

2007 OST SYMPOSIUM PODCAST GUIDE

INNOVATION. QUALITY. EXCELLENCE. OST: LEARNING TOGETHER, LEADING TOGETHER

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007

Hosted by PASE and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)

Introduction and welcome by **Chris Caruso**, Assistant Commissioner of Out-of-School Time at the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Overview of the day: evaluation of the first year of the OST program will be given, followed by time for questions and then the workshop sessions. Thanks to the sizable crowd for making it all the way to Columbia University on such a cold day.

Dr. William Eimick -- Director of the Picker Center, The School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

- Dr. Eimick's own experience as a public school student stands as an example of the power of afterschool education, which allowed him to stay in school and be as successful as he is today.
- The work being done at the symposium and by the people who are in attendance is on the cutting edge of education.
- Education is the best enabler for allowing the poor and disadvantaged a means of making themselves better off.
- Partnerships and networking, like what is being done at the symposium, allow everyone to get more done, more effectively in the field of education. Everyone here is currently playing an essential role in the world of education, including the government and Columbia University.
- As of late, Columbia University has become increasingly involved in the city, and Dr. Eimick is proud of that. He offers his congratulations to all for the work and effort they have contributed so far.

Alison Overseth, president of the Board of Directors of PASE, greets those in attendance and expresses her delight that so many people have come to the symposium.

- Thank you to Columbia for the use of their space, as well as all of the work they have put into the field of after school education.

- PASE now has a network of over 1,400 agencies serving more than 500,000 youth all across the city.
- PASE has long upheld the power of after school education, and is, to this day, a part of a large, collective movement nationwide.
- The value of networking and talking to one another should not be underestimated. She encourages people to meet one another, talk, and start a dialogue about what is and should be going on in the field of after school education. These discussions are what we thrive on, and we work best when we are learning together.
- Thank you to everyone for the OST effort, most notably DYCD. The program is exemplary government work, involving the examination and perfection of many different elements and practitioners. What has come of it is a dynamic, interesting program that is very different from the one initially imagined, which speaks to the knowledge we have gained and the flexibility of DYCD. By allowing each of the participating programs to form itself and be as different as it needs to be, the folks involved with the OST initiative have allowed the entire program a maximum level of efficiency and efficacy.
- It is delightful that everyone involved in OST is so different, and she admires the way community based approaches have been able to serve the needs of today's youth. Diversity such as this means that different needs in different locales are being catered to and met.
- What we have learned from this work in New York City is an invaluable testing ground for the rest of the country. We have programs of every variety, and are offering so much for and to our children. This symposium, and the entire OST project, are a chance to learn from each other and discover things about your colleagues.

Chris Caruso

- Thank you to Dr. Eimick and Columbia for hosting, as well as Dr. Esther Fuchs, who has been instrumental in making all of this happen. Thanks to PASE and the Wallace Foundation as well.
- It is exciting to be present at such an important get-together, the first time everyone has been able to get together in a region-wide, borough-wide discussion since June 2005.
- In OST's first year:
 - over 58,000 young people were reached, which exceeded goals by 25%.
 - the 550 programs currently sponsored are expected to reach 67,000 youth next year, which is more than are reached in all of Boston and Chicago combined.
- New York City really is the largest afterschool initiative in the country.
- The program is flourishing in all of the boroughs, from the Far Rockaways to Staten Island to the Bronx.
- DYCD continues to work on developing new community partners, keeping staff invigorated, and keeping CBOs interested.
- According to first year findings, 91% of program directors are satisfied with their jobs, and 88% enjoy their work.

- Today’s symposium will build on this passion, allowing everyone to meet new colleagues, and realize that this is about more than a funding stream—this is all truly changing children’s lives.
- The experience that kids have out of school changes their lives both during and after school. We must broaden our definition of education to incorporate time beyond school, to include families, as well as communities.
- By helping to ensure that these programs take place, we are all making real, comprehensive education a reality in New York City and the greater United States. PASE and everyone else involved has truly recognized the role that after school education can have in influencing the lives of children.

