

Greater Rochester Afterschool Leadership Summit

Memorial Art Gallery | Rochester, New York | January 30, 2017

EVENT SUMMARY

The Greater Rochester Afterschool Leadership Summit provided an opportunity for the greater Rochester community to celebrate its success as a thriving afterschool system, interact with national experts in afterschool coordination, and generate ideas for local action to better coordinate across youth-serving systems.

Introductory Remarks

Chris Dandino, Director, Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA)

Barbara Deane Williams, Superintendent, Rochester City School District

Larry Marx, Executive Director, The Children's Agenda

the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA), an initiative of the Rochester Area Community Foundation that serves as the coordinating body for out-of-school time (OST) programming in the area. GRASA advocates for policies that support OST, and is the primary source of training, technical assistance, and quality assurance for OST providers.

The Summit opened with welcoming remarks from key leaders in the community. Ms. Dandino articulated the framing for the Summit's conversations: learning occurs anytime, anywhere, and that the community's education system is a pipeline that requires coordination across all youth-serving systems to be effective. Superintendent Williams then remarked that collaboration and aligned

action are enormously important in the city's anti-poverty initiative, and that the school district is willing to partner with anyone in the city to make that happen, particularly those working in out-of-school time (OST). Mr. Marx closed the opening session by reiterating that no one entity is sufficient to improve outcomes of youth from cradle to career. Each youth-serving agency in the community may not be on the same boat, but they should be moving in the same direction.

All speakers mentioned the concern that despite GRASA's immense success to date, the community currently only has the capacity to serve an estimated 31% of youth in OST programs. Especially considering the growing middle skills gap in the region, OST coordination can play an important role in providing more young people with the skills they need to succeed.

Keynote Address

The Honorable Carlos Carballada, Deputy Mayor, City of Rochester

Deputy Mayor Carballada reiterated the idea that learning should not end when the bell rings. The goals of OST align with the community's goals of giving all of its young people the skills they need to succeed later in life, including non-academic skills necessary for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. The Deputy Mayor then noted that schools should not have to do the work alone, but neither should parents. Community providers of OST, higher education, workforce agencies, and other community organizations should participate in coordination efforts to ensure resources go to providing high quality opportunities in the areas of greatest need. He then encouraged everyone in the room to get involved, because it is in everyone's best interest to build strong, healthy youth.

Presentation: Growing Together, Learning Together: Lessons Learned from Building Afterschool Systems in Support of Improved Youth Outcomes

Jennifer Brown Lerner, Deputy Director, American Youth Policy Forum

Sharing the research catalogued in a recent report from The Wallace Foundation entitled, "[Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems](#)," Ms. Brown Lerner explained that high-quality programs have been shown to have positive effects on students' attitudes toward school, social behavior, school grades and achievement tests, and reduced problem behaviors. She also discussed city strategies to boost quality, to collect and understand data, to expand access to high-quality afterschool, to collaborate with cradle-to-career collective impact initiatives, and to sustain OST efforts. In conclusion, she noted that shared leadership through coordination tailored to the local context is critical to ensure the strengths of all parts of the community are leveraged.

Local Panel: Opportunities for Coordination of Youth-Serving System in Rochester

Marisol Ramos-Lopez, Commissioner, Department of Recreation and Youth Services

Kendra March, Deputy Superintendent, Rochester City School District (RCSD)

Antwan Williams, Director of Youth System Services, RochesterWorks!

Stephanie Fitzgerald, Senior Program Officer, United Way of Greater Rochester

From homework and tutoring to providing computer access to environmental education, the Department of Recreation and Youth Services is committed to serving young people both during and after the school day, including during the summer. Ms. Ramos-Lopez shared the various ways in which local recreation centers are partnering with schools to support academic achievement, positive behaviors, goal setting, and the provision of caring adult relationships. Deputy Superintendent March stated that RCSD is soliciting support and input from anyone in the room, and wants each facet of the youth-serving community to be a partner. She then explained that RCSD's role is to education students, but partnerships can ensure that students have the supports they need all day every day. Mr. Williams shared several tools RochesterWorks! has developed to connect kids to education and employment opportunities. They are also funding positions housed in nine different agencies, and are ensuring between 700-800 youth work positions throughout the summer. He emphasized that afterschool and summer programs are critical in helping young people develop the employability skills they need later in life. Ms. Fitzgerald mentioned several ways in which the United Way is investing to ensure all children in the community are ready by 21 for college, work, and life, including home visitation, OST, summer learning, and mentoring. She also re-emphasized the importance of caring relationships with adults, but added that socialization with peers in various contexts is also important.

