of what parents want and what they bring to the process, and the kinds of ideas and beliefs that they have. Schools need to take that into consideration in their curriculum and in their engagement with children.” Eiland-Williford

tells what this process of honoring and building upon means in the real-life relationships that educators and parents have. “It’s very important to acknowledge what families bring to the partnership. It’s not that I have a master’s degree and I am going to tell you what you need to know. We need to have mutual respect. There’s a give and take, and everyone has information that is important,” she says.

In iteration 4, the word “families” moved up to the front of the shared vision.

Iteration 3: 12.04.09

UEI and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for vulnerable children that begins at birth...

Iteration 4: 12.18.09

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for children and their families that begins at birth...

Harvey-Dixon notes, “You can’t do this without families. The children come to us from families. We have to acknowledge their environments; it has to be a partnership between families and us. That was a conscious decision to push families forward and highlight their contribution.” Pacchiano highlights a different reason for moving families to the front of the statement: to put the child and family together in the statement. According to her, “in ECE, you never refer to the student not within the family. How we talk about the model and what we’re doing is to put the child back in the context of the family. We know that the outcome we’re after has to come from the ecology of school and home coming together. So we put families back where they belong.”

Demonstrating a birth-to-college model of public education

The partnership has large scale goals for influencing the field of education in the United States. Each institution believes that quality ECE that transitions smoothly into quality K-12 is necessary in order for students to succeed. Additionally, partnership members believe that if K-12 and ECE schools communicate with one another, and align and co-create practices as necessary, students' learning will be accelerated and they will achieve at high levels. They hope that their program will be an honest and effective demonstration of this. The aspiration is that many other organizations and schools will build birth-to-college programs, a movement which will, over time, lead to policy change in the U.S. Says Schwartzman Zimmer, "What we want to do is way beyond our two organizations. We want public education to deal with all kids, across the board, beginning at birth." As Pacchiano asks, "Why would we do all this hard work if it wasn't to contribute to this choir and this call for change?"

Over time, the working group removed specific references to the population of children that they serve and instead specified that their goal is to create a model of public education—a model that would,

by definition, serve all children in the U.S. "We took out references to birth-to-age 10 because we knew that we wanted this to go beyond age 10. We started to think broader in our minds," says James. Pace agrees, "Over time, we changed from being very specific about ECE and K-12, because that got wrapped up in the idea of public education [throughout childhood]." Additionally, the group also removed references to creating a model of education for vulnerable children specifically. At the beginning, says Harvey-Dixon, "We know the population that we serve, and, at first, we wanted to acknowledge that we want to make the playing field more even for those vulnerable kids." Over time, however, the group "stopped labeling children as vulnerable. The current public education expenditure for children, birth to 5, is risk based already. We had some great conversation about the roots of that word and where it had come from," says Pacchiano. She continues, "what we reflected on was that our hopes for the model and the outcomes it achieves is what we want that for all children. I don't think that public education should begin at birth just for children in poverty. If it's public, it should be for all publicly educated children. If we're really talking about a model for public education, then that's universal."



Looking Forward: The Future Work of the Partnership

Currently, work centers on coordinating admissions policies, and aligning and creating standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, academic and social supports, and professional development. The roadmap in Appendix B of the supplemental materials to this teaching case study outlines future and completed goals and activities for the partnership. Overall, the working group is about to embark on implementing the goals and activities they have agreed upon. As Ounce and UEI continue forward, they plan to continue to document and disseminate information about the processes and outcomes of the partnership.



**Working Together to Build a Birth-to-College Approach to Public Education:
Forming a Partnership Between the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute
and the Ounce of Prevention Fund**

Teaching Notes

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Overview

This teaching case study describes the formation of a partnership between the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (UEI) and the Ounce of Prevention Fund (the Ounce) to create a birth-to-college model of public education. It focuses on the process of crafting the shared vision and mission over a series of meetings of a working group, comprised of members from both organizations. An outside expert facilitated the meetings. The study is designed to generate discussion about issues involved with beginning to establish such a partnership. It is intended for K-12 schools and school systems, early childhood education (ECE) agencies, and other organizations interested in forming similar partnerships to create seamlessness for children and families from ECE to the 12th grade and beyond to college.

The case study materials consist of four components. They are a teaching case study, a video, teaching notes, and supplemental materials. The case study is comprised of three parts: 1) Part One (pp. 1 – 14) “Introduction to the Partnership”; 2) Part Two (pp. 14 – 25) “Building a Partnership: Growing from ‘Us’ to ‘We’”; and 3) Part Three (pp. 25 – 33) “Evolution of the Partnership’s Shared Vision and Mission.” The video consists of three parts: 1) Part One (00:00 to 06:32) Short introduction and “Bridging Early Childhood Education and K-12”; 2) Part Two (06:32 to 10:18) “Developing the Partnership;” and 3) Part Three (10:18 to end) “Creating the Vision and Mission Statements”.

Discussion participants should read the teaching case study prior to the discussion. Discussion facilitators should read the case, watch the video, review the discussion prompts given below, and survey the supplemental materials. The supplemental materials provide a more in-depth look at the UEI-Ounce partnership and situate the teaching case study and video within a larger context.

To begin the discussion, the facilitator should show part one of the video. Use the part one discussion prompts to discuss the video and teaching case study. Then, do the same for parts two and three.

Prompts for part one of the discussion

Use these prompts with part one of the video (00:00 to 06:32) and part one of the teaching case study (pp. 1 – 14).