Dr. Esther Fuchs

- Background on OST: the city wanted to work with providers in the community to help restructure OST as a project. This partnership was created to allow a constant interaction between all parties, because this wouldn’t work if we were only having annual discussions.
- OST has worked to listen to all of the providers out there, to learn about what is successful and what is not. We work to replicate the successes, and get them out across the city.
- It became apparent that the programs and providers were not equitably distributed across the city, and so OST has made it an emphasis to work on a more equitable set of offerings for all children. There aren’t too many programs, they just aren’t equally available to all.
- What we discovered was a system that couldn’t articulate where it was spending its money, how many kids it was serving, or what the differences were between different programs. When OST first started trying to collect data on the field, it was like adding apples and oranges, and so the government and the foundation community had to work together to clean everything up, get the numbers in line, and figure out what they were counting and how.
- The citywide database that has since been established is allowing resources to be used much more effectively. All of the numbers and databases are available via the OST website, and allow one to see the real progress that has been made in only a year.
- Many people thought it would be too hard to do all of this and that it just couldn’t be done. The numbers show, however, that people can, and people have. New York City now has the largest out of school time system in the nation, and the most creative, innovative group of people running it.
- Evaluation results clearly indicate, in a way that there has never previously been data to indicate, that after school is much more, and does much more, than simply “midnight basketball.” (Referencing the infamous Ronald Reagan comment.)
- We have strong evidence of an important aggregate effect across youth all over the city, indicating that after school time has mass effect. What DYCD has done is allow providers to collect data in the least obtrusive way possible, making the entire field accountable to tax payers and the community.
- We now know, also, that not everything works, and have a better understanding of the most efficient, effective ways to reach kids. The fact that DYCD held themselves and the OST program accountable from year one is very important

- too. Lots of times programs won't begin collecting data until the second year, claiming they need to iron out kinks first to ensure success.
- While OST may not have been perfect from the get go, it has been a success, even now in only its first year.
 - A few of the most important things that we've learned include the fact that almost all programs were successful in finding as many or more participants than they'd targeted, and the fact that the program directors running things are highly qualified.
 - 86% of all program directors have a college degree or higher, which dispels a common criticism that those in charge aren't qualified. Parents are also satisfied with the services being offered to their children—2/3 of parents reported less work because their child was enrolled in a program, and 2/3 also said that the program their child was in was “excellent.”
 - Mayor Bloomberg's support of the initiative has been extraordinary; he truly “puts his money where his mouth is.” He just recently gave the OST program a 3 year, 70 million dollar increase in funding.
 - None of this would be possible without the excellent, honest evaluation that has taken place over the last year.

Christina Russell, Senior Research Associate at Policy Associates

Specific finding from the year one evaluation

- The purpose of the evaluation was to track what took place and create room for improvement within the program.
- Tracking began in summer 2005, and the year one report has just been released.
- The year one evaluation focused on capturing the implementation of the programs, who participates in them, and what the patterns of attendance are.
- The evaluation looked specifically at patterns of growth and change within the programs. It also tried to establish whether providers are meeting city needs and improving their capacities to serve youth.
- It's a three-year evaluation, collecting data from all OST programs in options 1, 2, and 3. Surveys are conducted of all onsite program directors, and of many of the youth participants (focusing on those in grades 3-12). They also conducted an in-depth survey with 15 programs, doing onsite interviews with staff, participants, and parents to get a better look at the way programs were functioning.
- Findings include OST online data for more than 50,000 participants, 161 executive directors, 443 program directors, more than 100 program staff, and more than 300 parents.
- In the 2005-2006 year, 528 programs were launched. 314 of these programs were school-based. The median OST award to these programs was \$73,000, with a range in awards from \$3,000 to \$340,000.
- 51,000 youth were served by the OST-funded programs, and 74% of these programs met or exceeded their program target enrollments.
- 44% of these kids were in elementary school, 33% were in middle school, and 25% were in high school.
- Center-based programs were the most likely to serve high school students.
- Of the entire youth base served, 39% were Hispanic, and 35% were African American.

