

Build Ohio Case Study Report May 2003 – October 2004

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PUBLIC SERVICE & PUBLIC POLICY

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1. Background and Overview

Basic organization of the Build initiative and its development and work over the last 18 months¹

The previous report to the national evaluators, submitted in July 2003, described Build Ohio in its formative phase. In the current reporting period (May 2003-October 2004), Build Ohio has made important headway in creating and advancing a statewide system of early care and learning.

Within this reporting period, Build Ohio experienced two distinct installments of growth. The first, the time period from May 2003-2004, should be understood as continuing the “gestation” period of early Build. During this time, Build Ohio started to see results of its array of separate projects that were gratifying to both Build members and to the national initiative. Build Ohio’s specific efforts in professional development and public awareness moved forward, and products such as the economic impact study were developed during this activity period.

During the second time period, from early summer of 2004 to the present, these “products” additionally functioned as a catalyst for Build’s emerging role as the multi-faceted table around which leaders in early care and education convene in order to create a statewide system of care and learning. During this period, Build Ohio has broken out to become the impetus for the key leaders in early child care and development to create an agenda to move beyond an “inner circle” sharing of knowledge. Build has provided the resources and given the attention to bringing together important people involved in the early child system, and, at the same time, creating buy-in outside of the inner circle.

Issues Faced and Addressed

Issues faced and addressed by Build Ohio

Unlike other Build states, Build Ohio did not become a project of an existing organization with an established early care and education agenda. Build Ohio was created through collaboration among key leaders in early care and education policy, advocacy, and service delivery. Build provided the impetus for a group of well-informed, well-connected early child care and education experts who were highly committed but independently functioning in state, local, and private agencies to work together in a formal way on a regular basis. As a result, the priorities established by Build Ohio were not driven by a single agency or individual but represented a collective will.

¹ Sidebar notations are derived from national Build questions for this case study report; because our organization varies slightly from the suggested outline, these notations are designed to guide national Build evaluators in finding report components efficiently.

Why Build Ohio has emphasized what it has

Build Ohio's greatest asset—the fact that so many divergent groups and viewpoints are at the table—has also been its greatest issue. From May 2003 until the following summer, Build struggled with the root question of its identity as an organization even as it saw accomplishments and successes. As described in the first Case Study, Build elected to use an existing plan (titled *Strategic Framework: Building an Early Learning System for Ohio's Young Children*) to frame its process of establishing priorities and milestones to accomplish. These specific accomplishments included Build's completion of an economic impact study, carrying out a statewide marketing survey, and development of three work plans for Professional Development, Early Learning Standards and Accountability, and Public Communication and Public Will. During this period, Build also continued working toward clarifying its governance and operating structure, struggling with strategy and identity: i.e., should there be a comprehensive plan? Or were Build's seemingly separate efforts a sufficient beginning for moving toward a comprehensive system? Almost two years of "process" had taken its toll on Build Ohio membership; attrition was occurring and attendance at meetings had dwindled.

Over the summer of 2004, however, several events came together to precipitate a breakthrough for how Build understood its role in state system-building. First, Build members started seeing the products that had come out of their work with Build on specific projects such as the economic impact study. Seeing these small successes helped energize the group. Second, pressure from the national Build forced Build Ohio to ask itself about the role of these separate projects in its overall work of system-building. Lastly, motivated by both attrition and the need for a full range of perspectives, the Build Ohio administrative board was expanded to include new members representing a broader cross-section of state and private agencies. Each of these events contributed to a Build Ohio system-building focus and clarity that seemed to emerge at its August 2004 meeting. By assembling the puzzle pieces—e.g., the new advocacy campaign (not a Build enterprise), the marketing plan results and strategy, the economic impact study, and ODJFS's virtual adoption of Build's professional development project—the administrative board began to see its range of potential relationships and also its centrality to the many component parts necessary to a comprehensive ECCE system. This emerging awareness set the stage for the 2005 continuation proposal submitted to Build National in October.

