



**Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School Time Meeting Minutes**  
**November 30, 2004**  
*McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota Campus*

**Commissioners Present:** Carol Truesdell, Maya Babu, Delroy Calhoun, Andrea Platt Dwyer, Blaire Gagne, Anne Ganey, Jennifer Godinez, Bridget Gothberg, Les Heitke, Scott Lyons, Daniel Knutson, Harold Mezile, Greg Owen, Michael Rodriguez, Kathleen Vellenga, David Walsh.

**Commissioners Absent:** Don Shelby, Joanne Benson, McKinley Boston, Jr., Emmett Carson, Julie Green, Susan Hoff, Joe La Garde, Mary Ann Nelson, Sandy 'Ci Moua, Valerie Halverson Pace, Christopher Wilson

**Staff Present:** Dale Blyth, Joyce Walker, Ann Lochner, David Moen, Kitty Schneider, Sherry Boyce, Janet Beyer, Carol Thomas

**1. Welcome**

Carol Truesdell welcomed everyone, acknowledging all of the hard work that preceded this last Commission meeting. She indicated there would be a meeting in early 2005 to bring closure to the work of the Commission, recognize the contributions of Commission members, and plan for engaging Commissioners as champions for Out-of-School Time during the year ahead.

**2. Overview of the Day**

Carol reviewed the Commission's Charge and goals for the day. She indicated the majority of the day's work would be centered on review of the final report draft:

- Confirm direction taken in introductory sections of the report: Making the Case, Vision and Core Principles.
- Review, discuss, adjust, and affirm levels of support for recommendations and related action strategies.
- Discuss next steps for preparation and release of report and related roll-out activities.

Carol asked Dale Blyth to review steps leading to preparation of the report draft and the role for Commissioners in reviewing the report during today's meeting. He explained the need for directional endorsement to ensure content of respective sections reflects the majority view of Commissioners. He encouraged Commissioners to treat the report draft as a first attempt to combine Commissioner Input with pertinent research findings—a beginning point for assessing support for the framing of key elements. Dale proposed and Commissioners agreed to use a simple "temperature taking" tool indicating support on a scale of zero to five for the direction of report segments.

**3. Review of Report in General**

Dale asked Commissioners for their general reaction to the report recommendations as a whole. Commissioners expressed general support for the current draft reflection of their ideas. There were specific suggestions about using more inclusive and simplified language—particularly around cultural background and resource/opportunity challenges for children, youth, and families.

There was support for the holistic approach embodied in the report, and concern that language throughout the report should resonate similarly for all children youth and families in all types of communities.

There was agreement that the report needs to be clearer about funding aspects as they connect to recommendations and convey the cost of inaction as well as actions put forth in recommendations.

Youth Caucus recommendations are effectively woven throughout the report.

#### **4. Review of Introductory Sections: Votes in the 3-5 range**

Carol requested Commissioner Feedback on introductory sections of the report draft, recalling these sections had been reviewed and approved as individual documents at previous meetings. The purpose for revisiting them at today's meeting is to ensure they fit together conceptually and create an appropriate framework for the direction of recommendations. Discussion highlights are summarized by category below:

##### ❖ **Making the Case**

Discussion of this section concluded that the urgency of the situation in Minnesota around the needs of youth for OST supports and opportunities should be moved to the front of the report. Care should be taken to keep the message positive, yet realistic about current inattention to the issue in Minnesota. The danger of losing our most important legacy unless we invest wisely needs to be woven into early part of the report-- to encourage early interest and buy-in. The importance of investment in OST opportunities for young people should be balanced with consequences of not investing.

##### ❖ **Vision**

In this section, Commissioners wanted to see more Minnesota statistics, such as those contained in the Minnesota Youth Survey. Reference to demographic changes—aging baby boomers and geographic trends—e.g., rural areas losing youth would add additional insight to why this issue is urgent for young people growing up today. A broader focus embracing K-12 age children and youth should be used more consistently throughout the report, with more uniform references to these ages.

##### ❖ **Commitment to Core Principles**

Commissioners were concerned that “core principles” language may project a values connotation that could cause confusion with current the trend toward politicization of “values”. Simplification of this section was recommended to highlight main points more clearly.

#### **5. Review of Recommendations**

Consideration of recommendations was structured to:

- ◆ Determine support for collective set of seven recommendations.
- ◆ Focus on two pivotal recommendation areas: Statewide Investment Fund and Statewide Fabric of Support.
- ◆ Review remaining recommendations in light of statewide investment and support discussion.

