

Event Summary

Central Texas Out-of-School Time Leadership Summit

Austin, Texas

June 10, 2016

Opening Remarks

Allison Ivey, Executive Director, Learn All The Time (LATT) Network

Ms. Ivey opened the day by articulating the value of out-of-school time (OST) and the benefits of a coordinated systems approach. Given that schools are important to youth development and preparation for long-term success, OST is uniquely suited to be a critical partner and component of the youth-serving ecosystem that provides the knowledge and skills that are necessary to be successful in life. There is a significant opportunity gap between low and high income students in their academic achievement, as well as in their access to high quality OST programs; in taking a systems approach, the Central Texas region can better coordinate to proactively addressing the needs of all youth in the community.

Keynote Address

The Honorable Steve Adler, Mayor, City of Austin

Mayor Adler began his address by acknowledging the importance and relevance of the issue of OST in the Central Texas community. He then described the “two city” narrative to describe Austin: one city in which families are prospering, and another city in which they are not. The Central Texas community is well-positioned to tackle this challenge, due in large part to the incredible work being done in educating and supporting youth in the area.

According to Mayor Adler, there are four main issues facing the city in order to build the infrastructure it needs to thrive: housing costs, transportation, workforce development, and education. In Austin, education means three things:

- early childhood,
- community schools, and
- out-of-school time.

Mayor Adler stated that the work being done by regional leaders in the room on those three areas of education, particularly OST, is a vital component to closing the “two city” divide. OST provides critical skills like collaboration and teamwork, but it also supports and complements the educational missions of schools, especially in core areas like STEM. It is also an opportunity to connect young people to the workforce, an integral component to the city’s infrastructure. Mayor Adler closed by sharing his hopes that the work being done by those in the room is the beginning of a regional consensus on the value of OST in the community and one that he intends to continue to follow and participate in.

Presentation: Afterschool Systems to Achieve Key Outcomes for Youth

Candy Markman, Director, Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA)

Ms. Markman began by posing three guiding questions:

1. Why does OST matter?
2. Why take a systems approach?
3. What are some of the key elements that support OST systems?

She articulated that Ms. Ivey and Mayor Adler’s descriptions of the value of OST were consistent with the research and lessons learned from around the country. Research is clear on the important outcomes that young people achieve when they consistently participate in OST programs, including academic, social, safety, and skill development. Deciding that OST is important, however, is not enough. There are two major challenges that can be addressed by taking a coordinated systems approach to OST:

1. Access and equity. This is an issue everywhere in the US, and it is particularly relevant to Central Texas, given its challenges with economic segregation and the “two city” narrative Mayor Adler previously discussed. Research indicates that 1.5 million young people in Texas would participate in afterschool programs if they were available to them. OST systems can coordinate programs to fill in the gaps, ensuring that no young person in the community is excluded.
2. Quality. Research also shows that high quality programs make a significant difference in academic, social, and behavioral outcomes of OST participation. OST systems can share resources and knowledge to ensure that all programs in the community are of the highest quality.

Ms. Markman stated that her presentation was designed based on research and lessons learned from over a decade of investment from The Wallace Foundation, as well as the successes and challenges from her own work in Nashville. According to research from The Wallace Foundation, there are four cornerstone elements of OST system building:

1. Strong leadership. Austin and Nashville are both fortunate to develop this system under supportive city leadership. In addition to the Mayor, leadership comes in many forms – city or county agencies, superintendents, community organizations, policymakers, and various other champions of the work. In Nashville, Mayor Dean listened to the needs of the community and committed to building an afterschool system to help combat the dropout crisis. In 2010, he included \$400K in the city budget to launch of first After Zone program for 250 high-needs students. Now Nashville has \$4 million in public investment, serving over 2,000 students across the county. NAZA matches with \$1 million extra to weave a web of support to providers across the community to address both access and quality of programs for the benefit of young people.
2. Coordination to fit the local context. The Wallace Foundation model of OST system building focuses on moving from fragmentation to coordination in order to more effectively serve young people. It is important that as cities and regions work to develop these OST systems, they recognize the needs of the community and build a plan that works to fit that context. In Nashville, leadership is a cross-departmental, cross-agency strategy focused on shared leadership so that a variety of stakeholders have a seat at the table, even though leadership transitions such as the recent Mayoral transition in Nashville. Nashville’s new mayor, Megan

Barry, and Library Director, Kent Oliver, are now leading the table with 30 people with the sole purpose of strategic coordination and community ownership.