How Build has positioned itself in the state context

Build Ohio's breakthrough was recognizing its full range of multiple and flexible relationships to the component parts of a comprehensive system, beginning with creating the table around which these the divergent contributors to the system gathered. But its roles could also include initiating new component parts, supporting existing parts, creating relationships between the parts, and identifying missing parts. These potential roles continue to emerge.

The first tangible accomplishment to come out of this realization is a matrix

of statewide initiatives, projects, working groups, etc., around early childhood care and learning that were identified by Build Ohio members and organized according to the role each plays in the components of a statewide infrastructure (see Table 1). No such matrix existed prior to Build.

*What Build sees
as its next steps*

As a result of the creation and analysis of this matrix, Build Ohio has realized its function and has developed its plan. Build Ohio is positioning itself as a facilitating body for a statewide system of early childhood learning and development centers, agencies, and programs. Build Ohio has begun in the last several months to emphasize this role as a connector and “repository” for system work underway in Ohio and to position itself as the forum at which cross-system discussions take place. After an initially bumpy start, Build Ohio has made strides in both articulating and developing system links to describe the relationship of projects and initiatives as well as providing impetus for specific efforts in professional development and public will (see section 5, below).

In 2005, Build Ohio will focus on six major priorities, four of which focus on system change and two of which identify the communication functions of Build Ohio’s role as the connector and convener.

2. Political Leadership

*Progress
achieved in
efforts to
develop or take
advantage of
political
leadership*

Build Ohio began as a collaboration that included the Ohio Departments of Education, Health, and Job and Family Services. These agencies control millions of dollars that support early learning and school readiness. The collaboration that became the Build Ohio Administrative Board determined that keeping these agencies at the table working collaboratively on building and improving the infrastructure components of the early care and education was the strategic direction likely to result in the greatest gains during a time of shrinking resources. Focusing on gubernatorial or legislative strategies to increase services would likely have split the coalition.

In its recent history, Ohio experienced great strides in political support for early childhood through state funding of Head Start. Unfortunately, pressure on the state budget forced a shift in the funding for state Head Start from flexible general state revenue dollars to federal TANF dollars. As a result, program eligibility changed and fewer children were enrolled. Early childhood has become less important as a state priority and less a policy focus of the current administration.

In response, perhaps out of collective wisdom, Build Ohio leaders have constructed a structure less dependent on any given administration. However, paramount to this new structure is the high involvement of members of the related state agencies (education, health, job and family services, and now mental health and mental retardation/developmental disabilities), each of which is well represented at the Build Ohio table.

In order to maintain a position of influence with a broad and active

representation from these agencies, the Build board determined early in its formation that it could not and would not assume an advocacy role. As the organization has matured, much of its strength has emerged from that decision. People who may not have been able to remain at the table of an advocacy group are still active participants in Build. Meanwhile, the undeniable need for an advocacy role has spawned a campaign, described briefly below, in which interested private organizations are forming an advocacy organization that is informally at the table with Build but not an official arm of Build itself. In this way, Build maintains the power and advantages of its politically neutral stance.

Steps identified to further create leadership where it is needed

The “Campaign”

The “Campaign,” the project that resulted from Build’s commitment to a less-political role, is a separate effort working to develop a specific agenda to improve school readiness services and convince gubernatorial candidates to adopt this agenda as part of their 2006 campaigns. The “Campaign” includes, among others, those Build members who wished to become more involved in an advocacy role for early care and learning; it aims to take account of the early care and education community in the development of outreach to candidates and public support of the agenda. The lead agency in The “Campaign” is the Center for Community Solutions (Cleveland), which is working with early childhood education lobbyists on fund raising, finalizing the agenda, and developing campaign strategies.

