

Voices from the Field...

Building A Legacy that Helps Assure Bright Futures for Our Youth
June 16th & 17th - Washington, DC



KEY LEARNINGS

1. Money issues are an important concern for all of the school district programs
2. Obtaining appropriate and detailed data enhances program content and allows programs to better develop student services and tracking of student progress
3. Keeping youth engaged is important
4. Replicating services must be carefully planned and research based
5. Services should be tailored to youths' developmental and behavioral styles
6. We all have common issues and challenges and working together we can develop more effective solutions
7. Grantees can learn so much from each other
8. Relationships are important to making programs work and become more effective
9. Much focus is on social/behavior/attitudes rather than literacy and numbers
10. Clear written agreements that define partner responsibilities/roles are important to program success
11. There is evidence that we know how to fix the at risk youth problem
12. The program accomplishments and work with at risk youth must sustain, even after the grants end

Milwaukee (Critical Success Factors Tool)

Expansion and Replication for Transition High School Expansion

At the request of Marty Lexmond, of the Milwaukee grant program, the participants were asked to brainstorm critical success factors in expanding and replicating the Transition High School.

1. Replicating the culture of the existing program to ensure that there is consistency of culture in expanded and existing sites
2. Modeling a chemistry that works at the new site
3. Recognizing that each site is unique and that one model does not fit all
4. Preventing development of a stigma and opportunities for segregation through development of additional transition schools
5. Developing a well-defined implementation plan, that provides a development time frame that allows for measured growth, and an understanding of what the expansion means.
6. Selecting a location that is accessible and will draw students to the school
7. Determining the characteristics of the needed staff
8. Developing the right kind of staff that fit needed characteristics
9. Understanding the role of the school district in this expansion and aligning the new transition center goals with those of the school district
10. Obtaining appropriate and effective leadership that is passionate, and competent
11. Understanding the needs of the community the new Transition School will serve and aligning population needs to the new school

Milwaukee (Critical Success Factors Tool) *(continued)*

12. Recognizing and alleviating potential conflicts between acceptance of students into the new Transition School who are close to graduation and students who need to change schools prior to graduation
13. Determining the views from the existing Transition School students about their school experiences and students who are in a holding pattern for admission
14. Promoting this school and program as an effective education alternative for this culture
15. Ensuring resources are not over used and program content diluted
16. Understanding if the current school model will be used or if and how the model should change
17. Understanding the implications of failure (and continued success)
18. Ensuring effective data is available to help determine what is needed
19. Developing the process by which students will be placed and accepted to the school

Philadelphia (Critical Success Factors Tool)

Re-engagement Center /Services

Strengths

1. All word of mouth/referrals
2. 30-60-90 day follow-up with connection and link to school
3. Invitation /access to come back (1)
4. Advocacy for
5. Re-enrollment back into a school (4)
6. Assessment of student-academic, behavioral (2)
7. Legwork is done—support needs
8. Central site and planned expanded site location
9. Use of on-line recovery of credits
10. Center has district school
11. There is an ability to build relationships with receiving schools (2)
12. Philadelphia youth networks
13. Referral systems
14. Exceed target
15. Youth involvement (pd internships)
16. Teen Parent Services
17. Location
18. Appearance of building
19. Enthusiasm of staff (2)
20. Staff of the art tech. center
21. Effective intake process (1)
22. Multiple resources
23. City and school board collaborations (3)

Challenges

1. Lag time for start of placement
2. Assignment of credits if on line course is started and then student transfers
3. When promotion campaign is started—too many may come in for services that is beyond center capacity
4. Power status within the school system
5. Management of staff who come from various agencies, duties, absences, supervision and evaluation
6. Find satellite site
7. Multi-language needs of clients
8. Attracting all the populations
9. Where do the holes exist?
10. Follow-up tracking/Mobility (1)
11. Parental involvement
12. Long term outcome tracking
13. Accommodating walk-ins
14. Economics (1)
15. Program schedules
16. Location in school board bldg
17. Physical constraints (3)