In order to build a birth-to-college model of public education, an organization specializing in birth-to-5 education (i.e., the Ounce) and an organization specializing in K-12 education (i.e., UEI) decided to explore the merits of a partnership to share knowledge and build a program that successfully demonstrates this model. Aware of the differences between the two fields of ECE and K-12, key members from each organization formed a working group to identify underlying commonalities and to come to a shared understanding of differences.

1. Who are the key organizations and players in this case study? What is their purpose in working together?
2. Is this partnership necessary? Are these two organizations well-suited to enter into a partnership with one another? Why or why not?
3. What were the areas of common ground shared by the two organizations at the outset? Are any particularly striking or rare? Are the areas of common ground necessary and sufficient to a successful ECE/K-12 partnership? What common ground is necessary and sufficient to your partnership?

4. What are some similarities between the two organizations that might benefit the partnership? What are some similarities between your organizations that might be beneficial to your partnership?

5. What might be some of the challenges facing the partnership? Is the historical separation between ECE and K-12 a challenge, and in what ways? What factors pose a challenge for your partnership and how you go about establishing or strengthening it?

Prompts for part two of the discussion

Use these prompts with part two of the video (06:32 to 10:18) and part two of the paper (pp. 14 – 25).

The working group participated in a series of meetings over nine months where, with the help of a skilled facilitator, they crafted a shared vision and mission that would define the partnership. They developed a working norm of scrutinizing and extensively discussing the meanings and connotations of words, phrases, and sentences. These discussions uncovered common ground and points of tension between the fields of ECE and K-12. Over time, discussions about recurring topics became increasingly honest. Feelings of trust solidified, and by the end of the process, the group had become a “we”.

1. What were some of the lessons learned from a previous failed partnership that UEI participated in? Why is building a working group that writes a shared vision and mission over an extended period of time necessary for this partnership?
2. What was the importance of having a facilitator for early conversations? What were some of the strategies used by this particular facilitator that working group members found helpful? Should your partnership use a facilitator for this part of the process, and, if so, what knowledge and skills should the facilitator have?

3. What do you think of the facilitator's practice of asking members to start the process by drawing pictorial representations of the partnership? Why did he use this activity? Why do you think the group chose the drawing they did to represent their partnership? How would you "draw" your partnership?

4. The facilitator stressed the importance of creating relationships between the members of the organizations. Why do you think having trusting relationships is important to this work? What did the facilitator and/or the group do to encourage or foster these relationships?

5. Why was so much discussion necessary for just two sentences? How did this process eventually lead to trust within the group? How did this affect their ability to question stereotypes or misconceptions about one another's fields? Why is this important?

6. What is the significance of the shared vision and mission evolving to incorporate the term "we"? One member described it as "embodying [their] own alignment." How is a true partnership a metaphor for the goals for children (seamless education) and for the field of education at large (bringing ECE and K-12 together)?

Prompts for part three of the discussion

Use these prompts with part three of the video (10:18 to end) and part three of the teaching case study (pp. 25 – 33).

The words and sentences used in the shared vision and mission as it progressed across iterations during the nine-month period reflect the status of the partnership over time and the development of shared language and ideas. The end result was a shared vision and mission with meaning and intention co-constructed by members of each of the partnering organizations.

1. All eight iterations refer to building a model that will help children to succeed in school, college, and life. How does the wording of this goal change over time? Does this signify anything about how the goal developed over time?

2. The discussion surrounding the use of the term "accelerate student learning" is an example of the two organizations co-creating the meaning of a particular term. Why did this discussion reoccur? How do you think the discussions unfolded within the working group meetings, keeping in mind the facilitator, the working norms, and the changing relationships over time? What do you think about the use of this term and why and how the group agreed to use it? What is the significance of someone from the field of ECE defending the use of the term when questioned by someone else from the field of ECE?

3. What is the importance of the discussion surrounding the use of the term "align" with respect to instructional, curricular, assessment, and professional development approaches, and academic and social supports? What are the differences between ECE and K-12 that might make this term controversial in a partnership?

4. What is the significance of the fact that the wording about families remained relatively stable across iterations? Why is the idea of "honoring," and not just "building upon," the strengths of families so important to the partnership members?

5. What is significant to the partners about ensuring that this birth-to-college model becomes a part of public education? How do you think they can go about achieving this goal? Does your partnership have a large-scale vision like this? How can you go about achieving it?

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Supplemental Materials

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Appendix A.

Calendar of Events from April 2009 through August 2010

April 14, 2009

Begin conversation about whether Educare and UEI are interested in forging a partnership

May 19, 2009

UEI visit to Educare

June 9, 2009

Debrief about visit to Educare, upcoming Educare visit to Donoghue, and 0-10 work in general

June 11, 2009

Educare teachers visit NKO

June 24, 2009

Meet with Brenda Eiland-Williford (See Appendix D for titles) to keep the work moving and decide next steps. Agree facilitator should be used for developing common paradigm on how children learn and keeping everyone open for what others have to say

July 9 through July 15

Email and phone communications between Linda Wing and Diana Rauner regarding funding and who will head this project for Ounce

July 23, 2009

Educare visit to Donoghue

July 24, 2009

Meet with Harry Davis to discuss possibility of serving as facilitator for the project. Davis to call identified individuals from UEI and Ounce/Educare over the next 4-6 weeks