3. Shared Vision²

Status of agreement on what constitutes and effective early learning system and degree of understanding and consensus

Build’s vision can also be understood as evolving through two distinct periods. In February 2003, the Build Administrative Board met with Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan to develop priorities for the work of the Build Alliance. In so doing, the Board identified system infrastructure components and agreed to focus on these needs and not on direct services to children and families. At that time, Build Ohio officially adopted the *Strategic Framework: Building an Early Learning System for Ohio’s Young Children* as the underpinning of its three areas of work and initially organized its work according to those areas.

In the year and a half that followed, Build Ohio has

- conducted a marketing survey;
- conducted an economic impact study;
- developed a brochure and web site;
- implemented a quality rating system with supports such as TEACH, a

² In the report instructions, this section was to be the fourth. Given Build Ohio’s unique history, we thought it made more sense to place the discussion of vision prior to the discussion of system building.

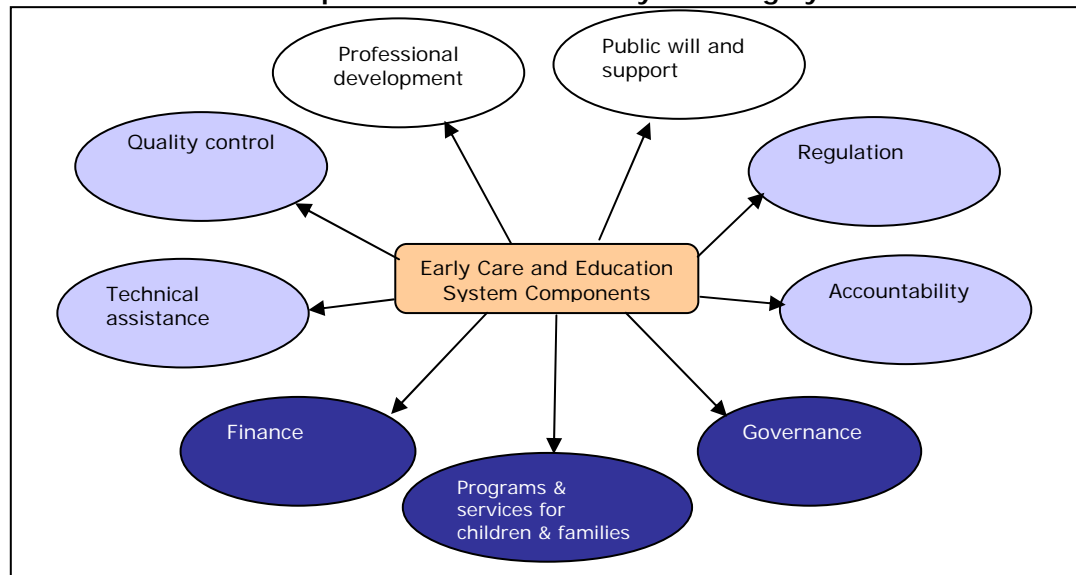
- professional registry, and resource grants in six areas of Ohio;
- participated in the School Readiness Indicators Project; and
- held professional development opportunities for its members.

The period from May 2004 to the present was critical in the development of this shared vision of what constitutes an early care and learning system. However successful on their own, these projects were not, as national Build staff pointed out, creating a comprehensive system. In a retreat held in spring 2004, national staff reminded Build Ohio that the Build goal was the creation of this comprehensive statewide system.

While all components of a comprehensive system existed in the Strategic Framework and therefore formed the theoretical underpinning of Build’s first working phase, they began being functionally incorporated into the work plan during the summer of 2003. The ensuing planning process for Build Ohio resulted in nine prioritized components of an early care and learning system for Ohio: professional development, regulation, finance, governance, accountability, quality control, technical assistance and public will and support (Figure 1). While all of these components are currently addressed in some fashion in Ohio, Ohio lacks consistent, stable support and adequate resources across all infrastructure components, for all sectors of the early learning system, and in all geographic areas.