The panel then addressed questions on data sharing to create a seamless continuum of enrichment and learning across systems, noting that the Department of Recreation and Youth Services has been working with many partners, including RCSD, to get a data sharing initiative off the ground. Panelists agreed that data should be used not in a punitive manner, but in order to inform ways in which the community can better support youth and their families. Panelists also reinforced the need to do better at connecting with the business community, noting that the community's children are "all of our children" and they don't stop being our children when the school day ends or when they go into the workforce.

Respondent Panel: National Perspectives

Bela Shah Spooner, Program Manager, Afterschool, Institute for Youth, Education, & Families, National League of Cities

Kelly Malone Sturgis, Executive Director, New York State Network for Youth Success

Erik Skold, Director, Sprockets, City of St. Paul (MN)

Krista Drescher-Burke, Community Data Specialist, Diversity, Equity & Poverty Programs Division, Jefferson County Public Schools (KY)

Ms. Shah Spooner works with NLC to help communities understand the range of resources and opportunities to coordinate. She emphasized coordination and data sharing, and noted that messaging of OST as a critical partner

is important to bring other sectors on board. Ms. Sturgis runs the statewide afterschool network (SAN) for New York, working to increase the capacity of local intermediaries and increase access to high quality expanded learning opportunities statewide. Her organization works to provide technical assistance, professional development, quality improvement, and quality self-assessment, and serves as a voice for program providers as a state policy advocate. Mr. Skold's organization, Sprockets, is a public-private partnership between St. Paul Public Schools, the City of St. Paul, and about 45 community organizations that support youth service providers in the area. Sprockets works to provide reliable information through a shared data system, from tracking participants' attendance to demographic data to measuring impact and other quality measures. The premise for the data system is to support strong programs through a process of continuous improvement tied to quality professional development. Finally, Ms. Drescher-Burke is part of a collaborative initiative in Louisville called Louisville BLOCS, with staff people from Jefferson County Public Schools, the City of Louisville, and the local United Way. Louisville's OST work is a critical part of the City's cradle-to-career plan, and focuses heavily on reducing access gaps in the area, providing wraparound services, addressing racial equity concerns, and preparing all kids for college and careers. She shared that it is important for collaborative communities to focus less on territory and ownership and more on sharing information openly and working collectively to better serve youth.

Panelists then addressed three key questions:

1. *Building partnerships around data collection and sharing.* Data is collected in St. Paul through the district, as well as through OST programs and parent and student services. Mr. Skold emphasized that a data sharing agreement with the school district in St. Paul has been critical to success. In Louisville, the district (part of the BLOCS collaborative) is the main data warehouse, and has established an agreement with providers. Ms. Sturgis noted that New York is currently working to put a statewide data system in place.
2. *The role that a coordinated afterschool system plays as part of a collective community agenda.* In Louisville, OST is part of a cradle-to-career framework, working closely with the 55,000 Degrees initiative as part of a strategy to increase postsecondary credential attainment in the region. St. Paul's collective impact organization works to ensure that measures and goals outside of academics are included in their framework, including some measures of social and emotional learning (SEL). Both communities have positioned afterschool as an environment that supports the teaching and learning of social and emotional skills. New York's SAN is also prioritizing SEL and, according to Ms. Sturgis, sits on an advisory group working to create a set of SEL standards for the state of New York.
3. *How to break down silos (not theoretically, but in reality).* Louisville's OST network relies on a shared governance structure, meaning much of the decision-making and thus the execution of the work is shared. Ms. Shah Spooner noted the important role that mayors and city leaders can play in bringing people together, especially people who may not ordinarily be at the table. All panelists agreed that it is important to intentionally and regularly bring people together. Ultimately, collaborative success depends on relationships, and there needs to be a structure in place for building those relationships.

Final Thoughts

Chris Dandino, Director, Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA)

Ms. Dandino noted that each organization in the room should work together, decide what each party brings to the table, and weave together a comprehensive learning community. She noted that GRASA is proud to take the lead in coordinating OST work, but the involvement of city leaders, the K-12 system, higher education, workforce, the business community, libraries, cultural institutions, and other community organizations will be crucial in building a strong continuum of services to serve all young people effectively.