

**REGION I/CAP
BUSINESS AND YOUTH SUMMIT
MAY 13, 2004
EVALUATION**

1. What was good about the Summit?

- Best practices panel Good excuse to be away from the office
- Networking
- Young people's testimony
- The lunch speaker

2. What would you change?

- Allow more time to ask questions
- Involve more youth
- Temperature - room too cold

3., Suggestions for improvement.

- Have business leaders as speakers at the next event
- More advance notice for registration deadlines

Region 1 Focus Group
May 13, 2004
Dalton Convention and Trade Center

Context

The focus group was conducted at the close of the Region 1 Youth Development forum. The theme of the forum was centered around the 5 America's Promises as a way to unite the counties, to focus on assets, to engage the business community. Part of the forum agenda was focused on sharing best practices from across the region. The programs highlighted included independent as well as school-linked and schoolbased programs in the region. Program presenters came from nonprofits, a chamber of commerce, a RESA (regional education service area), Big Brothers and Big Sisters in partnership with a YMCA, and a Family Connection & Americorps partnership. Following the best practice presentations, forum participants heard about the CYDS/ASN partnership, the work to date including a brief overview of the youth policy framework. After lunch, participants broke into county groups. In groups each county aligned its Family Connection strategic/operational plan, goals, objectives, strategies with the most appropriate of the 5 America's Promises. Many of the plans included out of school programs and activities as part of their strategy to improve a specific result and benchmark (e.g., children succeeding in school/ increase the rate of high school completion). It was in this context of having heard some of the best practices and focusing on their own outcome-based strategic plans, all of which have priority goals and objectives regarding youth, that the participants came to the focus group.

Focus Group

Facilitated by: Becky Winslow.

Initial notes taken by: Katy Crumley

Participants: 9 participants representing a) an afterschool program; b) county collaboratives focused on youth and strategies for youth in afterschool/out of school time; c) youth services; and d) youth. Organizations and groups represented included: Early Childhood Initiative, Gilmer County; Family Connection, Whitfield County; Peer Counselor, Teen Resource Center, Whitfield County; Director, Teen Resource Center, North Georgia Health District, Whitfield County; Walker County Connection, Walker County; Hands of Christ After School Program, Bartow County; Family Connection, Catoosa County; Family Connection, Region 1; and North Georgia Health District.

The focus group began with introductions and an overview of the purpose of the focus group and intended use of the findings.

Next the group reviewed the Afterschool Network vision, mission, goals and outcomes, and the Mott grant goals and objectives. (each participant received a handout)

Themes that emerged

- The name (Afterschool Network) is narrow, doesn't reflect what is needed -
- quality programs and activities before and after school, weekends, summer time, other school breaks - and makes for a hard sell to other folks.
- The school systems have most of the afterschool programs in the region; these are usually for pre-K, K and elementary school children. There is practically nothing for middle schoolers - a big need in the region.
- There is no networking of afterschool programs or providers.
- Participants seemed to understand the need for quality standards. They are concerned about having no flexibility and having regulatory mandates without any support (financial or technical assistance) to meet the mandates.
- One person expressed the need for more standardized performance evaluation across programs so that programs are measuring the same things and it becomes possible to learn from the findings.
- More and effective communication with a variety of audiences (parents, business, community) was a thread.

General Comments:

- Call it out-of-school time (after school, nights, weekends, not just school-based: community-based because schools don't provide transportation)
- Hard to get dollars to keep programs funded
- Problem is don't have programming at the middle school level (big gap)
- Some school activities are there, but they leave out at-risk kids
- Waiting list from 6 months to 2 years to get into programs (elementary and high school ages have the longest lists)
- Church that runs program 3 days/week
- 2nd graders are keeping pre-K'ers at home after school
- 20% walk to school, 10% are transported, 70% picked up

Who are the key after school stakeholders?

- Club Hero (ABAC), Boys & Girls Club in a few counties, churches, schools, YMCA. Schools are the primary providers for the elementary aged children.
- In addition, families, [parents, youth], and then the group provided a list of key stakeholders: public health, mental health, schools, Family and Children Services, Parks and Recreation, Big Brothers, Big Sisters in a few counties, Chambers of Commerce, Family Connection, Communities in Schools, Industry and Trade, etc.

Where are you in the process of networking these stakeholders?

- Nothing being done unless by GSACA - need to get schools involved; they are the primary providers and they each do their own thing.

Mott Goal 1: Create a sustainable structure of statewide, regional and local partnerships, particularly school-community partnerships, focused on supporting statewide policy development.

Objective 2: Coordinate multiple afterschool efforts funded and administered through education initiatives, human services initiatives (child care), other state and local government agencies, and community-based organizations.