Build Ohio determined that its top priorities were professional development and public will and support, and it created targeted work plans organized around these. Its secondary priorities were quality control, technical assistance, accountability, and regulation.

Figure 1
The Components of an Ohio Early Learning System



Collective agreement on these components of an effective early care and

education system, led to creation of the component matrix that has become a crucial hub of Build's work (see Table 1 below).

Extent to which the system is more than a laundry list of unprioritized concerns or set of discrete, small actions

Build Ohio's work during 2003-2004 comprised discrete actions within each of the three workgroups, with little articulation of how they added up to a comprehensive system. But as a result of their completion, those specific projects were the impetus that brought more key stakeholders to the table and served to energize Build as a group.

During the summer of 2004, pressure from the national Build and these circumscribed successes combined to result in Build's vision of itself as a "repository" of information and convener of the representatives in early learning and care. The systems component matrix (Table 1, page 10) provides an organizing principle to assess, make linkages between, and potentially identify gaps in the early childhood programs and initiatives going on around the state.

Although not expressly articulated in Build's proposal for continuation funding, the Build's role is emerging as more than a "repository." or convener. Through the developmental process of the administrative board, Build Ohio is coming to see itself as influencing, facilitating, and supporting, without owning, all of the system work underway in Ohio. In fact, as a result of Build's role in knowledge and information sharing, it is becoming a catalyst for generating that knowledge as well as the vision that can result. The component matrix, based on the nine system components, is a flexible, living document that is not the end point of Build's work but a beginning point to the compilation and analysis of important knowledge about and action around early child care and learning in Ohio. Build has the potential to not only catalogue these projects but can identify system components where work is yet to be done.

4. System Building

Costs and consequences to government and society of the limitations of the current system

The consequences of not having a comprehensive early childhood system are apparent to the leaders and practitioners who comprise Build's core, but Build Ohio has not yet fully communicated the need to those outside of its circle. A first step for Build Ohio during the 2003-2004 "gestation period" was to work to reach outside of the inner circle to identify and speak to other stakeholders. As one example, Build Ohio partnered with the National Economic Development and Law Center to produce the report *The Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Ohio* (published November 2004) aimed at presenting a business case for a focus on early childhood. Similarly, Build contracted with the Global Strategy Group to conduct a marketing study that will help Build develop a communications plan to explain the social and political benefits of an early child care and learning system to the state of Ohio.

Status of understanding

Constructing a view of the components of an early care and learning system

*on the
limitations of
current array of
services*

was the first step toward system-building. Build's system component matrix (Table 1) demonstrates that Build is gathering credible information about the scope of projects and programs across the state and organizing them according to their participation in larger system building. Moving from thinking of their programs as separate and silos of activity working along side of other state efforts, Build leaders and practitioners are sitting at the table to understand and articulate how their work feeds into the various parts of the system.

Build's next steps are to understand where linkages do or could happen and to identify the gaps.

Table 1

Component Matrix: Initiatives and Their Relation to Comprehensive Early Child Care and Learning System

Initiative/Project	Infrastructure Components							
	Professional Development	Governance	Regulation	Accountability	Public Will and Support	Technical Assistance	Quality Control	Finance
Step Up to Quality	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Professional Development Institute	X							
Governor’s Early Literacy Initiative	X						X	
First Steps, Infant/Toddler Initiative	X			X	X	X	X	
Organizational & Management Training	X							
Family Child Care Work Group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Head Start Health Institute	X							
OAEYC Annual Conference	X							
Articulation Agreement Study	X							
Healthy Child Care Ohio	X					X		
Ready to Learn	X							
Ohio Head Start Annual Conference	X							
Connections Conference (family CC)	X							
ODE Annual Conference	X							
Learn and Lead Series	X							
Help Me Grow	X		X	X		X		
Birth to Three Conference	X							
EC Mental Health Initiative	X					X		
Early Intervention	X		X	X				
State CCRR Network	X							
OCCRRA	X					X		
Mandatory Registration Initiative		X	X	X				
State Head Start/Head Start Plus		X	X	X		X		
ODJFS Child Care Rule Revisions			X					
Policy Matters				X	X			
Local Connection Initiative				X	X	X		
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment				X				
MCH Needs Assessment				X				
Economic Impact Study					X			X
Communications Plan					X			
The “Campaign”					X			
Build Ohio Web Site					X			
Better Baby Care Campaign					X			
Ohio Children’s Agenda					X			
Early Childhood Budget Coalition					X			
Parent Information Web Site						X		
Healthy Child Care Ohio	X					X		
Get It, Got It, Go!							X	
Early Learning Content Standards							X	
Head Start Partnership Study								X
Tax Outreach Campaign								X
Market Rate Study								X
Cost Containment Measures								X

