Coalition for Community Schools presents:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The Beacon Model’s Promising Practices in Youth Engagement

Thursday February 24, 2011
Vision: The Coalition for Community Schools believes that strong communities require strong schools and strong schools require strong communities. We envision a future in which schools are centers of thriving communities where everyone belongs, works together, and succeeds.

Mission: The Coalition advances opportunities for the success of children, families and communities by promoting the development of more, and more effective, community schools.
What is a Community School?

- A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. It provides academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement, and brings together many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities for children, youth, families, and communities. The school is generally open for extended hours for everyone in the community. Community schools may operate in all or a subset of schools in an LEA. (Title I Guidelines, U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 2, 2009)
Key Community School Principles

- Foster strong partnerships
- Share accountability for results
- Align school and community assets and expertise
- Set high expectations for all
- Build on the community's strengths
- Embrace diversity
What Happens in a Community School?

- Engaging Academic Instruction
- Comprehensive services: health, mental health, prevention services and family support
- Community-based learning (service, civic, experiential)
- Adult education and workforce classes
- Community building
- Early child development
- Increased learning time and enriched learning opportunities
- Family and community engagement

Youth Development
Community School Models

- Children’s Aid Society
- Schools of the 21st Century
- Communities in Schools
- University-Assisted Community Schools
- Beacon Schools
Aim of Webinar

- Discuss the Beacon Model
- Explore Youth Engagement Theory
- Discuss Promising Practices in Youth Engagement from San Francisco and Minneapolis initiatives
Sarah Zeller-Berkman, PhD, Youth Development Institute, NYC

Will Corpuz and Samantha Armas, OMI/Excelsior Beacon, San Francisco

Matt Kjorstad, Judy Williams, Hayley Tompkins, YMCA Beacon, Minneapolis
Brief History of Beacons

- Established in New York City in 1991 as part of the Safe Cities Safe Streets program
- There are currently 80 Beacons in New York City
- 104 Beacons Community Schools (CM) in four cities
- Nationally they reach more than 200,000 individuals in New York, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Denver.
The Beacon Model

Features:

- Located in public schools and operated by a community-based organization
- Innovative collaboration between the public and non-profit sectors to turn the school building into a true public resource
- Community-youth development strategy as opposed to just after-school
- Offer education, recreation, adult education, arts, and family programming after school, before school, on weekends, and during vacations
Youth engagement is a core element of the Beacons model:

“And what will the community school be? The program itself will be shaped in each community by young people, their parents, Community Boards, merchants, teachers, social service organizations, police and every positive force in the ten targeted communities. Imagine.” (Richard Murphy, 1991 first Beacon RFP)

Young people contribute to their own development, the development of their programs, and the development of the community at large (Tolman & Pittman, 2001; Villarruel et. al, 2003).
Model of Multi-Level Development

21st Century Model of Youth Driven Development

- Shift in status quo for young people in the U.S.
- Adult-youth partnerships

Arrows of Theoretical Support
Arrows of Developmental Support
Ladders of Leadership, NYC. Ladders to Leadership incorporates multigenerational interaction, community building, and meaningful roles for young people in their programs and communities.

San Francisco – Adults and youth working together to prevent violence in their community using first responder team to prevent tensions between youth groups in the neighborhood from erupting into larger problems.

Minneapolis – Adult-youth partnerships from the site level to the initiative level.
Tailor Made: Adults and youth working together to prevent violence

OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
Urban Services YMCA
San Francisco Beacon Initiative
Tailor Made- Introduction

- A program of the OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Established in 2005 from a patchwork of funding-DPH, MOCI, DCYF.
- Offers case management and gang prevention to young people.
- Support families with referrals, navigating school and juvenile justice/court system, and with conflicts at home.
Tailor Made: Youth Engagement

- Group work: TM intentionally develops a strong sense of group identity and belonging by creating roles, earning membership t-shirts, attending community events.
- Young people are supported to come up with topics for the group sessions.
- Young people are co-facilitators for presentations to other youth and at community forums.
- Youth are involved in organizing “Silence the Violence” and “Peace Week” assemblies and workshops in their schools.
Adults partner with youth to prevent violence in schools

- Tailor Made CMs and youth work together with schools as a conflict response network to prevent violence.
- TM youth participants are well respected within peer community and can position themselves as preventers of youth violence.
- TM mediates conflicts between different racial groups and gang affiliations before violence erupts – includes TM workshops that promote team building between groups, identifying commonalities, and reinforcing the negative effects of violence.
In 2010-2011 Tailor Made served over 130 youth in or at risk of entering Juvenile Justice system