3. Data. Data can be used to address gaps in service, to identify areas in need of improvement, to track and measure success, and for a variety of other purposes. In Nashville, OST service areas are divided into zones, each launched one-at-a-time with local neighborhood input. NAZA has a contract with a local entity in each part of town to coordinate and fund the afterschool programs in that zone. NAZA also has a formal data sharing partnership with the school district, and is able to access data on every young person in the county regarding their needs, and can compare that against a program grid to determine where programs are needed most.
4. Quality. OST systems can work to ensure that high quality programs are available to all youth in the community. Whether communities use the Weikart Center's Youth Program Quality Assessment tool (YPQA), as Nashville has done, or another quality tool, continuous assessment and improvement should remain a focus.

Panel: National Voices

- **Jennifer Brown Lerner**, Deputy Director, American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)
- **Michael Crowley**, Senior Director of Communications and Policy, After School Matters Chicago (ASM)
- **Reggie Moore**, Founder and Director, Beyond the Bell Milwaukee (BTB)
- **Candy Markman**, Director, Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA)
- **Alison Reis-Khanna**, Executive Director, Texas Partnership for Out-of-School Time (TXPOST)
- **Carinne Deeds**, Policy Associate, American Youth Policy Forum (Moderator)

Introductory Remarks

Ms. Brown Lerner described the role of American Youth Policy Forum in providing communities with access to research and best practices on OST system building. She remarked that one of the most critical functions of OST systems is providing all kids in a community with the opportunity to engage in OST activities that help them develop the most critical skills to prepare them for college and career. These skills can be academic, technical, or personal skills, often referred to as soft skills or social-emotional skills. OST is a unique and important contributor to this critical skill development along the college and career readiness continuum.

Mr. Crowley gave an overview of the programs coordinated by After School Matters (ASM), Chicago's OST intermediary for teens and older youth. ASM focuses on older youth because of the need in the community for services to keep teens engaged in school and work, and to prepare them for an array of opportunities after high school.

Mr. Moore was recently appointed to serve as the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention for the City of Milwaukee, but he founded and continues to support Beyond the Bell, Milwaukee's OST intermediary. Mr. Moore identified the need to establish a coordinating entity for OST, as access to high quality programs were not equal across the city. He and other local leaders started a grassroots community effort to engage the leadership and input of young people in the development of a system that better serves them.

Ms. Reis-Khanna described her efforts at TXPOST to bring the stories and the data from communities to state policymakers in order to enact positive change that enables the work of OST across Texas. Given that so many young people report not having access to OST programs, even though they want it, access and equity in communities across the state is a priority of TXPOST, as is legislation to support OST system building work.

Moderated Discussion

Question: Given the value of OST in terms of preparing youth for all aspects of success beyond high school, what are the most critical skills that OST can contribute to a young person's overall development from cradle to career, and specific strategies you've used to foster development of those skills?

- Mr. Crowley indicated that resilience, or the ability to see something through from start to finish, is a critical skill that OST can help develop. OST is positioned to help young people connect the dots between what they are doing on a daily basis in school and outside of school, and how that affects people around them. ASM fosters this learning through project-based learning, in which young people work on and lead projects from start to finish and overcome obstacles. They can also showcase their work, giving them a sense of accomplishment and the ability to see the value of their work.
- Mr. Moore said the skill he thinks is the most critical is imagination, both in terms of creative career fields and key critical thinking skills. It's also essential that OST empowers young people and gives them autonomy to use their imagination for good, rather than feeling disempowered and creating their own unproductive solutions. Giving young people a voice is one of the biggest opportunities in OST.
- Ms. Brown Lerner noted that we must ask the following question: What are the things we want young people to do and how do we get them there? It's important we connect to the regional workforce, as they are the best positioned to help us understand what skills young people need the most.

Question: In creating opportunities for this skill development, whether academic or non-academic, we're starting to see a lot of communities think about OST as part of a continuum of services for children across early childhood, K12, OST, and youth employment. What can an OST system do to intersect with other regional initiatives that align well or share goals with OST?