July 28, 2009

Donoghue and NKO visit to Educare

September 2, 2009

Discuss assessments administered, how results are used by each organization to improve instruction and supports to children, and how each organization approaches family engagement in terms of assessment data

September 3, 2009

Meet with Harry Davis to learn results of phone interviews

October 2, 2009

Begin to develop vision, goals, and norms for our project

October 9, 2009

Linda Wing and Claire Dunham request feedback from participants at October 2 meeting on jointly-crafted draft vision statement

October 20, 2009

Linda Wing and Claire Dunham send revised vision statement to participants at October 2 meeting

October 23, 2009

Discuss University of Chicago Charter School (UCCS) admissions policies

November 9, 2009

Harry Davis continues to facilitate work on vision statement and goals with participants at October 2 meeting. Working group continues this work around vision, mission, core values, goals, activities and timeline for the project

November 9, 2009

Impromptu meeting following facilitation session to share information about assessments, administration of assessments and use of assessment data

SM3

November 30, 2009

Working group continues work on creating the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities and timeline, as well as selecting individuals responsible for the work and specific components

December 3, 2009

Meeting with Donoghue parents to get feedback on their visions and goals for their children from birth through college

December 4, 2009

Working group continues to create the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities and timeline, in addition to selecting individuals responsible for the work and specific components

December 8, 2009

Meeting with NKO parents to get feedback on their visions and goals for their children from birth through college

December 18, 2009

Working group furthers the work to create the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities and timeline, as well as selecting individuals responsible for the work and specific components

December 23, 2009

Discuss Educare and UCCS admissions policies

January 14, 2010

Nicole Pace meets with Educare parents to get feedback on their visions and goals for their children from birth through college

February 4, 2010

Panel at Educare talks with Educare parents about kindergarten readiness

February 4, 2010

Plan for upcoming meeting with UEI and Ounce leadership

February 24, 2010

Todd Barnett and Linda Wing go with two representatives from The Community Builders (the company that manages the mixed-income housing surrounding Donoghue) to explore how public housing families can take advantage of Educare

February 26, 2010

Todd Barnett and Rodney Brown go to Educare to discuss attending NKO and Donoghue with Educare families

March 22, 2010

Working group furthers the work to create the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities and timeline, as well as the selection of individuals responsible for the work and specific components

April 5, 2010

Second meeting to plan for meeting on April 6 with UEI and Ounce leadership

April 6, 2010

Inform Ounce and UEI executives about working group progress

May 5, 2010

Discuss transitioning to UCCS Educare families whose children were admitted by lottery in March 2010

May 6, 2010

Working group integrates feedback from April 6 meeting with UEI and Ounce leaders into the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities, and timeline for our work

May 14, 2010

Linda Wing attends Educare Community Partnership Breakfast at the Chicago Educare Center

May 17, 2010

Working group continues to integrate feedback and develop detailed goals and timeline. Moves further towards creating the vision, mission, goals, and timeline to present to Tim Knowles, Diana Rauner, and Claire Dunham

May 19, 2010

Prepare for math and reading workshop for Educare families on June 3

June 3, 2010

Workshop for Educare families around Everyday Math and literacy

June 10, 2010

Working group meets to move towards completion of the vision, mission, core values, and work plan

June 14, 2010

Further develop shared understanding of Educare and UCCS admissions policies

June 15, 2010

Bus brings Educare families to NKO and Donoghue for school tours and conversations

June 25, 2010

Working group finalizes the vision, mission, core values, and work plan to present to UEI and Ounce leadership

Sets timeline for action plans

June , 2010

“Catalyst for Change,” Educare’s yearly brochure, mentions our project and uses the wording from our joint vision statement

Appendix B. Roadmap as of June 25, 2010



Vision

We will build a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and creates success in school, college, and life.

Mission

Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches, and academic and social supports, to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve.

From Birth To College

Ounce of Prevention Fund and The University
of Chicago Urban Education Institute

Core Values

To every child, the deepest dedication is due.

We honor families as their children's best advocates.

We believe in the expertise of teachers and staff.

We respect our current models of education.

We are committed to change that is driven by data and assessment.

Goal 1: Create the Partnership

We will build the institutional commitments and operational capacities to successfully engage in actualizing the vision and mission of this work.

Activities, Responsible Individuals, and Timeline

A. Foundation for the Partnership

1. The Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) and the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (UEI) will share and understand each other's missions, goals, approaches, and accomplishments.

May 19, 2009 - UEI and Ounce leaders visit Educare

June 11, 2009 - Educare teachers visit NKO

July 23, 2009 - Educare teachers visit Donoghue

July 28, 2009 - Donoghue and NKO teachers visit Educare

2. Ounce and UEI will create a shared vision, work plan, working relationships and a professional learning community.

September 2, 2009 - Working group meets to learn about assessments used by Ounce and UEI

November 30, 2009, December 4, 2009, December 18, 2009, February 4, 2009, March 22, 2010, April 5, 2010, May 3, 2010, May 17, 2010, June 10, 2010, and June 25, 2010 - Working group meets to create the vision, mission, core values, goals, activities, responsible individuals, and timeline

Who: Tim Knowles, Diana Rauner, Claire Dunham, Tanika Island-Smith, Rodney Brown, Todd Barnett, and the working group, which consists of Brenda Eiland-Williford, Debra Pacchiano, Anita Harvey-Dixon, Nicole Pace, Sheila Benson, Linda Wing, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Terese Schwartzman Zimmer

Timeline: Begin spring 2009

B. Commitment to the Partnership

1. Ounce and UEI will make institutional commitments to the partnership.

October 2, 2009 - Ounce and UEI executive leaders and working group confer at Gleacher Center

November 9, 2009 - Ounce and UEI executive leaders and working group confer at Gleacher Center

April 6, 2010 - UEI and Ounce executive leaders and working group convene at Ounce

2. Internally, Ounce and UEI will set expectations and establish priorities for the engagement of their respective staff members in the partnership.

