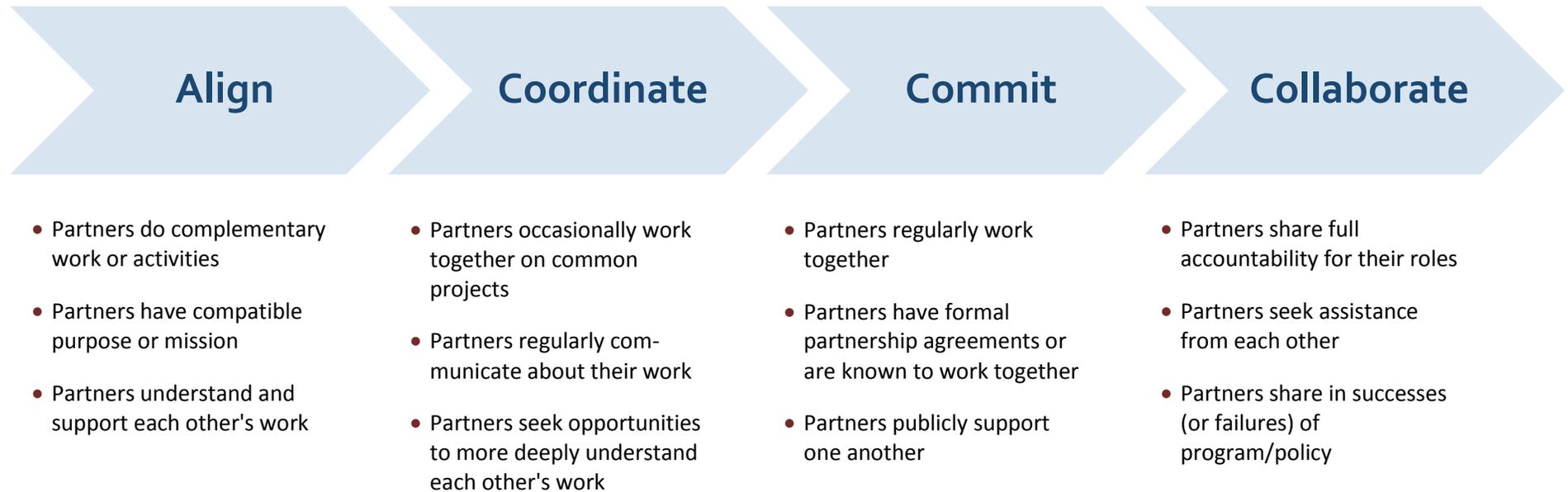


# State Education Agency (SEA) Partners Tool

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## CONTINUUM OF PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

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## DEFINITIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNER CAPACITY

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### Organizational Partner

Any organization (for example, an agency, institution, nonprofit, business) that is working intentionally on shared objectives can be a partner. Choosing organizations by looking *across* the spectrum of potential—beyond the traditional relationships of organizations that are accountable to the SEA in some fashion—can greatly expand the opportunity for shared work. In addition, partners:

- Collaborate;
- Have a shared understanding of goals and objectives;
- Are known associates with articulated and/or traditional working relationships; and
- May include State education agencies (SEA), regional delivery organizations (RDO), institutions of higher education and non-governmental organizations, such as nonprofits, consultancies, unions, philanthropies, and business, grassroots and advocacy organizations.

### Capacity

The actual or potential ability, readiness and willingness of a partner to perform and deliver the expected results.

