



Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School Time Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2004
McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota Campus

Commissioners Present: Carol Truesdell, Don Shelby, Joanne Benson, Peter Benson, Delroy Calhoun, Andrea Platt Dwyer, Blair Gagne, Bridget Gothberg, Les Heitke, Susan Hoff, Daniel Knutson, Harold Mezile, Mary Ann Nelson, Greg Owen, Christopher Wilson

Commissioners Absent: Maya Babu, McKinley Boston, Jr., Emmett Carson, Anne Ganey, Jennifer Godinez, Julie Green, Joe LaGarde, Scott Lyons, Sandy'Ci Moua, Valerie Halverson Pace, Michael Rodriguez, Neal Thao, Kathleen Vellenga, David Walsh

Staff Present: Dale Blyth, Joyce Walker, Sherry Boyce, Ann Lochner, David Moen, Kitty Schneider, Ann Walter

1. Welcome

Carol Truesdell welcomed everyone, extending a special greeting to Don Shelby on his return to the Commission after his absence due to illness. Commissioners applauded his recovery and extended warm wishes for his continued good health.

2. Overview of Goals for Today

Carol reviewed the Commission charge and three goals for the meeting:

- Adopt a preamble statement to precede final recommendations, outlining key issues that will frame work group discussion topics and content of final recommendations.
- Establish Commission work groups that will study target areas of concern and propose concrete suggestions for content of final recommendations.
- Receive and discuss Youth Caucus recommendations and ensure their inclusion in discussion by Commission work groups.

3. Review and Discussion of Proposed Preamble for Final Report

Carol invited Commissioners to review a draft of a preamble statement prepared for their consideration. She noted the preamble reflected a recent shift in emphasis to a more youth-centered focus. This shift recognizes youth participation in a broader context of experiences within their communities, families, schools, and out-of-school settings and relationships. In this context, youth are viewed as consumers of choices made available to them by adults in their communities. Youth are active participants with adults in identifying preferred choices for OST and communities are responsible to ensure high quality OST opportunities are available. Commissioners recommended changes in the preamble statement to better reflect this direction. Discussion highlights included:

- If we want youth to make good choices, we (adults) have to take responsibility for providing good options.
- Youth Voice feedback should be blended into the preamble, ensuring their views are taken seriously in planning process.
- Communities are pivotal to youth experiences and should be at the center of both needs identification among youth and tailoring options to fit identified needs for OST supports and opportunities.
- The Commission's role should be to develop the strategies that can help communities enhance OST capacity.

- There must be recognition of the differences in family and community capacity to ensure young people have access to supports and opportunities that will enrich their growth and development.

4. Review and Discussion of Key Issues

Carol invited Commissioners to review key issues proposed as focal points for Commission recommendations. Discussion of key issues further elaborated how the approach reflected in the preamble statement would be incorporated into priority areas for discussion by Commission work groups. Work Groups will be organized around four identified areas:

- Stimulate Positive Youth Choices

Recommendations that would identify and create peer, family, community, and state mechanisms to support, reward, and help guide young people as well as families to more deliberately choose and use positive formal and informal out of school opportunities.

- Create Community Opportunities

Recommendations that would identify and create mechanisms in every city, town, and village to both:

- a. canvas young people and parents about their interest and dreams in order to shape the kinds and types of programs needed AND
- b. plan, develop, resource, implement, and evaluate a coordinated fabric of out of school opportunities responsive to youth voice, accepting of diversity, and that promote learning and development.

- Build Public Will

Recommendations that would establish effective mechanisms that build public will in order to hold citizens and leaders accountable for creating and sustaining an appropriate range of high quality, widely accessible opportunities for young people during the non-school hours.

- Establish State Mechanisms

Establish effective state mechanisms for supporting, evaluating, securing and sharing resources, and assuring access to quality out-of-school opportunities that provide positive choices for young people.

Discussion about key issue areas was followed by a brief presentation of highlights from the issue brief, *Funding Strategies for Out-of-School Time*. This presentation reviewed some creative methods of enhancing funding for OST supports and opportunities through combining public and private funding sources at local and state levels. Commissioners offered examples of key OST Partnership possibilities among provider networks that could positively impact statewide OST capacity. Carol Truesdell shared an example of how her Church leveraged thousands of dollars through strategic application of private donations as match to leverage additional funds. Commissioners were encouraged to use the funding strategy examples referenced in the research brief to inform their consideration of funding possibilities in preparing work group recommendations.

