



**Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School Time Meeting Minutes**  
**May 25, 2004 9:00-2:00**  
*McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota campus*

**Commissioners Present:** Carol Truesdell, Maya Babu, Peter Benson, Delroy Calhoun, Andrea Platt Dwyer, Anne Ganey, Blair Gange, Jennifer Godinez, Julie Green, Les Heitke, Susan Hoff, Daniel Knutson, Scott Lyons, Harold Mezile, Sandy'Ci Moua, Greg Owen, Valerie Halverson Pace., Kathleen Vellenga, Christopher Wilson

**Commissioners Absent:** Joanne Benson, McKinley Boston, Emmett Carson, Bridget Gothberg, Joe LaGarde, Mary Ann Nelson, Michael Rodriguez, Don Shelby, Neal Thao, David Walsh.

**Staff Present:** Dale Blyth, Joyce Walker, Ann Lochner, Dave Moen, Sherry Boyce. Kitty Schneider

**1. Welcome and Introductions:**

Carol Truesdell welcomed everyone and expressed regret that Don Shelby, Commission Co-Chair, could not be with the group due to health concerns. Commissioners wanted to send Don their best wishes and agreed a card should be sent to him. Carol gave a brief re-cap of the March meeting, noting that today's meeting would expand on work toward clarifying Minnesota's vision for Out-of-School time (OST) and identification of strategies needed to accomplish the vision.

**2. Overview of Goals for Today's Meeting:**

Carol reviewed goals for the day:

- 1) To refine and affirm the Commission's vision for WHAT must be ensured.
- 2) To clarify the primary reasons WHY we believe vision elements must be ensured.
- 3) To determine the direction for Commission recommendations with regard to HOW state and local systems would implement the vision.

**3. Refining and Affirming Our Vision:**

Carol invited Commissioners to review an OST Vision Statement summarizing vision priorities identified by Commissioners at the March meeting. Dale Blyth facilitated a discussion regarding vision elements. Commissioners offered perspectives about key challenges and strategies related to achieving the vision. They noted that OST supports and opportunities are unique in their ability to positively influence the growth and development of children and youth, and should be positioned to work in concert with families, communities, and schools rather than competing with them. Commissioners endorsed Vision Statement content and will share any specific recommendations for wording changes.

**4. Reflections from European Approaches:**

Joyce Walker reviewed highlights of an issue brief she prepared for the meeting: *The European Experience with Youth Programs: Lessons for Out-of-School Time*. Joyce recounted her recent experience traveling to Great Britain and France to meet with youth development leaders. She explained the differences in philosophy and approach to Out-of-School Time in these European countries, highlighting three examples:

- a) Language: "Non-formal learning" is the terminology used to distinguish Out-of-School Time as a category separate from academic "knowledge-based" education.

- b) **Theme:** Non-formal learning is a separate “sector” within which three thematic areas guide overarching goals for youth: Civic engagement, social inclusiveness; and personal development.
- c) **Age:** Youth are seen as an “older” age group—commonly between 14 and 26-- and goals for youth are characterized as steps toward adult participation and contribution.

Commissioners shared reactions about the high value placed on youth investment in European society. It was recognized that in the United States and Minnesota, in particular, we are challenged to “sell” and justify youth investments, like supports and opportunities for learning and development during non-school hours. Commissioners were asked to consider “compelling reasons” that could effectively engage public support for ensuring a state OST vision. A process was designed to facilitate discussion and prioritization of potential “compelling reasons” and is described in # 5.

**5. Clarifying and Prioritizing WHY we want to ensure our Vision for OST.**

A variety of compelling reasons for strengthening OST opportunities were listed on flip charts-- framed as a variety of outcome-oriented statements related to youth involvement in OST activities. Commissioners were invited to consider the merits of each and to comment about their strengths and weaknesses as potential selling points for a statewide OST vision. Commissioner feedback will be used to inform a Communications Study to be conducted in Minnesota by Frameworks Institute, in collaboration with the Minnesota Out-of-School Time Partnership. It will also be used to frame the preamble for the final Commission report and future discussions of communications strategies for building public will.

Commissioners were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each reason/approach by indicating first, second and third place preferences. Support for each of the “Compelling Reasons” is reported in order of highest preference below.