- Mr. Crowley noted it's important to build on each system's expertise. This could be partnering with the private sector for STEM outreach, working with other city agencies for professional development opportunities. The most important element is that experiences are relevant and enjoyable for young people. If school can't always be that for them, then OST can.
- Mr. Moore suggested that other systems are struggling with same things OST is struggling with in many cases, such as the lack of coordination and accessibility of programs. OST can work collaborate and problem solve together effectively. For instance, research indicates confinement is not an effective way to prevent juvenile crime or to rehabilitate young people. In Milwaukee, OST has become involved in these conversations with police and juvenile crime systems like never before. Even if OST cannot solve juvenile crime, it can be that safe, fun place that young people go to feel empowered and engaged to help prevent them from committing crimes in the first place.
- Ms. Reis-Khanna said Texas is fortunate to have six major hubs, or regional OST systems, that can learn from one another. In particular, the philanthropy and business sectors across Texas have been highly involved in both pushing and pulling the work along in various youth-serving

sectors. Workforce development is also a critical partner across Texas. There are 28 different workforce boards; it's important that OST work with them, especially as there is no statewide funding stream dedicated to OST. The work OST is doing can be leveraged to show connections to the workforce.

Question: Given Mayor Adler's strong words of encouragement and willingness to support this work, what are your words of advice to those who are charged with task of developing an OST plan in Central Texas that he can get behind?

- Ms. Markman offered that the most important work is in carefully building the plan. It's critical to do it intentionally and in a way that is thoughtful and reflective of the needs of the community. It should first and foremost address access and quality issues. Then, OST leaders must identify long-term champions to be at the forefront of the planning process.
- Mr. Moore said you must begin with sustainability in mind. No OST system is alone, and Central Texas can and should look to other similar cities, like the ones on the panel and others, for guidance on anticipated challenges and opportunities. Keep in mind that it's also important to connect with other systems working toward similar goals, and to always ask who is *not* in the room.
- Mr. Crowley challenged participants to think about equity in diverse ways. Whatever community is the most in need or disconnected in this particular region should be included in the OST system. It's important to be reasonable, but perhaps even more important to start off thinking big, then help enable others to see the long-term vision.
- Ms. Reis-Khanna echoed the need to base the plan in reality. She also suggested that Central Texas OST leaders share their plan with TXPOST, as the statewide network can make connections to various other key players in this work who can offer guidance and support.

Audience Discussion

Question: How are the "zone" boundaries in Nashville developed?

- Ms. Markman replied that the zones are based on bus routes. This helps the OST system combat inequalities around the region, which is similar to Central Texas in that many families are moving away from the inner core of the city to find more affordable housing.

Question: How specifically can the OST system partner with the private sector?

- Mr. Crowley emphasized the importance of working with the private sector, especially for those serving older youth populations. Private sector partners can serve on advisory boards, can work with OST to connect young people to internships and apprenticeships, and can help OST leaders identify the most critical skills needed in the workforce. It's vital that OST leaders begin to involve the private sector as early in the process as possible.

Presentation: Out-of-School Time in Central Texas

Allison Ivey, Executive Director, Learn All The Time (LATT) Network

Ms. Ivey framed her presentation around the value that OST brings to young people and to the community, and the ways in which LATT network can guide and coordinate OST work in the region. She noted that there are 774 hours of potential learning time in a year, and schools themselves cannot be expected to be the sole facilitators for learning for young people. It is important to take advantage of opportunities for learning and development outside of the school day. She pointed to a Harvard

research study that showed that there are an additional 300+ hours we could be using to help students gain non-academic skills.

LATT Network takes the position of OST into consideration and is working to assess and meet the specific needs of the Central Texas community. The focus areas of the network are:

1. **Quality:** This means having a clear definition of what high-quality means, professional development aligned to standards, and the capacity for leadership.
2. **Capacity/Advocacy:** This entails building awareness internally of the providers and resources that exist as well as future needs, including expanding and coordinating services beyond Austin city limits.
3. **Outcomes:** This involves capacity for data collection, assessment of service gaps, and the use of data for continuous improvement

The logic behind LATT's strategy is the understanding that high quality programs lead to positive outcomes. LATT, therefore, takes responsibility for improving program quality in Central Texas and expanding those high quality programs across the region.

Panel: Local Voices

- **Susan Dawson**, President and Executive Director, E3 Alliance
- **Suki Steinhauer**, CEO, Communities in Schools of Central Texas
- **Kimberly McNeely**, Assistant Director, Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- **Mary Ellen Pietruszynski**, Executive Director, Sooch Foundation
- **Richard Tagle**, CEO, Andy Roddick Foundation (Moderator)

Moderated Discussion

Question: E3 Alliance is known for its exceptional work with research and data. What are the challenges and opportunities in this space related to out-of-school time?