- Child care (Early Head Start) is available for 0-3;
- Before school care is needed because of shift work.
- Change the language to before/after/out-of-school care.
- The word "care" [as in child care] is problematic (it's really everything); Need structured activity with responsible adults
- Child care is closed when school is closed: problem. What to do with kids in the summer?
- Companies are opening child care centers (but not many in this area - could use). Gilmer - Industrial Park is starting one. Parents drop kids off at school in the dark before school opens to get to work on time, they leave kids alone at night while they are sleeping to go to work, and they are leaving kids in their cars while at work because no options.
- Academic enrichment NOT day/child care - different regulations. Don't try to make regulations the same. Certifications of CPR, licensed teachers getting early childhood certifications.
- Link afterschool with Early Childhood and Youth Development because
- possibilities haven't been reached - potential with Children's 1 S" (a public health
- early identification program) hasn't been reached.
- Office of School Readiness joining state partnership. Caution re getting Early Childhood folks in, don't lose focus on After School.
- Drugs, gangs are real issues - need afterschool alternatives.
- Married 7th grader who is pregnant (being home schooled so pregnancy won't be "contagious") - this was offered as an example of the mind set of parents in howto handle the afterschool high risk time.
- Transportation is an issue for young people accessing afterschool programs - buses are cost-prohibitive for a 2nd run unless done with local funds (still very expensive). 21st Century Learning grants can pay for transportation, but otherwise it's a major obstacle.
- Community-based programs accommodate maybe 15 children.
- People will do the program but won't transport because of liability - this is a policy issue around liability/cost. Pull together Superintendents and Regional groups where it's been working to talk with people who are scared, to discuss how they got around it, paid for it, etc.
- Include/ coordinate with not just schools, but with other partners.
- DOT has some funds for counties to do local rural transportation systems. Some systems must have 24 hour notice, policy issue regarding whether these funds are for Medicaid clients only, etc.
- Dalton City has transportation funds, but limited.

Mott Goal 2: Support the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing afterschool programs.

- Research links After School programs to positive school attendance but not to grades. Some counties can get data from schools on grades, etc. but others won't, even
- with release forms signed by parents (state/regional barrier to be broken down)
- Many at-risk parents won't sign because they think they open themselves up to DFCS, etc.
- Group mentoring might be ok where parents won't sign for individual mentoring.
- Still useful for the young person. In one county afterschool program now have a
- 10-page registration form for all the signatures that are needed.
- Specify school-based/linked to include community and faith-based programs.
- Have a glossary of terms.
- Is there a focus on the older child? The focus is not clear. Specify ages.

Mott Goal 3: *Support statewide systems to ensure programs are of high quality.*

- Standardize and fund an evaluation system. Don't tell us what to do if no help to implement. Doesn't make sense when all are separate. No unfunded mandates.
- Don't assume local infrastructure is there to evaluate programs.
- Give SUGGESTED standards - not mandated.
- GSACA guidelines are rigid - not 501c3 friendly for standards. Accountability might even be higher, but need to be different for grant funded programs (Ex.: no gym at the church after school program facility, so it wouldn't qualify for GSACA, even though they do pay for Gold's Gym membership)
- Others to involve? Private providers.
- AS programs should not just be about bookwork - they should be fun, with activities. 20 minutes of education, homework help, then activities.
- Denial from school system - student says "teacher called me stupid"; students are not believed - school won't admit bullying happens - they pretend everything is perfect.
- Young people would want to participate (on-site) if their opinion is valued. Be clear about why they're there - see results.
- 18 y/o wanted to run for school board.
- Community assessments - work in surveys, focus groups. Pilot survey (that youth help develop) - opportunity to build awareness of young people not in school. Could use Youth Council people (this could focus to pull group together)

How could a statewide after school network support your work locally, and regionally?

- Could help focus on and decrease in negative indicators
- Help with communication. Give stats/info condensed to take to folks and say "This is an issue", prevention #'s (saving \$ not pregnant, DJJ, etc.)
- Helps "market through effective education"

- Promotes teens to return to community if they feel valued and they care (Economic Development) (need programs to show young people are cared for)
- Teaching kids to dream "Dream it, Do it"
- Harvard Family Research Project - "Out-of-school time"-good resource
- Need a wider orientation (than just afterschool) because taking it back to community folk
- Evaluation across the board in the network for comparability, but allow for local flexibility
- Local programs - pick from a selection of assessments/instruments/evaluations for each program. Don't want them playing video games all day
- Schools, FC, parents, private providers working with children/youth.
- Best practices or standards? A brief discussion followed regarding the difference.
- A network could help bring 4-H, Rec. Depts., Y's, Boys & Girls Clubs, Scouts, DNR, faith-based organizations all to the table.
- Engage other stakeholders, e.g., interview community leaders working with kids, like Gordon County Juvenile Court Judge/Debate Team Coach - Arianne can connect with.
- Could help engage business, e.g., Bluebird School buses - think outside of the box (major businesses to be involved in transportation)
- A network can sponsor a website to tell about local available opportunities for summer care, etc.
- Look at 8-counties data - are there common pieces across counties so we can help each other out? Begin to look region wide for common ways a network could serve the region.