5. Actions and Achievements

Positive steps taken in building that system

Degree to which they have been selected strategically and efforts are made to use them as building blocks for larger system development

Between May 2003-2004, Build Ohio worked to build its own infrastructure as an organization. As in its first year, Build spent much of this time struggling to identify and articulate its voice. Yet during this time, Build also hired a project director to devote full-time attention to the organization and accomplished many projects described in more detail below. The administrative board of Build was also engaged in the task of clearly defining itself, and technical assistance funds from the national project were used to hold a retreat to clarify its functions. On par with realizing these achievements is Build’s growing recognition that its actions and successes fed its development as a statewide convener. These discrete products of Build’s activity in May 2003-2004 are being used as building blocks for the larger system development happening since May 2004.

The table below illustrates the change in Build’s pursuits, from discrete projects to larger system development activities, during the current reporting period:

**Table 2
The Development of Build Ohio**

May 2003-2004	May 2004-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing survey • Economic impact study • Web site, list serve, and brochure • Step Up to Quality project • Professional development institute • Build project director hired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollout of the economic impact study with the business community; initial strategy building for business community involvement • Identification of three target audiences for the marketing plan • Identified nine components of an Ohio early care and learning system • Component matrix describes and analyzes local and statewide projects and initiatives • Linkages between the projects and initiatives can be identified using this matrix • Enlargement of the administrative board to include representatives from each part of the matrix • Recognizing that Build is the “table” and becoming the forum • Identifying Build’s functions

Starting in May 2004, The Build administrative board and project director clarified the related functions of Build that allowed strategic planning to go forward. The functions of Build Ohio are identified in

Table 3 below. Build’s planning for 2005 thus focuses on six major priorities under each of these functional areas; four of these priorities focus on the system change functions and address one or more of the infrastructure components of an early care and education system. Build’s work plan for 2005 details these priorities.

Table 3
Functions of Build Ohio

Information Functions	System Change Functions
1. Collecting and sharing of information to promote understanding about how Ohio’s system exists and functions today.	Create change in Ohio’s early care and education infrastructure by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prioritizing infrastructure components for action b. Creating workgroups as the vehicle for action c. Developing work plans with goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes that will move the system forward d. Implementing the work plans e. Utilizing information functions to inform and impact work plans
2. Providing (a) vehicle/s to exchange information and promote understanding about trends/events that may affect the system in Ohio.	
3. Providing a vehicle to connect and support the sharing of information between or among local initiatives/efforts, state initiatives/efforts, and state and local initiatives/efforts.	

The following discussions of the actions and achievements of Build Ohio are organized around the two periods of activity that has characterized Build’s development.