Who: Tim Knowles and Diana Rauner

Timeline: Begin spring 2009, reconfirm spring 2010

C. Leadership of the Partnership

1. Ounce and UEI will identify the individuals within each organization to lead the work.

2. UEI and Ounce will articulate the roles and responsibilities of these individuals.

3. Ounce and UEI will develop indicators of progress in forming the partnership and agree upon the timelines and mechanisms for progress reporting.

Who: Diana Rauner and Tim Knowles

Timeline: Begin spring 2009, reconfirm spring 2010

D. Building Organizational Capacity for the Partnership

1. Ounce and UEI will identify the necessary resources (time, people, and money) for the partnership.

2. Ounce and UEI will design and implement a plan to secure the necessary resources. As a first step, a joint proposal will be developed for submittal to the Kellogg Foundation.

Who: Tim Knowles, Diana Rauner, Linda Wing

Timeline: Begin spring 2010

Goal 2: Conceptualize the model

In partnership with families we serve, we will design a model that aligns early childhood education and K-12 education to seamlessly and significantly improve the academic and life outcomes of children.

Activities, Responsible Individuals, and Timeline

A. Families

1. Ascertain family hopes and dreams for the model

December 3, 2009 – Linda Wing meets with Donoghue parents to solicit feedback on the birth-college pathway for their children

December 8, 2009 – Linda Wing meets with NKO parents to solicit feedback on the birth-college pathway for their children

January 14, 2010 – Nicole Pace meets with Educare parents to solicit feedback on the birth-college pathway for their children

2. Inform families of educational opportunities offered by Educare, NKO, and Donoghue through workshops, school visits, and other activities

February 4, 2010 – Teyona James participates on Educare panel for families with focus on kindergarten readiness

February 24, 2010 – Todd Barnett, Linda Wing, Nicole Pace, and representatives from The Community Builders explore how public housing residents in the mixed-income housing surrounding Donoghue might take advantage of Educare and how Educare families might take advantage of mixed-income housing options

February 26, 2010 – Todd Barnett and Rodney Brown go to Educare meeting to recruit families to apply to NKO and Donoghue

3. Design a model that empowers, educates, supports, learns from, and partners with families so they can become their children's best advocates

4. Educate families about the model, the opportunities it offers their children, and how they can support their children's success

May 19, 2010 – Sheila Benson, Jill Thompson, and Teyona James plan June 3, 2010 mathematics and reading workshop for Educare families

June 3, 2010 – Sheila Benson, Jill Thompson, and Teyona James conduct mathematics and reading workshop for families

Who: Brenda Eiland-Williford, Sheila Benson, Anita Harvey-Dixon, Nicole Pace, Debra Pacchiano, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Teyona James, Tanika Island-Smith, Rodney Brown, Todd Barnett

Timeline: Begin winter 2009-10

B. Admissions

1. Identify, share, and understand current admissions policies of Ounce/Educare and UEI/University of Chicago Charter School

October 23, 2009 – Nicole Pace, Brenda Eiland-Williford, Anita Harvey-Dixon, and others meet with Linda Wing, Todd Barnett, and Maegen Rose at Donoghue to share information about the charter school's current admission policy, which is in effect for fall 2010 admission

2. Explore and agree on future policies regarding the admission of Ounce/Educare families to the UEI/University of Chicago Charter School and the admission of UEI/University of Chicago Charter School families to Ounce/Educare

December 23, 2009 – Nicole Pace and Maegen Rose meet to discuss desired Ounce/Educare and UEI/Charter School admissions policies

3. Disseminate the policies

Who: Nicole Pace, Maegen Rose, Linda Wing

Timeline: By fall 2010

C. Standards and Expectations

1. Examine and understand Illinois Early Learning Standards and K-12 Standards

2. Identify, share, and understand current standards and expectations for teaching and learning followed by Ounce/Educare and by the UEI/University of Chicago Charter School

3. Align and create standards and expectations that are characterized by common language and address acceleration of student learning, professional development, instructional and curricular frameworks, and assessments

4. Begin with socio-emotional development and proceed to mathematics, literacy, and other subject areas in subsequent years

5. Include classroom-level specifics, such as how we use space and learning materials like manipulatives, define print rich and developmentally appropriate supports for cognitive development in all academic areas, develop and evaluate curriculum units and lessons, and group students based upon assessment data for differentiation of content and/or instruction

6. In regards to professional development, include in-class coaching, mentoring, teacher-led workshops, national conference participation, classroom observation and feedback, and training in specific methods

7. Involve Ounce/Educare and UEI/University of Chicago Charter School teachers and teacher leaders in the study, alignment and creation of standards and expectations

Who: Brenda Eiland-Williford, Sheila Benson, Debra Pacchiano, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Teyona James, Tanika Island-Smith

Timeline: By fall 2011

D. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Identify, share, and understand evidence-based practices in mathematics, literacy, and other content areas

2. Identify alignment and creation opportunities

3. Build a model upon the aligned and co-created opportunities

Who: Brenda Eiland-Williford, Sheila Benson, Debra Pacchiano, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Teyona James, Tanika Island-Smith