### Continuum of Partner Engagement



### High Capacity Partner/Low Capacity Partner Characteristics

Characteristic	Low Capacity Partner	High Capacity Partner
<b>Scale</b>	Limited ability to fully address State needs in terms of target audience served (for example, number of students or teachers)	Able to fully address State needs in terms of target audience served (for example, number of students or teachers)
<b>Quality</b>	Inconsistent quality in program/policy design or implementation; program/policy fails to meet objectives	Able to conduct high quality program/policy design or implementation to meet objectives
<b>Role Definition</b>	Unclear about roles and responsibilities; relationships are fragmented or consume staff effort; authorities are questioned	Clear about partner roles and responsibilities; relationships are honest and strong; the required authorities are clarified and understood by all
<b>Mutual Accountability</b>	Not transparent about program quality and results; blames others when facing challenges; rarely seeks assistance from partners when needed	Transparent about program quality and results and assumes full accountability; openly shares program results and seeks feedback from stakeholders; seeks assistance from others when needed; holds partners accountable for their roles in a professional manner
<b>Leadership</b>	Does not have respect in the field or the community; is not able to effectively influence others to action	Commands respect based on proven track-record; is able to effectively influence others to action
<b>Expertise</b>	Has a limited track-record or reputation based on special skills or knowledge	Has demonstrated competencies that support progress toward Race to the Top goals; has a well-earned reputation based on special skills or knowledge
<b>Resources</b>	Has limited human, financial, social and/or political capital that could be used to promote progress toward Race to the Top goals	Has access to human, financial, social and/or political capital that could be used to promote progress toward Race to the Top goals
<b>Data</b>	Inconsistently collects and tracks data on program/policy quality; reluctant to share data with partners	Collects and tracks data on program quality; openly shares data with partners
<b>Communication &amp; Engagement</b>	Does not communicate regularly with partners; lack of transparency regarding program/policy problems; limited involvement from others in problem-solving	Identifies and implements methods of communicating with partners; seeks out opportunities to communicate; values shared understanding; seeks feedback on program/policy problems and involves others in problem-solving

## Organizational Roles in Reform

This chart describes roles for organizations in partnership. In your State context there may be other roles; identifying them will help your State to identify both strengths and gaps. Some organizations will play multiple roles or one role, depending on their capacity and mission. As you plan, it can be easy to assume all roles are covered, but it is important to think through each role to ensure that the partnership is set up for success.

<b>1. Program Implementer</b>	Implements program/policy as designed, including trainings, workshops, hiring/supervision of staff and all operational duties
<b>2. Sponsor</b>	Provides long-term support for policy/program lever; sustains commitment, interest and authorities; serves as champion
<b>3. Decision-Maker</b>	Has the authority to make decisions regarding the policy/program, including its existence, governance, continuation, scope and scale; there may be multiple decision makers at various levels
<b>4. Budget Appropriator</b>	Has the authority to fund all activities regarding the policy/program
<b>5. Program Designer</b>	Designs the program to meet identified needs; develops workshops, training and tools to support program implementation
<b>6. Evaluator</b>	Evaluates the quality of the policy/program based on data; collects and analyzes data on relevant metrics regarding policy/program quality and implementation; conducts literature reviews, research or assessments; reports findings to policy/program owners
<b>7. Improvement Leader</b>	Identifies needed policy changes to reach policy/program goals; leverages evaluation and program data to communicate needed changes; ensures lever is consistent with State agendas; monitors and analyzes relevant State and local policy
<b>8. Communicator</b>	Communicates policy and program ideas at all levels (internally and externally) to ensure shared understanding and promote program/policy as needed
<b>9. Engagement Manager</b>	Builds and sustains ownership for policy/program levers by nurturing relationships with key stakeholders; facilitates input through meetings, events or advisory groups to ensure stakeholders understand and are included in policy/program development; seeks opportunities for collaboration; builds consensus for needed improvements; brings forward conflicts and concerns of key stakeholders
<b>10. Funder/Donor</b>	Provides resources to further the work of the policy/program; contributes cash or other goods, such as services, real estate, motor vehicles, materials or other assets; may require investments in specific activities; usually stipulates reporting requirements and expects relationship management
<b>11. Advocate</b>	Actively communicates by speaking or writing in support of the policy/program; recommends publicly; argues in favor of the policy/program in an effort to build additional support; seeks opportunities to speak or write in support of the policy/program