#### **6. Collective Set of Recommendations: Votes in the 4-5 range**

Commissioners were asked for their reactions to the entire set of seven recommendations as presented in the report draft. There was strong agreement that the recommendations taken collectively reflect critical dimensions of Commission viewpoints about youth needs for developmental supports in their communities.

Discussion revealed concern that becoming more systematic about OST across the state should be positioned as a community centered effort inclusive of all contributors to OST capacity. Becoming more systematic should be about community empowerment.

**I. Recommendation I: Encourage Positive Choices: Votes in the 4-5 range**

There was strong support for recognizing youth who participate in community youth development opportunities and for promoting public awareness about available community choices supportive to positive youth development. Engaging youth in identification of local supply and demand issues was viewed as critical to the process of providing the appropriate mix of opportunities. The complexity of implementing the “Dream Scheme” strategy outlined in Action Strategy “A” was seen as too complicated and cumbersome to reach the majority of Minnesota youth. There was support for a more general method to recognize youth who participate in community youth development activities.

**II. Recommendation II: Close the Opportunity Gap: Votes: 1-4 range**

Commissions indicated mixed support for this recommendation and action strategies. Discussion revealed concerns about language that lacks appeal for diverse audiences. Action steps were viewed as deficit, rather than asset based. Commissioners agreed the action steps should be re-worked to encourage community empowerment and community asset mapping.

**III. Recommendation III: Assure Quality Opportunities: Votes: 3-5 range**

The majority of Commissioners were strongly supportive of action strategies related to ensuring quality developmental opportunities for Minnesota young people. Discussion confirmed recognition that youth worker training is essential to ensuring quality opportunities for youth to enhance their development. In addition, the involvement of youth in defining quality is essential to the integrity of establishing quality criteria.

**IV. Recommendation IV: Increase Community Capacity: Votes: 3-5 range**

A community award system was viewed as a more positive incentive for communities than a rating system that could result in a negative label. Youth involvement in recognizing community capacity to address youth development was strongly supported.

**V. Recommendation V: Statewide Fabric of Support: Votes in the 2-5 range**

Commissioners engaged in an extensive discussion about possible models for a statewide leadership structure. There was general agreement that a statewide fabric of support should tap into those existing collaborative structures at state and regional levels that would support a strong OST agenda. Commissioners identified the need for:

- ◆ A coordination component between state and community levels—a regional structure through which community supports for quality programming, training, and scholarships for youth could be effectively addressed.
- ◆ Close cooperation with the Minnesota OST Partnership in their work to shape state-level OST leadership efforts. A group of Commissioners volunteered to meet with MN OST Partnership Agenda Group to explore alignment of Commission views about criteria for statewide leadership models with the Partnership’s.
- ◆ Positioning integral leadership functions for community based youth development opportunities at the state level.

- ◆ A transitional period of two to four years during which leadership elements can be formalized.

**VI. Recommendation VI: Strengthen Advocacy: Votes: 3-5 range**

It was agreed that multiple avenues to increase awareness and support in Minnesota for positive youth development opportunities should be explored through existing advocacy groups. In addition, Commissioners affirmed their support for dedicating a portion of any new funds raised (to increase Minnesota OST capacity) to a statewide public relations campaign. Strategies to build public will were viewed as a key function of statewide leadership.

**VII. Recommendation VII: Establish a Statewide Investment Fund: Votes in the 0-5 range**

Commissioners strongly supported the three pronged funding model suggested in the report: public, private, and citizen (youth and parents)—as a means to raise new dollars for statewide OST capacity building. There was concern about the need for a method to accurately estimate the amount of revenue needed to adequately increase OST capacity; the process for raising additional dollars; and the proportion of money to be allocated to infrastructure investments vs. programs.

Commissioners expressed concern that the funding section had been discussed the least during Commission meetings and must address justification, utilization, and implementation issues related to recommendation action steps. Commission staff will pursue suggested strategies to strengthen this section.

**7. Conclusions and Wrap-Up**

Carol asked Commissioners to indicate their interest in further discussion about statewide fabric of support and statewide investment strategies. Commissioners thanked Carol for facilitating the day's lengthy discussion of report elements. Dale reviewed plans for Commissioner Input on the final edited report draft: Commissioners will receive a paper copy of the final draft on which to indicate changes, with a new release date in March 2005. News about possibilities for Commissioner Participation in report release and roll-out activities will be forthcoming in early 2005, as will opportunities to learn about FrameWorks' Minnesota research results and message development applications.