<b>RANK</b>	<b>WEIGHTED SUM***</b>	<b>COMPELLING REASON</b>
<b>1</b>	25	All MN youth deserve and need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong schools</li> <li>• strong non-formal programs and opportunities and</li> <li>• strong families.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	19.5	Improve Minnesota quality of life through civic engagement with inclusion for all.
<b>3</b>	12.5	Help all youth see a hopeful and happy future for themselves
<b>4</b>	12	Reduce Crime and prevent trouble.
<b>5a*</b>	7	Build strong future leaders
<b>5b*</b>	7	A state that provides rich youth experiences through community involvement.
<b>6a*</b>	6	The American Ideal: Potential for all, possibility for each individual to achieve full potential plus world leadership.
<b>6b*</b>	6	Build a community of lifelong learners
<b>7</b>	4	Build creative, innovative, knowledgeable workers for a stronger future economy.
<b>8a*</b>	3	Make Minnesota a better place for families to settle, grow, and prosper
<b>8b*</b>	3	Assure every child and youth can reach maximum level of educational attainment

\*a) and b) signify ties

\*\*\* Weighted Sum = (1<sup>st</sup> Place Votes x 3)+(2<sup>nd</sup> Place Votes x 2)+(3<sup>rd</sup> Place Votes x 1)

**6. Debate: Alternate Approaches to Reaching a MN Vision for OST**

A debate was staged to stimulate discussion about two different approaches that would achieve a statewide vision for OST through different methods:

1. *Grow multiple types of opportunities to fill the out of school hours of youth OR*
2. *Focus in on one or two compelling themes and use them to drive what types of opportunities are encouraged during the out of school hours.*

Brief presentations by Commission staff highlighted possible benefits of each direction. Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of respective approaches. There was concern that too narrow a theme may not engender sufficiently broad support, while too general a focus may not clearly reflect state priorities for youth during their non-school hours. Broad support for multiple types of opportunities was seen as a more flexible option, with sufficient latitude for inclusion of more specific themes over time.

**7. Dialogue: How Should State-Level Support for OST be organized?**

Commissioners were then invited to consider how three different styles of state-level activity might enhance or inhibit community capacity to ensure **quality** and **access** of OST opportunities through:

- **STIMULATION:** Support conditions that promote quality and access through informal measures such as improved networking among providers.
- **COORDINATION:** Synchronize efforts to ensure quality and access through collaboration and organization of activities to enhance collective capacity.
- **OVERSIGHT:** Structure an OST operating system to direct, manage, monitor, and evaluate strategies intentionally designed to positively impact OST capacity in communities across the state. Discussion highlights for each of the three approaches follow:

<b>STIMULATION</b>		
	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>
<i>State Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-level actions to stimulate OST supports and opportunities could include making technical assistance available to help communities formulate their own plans for OST.</li> <li>• Communications and marketing activities at the state level would also enhance community OST capacity statewide.</li> <li>• Finally, community collaboration could be stimulated at the state level, with tangible rewards for communities that enhance effectiveness of their OST resources. Ensure that the definition of “quality” works for different types of communities and that youth have meaningful involvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to OST activities could be stimulated at the state level through elevating public understanding about the meaning and implications of “quality” programs for youth outcomes.</li> <li>• Elevating the importance of quality programs could become an incentive for encouraging greater utilization of programs.</li> <li>• The state could also initiate efforts to engage educational leaders in seeing the connections between educational achievement and learning with OST learning and developmental growth.</li> </ul>
<i>Local Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine what community needs are, before moving to the state level. Involve all types of communities—by place and association—in discussion about their unique needs for OST supports and opportunities.</li> <li>• Help communities understand how to assess and measure both OST needs and progress in meeting them in measurable outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation is seen as a key access issue for both rural and transit-dependent families in urban communities. Creative ways to overcome the transportation issue as a barrier is needed.</li> <li>• Data collection at the local level has driven recognition of the need for new OST approaches.</li> <li>• Language barriers should be addressed at local levels, to ensure programs are relevant and attractive to all youth and their families.</li> <li>• Networking opportunities across communities may be helpful in improving access.</li> </ul>

<b>COORDINATION</b>		
	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>
<b>State Level</b>	<p>State level programs, like the Governor’s After School Enrichment program, bring community partners together to find creative avenues for coordinating services for youth and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps Family Service Collaboratives could be helpful in coordinating local youth OST investments across the state.</li> <li>• Family Centers in communities could also be encouraged to maximize coordination of OST programming across the state.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources are seen as the major barrier to access at local level: support in this area would improve access.</li> <li>• Supporting culturally-specific organizations in communities could improve access for multi-cultural youth</li> <li>• Networking opportunities across communities could enhance individual and collective OST access.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find ways to help local leaders and citizens understand the importance of their involvement as planners for community OST supports.</li> <li>• Elevate the importance of youth professionals as key to quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities need local leadership to champion OST</li> <li>• Put activities where youth are most likely to see them – unique to each community</li> </ul>