- Ms. Dawson remarked that there are over 1,000 education related non-profits in Central Texas, and 110 OST providers in Austin Independent School District (AISD) alone. It's challenging to grasp the data capacities and needs of everyone involved. E3 has been working over the past year to the different OST providers and compare that against where students live. The quantitative aspect of data collection and the qualitative aspect of hearing the needs of the actual participants in OST is where LATT comes in and really bridges that gap. What we do know is that there are opportunities to do a lot of work based on what the data are already showing. We know now that there are not enough services, we know certain programs do not have the capacity to do more, and there is a lack of accessibility to many programs due to issues with transportation and other logistical factors. Getting our hands on this data, however, is only the first step in truly understanding and being strategic about our services.

Question: Communities in Schools is well known for their work coordinating services. What are things to consider that may be stopping us from effectively coordinating services?

- Ms. Steinhauer noted that Central Texas is full of extremely creative, entrepreneurial people, and a range of fantastic services do exist. To better coordinate, we need more granular data to

be able to do things like map and create zones of service, as Nashville did. Another challenge is that 40% of learning happens outside of school, but there is no dedicated OST funding in the state budget. We need to get better at not over-relying on 21 Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) funds to do this work.

Question: The Parks and Recreation department is charged with creating and maintaining numerous partnerships. What are the challenges and opportunities these partnerships can provide in OST?

- Ms. McNeely commented that the Central Texas community has high expectations of us city government, and without these networks and coordinated systems we cannot meet all of those expectations. We can work together to ensure that we are providing high quality programs and services that can be an equalizer in this community. Often times, our business partners don't know about OST, don't know their role, and aren't aware of the return on investment. This is an opportunity for OST leaders to articulate their role in preparing a high quality workforce for the future.

Question: The Sooch Foundation is very concerned about disconnected youth. How do we work to serve young people not involved in the education or workforce system?

- Ms. Pietruszynski explained that the Foundation has not historically been involved in the afterschool space, but rather has focused on the students that aren't "counting" in any of these systems. We are trying to identify these students first and foremost. OST can serve as a medium for preventing young people from disengaging in the first place by keeping them engaged and potentially making connections to the workforce.

Question: What are the operational aspects that OST leaders should consider moving forward under the call to action from Mayor Adler?

- Ms. Steinhauer noted the importance of time, and that the time spent in OST can be used differently for young people than the time spent in school. OST can complement and enhance the work done on literacy and can even be more personalized due to the flexibility that OST provides. It's also an opportunity for project-based learning, community involvement, development of workforce skills and soft skills, and even summer employment. It's important to think of these assets when moving forward in a strategic direction.
- Ms. Dawson noted two things to consider moving forward: mobility and assets. In terms of mobility, child poverty is growing at a rate four times higher than the rest of the country, and much of this is due to the lack of affordability, especially with regards to housing. This means that many families are moving to the suburbs. OST leaders must keep this in mind when considering how to serve the community. It's also important to know how to leverage your assets, as was previously mentioned.
- Ms. McNeely offered tips for creating public/private partnerships. OST leaders must identify and communicate their needs. Funding is one need, but there is also the need for partners in workforce development and thought partnership on how OST can best help young people develop those skills needed in the workforce.
- Ms. Pietruszynski mentioned the necessity to learn from what's already happening in the community. Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative, a grantee of the Foundation, has been successful in three applicable ways: using the workforce system as a backbone, building strong relationships within the community, and empowering young people to have a voice.
- Ms. Dawson noted that Central Texas is a uniquely collaborative community. Leaders around the region are willing and able to share best practices to work toward the common good.

Closing Reflections

Shannon Lombardo, Director of Community Services, Leander ISD

Mary Ellen Pietruszynski, Executive Director, Sooch Foundation

Ms. Lombardo is in charge of community relations in Leander ISD, and focuses on making connections between afterschool enrichment, mentorship, faith-based communities, and various other services within and outside of the school day. Leander ISD is large and diverse, and access to OST is limited in many areas. In discussions with principals, Ms. Lombardo has uncovered a true need for greater access to OST opportunities, as many young people have been upset at the lack of stimulation after school hours. Rather than taking a piecemeal approach to coordination, a system can help everyone in their organization efforts. It is also critical to keep in mind the need for social-emotional and mental health awareness and supports.

Ms. Pietruszynski closed the discussion by remarking on the incredible strengths of the Central Texas community. As was enforced by Mayor Adler earlier in the day, relationships are one of the greatest tasks in the community, but they are also a great strength. It is important that everyone in the room, and others, work together to find creative solutions to solve the problems of the community together.