Key Considerations when Planning Cross Sector Learning Events
Calgary and Area RCSD Learning Partnerships Committee 2020 04 01

This document is designed to provide a guideline for anyone hosting a cross-sector learning event.

Calgary and Area RCSD hosted annual Imagine That! cross sector learning events since shortly after its inception in 2013. Each event was designed to promote evidence-informed ways of working regardless of sector, organization, or role. Event planning from concept through to post event evaluation was led by a multi sector Learning Partnerships Committee with the dedicated central support of an Administrative Coordinator from the RCSD Secretariat. Events were open to front line staff from Education (public, separate, private and charter school divisions), Children's Services, Community and Social Services, Albert Health Services, First Nations (Tsuut'ina), neighbouring RCSD's, community organizations, and parents and individuals who work together for children and youth.

Pooled funding from Calgary and Area RCSD partners supported complimentary registration for all participants. Topics and speakers were selected in response to emerging regional needs across sectors, organizations, and roles. Post event evaluation helped committee members plan each future event and incorporate participant feedback and recommendations.

Finally, in addition to the in-kind support and time commitment of cross-sector committee members and their leaders, a shared annual budget of up to $25,000 was supported centrally with payments processed through the designated partner banker board.

10 months out (January)
- Appoint an event coordinator
- Convene a planning committee (cross sector leaders, front line staff, parent/family reps) and pre-book planning meetings until event day (monthly or bi-monthly).
- Begin planning conversations for new event (review feedback from previous events), identify topics and speakers that can advance the work of the network and ensure relevance to staff and parents. Use the Service Delivery Rubric as a tool to guide committee recommendations.
- Learning Partnership Committee members in Spring 2020 recommend the following topics be considered should a cross sector learning event be supported in future: Adverse Childhood Events, Anxiety, Attachment Theory, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Diversity and working with varied cultures, Kinship Care: Supporting Grandparent Caregivers Across Systems, Trauma Informed Practice and the Impact on Learning. Most of these suggestions were made by multiple participants at Imagine that over successive years.

- Begin event budget based on available funding (venue, catering, AV, printing, registration etc.)
- Decide on 2 or 3 potential dates based on partner system and venue availability, and soft-hold venue space. Check against any conflicts with partner systems.
- Committee to decide on format (e.g. if breakout spaces are required) as this may influence venue selection.
- Connect with potential speakers around availability, fees etc.

8 months out (March)
- Committee to shortlist speaker options to ensure someone who presents credible, evidence-informed content as well as someone who has not already 'saturated' the local audience.
- Coordinator to prepare letter of agreement with speaker with the support of the host organization/banker board. Coordinator to arrange venue deposit.
- Committee to develop learning outcomes and focus questions for the keynote speaker to ensure that overall learning objectives are met.

7 months out (April)
- Committee lead and Coordinator to meet with speaker to finalize objectives, format etc. and request bio and photo from keynote.
- Committee to draft event agenda based on chosen format, venue, speaker, and include networking time.
- Committee members to begin to collect e-resources to support even topic.

6 months out (May)
- Coordinator to draft and committee to finalize messaging for all communication materials (save the date, registration site, event booklet, evaluation questions etc.)
- Coordinator to prepare and committee to agree on final draft event budget
- Coordinator to visit venue and take room photos to use in detailed 'day of' planning
- Coordinator to preselect catering options for committee decisions based on available budget and venue options.
- Coordinator to arrange for Elder blessing on event day

5 months out (June)
- Committee to decide on how to manage registration e.g. assigning a number of spots per participating organization/system (and managing registration 'off line' via system contact and the event coordinator) or building an online registration system and allowing registration on a first come first registered basis. Always set aside spots for parents.

- Coordinator to prepare registration system (online via Simple Survey or similar tool or manually via spreadsheet)
- Coordinator to create and distribute the 'save the date' through partner systems
- Committee to decide on swag/giveaway requirements (Coordinator to order)
- Coordinator to book accommodation (if required) for speaker and arrange for room/taxes to be direct billed to host organization

3 months out (August)
- Coordinator finalizes event e-booklet (agenda, session descriptions, bios, photos, self-reflection questions, resources, and acknowledgement.