<b>OVERSIGHT</b>		
	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>
<b>State Level</b>	<p>Overall policy decisions could help or hinder if not structured properly. The process of setting quality standards could be a challenge if multiple criteria are used on different levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that quality standards are set to act as positive guidelines for programs.</li> <li>• Adopt a set of best practices and an umbrella group could be responsible for ensuring training and TA across the state.</li> <li>• Make community collaboration a centerpiece for defining “best practices”, recognizing that it requires time and resources to be done well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide the use of dollars to address access issues across the state.</li> <li>• Quantify OST program utilization by youth and identify gaps—tie this state snapshot to local data and publicize.</li> <li>• Set state goals with objectives for increasing access to OST supports and opportunities across the state.</li> <li>• Identify a baseline for community OST capacity development.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a mechanism for communities to participate in visioning processes to get OST on community radar screen and included in their planning agendas.</li> <li>• Create mechanisms for communities to set multiple goals for OST to be achieved over time.</li> <li>• Strengthening the capacity of smaller youth serving organizations has been used in other areas as an effective approach tied to measurable outcomes and should be considered a viable strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the dimensions of needs for OST supports and opportunities including cultural demographics and fit community access enhancements to local situation.</li> <li>• Provide the resources for communities to bring multiple partners to the table and focus planning for OST on best practices research.</li> <li>• Promote free activities as part of the overall mix of resources.</li> <li>• Help teachers reach-out to disengaged students with information about OST programs.</li> <li>• Encourage local organizations to set goals for increasing youth participation by specified percentages.</li> </ul>

## **8. Youth Voice Report on Focus Group Research**

Rebecca Saito presented an overview of focus group research she recently completed involving youth in a variety of statewide locations. Findings of the study are contained in an issue brief prepared for the meeting: *Listening to Young People's Perspectives on Out-of-School Opportunities*. Her presentation highlighted rural, urban, and suburban youth feedback about participation in OST programs. Saito developed a youth development typology categorizing communities in terms of the quantity, location and types of opportunities available to young people during their non-school hours:

### *Opportunity Rich*

- Lots of school-based opportunities
- Lots of community-based opportunities
- Lots of informal opportunities

### *School-Based Opportunity Rich*

- Lots of school-based opportunities
- Few community-based opportunities
- Few Informal opportunities

### *Opportunity Depleted*

- Few School-based opportunities
- Few community-based opportunities
- Few informal supports

Findings suggest 50% of youth do not participate in any youth programs and across all types of communities studied, none were *Opportunity Rich*. Commissioners discussed study results and shared personal insights about reasons for “non-participating” youth.

## **8. Updates**

- Commissioners received an update on the work of the Minnesota Out-of-School Time Partnership. The intent of the Partnership’s application to the Mott Foundation to establish a Minnesota OST Network was reviewed and a resolution to approve the application was circulated.
- The Youth Caucus—engaging about twenty statewide youth in a weekend retreat— offers the opportunity for five Commissioners to participate in discussions with youth on Saturday, July 10, 2004 at Camp Ihduhapi, Loretto, MN. A hand-out reviewing goals and plans for the retreat was furnished.
- Descriptions of site visit locations to be visited following the May meeting were shared.
- A description of Frameworks Institute and their plan for Minnesota message development work in collaboration with the Minnesota Out-of-School Time Partnership was shared. Commissioner input about compelling reasons to ensure OST opportunities for Minnesota youth will inform the creation of focus group questions.

## **9. Selecting a direction, highlighting great ideas**

The meeting concluded with a synthesis of the ideas generated for WHY a Minnesota vision for OST is critical to the success of HOW it will be accomplished. Commissioners were encouraged to think about which strategies are most important to the larger goal of moving the OST agenda for Minnesota forward. There was agreement that the compelling reasons or themes identified during the meeting should be folded into a broader message uniting them in a common goal to improve the lives of youth. Involvement of youth at state and local levels is critical. As one Commissioner framed the challenge, we are looking for something thematic, but not looking for a

theme. Something like, “Every child moving forward” to represent the importance of investing in the growth and development of children and youth during the hours they are not in school.

#### **10. Preparing for July—Funding Streams and Funding Strategies**

Commissioners were encouraged to review the Funding Streams and Funding Strategies issue briefs contained in their meeting packets prior to the next Commission meeting on July 27, 2004. These materials provide the background information necessary for the next step in envisioning how Minnesota might create and support the Commission’s vision for OST in Minnesota.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Dale Blyth announced that a November meeting will be scheduled to ensure adequate time for completion of Commission recommendations. Carol Truesdell adjourned the meeting, thanking Commissioners for the high quality of discussion.