Orlando (Forced Field Analysis)

Partnership with Workforce Central Florida and the Metro Orlando Urban League

Success Factors

1. Caring
2. Partnerships
3. Organizational culture
4. Holistic approach—living and emergency food and shelter
5. Mentoring
6. Parenting proximity to targeted schools
7. Coordinated efforts-mtgs-weekly communication
8. Hiring the right people such as outreach specialist
9. Encourage parent participation
10. Regular meetings are held with all partners
11. The ability to work with intervention specialists
12. There is a diverse group of community partners
13. There is seasoned staff
14. There is effective communication among participants

Challenges

1. Outcome measures leads to mismatched
2. Intensity of follow up that is required of young people
3. Moving forward there is a need to manage/coordinate outcomes and educate the workforce systems
4. Grant does not allow for food purchases--the solution is to partnership with food companies
5. Program sustainability once the grand ends--the solution—staff intends to maintain relationships with youth to the best of their ability
6. Building a trusting relationship with youth--the solution: showing that you are “human”

Moving Forward

1. Continue doing what we are doing
2. Maintain contact with/parents
3. Use resources provided

Chicago (Force Field Analysis Tool)

Data Driven Approaches to Serving High Risk Youth

Contributing Factors for Success

1. Use of data to select, monitor, revise and report outcomes
2. Tool to gather the data
3. Show how to use
4. Access to research from University of Chicago which guided choice of tracking indicators
5. Predictability of 9th grader and probability to graduate “on track” or off track
6. Well informed about youth
7. Information sharing between school and stakeholders
8. Training on how to use data (to develop, implement and evaluate)
9. Data analysis prompts improvement for accomplishments
10. Job description addresses non-negotiable requirement to become involved in data analysis
11. Constant communication
12. Case management strategies and systems ensure data-driven results
13. Web-based data systems
14. Monitoring data-driven results (best services and best practices)

Factors Against

1. Resistance to fear of data (need to understand use and importance)
2. Time commitment to gather data, and determine which data to use
3. Lack of tools per districts
4. Confidentiality
5. Capture “other successes”
6. Ability to track gang activity
7. Data—the accountability
8. Number of students returning
9. Finding staff with good classroom management and remedial skills
10. Not as good as traditional school
11. How do you youth view youth data—WiFi Time
12. Staff resists (too much time collecting data)
13. Accuracy of information and definitions (95% of students receiving mentoring)
14. External data collection
15. Too much focus on data rather than the students or the “real” world
16. Data that can't be captured because a program has not been in place long enough or not easily quantifiable (program has disappeared and a student returns and advises a teacher the impact that he/she had on that person)

Chicago (Force Field Analysis Tool) *(continued)*

What's Impacting Challenges and What Do We Do Moving Forward?

1. Professional development
2. Follow-up student successes
3. Find other measuring tools for pro social/ behavior, attitude
4. Baltimore uses "Mentor Pro"
5. Train, educate. Encourage, continue staff development for grant staff
6. Find key players in school district for data (to access; identify tools and sustain use)
7. Empower line staff to participate in data collection—lead by example
8. Clarify/obtain definitions of linked services (streamlined resources)
9. Use civic organizations (i.e. food)
10. Use of Americorp
11. TANF funding for success coaching

Baltimore (Force Field Analysis Tool)

Future Works: A Dropout Prevention and Retention Strategy for Middle and High School Students and Community Collaboration – Addressing the Gang and Youth Violence Issue