Actions and Achievements: Infrastructure Development³

Members of Build Ohio include representatives from all relevant state agencies and departments. In Ohio, creating infrastructure from the “bottom up” means that it is not subject to the capriciousness of changing political regimes. While one state policymaker may provide proactive leadership on early care and learning, the next elected official may focus on other policy areas. Thus Build Ohio has focused on recruiting members who specialize in early childhood within their state agencies to be involved with this work rather than putting direct pressure on top-level officials. The

Planning and capacity development, particularly within state government by mid-level personnel, to insure that, when resources are secured, system building activities can be carried out

³ Although the following three sections—6. infrastructure development, 7. political mobilization and advocacy, and 8. public awareness and support—were separated in the Draft Case Study Format suggested by the national Build, we believe that they demonstrate the three areas of action and achievement and have included them as subsets of #5. Thus the following sections currently identified in the national format document as 9 and 10 will become sections 6 and 7 of Build Ohio’s case study report.

linkages created in this manner will not be easily broken.

An illustration of this process during May 2003-2004 is the Step Up to Quality pilot implementation. This quality rating system for licensed child care centers was designed in 1999-2000 and has languished until Build identified it as a priority. Because of Build Ohio's support, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was able to invest over \$2 million in this project, and Build resources allowed activities to move forward while ODJFS was arranging for this investment. Build members serve on the Cross-Agency Steering Committee guiding this initiative, and Build will play a lead role in the development and dissemination of reports on this pilot.

Recent Infrastructure Achievements

From May 2004 to the present, Build's crucial achievement is the component matrix. All early care and learning projects and initiatives in Ohio are catalogued by Build members on a matrix that references the system components, so that gaps may be identified and strategies may be assessed.

Research, knowledge, and standards development to answer questions needed to support systems building.

Improvements in cross-system communication, coordination, collaboration.

Rather than reinvent the wheel, Build is asking how it can assist organizations that are already involved in system-building to come to the table to describe their efforts and to forge links with others. For example, the Ohio Department of Education had already planned work in school readiness indicators, and the Early Learning Standards and Accountability work group of Build Ohio was integrated into the membership of the indicators initiative. Build members hosted regional forums to obtain input on the proposed indicators, which revealed significant consensus around the state; Build also identified which components of system development this initiative fulfilled by analyzing it using the component matrix. The task force also partnered with the Governor's Ohio Family and Children First Council, which is designing a comprehensive set of child well-being indicators with which school readiness indicators align. Additional examples of outside projects coming to the table are Policy Matters, The "Campaign," and now even the *Strategic Framework* planning group.

Build's job is to provide the structure and the forum so that the people engaged in this work can come together, know what each other is doing, plan together for change and future projects, and create the stable links that comprise an early care and learning system. The development of the system-building matrix shows the purpose of advocates and providers coming to the table. Within the last several months, as a result of the products and the pressure from national Build, there is a new sense of importance in sitting at the table at all.

Actions and Achievements: Political Mobilization and Advocacy

Activation of diverse constituencies—including usual and unusual suspects—in promoting early learning system building

Build Ohio has struggled with the issues of political mobilization and advocacy. In the midst of the discussions around Build's proper place in policy debates, several Build members formed "The Campaign." This initiative is working to develop a specific agenda to improve school readiness services and to convince gubernatorial candidates to adopt this agenda during their 2006 campaigns. "The Campaign" received foundation support to implement these plans.

When asked about their accomplishments in the area of political mobilization, Build members attending the national conference in September identified it as an important part of the state's long-term strategy for system-building but believed that they were not doing well in this regard. Since then, however, it has become clear that the formation of "The Campaign" actually demonstrates Build Ohio's most important role: being a forum where leaders can identify gaps and work to fill them—even if filling them is outside of the Build effort *per se*. Build's existence as a forum where system needs are identified is the impetus behind "The Campaign" but Build is not "The Campaign."

Building awareness as a precursor to advocacy, particularly with business community.

Although not engaging in direct advocacy, garnering business support is a key step in creating a comprehensive system, according to Build members. Businesses in Ohio want demonstration that investing in early learning makes sense. As an early project, the Economic Impact study offered a business case for focusing on early care and learning. This report proves that early care and education is a significant job-creating, income-generating state industry in its own right, as a \$1.95 billion commercial activity with 57,000 employees. The study found that the existence of early care and education enables a working parent labor force to thrive, improves employee productivity, and cultivates Ohio's future workforce by sending children to kindergarten ready to learn. Geared especially toward a business audience, the report links early care and education to a stronger state economy but also shows that child care professions are among the lowest paid occupations in the state.