2 months out (September)
- Open registration mid-month as per details included in the 'save the date'.
- RCSD used Simple Survey (subscription) to manage registration and post-event evaluation.
- Coordinator monitors 'open' registration on a regular basis and connects with individual system partners if registration is low in for their staff
- Coordinator reviews action items, ensure all volunteer roles are filled (set up lead, av support, resource table, registration table, setting up room, site hosts, mic runners, facilitators emcee, catering/dietary, attendance certificates, clean up, and transporting speaker to and from event if required.
- Committee reviews venue logistics
- Committee reviews and finalizes event e-booklet and evaluation questions
- Coordinator submits printing order if required.
- Coordinator prepares online evaluation link (which is sent to all registered participants bcc following the event).
- The Likert Scale is used to measure participants feedback on whether they felt engaged with the information, whether the information was relevant to them, whether they took the opportunity to network during the event, and custom questions to measure advertised learning objectives for each event. Additional open questions including, 'tell us one thing that you will take away from the event', 'what topics and speakers would you like to have for future learning events?', and 'what else would you like us to know?' provide the committee with specific feedback which proves useful for further customization of future events to best meet the needs of frontline staff and parents.
- Coordinator finalizes emcee script/timing for the day (with safety messages, reminder to check in at the registration table, washroom locations etc.)
- Coordinator prepares welcome messaging for guest Leadership opening remarks.

1 month out (October)

3 weeks out
- Coordinator sends bcc reminder to all registered participants and encourages anyone unable to attend to submit regrets.
- Coordinator manages waitlisted spots against cancellations
- Coordinator liaises with venue re. final timed agenda, final catering numbers and dietary requirements.

2 weeks out
- Coordinator prepares signs for charging stations, registration desk etc.
- Coordinator prepares networking contact list (names, organizations, email addresses of all participants who opt in during registration)
- Coordinator prints blank certificates (event name, keynote, date, duration)

1 week out
- Coordinator packs up event supplies
- Coordinator prints name tags (once registration is finalized and waitlisted spots confirmed) and bundles them in alpha order by surname
- Coordinator sends final reminder and wayfinding/parking maps to all

Day before
- Coordinator transports event supplies to venue (if possible)
- Coordinator sends reminder email to all volunteers to confirm arrival times and roles.

Event Day
- Coordinator and committee members (the volunteer crew) arrive at venue by 7:00 a.m. to set event space and test AV
- Coordinator and volunteers clear the space as event concludes
- Coordinator sends link to the evaluation survey (bcc) to all participants along with the networking list

Debrief meeting (2-3 months post event)
- Coordinator shares draft evaluation feedback and collates planning committee feedback and observations.

Other
- Coordinator pays invoices
- Coordinator updates the summary report with committee recommendations and evaluation survey results
- Committee co-chair presents summary to the sponsoring Leadership team.

8 Months Out
March
- Shortlist all options
- Confirm preferred speaker and venue
- Develop learning objectives
- Decide on event format

6 Months Out
May
- Finalize communication content
- Finalize budget
- Finalize venue contract

3 Months Out
August
- Prepare Event Booklet
- Prepare online evaluation
- Prepare online registration system

3 weeks out
- Send reminder
- Manage waitlist

2 weeks out
- Prepare signs and event supplies
- Finalize Catering
- Prepare networking list

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

10 Months Out
January
- Appoint coordinator
- Convene planning committee
- Start planning potential topic speaker scope dates and venue

7 Months Out
April
- Meet with speaker
- Draft event agenda
- Define topic(s) based on learning objectives
- Collect resources

5 Months Out
June
- Finalize registration process
- Send out 'save the date'
- Order swag
- Book speaker accommodations

2 Months Out
September
- Open registration
- Finalize volunteer schedule
- Submit printing order
- Emcee script with timing
- Draft welcome messaging

1 week out
- Print name tags
- Send final reminder + wayfinding/parking details
- Prepare e-agenda loop
- Prepare bcc list for evaluation email
- Check in with volunteers and speakers re. Final logistics

Event Day
- Set up venue
- Check in guests
- Clean up
- Send evaluation link and participant list bcc

Post Event
- Committee debriefs
- Process invoices
- Complete event summary report
- Share report with sponsoring leaders and then share bcc with all event participants.