



In December 2004, University of Minnesota president Robert Bruininks created the Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School Time (MNCOST). He charged the group with crafting *the vision and strategies needed to ensure Minnesota's young people—ages 8 to 18—have engaging opportunities to learn and develop during the times when they are not in school*. This update provides an overview of MNCOST's activities and accomplishments.

About The Commission

MNCOST is a partnership of students, educators, policy makers, youth development professionals, and others who have a stake in the well-being of Minnesota kids.

Bruininks told the crowd at the official launch at the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, "How and where young people are spending their out-of-school time is a major concern for working families, businesses, communities, schools and neighborhoods throughout Minnesota."

Over the past year, Commissioners have responded to Bruininks charge by:

- **Making the Case for OST programming:** Articulating why OST programs are important, and how high-quality opportunities impact young people, their families, their schools, and their communities.
- **Understanding the Current Situation:** Creating a portrait of the state of OST programming, and the roles played by formal and informal systems and organizations.
- **Exploring Options:** Examining best practices statewide, nationally, and internationally, and identifying promising funding streams and strategies.
- **Defining what Minnesota wants:** Creating a vision for what is desirable, and what is possible.

New OST Resources

If your work, family, or community brings you in contact with young people, you'll want to learn more about how Minnesota kids are or could be spending these critical hours. The Commission has developed more than 10 briefing papers that highlight the current state of OST programming, as well as a vision and agenda for moving forward. The papers include:

- **Original research**
- **Policy perspectives**
- **Making the case for improvement**

See the back of this page for a complete list of titles.

What's Next?

In addition to Commission meetings scheduled for September and November, small work groups have formed to address each of four areas of particular need:

- Stimulating positive youth choices
- Creating community opportunities for OST programming and activities
- Building public will for supporting OST programming
- Establishing state mechanisms for ensuring access to high-quality OST opportunities

A full report from the Commission, including specific work group recommendations, will be available in January, 2005.

The Vision

?? **Every young person is engaged** in age appropriate, high-quality, readily accessible activities that provide positive connections and guidance, and offer opportunities to develop useful skills and healthy behaviors that contribute to a positive future.

?? **Every family has access to affordable, high-quality opportunities** that they can encourage and that will constructively engage their children.

?? **Every community has a clear plan and adequate support** to help young people engage in non-formal learning activities that reward and challenge them, and help them grow individually as well as contribute to the community.

?? **Every organization and professional providing opportunities has the needed supports** to promote and improve quality, including access to a continuum of education and training programs for the staff and volunteers who shape and deliver them.

?? **A statewide operating system exists** to support youth, families, organizations, professionals, and communities in providing the array of services and functions needed to assure a flexible, equitable, effective, and efficient statewide approach that serves to strengthen the quality and accessibility of non-school learning opportunities.

?? **The public understands the value of these opportunities** and supports a stable and appropriate allocation of public and private resources needed.

Briefing Paper Topics

Making the Case

- Why is Out-of-School Time Important?
- What are Young People Doing with their Time?

Understanding the Current Situation

- Demographic Snapshot - Children and Youth in MN
- In Search of Youth Policy
- Support for Adults in Out-of-School Time Programs

Exploring Options

- Overview of Out-of-School Time Funding Streams
- Funding Strategies for Out-of-School Time
- The European Experience with Youth Programs: Lessons for Out-of-School Time

Defining What Minnesota Wants

From The Minnesota Youth Caucus

- An Overview
- Report on Proceedings
- Implementation Ideas and Action Steps
- Youth on Youth: Youth Conducted Field Interviews with Non-Participators in Out-of-School Time Opportunities

All may be downloaded free of charge from the MNCOST Web site: www.mncost.org.