5. Youth Caucus

The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by youth who attended a Commission-sponsored Youth Caucus event earlier in July. The purpose of the Caucus was to gather in-depth feedback from youth about their experiences with and needs for OST supports and opportunities. The Caucus was arranged as a weekend retreat, engaging diverse youth leaders from across the state in discussion about five focus areas identified by Commissioners as central to enhancing OST capacity in Minnesota: Access, Marketing, Community Will, Quality, and Resources. During the

Caucus, youth reviewed the Commission charge, vision, and research materials as well as input they had gathered from youth in their local communities prior to the Caucus. All of this information was used in preparing their recommendations for enhancing OST capacity in Minnesota.

Caucus staff prepared a series of documents describing Youth Caucus process and recommendations, which they shared with Commissioners: *Minnesota Youth Caucus on Out-of-School Time: Report on Proceedings*, research brief; *Youth on Youth*, summary of interviews conducted with youth prior to the Caucus; and *Minnesota Youth Caucus on Out-of-School Time: Implementation and Action Steps*, a more detailed account of action step possibilities.

Commission members had also been invited to take part in a discussion segment with youth during the Caucus. This session engaged youth and Commissioners in joint problem solving to identify successful OST models and best practices in each focus area and led to creation of action steps around issues in each area. Commissioners who attended were: Les Heitke, Valerie Halvorsen Pace, Delroy Calhoun, Harold Mezile, Andrea Platt Dwyer, and Carol Truesdell.

6. Presentation of Recommendations by Youth

A group of Youth Caucus participants attended the Commission meeting to personally share their recommendations with Commissioners. These youth were introduced and recognized for their important contribution to the work of the Commission. Youth shared each of the ten recommendations they created during the Caucus, followed by a video presentation prepared by Phillips Community Television featuring additional youth voices discussing issues for consideration by the Commission. Following their presentation of recommendations, Commissioners asked youth for additional input about their views regarding OST. This lively exchange of ideas is summarized below:

- **Making a Difference:** It is important for youth to feel their participation in and contributions through OST activities are significant and matter.
- **Gaining Insight:** OST supports and opportunities give youth insights about themselves and their lives, helping them realize their dreams.
- **Youth Involvement in Decision Making Bodies:** Youth should be engaged with adults in every decision-making effort that will affect them. The value of youth-adult relationships is critical to the success of OST.
- **Diversity:** A diversity of youth should be involved in planning and implementing OST opportunities.
- **Communication/Marketing** of OST should be connected with positive messages about youth. Minnesota needs to understand OST should be a state priority.

Youth and Commissioners continued discussion through lunch. Carol led the Commissioners in thanking the youth for all of their work to enrich Commission understanding about youth perspectives regarding OST. She invited the young people to continue active involvement with the Commission through participation in Commission Work Groups and asked the Commission Youth Voice Coordinator to devise a plan for engaging youth in this process. Commissioners confirmed their commitment to ensure on-going involvement of Youth Caucus participants as the work of the Commission moves into a more active recommendation preparation phase.

7. Work Group Discussion

Carol engaged Commissioners in discussion about a Work Group format to facilitate creation of recommendations. Commissioners supported the idea of forming small groups to draft recommendations in key issue areas and discussed how to proceed with this plan:

- A group of seven Commissioners agreed to serve as an advisory group to fine-tune the preamble and identify priorities for inclusion in key issue areas, including Youth Caucus recommendations.
- All Commissioners will be invited to join Work Groups in designated issue areas.
- Each Work Group will have a Commission chair person and staff person assigned to facilitate meetings, record proceedings, etc.
- Work Groups will try to arrange one in-person meeting if possible, with conference call meetings as needed to accomplish tasks.
- The possibility of using part of the September meeting as Work Group meeting time will be explored, based on availability of Commissioners for Work Group meetings prior to the September 29 Commission meeting.
- The hope is to have Work Group recommendation drafts with funding possibilities ready for consideration at the September 29 Commission meeting.

8. Updates

Commissioners received a brief update about the on-going work of the Minnesota Out-of-School Time Partnership engaging a broad group of public and private partners in moving Minnesota's OST agenda forward. At this time, approximately \$800,000 has been committed by Partnership members to this work, including \$141,000 for funding a communications project on OST through Frameworks Institute in Washington, D.C.

Plans were reviewed for development of briefing papers focused on specific issues related to OST in Minnesota, including types of contributors to OST in Minnesota communities; content areas of focus for OST programs; and special audiences for OST supports and opportunities.

9. Adjournment

Carol thanked Commissioners for their commitment to the youth of Minnesota and adjourned the meeting.