Timeline: Mathematics by fall 2011, literacy by fall 2012, other areas by fall 2013

E. Assessment

1. Examine assessment tools, how data is used to inform instruction and supports, professional development, and training to find areas of similarity and dissonance, as well as opportunities for alignment

September 2, 2009 – Teachers and leaders from Educare, NKO, and Donoghue meet to discuss assessments at each organization and how results are used

2. Align assessments and share student data as children transition from Educare to Donoghue and NKO

Who: Teyona James, Debra Pacchiano, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Sheila Benson, Brenda Eiland-Williford, Tanika Island-Smith

Timeline: Begin fall 2009

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3. Inform families of purpose, timing, and methods of shared assessments

Who: Teyona James and Debra Pacchiano

Timeline: Begin summer 2010

F. Transitions

1. Identify key transitions in the education of children and their families

May 17, 2010 – The working group identified these transitions:

a) Application and admission

b) Introduction to Educare

c) Early Head Start to Head Start

d) Last six months of Head Start

e) First six months of kindergarten

f) “Learning to read” at grade two to “reading to learn” at grade three

g) Elementary school (grade five) to middle school (grade six)

2. Implement preliminary admission transition activities

Post-March 26, 2010 University of Chicago Charter School lottery – Todd Barnett and Rodney Brown meet regularly with Educare families whose children have been admitted for fall 2010 to facilitate enrollment, school visits, orientation, interviews, support, and welcome to NKO and Donoghue communities

May 5, 2010 – Nicole Pace, Todd Barnett, and Rodney Brown meet to plan how to jointly assist Educare families in making the transition to NKO and Donoghue

May 26, 2010 – Donoghue and Educare meet to confer on children with special needs

June 14, 2010 – Bus takes Educare families to NKO and Donoghue for school tours and conversations

3. Implement preliminary transition plans for the last six months of Head Start and first six months of kindergarten

Who: Brenda Eiland-Williford, Sheila Benson, Anita Harvey-Dixon, Debra Pacchiano, Teyona James, Tanika Island-Smith, Nicole Woodard Iliev, teachers

Timeline: spring 2010 to spring 2011

4. Create a model that incorporates, at each of the transition points, the knowledge gained from the preliminary transition activities, and that addresses the needs and perspectives of: a) children, families, teachers, and staff; b) Educare/UCCS programs; and c) Ounce and UEI

Who: Teyona James, Debra Pacchiano, Brenda Eiland-Williford, Nicole Pace, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Terese Schwartzman Zimmer, Sheila Benson, Anita Harvey-Dixon, Tanika Island-Smith, Linda Wing, charter school leaders at the middle and secondary school

Timeline: Begin spring 2010

Goal 3: Implement the model

We will implement policies, practices, and procedures that support teachers, staff, and families in their roles and responsibilities.

Activities, Responsible Individuals, and Timeline

A. Leadership

1. Identify point persons and their roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the model
2. Establish a shared calendar of meetings and update the contact sheet

3. Meet regularly to coordinate efforts, report on implementation, deepen shared understanding and shared commitment, and maintain accountability

B. Action Plans

1. Devise action plans for each of the following: a) families; b) admissions; c) standards and expectations; d) curriculum and instruction; e) assessment; and f) transitions
2. Identify the point persons, timeframes, resources, team members, monitoring, and evidence of completion
3. Describe policies, practices, and procedures

Who: Nicole Pace is the point person for the action plan on families (with Todd Barnett and Rodney Brown on the team); Linda Wing for admissions (with Nicole Pace on the team); Nicole Woodward Iliev for standards and expectations (with Sheila Benson and Brenda Eiland-Williford on the team); Teyona James for curriculum and instruction (with Sheila Benson on the team); Debra Pacchiano for assessment (with Brenda Eiland-Williford on the team); Anita Harvey-Dixon for transitions serving on the teams for families and curriculum and instruction, and Terese Schwartzman Zimmer the manager of the overall effort

Timeline: First team meetings to take place by July 15, 2010; first drafts of action plans to be completed by August 15, 2010; team report-outs to whole group to take place on September 17, 2010 and November 19, 2010

C. Implementation and Continuous Improvement

1. Implement the action plans
2. Assess implementation and refine the work

Goal 4: Demonstrate Outcomes from the Model

We will identify, collect, analyze, and share evidence on the growth and achievement of students, families, teachers, and staff to continuously improve the model.

Activities, Responsible Individuals, and Timeline

A. Progress Indicators

1. Identify, share, and understand the areas of child progress currently measured by Ounce/Educare and UEI/University of Chicago Charter School
2. Identify, share, and understand the areas of family progress and routines currently measured by Ounce/Educare (i.e., family risk and protective families, family routines/activities that support children's development and learning, family school-engagement behaviors)
3. Identify, share, and understand areas of student and school progress and currently measured by UEI/University of Chicago Charter School through family, teacher, and student surveys
4. Examine current child progress, family progress and routines assessment tools, and family, teacher, and student surveys to determine what they measure
5. Align progress criteria, indicators, and tools initially from birth to age five and then beyond that age group, select indicators and tools that allow comparison to similar students and schools locally and nationally

Who: Debra Pacchiano, Linda Wing, UEI Data Practice Team

Timeline: Begin summer 2010

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B. Longitudinal Tracking

1. Establish data sharing and feedback process
2. Identify a system to track the progress and outcomes of children and families
3. Track Educare graduates who attend other elementary schools and University of Chicago Charter School students who did not attend Educare

Who: Debra Pacchiano, Linda Wing, UEI Data Practice Team

Timeline: Begin fall 2011

C. Evaluation

1. Evaluate the model, i.e., the work plans and student and school progress
2. Evaluate the partnership

Who: Debra Pacchiano, Linda Wing, UEI Data Practice Team, outside evaluators

Timeline: Begin fall 2011

Goal 5: Document and Disseminate

We will document the experiences of all stakeholders and disseminate knowledge, practices, and tools.