Factors Contributing to Success

1. Outreach to the community entities
2. Ability to build relations/expectations
3. Deliver quality services
4. Location of services
5. Important reciprocity and accountability "give and take"
6. Good collaboration with Mayor's office and school system
7. Stability in leadership (continuity)
8. Parent communication (phone calls, home visits)
9. Ability to exceed expectations
10. Being a resource for parents as well as students
11. Using catchy titles for programs such as Pillow Talk and Gentlemen's Club
12. Strong mentoring program
13. Mental health referrals
14. Life skills workshops
15. Incentives programs
16. Track student through years
17. On-site access
18. Students have voice
19. Family support
20. Year round program
21. Lots of student recognition
22. Career exploration
23. Targeted recruitment of youth
24. Summer jobs
25. Job shadowing
26. Involvement with police department
27. Flexibility of staff (1 to 7 ratio)
28. Define responsibilities
29. Visibility of leaders
30. State leadership support
31. Collaboration with CBO
32. Significant number of summer jobs available
33. Staff and student retention
34. Relationship with Caring Adults
35. Lots of Partners
36. Student leadership opportunities
37. Life Skills programs
38. Peer to Peer Mentorships
39. College Exposure

Factors Working Against

1. Systems and their varying protocols
2. Initiating contracts
3. "Turf" Guarding
4. Maintaining focus of many staff members
5. Philosophical differences
6. Difficulty in engaging parents
7. Limited capacity
8. Group facilitation
9. Resources for mental health services
10. Business sector "buy in" for job placement
11. Transition of student population into regular classrooms
12. Assessments and grading credits
13. Student "buy-in"
14. Relation/sensitivity to this targeted population of student

Baltimore (Force Field Analysis Tool) *(continued)*

Factors Working Against *(continued)*

15. Traditional time limit on graduation
16. Dollars for programs
17. Long term employment
18. Gang coordination
19. Using more youth in planning
20. Common languages
21. Finding adults to work with youth
22. Staff retention
23. Youth retention
24. Mindset changes
25. School culture
26. Old concepts
27. Staff development
28. Staff Support

Moving Forward (Solutions to Challenges)

1. Acknowledge commonalities in each entity's mission
2. Keep perspective of both sides
3. Find means to sustain funding
4. Job Shadowing
5. Career Exploration
6. Support groups
7. Mental Health resources

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Feedback from Small Group Exercises

DISCUSSION AROUND PROGRESS/CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING GANG PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Successes

- Student Level
- Partnership with mentor program
- Database identification
- Paradigm shifting
- Job placement
- Increased knowledge: (id of gang hot spots/safety issues)
- Access to additional resources
- Strong regional structure for partnerships/Initiate plan
- Committed leadership: Orlando Police Department Chief
- Availability of mentors for youth
- Process of documentation to identify, track, obtain data
- Increased workshop/training focus for youth
- Gang presentations to school staff and parents
- Provide alternative replacements (for gang activities)
- Mayor's "buy in"
- Additional resources (strategies, experts)
- Convening the key players
- Tool-scorecard to capture the data
- Scorecard-issue map/gaps/import items

Challenges

- Data
- Leadership
- Connections with key players
- Prevention, Intervention, suppression
- Implementation of priorities
- Access to juvenile gang data – not tracked by LEOs (law enforcement organizations)
- Finding enough "replacements" for youth: training opportunities, incentives, activities
- Community awareness and support
- Tracking & Acknowledgement
- Lack of comprehensive approaches
- SF – Interventions/unable to meet S.D. requirements—no background info for former gang members
- Staff development around gang related interventions
- Fear of involvement

What Will Be Emphasized in the 3rd Year

- Use more reading and math gains
- Rethink resources used for reading and math gains
- Look at alternatives for using certain tools because of school district restrictions in some instances
- Look to the Milwaukee Transition School Model for ideas of improvement
- Develop a profile including the capability of literacy and numeracy tools
- Create an experience where all at-risk students come together based on the Peer to Peer Exchange model
- Use resources such as Apex and InSchool.com
- Emphasize the culture as an important factor of its success
- Highlight sensitivity training and staff development for individuals working with at-risk youth (e.g. can throw up barriers and treat student as inferior)