- On a program level, program directors are offering a broad spectrum of programs that are engaging and diverse. At the elementary level, these generally entail homework help, visual arts and crafts, and reading/ literacy. At the middle school level, these include team sports, homework help, and visual arts and crafts. At the high school level, the focus is on more unstructured, social time, group discussions, and current events lessons.
- More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of program directors reported procedures were in place to detect child abuse and neglect.
- 60% of staff surveyed had prior experience in the after school realm, and 86% had a college degree or higher. 78% of programs had at least some staff with a college degree. 35% of programs employ some sort of teen staff. Program directors, however, did note challenges in finding competitive staff to hire. They also say that they receive training most frequently in the areas of OST online, program design, and program management and implementation.
- 26% of program directors said that the TA they received was completely useful, with 64% saying that it was a good, useful start.
- Overall, surveys indicate that they are monitoring their staff through lesson plans and monthly meetings.
- The youth attending these programs said they felt safe, and that the programs gave them a sense of belonging. The youth indicated that the staff treated them with respect, and taught them new things.
- The few negative correlations that youth had with after school activities included being overly academic, and a weaker sense of connection with staff in an academic setting.
- Overall OST provider organizations had strong budgets, and a prior history of operating efficiently. 83% had operated prior to that year, and these generally had fairly large operating budgets.
- Parents were also satisfied with the programs, and 71% of them agreed that program hours fit their needs.
- All in all, the first year of programs was a success. The next two years of surveying will continue to look at the executive directors, program directors, and students to get a better understanding of how they all view their respective programs.

Chris Caruso

The future of DYCD

- DYCD is currently exploring the NYSAN quality assessment tool, which took years of planning and development, and allows for professional development, better participation, and improved staff collaboration.
- DYCD is infusing NYSAN elements into its own monitoring programs to ensure the highest levels of evaluation.
- The collaboration between NYSAN, PASE and DYCD will allow site visits everywhere to be consistent, and to increase the ability to build capacity.
- In January New York City was named one of the 100 best cities for young people, which speaks to the work of DYCD and everyone else—the collective work that is being done.

- The increased funding from the mayor, which includes \$32 million in 2008 and 44 million in 2009, will give more opportunities to more families. This increase will allow more money to go right back out the door into the community, where it belongs.
- DYCD is currently also looking to increase money from private funders—corporations and foundations—to increase viability, profile, and desirability.
- New resources allow us to focus on reaching equitable levels of adequate after school programming for all youth across the city.

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott

- It's the true sign of a successful gathering when one can walk through the hallways and hear the genuine comments of individuals. Enthusiasm is what is required to make these activities truly useful, and this entire symposium was beautifully coordinated.
- Thank you to Esther for her years of service and dedication to the field.
- The Mayor, the Chancellor and he will continue working to make sure that young people have access to the programs they need.
- All of this would not have been possible without all of the generous funders who have contributed, including the Wallace Foundation, the leading funder, who gave 12 million dollars.

Nancy Devine, Director, Arts and Communities, The Wallace Foundation

Why the Wallace Foundation is investing in New York City.

- Studies teach us that parents and kids really want to be able to attend high quality out of school time programs, but that they simply don't have access.
- The Wallace Foundation is committed to increasing access to high quality programs.
- Ground-breaking work is being done in cities like Washington D.C., Boston, Providence, and New York, where the Wallace Foundation is helping to develop research, knowledge and innovation at a variety of sites.
- The ultimate goal is to make sure that as many kids as possible have access to high quality out of school time programs, and she believe that this means that the organizations they are attending need to have improved access to partnerships and resources.
- Neither the Wallace Foundation money or the City's money are enough to make this happen, and so we must seek other funders and means of support.
- Quality afterschool is an invaluable resource, and the work being done here in New York is exemplary.