Activities, Responsible Individuals, and Timeline

A. Documentation of the making of the shared vision, mission, core values, and goals

1. Respond to invitation to submit a proposal to the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) for the development of a case study to document the working group's creation of the vision, mission, core values, and goals

Who: Linda Wing, in consultation with Debra Pacchiano

Timeline: winter 2009-10

2. Develop the case study, which will include a video introduction and teaching notes

Who: Raedy Ping and Raphael Nash, with Susan Miller, Sharon Lynn Kagan, and Susan Levine as reviewers

Timeline: spring 2010 to fall 2010

3. Inform the case study by participating in interviews and giving feedback on the penultimate draft

Who: Tim Knowles, Diana Rauner, Brenda Eiland-Williford, Debra Pacchiano, Nicole Pace, Anita Harvey-Dixon, Sheila Benson, Nicole Woodward Iliev, Linda Wing, Terese Schwartzman Zimmer, Teyona James

Timeline: summer 2010

4. Learn from and reflect upon the case study

Who: Ounce/Educare leaders, teachers, staff, and parents; UEI/University of Chicago Charter School leaders, teachers, staff, and parents

Timeline: Begin fall 2010

5. Disseminate the case study

Who: Linda Wing, Debra Pacchiano, FCD, Kellogg

Timeline: Begin fall 2010

B. Documentation of the steps involved in building the partnership

1. Audiotape the meetings of the working group and produce an annotated calendar of meetings

Who: Terese Schwartzman Zimmer

Timeline: Begin fall 2009

2. Develop and submit progress report to the Kellogg Foundation

Who: Linda Wing, Chapin Hall staff

Timeline: June 2010 to mid-July 2010; December 2010 to mid-January 2011

C. Documentation of the experiences of children, families, teachers, and staff with the model

Who: Debra Pacchiano, Linda Wing, TBD

Timeline: Begin winter 2010

E. Dissemination of knowledge, systems, practices, and tools through websites and written reports

Who: Debra Pacchiano, Linda Wing, TBD

Timeline: Begin winter 2010

Appendix C. Case Study Methodology

The author completed two rounds of interviews with each of the members of the working group. The working group is comprised of a total of nine individuals, four from UEI and five from the Ounce, who attended collaborative working meetings ten times over the course of nine months in the service of establishing the partnership.¹ The working group was responsible for crafting and developing a roadmap for the partnership, including the shared vision and mission, core values that exemplify shared beliefs, overarching goals for this stage of the partnership, and associated activities that outline the work involved with meeting those goals (see Appendix B for the roadmap as of June 25, 2010). The working group includes academic and curricular leaders, family support leaders, teacher leaders, researchers, and school administrators.

Each working group member was interviewed on two occasions in a one-on-one setting with the author.² A videographer was present, but did not participate in the interview. Members consented to being interviewed, videoed, and identified; they indicated this on a consent form. The first interview, conducted in May or June of 2010, included questions on the interviewee's background and experience in the field of education, her role within her organization and

within the partnership, her views on the necessity of the partnership, her hopes for the partnership, and her opinion of the challenges facing the partnership. The second interview, completed in July 2010, focused more specifically on the process of forming the shared vision and mission and changes across iterations of the text. Two working group members were unable to participate in the first round of interviews, so a longer interview was conducted with them in July 2010. Additionally, the author attended one working group meeting in May 2010 to be introduced to the individuals involved.

Executive-level leaders were each interviewed once, in July 2010. These individuals were not directly involved in the working group, but they have provided encouragement and feedback for the working group during the visioning process. Going forward, the leadership will be responsible for providing institutional support for the work and will provide public relations on behalf of the partnership.

1 The working group continues to meet to help guide the work of the partnership.

2 Additional information about interviewees is provided in Appendix D.

Appendix D. Information About Interviewees

Working group members

Linda Wing is the director of schools and community engagement at the Urban Education Institute. During her time in this position, she has led the design and opening of the Donoghue, Woodlawn, and Carter G. Woodson campuses of the University of Chicago Charter School. She continues to support those campuses, as well as the North Kenwood/ Oakland campus. She provides guidance and leadership, individually ensuring that each campus makes progress towards preparing all its students for college, while collaborating with neighborhood residents and organizations to strengthen community-wide involvement towards this goal.

Terese Schwartzman Zimmer is the director for strategic initiatives at the Urban Education Institute. Her role is diverse—she works with people within the UEI units of CCSR, Chicago UTEP, the Urban School Improvement Network, and the UEI/Ounce partnership. Her responsibilities include strategy, qualitative evaluation and documentation of projects and programs.

Nicole Woodard Iliev is the director³ of the University of Chicago Charter School Donoghue Elementary Campus. She founded Donoghue, along with Wing, and leads the teachers, family support staff, and other staff to prepare children for college, beginning in prekindergarten. Donoghue educates 420 students, prekindergarten through grade five.