Children's Hospital-Columbus hosted a breakfast forum (November 2004), attended by an estimated seventy-five participants and including eight high-level presenters, that kicked off the release of the report. This event was also well-attended by local media.

Recent Advocacy and Mobilization Achievements

During the last several months, the rollout of the economic impact study has occurred in the business community. An initial strategy for business community involvement has also come out of this report and its rollout.

Actions and Achievements: Public Awareness and Support

General public awareness of the value of developing an early learning system

Recognition of the role of government and the work of Build (and other groups) in building it.

Degree to which early learning system building is on the political landscape as an issue the public cares about.

During the May 2003-2004 period, Build Ohio contracted with the Global Strategy Group to conduct telephone interviews of registered voters and focus groups in order to identify the public's awareness of the value of early care and learning. The study found that respondents strongly supported early child care and education programs but that, in a state with economic difficulties, the resources spent on these programs would be heavily scrutinized. Of possible actions taken by the state, respondents identified health care as their top priority when it came to caring for children from birth to age five.

Respondents (74%) understood the responsibility of the state in early care programs and were very supportive of an increase in state funding for early care and education programs, as long as this increase did not mean an increase their personal taxes (only 29% supported such a move). Respondents were also concerned that care providers who operate out of their own homes meet standards similar to those met by day care centers in their provision of educational and other activities.

Recent Public Awareness and Support Achievements

The results of the marketing survey were not strong enough to support providing them to the media or to be the basis of a major initiative focusing on elected officials. Build did, however, use the results in part to identify three target audiences for public will communications: businesses, providers/teachers, and schools. Build will use the marketing survey results to craft its communications plan that will create targeted messages to these audiences to build momentum toward improved public perception of and investment in early care and education.

6. Alignment and Readiness

Indication that, through actions above, big early learning agenda/investment is close to coming about

An early learning agenda for Ohio is close to coming about. For the first time, Build provides the leaders in early care and education with a structure to develop the early care and learning system. First, the component matrix allows Build members to survey the range of initiatives and projects and analyze them according to their participation in system-building. Second, Build provides a forum in which this matrix becomes part of a statewide strategic planning effort.

Build Ohio cannot point to a body of evidence that this agenda exists, but the agenda is closer to being built during these last four months in which Build has found its voice. Now there is also a planning process for each of the nine pieces of the system; Build is cataloging the next steps of each initiative and program to determine how the general goals of each component are being met. Now there are tools (e.g., the economic impact

Agenda of sufficient size and scope to be able to impact children's development and school readiness in a way that can be felt and measured on a statewide basis.

study) and vehicles (e.g., the communications plan) to use in reaching this agenda.

Built into Build Ohio's planning is a method to ensure that the size and scope of the agenda encompasses all nine components of the system, the component matrix. Build can identify the initiatives that address one or more components and is in the process of both articulating and facilitating links in the system. In this process, there is the potential for Build to make more purposeful a third planning function of the component matrix: the identification and diagnosis of gaps in the system. Build has recognized over the last several months that it can be most useful not by attempting to create the system components itself but by being the catalyst for existing – or even new – structures to take on pieces of this agenda.

In this way, statewide measurement of children's development and progress is also built into the system. Eleven different programs are currently collecting data, as identified by their inclusion in the Accountability component of the early learning system framework (see Table 1). By knowing what's being measured and collected around the state, Build can be the repository for all the measurable facets of early childhood – and can also help to identify gaps in this knowledge and system component where work is yet to be done.

7. Steps Ahead and Final Thoughts

Assessment of the challenges and opportunities of Build over the next two years.

Build's challenge is articulating and sticking to its real role as the statewide convener, facilitator, and repository of systems-building work. A solid understanding of its function allows Build to identify needed work but not "own" the work.