Last year, Tailor Made was called upon and involved in over 75 calls to prevent violence in schools and the community

Tailor Made Youth participants have reported:
- Improved attitude about school
- Can identify a positive adult relationship for support
- Have reduced risky behavior
- Feel emotionally and physically safe in TM
- Have choices and opportunity for leadership in TM
Beacons Minneapolis
Adult-Youth Partnerships from the Site Level to the Initiative Level
Overview of Youth Engagement Strategies

- Beacons Leadership Retreat
- The Beacons Way
- Beacons Leadership Team
- Ladders of Leadership
Beacons Leadership Retreat

- A yearly retreat for the last 10 years has engaged youth from 3rd grade to High school as leaders and learners in an overnight experience.

- This retreat has solidified a High School and Alumni Role in the Beacon Centers, at camp and a step in the Ladder of Leadership.

- At this retreat the design of “The Beacons Way” and The Beacons Leadership Team were initiated.
The Beacons Way

- Builds trusting relationships, cultural knowledge and serves the community
  - We are a Family
  - Minneapolis Mosaic

- Is reflective, interactive, fun and promotes hands on learning
  - Hands on Learning

- Engages youth as decision makers, in planning and in leadership
  - Do your Thing!
  - Beacon YOUth Lead

- Is friendly, trusting, supportive of others and builds on strengths
  - This is how WE do it!
Beacons Leadership Team (BLT)

- Initiated in 2009 and is made up of 3-5 middle school youth and 1-2 adult staff from each of the Beacon Centers.

- Meets every month for 2 hours and rotates the “host” responsibility by the BLT Team at each Center.

- Facilitation and design is shared with youth and adults including: ice breakers, roll call, Committees and closing conversation.
Beacons Leadership Team

Training for all youth and adult BLT members includes:

- The Focused Conversation Method (reflection/insight)
- Demonstration of the Consensus Workshop Method
- Circle of Youth Engagement Training
- The Beacons Way
- Ladders of Leadership
At the Beacons Leadership Retreat-
A youth issues forum is facilitated with ALL students to set the Focus Areas (Committees) for the upcoming BLT agenda
Beacons Leadership Team

The 6 Focus Areas for 2010/2011 are:

- “Can’t Touch This”…Improving the Community Environment
- “Increase the Peace”…Preventing Youth Violence
- “Meet Me Half Way”…Student/Teacher Partnerships for Better Schools
- “Back Up Off Me”…Anti-bullying
- “Above the Influence”…Addressing Peer Pressure
- “One Love”…Promoting Respect and Equality
Phase One:

- Directors, staff, alumni, and youth Brainstormed the Vision of the Beacons Leadership Pathways and Current Reality (strengths, challenges, benefits, dangers)
- Consensus Workshop method Focus Questions: What are the already ESTABLISHED pathways to leadership in the Beacons Network? AND What are the EMERGING ideas and pathways to Leadership in Beacons
Ladders of Leadership

Phase Two/Three:

- The Consensus Workshop Findings, Vision and Current Reality were asked and recommendations made into themes.
- A Ladders of Leadership Think Tank (Staff, alumni, high school students) synthesized data and presented to Beacons Center Directors.
- Consultant designed ladder and incorporated themes into steps on ladder.
- Changes made from Focused Conversation with Centers.
Center Specific Youth Advisory’s

- Made up of youth in the Beacon Center
- High School student/ Alumni/Beacons Staff contributes to the facilitation and leadership
- Each Youth Advisory picks ONE Focus Area from the Beacons Leadership Retreat as the core of their work at their school/ Beacon Center
- Receive ongoing training in facilitation, leadership and action planning
Impact on Multiple Levels

Youth Level-
- YPQA average score on youth engagement increased from 2.4 (2009) to 3.4 (2010)

Site Level-
- Intentional training focused on engagement significantly increased in 2010 on all levels including BLT training, leadership camp training, youth staff, youth development staff, and volunteers

Initiative Level-
- Collaborative projects always include youth representation—we have set a standard way of moving things
- Creating program examples for organizations to integrate youth engagement into general practices
“Without Beacons it would be like living without a house…you’d be missing a big part.”

Beacons Participant, 5th grade
Questions and Answers
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