Teyona James taught kindergarten for five years at Donoghue. She currently teaches second grade and is also the primary literacy coordinator for prek through grade 2 at Donoghue. In her role as literacy coordinator, she works hand-in-hand with teachers in curriculum, assessment, and professional development within the domain of literacy.

Debra Pacchiano is the director of research to practice for the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Her responsibilities include evaluating direct service programs and working on a comprehensive implementation study at Educare as well as conducting formative assessments and directing data utilization. She also participates in research across Educare sites.⁴

Brenda Eiland-Williford is the director of programs and curricula for the Ounce of Prevention Fund. She leads work on program development, implementation, and assessment. She works directly with Educare staff to ensure the program is in compliance with licensing and funding regulations.

Anita Harvey-Dixon is the site administrator of the Educare School that provides care to 149 children from birth to five years of age. She acts as a liaison between the Ounce and the Educare School, as well as works directly with Educare families, and education and family support staff. Her administrative responsibilities include supervising staff, facilitating licensing procedures, and monitoring school progress.

³ University of Chicago Charter School campuses use the title “director” in place of the title “principal”.

⁴ <http://educarecenters.org/>

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Nicole Pace is the family support supervisor at Educare. She oversees the family support staff members who work directly to help support and engage the families of the children enrolled in the program.

During the formation of the partnership, Sheila Benson was the education manager at Educare. She was responsible for the educational program and direct supervision of the teaching staff.

Leadership members

Timothy Knowles is the John Dewey director of the Urban Education Institute and the John Dewey clinical professor on the University of Chicago Committee on Education. During his tenure at the University of Chicago, UEI has initiated the creation of 20 new schools across Chicago's South Side, four of which are designed and operated directly by the University of Chicago. This portfolio of schools is designed to serve as an existence proof that poor children can learn at high levels.

Diana Rauner is president of the Ounce of Prevention Fund. As president, Rauner serves as a primary spokesperson, communicating early childhood issues and Ounce's mission to private sector audiences, funders, and partners. She has overseen the expansion of Head Start, training, research, and advocacy programs and directs the Ounce's Illinois program and policy work.

Claire Dunham is the senior vice president of programs at the Ounce of Prevention Fund. She oversees the two main program divisions: the Illinois Birth to Three Institute and Child and Family Support Services. Her areas of expertise include child abuse prevention, home visiting, new program development, management and training.

Appendix E. Reactions to the Shared Vision and Mission

The author asked partnership members to read the shared vision and mission aloud and to share their reactions upon reading them. The following are excerpts from the second interview, conducted shortly after the shared vision and mission had been finalized. In these initial, off-the-cuff responses, we can see great overlap between the two organizations as well as the distinctive viewpoints that each field has to offer.

Reactions to the shared vision

We will build a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and creates success in school, college, and life.

Anita Harvey-Dixon, the Ounce: The vision personally establishes the goal and the purpose for the relationship, where we're going. When two agencies as large as ours come together from different areas, doing something that's never been done before, creating this together establishes a playing field that tells where we are similar.

Linda Wing, UEI: The vision statement is what brings everybody to the table. It captures the core beliefs that education for children and for the family should be public, and that the public should invest in education.

Brenda Eiland-Williford, the Ounce: We really take this idea of success for children very seriously, and we know that success begins early. We know it has to be a continuous effort and it has to be an effort that families have to be a part of. It's what children need and what we should be doing.

Teyona James, UEI: When we were making the vision statement, we knew that we couldn't stop at just school and college. We wanted to make sure we were successful in life. We wanted to add some kind of social context for what we wanted our kids to achieve. We wanted them to be successful as members of society and not just at school.

Nicole Pace, the Ounce: I know really the goal is to be able to say to other programs throughout the country that it can be done and it doesn't have to be insurmountable. I love the part including families. It is a vision, a future. It's something to strive toward.

Nicole Woodard Iliev, UEI: What is most important for me is that success is defined more broadly than school. We're talking about whole kids; we understand that it's the model of public education that's flawed, and not children and their families. That model hasn't been responsive to all children and all families, and we have the capacity to do something about that.

Debra Pacchiano, the Ounce: What has been most important for me about the vision statement is adding the piece about public education. Ounce's history has always been about leveraging private and philanthropic money to create change in public expenditure. So I am a die-hard believer that the very foundation of a democracy is public education. It's really important to me that our vision is not building a model that is only going to be delivered in a few places, but we strove to have a vision for how this country can come into this century and provide public education that begins at birth.

Terese Schwartzman Zimmer, UEI: My first reaction is the knowledge of what was involved in getting that one sentence done. For me, the power of the vision is much more the process that took place that ended up building a collaborative feeling and a trust, and really using the vision as a means more than an end.

Claire Dunham, the Ounce: When we were working on this, we were thinking about the value of public education, as opposed to something that's available only to a small number of particular children whose parents have a lot of resources.

Tim Knowles, UEI: It's a simple vision. It's grand, but it's simple and straightforward, which I love about it. It's not ambiguous; it's got high expectations baked into it but it's not filled with technocratic, bureaucratic, vision-y language. It just says what we're trying to do.

Diana Rauner, the Ounce: I think the most important thing here is the idea that public education begins at birth. That's a very important strategic perspective that we at the Ounce promote. That is part of what makes our country what it is—a shared understanding that the education of other people's children is something worth doing.

Reactions to the Shared Mission

Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches, and academic and social supports, to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve.