Discussion of the value of some of the key elements of Build to moving forward a state early learning system, as well as the issues they create –

Flexibility is inherent in Build's role as the convener and catalyst for state system-building work. Not locked in to a particular program, Build's ongoing agenda is based on real analysis of the separate system components expressed in the variety of programs and initiatives that its members identify. In fact, the agenda is simply a set of options in the face of Build's identification of a gap in the system as it is expressed and analyzed in the component matrix. This set of options is inherently flexible. When Build Ohio members recognize a need, the need can be identified as an opportunity with one of five possible options:

1. Too problematic (politically) for Build to take on.
(*Example: The Campaign* Advocacy is not something Build will do but by identifying it as a need, Build Ohio was the impetus for the creation of *The Campaign*.)
2. Not a Build project but Build can be the catalyst for its implementation and then spin it off to another entity.
(*Example: Step Up to Quality* Because of Build Ohio's support, the Ohio *Department* of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was able to

invest over \$2 million to invest in this project, and Build resources allowed activities to move forward while ODJFS was arranging for this investment.)

3. Not a Build project but that of someone at the table.

(Example: Early Learning Standards Build is supporting the efforts of the Ohio Department of Education by assisting in the wide dissemination of Early Learning Standards to the field, including the adoption by ODJFS of these standards as part of the Good Start Grow Smart initiative. ODE is represented on Build's administrative board.)

4. Not a Build project but one resulting from a collaboration of those at the table.

(Example: First Steps Infant-Toddler Initiative ODJFS, the Ohio Department of Health, and the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association have coordinated programs to create the Infant-Toddler Initiative. The collaboration for this initiative was a direct result of these organizations being at Build Ohio's "table," and Build is providing some resources to assist this collaboration.)

5. A project Build can engage on its own.

(Example: Marketing survey and economic impact study Statewide research on system components may be taken on by Build Ohio as a statewide organization with a priority of building public will for an early care and learning system.)

b. *Outside technical assistance, presence of a learning community, and recognition by national funders*

The national Build project provided technical assistance and other resources for the Build Ohio project; in addition, national Build project leaders provided important pressure on Build Ohio to keep its focus on building a comprehensive system, as described above. During this reporting period, technical assistance funds from national Build were used to bring Dr. Edward Zigler to Columbus for a professional development opportunity for Build members, to develop and deliver a Professional Development Institute, and to create and host a Local Connection meeting. The national Build's special meeting in August 2004 on governance was the impetus for Build Ohio's creation of the local connections initiative. All three of the events supported by technical assistance funds resulted in the expansion of Build's base of support.

Build national project members also comprised a learning community that had an important function during this case study period: this learning community has shown Build Ohio how it may be able to use statewide data to build political will and to measure the impact of its efforts.

The seed money provided by Build was also a key element in Build Ohio's formation; as outlined in Build Ohio's recent proposal, state and local funders, as well as public entities, have also invested in the projects that Build has identified as crucial to building a comprehensive early learning

and care system in Ohio.

c. *Incorporation
of evaluation
into the team
planning
process*

In addition, Build Ohio has incorporated evaluation into its planning process that is also a result of national Build assistance. All work plans have objectives that are established from the start, although Build Ohio has yet to measure statewide formal indicators of their success.

Final Thoughts

Whether from wisdom or happy circumstance, the Build Administrative Board members resisted pressure – even from the Build Funders--to formulate a comprehensive model at a time when doing so may have split the organization beyond repair. Instead they chose to focus on circumscribed and achievable, although seemingly disconnected, tasks. By allowing for success and for working roles and relationships to emerge, a strong, flexible method for addressing a comprehensive system has emerged. So too has a model for that system.

Fortunately, the National Build Initiative designed a multiyear funding term that allowed Build to avoid the problem of evaluating its progress too early and was a key to its current promise of success.