Anita Harvey-Dixon, the Ounce: The mission came about because K-12 and ECE are coming together. We don't want to become each other, but we need to be working together. We need to establish a map for ourselves. The vision is the goal and the mission is the map.

Linda Wing, UEI: In any work, it's essential that the people involved have a clear vision that consists of long-term goals and ideals and a mission that shows how you intend to achieve them. This is especially the case when two organizations come together to form a collaboration. You have to spend a lot of time to develop vision and mission and make sure they're clear with everyone. You need a lot of participation by key figures; we couldn't form the collaboration without these agreements.

Nicole Pace, the Ounce: To me, [the mission] is the thing you go back to as you're doing the work. Is this what we're doing? Does this look right?

Teyona James, UEI: We thought families were a definite strength of ours so we couldn't have a mission statement without including families. In actuality this is a partnership between the families we serve and the education we provide.

Debra Pacchiano, the Ounce: What speaks to me here is that both organizations are really committed to aligning the great things we're already doing, but we also knew that we would have to create some new parts. For a growing sub-population in our country, children who are growing up in multi-stressed families and communities, and in low-income households, the data is really clear. There is an achievement gap that exists by nine months of age. So this acceleration piece is to honor the fact that we're aware of that gap, we're aware that there isn't a public K-12 system in this country that has ever successfully, for all children, closed the achievement gap.

Nicole Woodard Iliev, UEI: For me, it's about the whole kid, it's social-emotional, it's academic, it's family, it's community. If we don't align and respect each of those pieces, then we probably won't be successful.

Brenda Eiland-Williford, the Ounce: The mission is what really excites me—I am hands on and like to be in the trenches. The vision is the beacon, but the mission makes it real. The most important part for me was “accelerate student learning.” We are working with a population of children that come to us behind in many areas, and ahead in other areas. The reality is that, in order to be successful, you have to speak the school language and be able to adjust to the way schools operate, and we have to help our children with that.

Terese Schwartzman Zimmer, UEI: In both the vision and the mission, but especially in the mission, there are lots of specific words that come out at me [because I remember specific conversations around them], like alignment, accelerating learning, and college. But in the mission, for me, because it's more detailed in a certain way, it's more of an action statement.

Diana Rauner, the Ounce: Here, we specifically get to define what it means to align birth-to-5 and K-12 education around questions of pedagogy, which I think people don't like to talk about, and about what happens outside of the classroom. I feel as though the birth-to-5 world has a lot to offer the K-12 world and vice versa.

Tim Knowles, UEI: There is more persuasive empirical evidence about the importance of good teaching than anything else. This is why we align and create instructional approaches to accelerate student learning. That's about teaching and making sure the quality is good. Our students also have many other issues running through their lives that sometimes can prevent them from learning at the highest levels. So, if schools and organizations aren't attending carefully to the social supports that are necessary, we're not going to get kids to where we think they can go.

Claire Dunham, the Ounce: Here, I'm reminded of conversations we had about what the word “align” meant and how that might play itself out in our goals. We did spend a good bit of time on language about honoring and building upon the strengths of families we serve. And we spent a good bit of time discussing the word “accelerating”: what does that mean, should we say that?

Appendix F. Key Iterations of the Shared Vision and Mission

Iteration 1: 10.09.09

The UEI – Ounce of Prevention Fund collaboration will create a model of education for vulnerable children from birth to age 10, providing the scaffolding for success in school, college, and life. We will inform and influence the fields of ECE and elementary education by aligning instructional approaches and academic and social supports that enable student learning, as well as honoring and building upon the assets of families and engaging them in their children’s development.

Iteration 2: 10.20.09

The UEI – Ounce of Prevention Fund collaboration will create a model of education for vulnerable children that begins at birth and proceeds to age 10, providing the scaffolding for success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports that accelerate student learning and develop engaged and principled citizens. In the process, we will honor and build upon the assets of families, engaging them in their child’s development. Our work will inform and influence the fields of ECE and elementary education.

Iteration 3: 12.04.09

UEI and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for vulnerable children that begins at birth and leads to success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of families. Our students will achieve at the highest levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. Our work will provide an exemplar that will inspire others to redefine public education as beginning at birth.

Iteration 4: 12.18.09

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for children and their families that begins at birth and leads to success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve. Our students will achieve at the highest levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. Our work will inspire others to redefine public education as beginning at birth.

Iteration 5a: 01.16.10

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for children and their families that begins at birth and leads to success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve. Our students will achieve at unprecedented levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. As a result our work will change public education by showing the necessity of comprehensive approach that starts at birth.

Iteration 5b: 01.16.10

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for children and their families that begins at birth and leads to success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve. Our students will achieve at the highest levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. Our work will inspire others to redefine public education as beginning at birth.

Iteration 6: 02.04.10

The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and the Ounce of Prevention Fund will create a model of education for students and their families that begins at birth and leads to success in school, college, and life. We will align instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve. Our students will achieve at the highest levels and become engaged and contributing citizens. Our work will inspire others to redefine public education as beginning at birth.

Iteration 7: 03.22.10

Vision: We will create a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and ensures success in school, college, and life.

Mission: Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve.

Iteration 8: 05.03.10

Vision: We will build a model of public education for children and their families that begins at birth and creates success in school, college, and life.

Mission: Our mission is to align and create instructional approaches and academic and social supports to accelerate student learning, while honoring and building upon the strengths of the families we serve.

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