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COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLANNING MATRIX

COUNTY	<u>BARTOW</u>				
Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan -- Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
#1 - Ongoing relationships with caring adults	<p>Goal 2: All children will succeed in school. Strategy 2: Continue to strengthen academic performance, promote positive peer/adult relationships and develop asset and resistance skills through after school and summer programs. Strategy 3: Continue to provide at-risk students with a personal, one-on-one relationship with a caring adult.</p>	<p>Mentor recruitment for the Chamber of Commerce's mentoring program. DOL, Chamber of Commerce and Family Connection will meet to develop a summer recruitment plan.</p>	<p>More mentors for the next school year.</p>	<p>Number of new mentors.</p>	

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COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLANNING MATRIX

COUNTY	CATOOSA				
Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
<p>#5 - Opportunities to Give Back through Community Service</p>	<p>Ensure students have the school, home and community support to succeed in school and to develop a plan for their future.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased enrollment of "at risk" students and foster children into leadership opportunities. 2. To include Partnership 2000 Leadership Academy for 5th, 7th and 1st graders, which results in a yearlong community service project. 3. Also to include membership and leadership training with the Teen Council. 4. Add an 8th grade leadership group to be trained as peer educators for substance abuse issues to deliver to 6th and 7th graders. 	<p>The number of students who had never been acknowledged as "leaders" will increase. Opportunities for community service will increase for more students</p>	<p>Increase in numbers of students involved.</p> <p>Increase in number of students previously identified as possessing risk factors being involved in community service and in leadership opportunities</p>	<p>Assist in fund raising to support the program.</p>

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COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLANNING MATRIX CHATTOOGA

COUNTY CHATTOOGA

Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth, in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
#5 - Opportunities to Give Back Through Community Service.	Provide opportunities for youth to participate in and contribute meaningfully in his/her community.	Youth council will increase their student forum from 1 per year to 1 per quarter (4 per year). Quarterly topics would be: 1. Health/ Self-defense and Safety 2. Financial Planning/money management 3. Career/vocational planning 4. Forum for teens and elected officials	Our youth will be more knowledgeable in these 4 areas. a. Youth council members will serve their peers by helping them, and by acquiring knowledge. b. Youth council members will learn leadership skills. c. Youth council will meet with local officials.	1. No. of participants attending forums. 2. Quantity of information disseminated. 3. Surveys of students, parents, and community leaders	1. Community education 2. Training of youth council members 3. Training and/or presentations at Forums.

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COUNTY	DADE	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your <i>efforts</i>? (<i>i.e.</i>: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.				
#4 - Marketable Skills through Effective Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase % of students who graduate. 2. Develop and implement comprehensive coordinated early learning system for families with children ages birth to 6. 3. Provide opportunities for family members to become lifelong learners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement "Big Bucks" program in grades 5-8 in combination of in-school and after-school settings. (Also during summer.) Instructors will be volunteers from the business community. 2. Implementation under aegis of Family Connection with help from collaborative partners, school system and Education to Careers Consortium. 	Program will be implemented in all planned areas and local business leaders will become more involved with local youth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased % of graduates. 2. Increased school success rate for students in lower grades and increased parent involvement. 3. Pre and post testing of participating youth. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. Community Education

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COUNTY	FLOYD	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
<p>Which Promise area did you choose?</p> <p>1. # 5 - Opportunities to give back through community service.</p>	<p>Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.</p> <p>Provide youth with opportunities to give back through community service</p>	<p>Provide after school opportunity for 6th grades. Use school building, civic clubs and churches to implement.</p>	<p>Sixth graders will be more successful in school.</p>	<p>1. Participants in program will improve grades, and school attendance. 2. Family feedback.</p>	<p>Educating state partners and elected officials on importance of after school programs.</p>
<p>2. # 3 - A healthy start and future</p>	<p>(same as above)</p>	<p>Add GED component to home visitation programs.</p>	<p>More parents will have GED.</p>	<p>Number of parents who have GEDs.</p>	

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Community Strategy Planning Matrix

COUNTY	GILMER				
What Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where, and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity, building, training, identifying, and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
Marketable Skills	School Success leading to job success	Create an after-school program to teach teens job skills (i.e. computer technology adapted to a work environment. Partners include: Local Chamber Govt. Partner Chief Callahan Jeff Hurd Fire Dept Dr. Stalling GHS Appalachian Tech. Water Authority Builders Asc. ETC Cathy Harrison	Through Initiative they (the Youth) will have a safe place to go to learn marketable skills	Family Connection evaluation / evaluator and student records Biggest Barrier: No facility such as Boys Club or United Way	Help in Grant plus training and additional resource suppliers e.g. economic development center such as Goodwill

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COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLANNING MATRIX

COUNTRY	POLK				
Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
#1 - Ongoing relationships with Caring Adults	Provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills and develop assets	Teen Night at the Boys & Girls Club - Friday night	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance of 40 youth in 12 months. 2. Youth involved in community service projects. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance 2. Pre and post tests 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. Programs 3. Funding

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COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLANNING MATRIX

COUNTY	WALKER	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
#1 - Ongoing relationships with caring adults	All Walker Co. successful in school.	1. Strengthen school-based mentoring through CIS, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the business community. Target up to 3 schools. Meet with school officials.	Increase number of successful mentor matches and re-establish program.	Double current matches in target schools.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. PR 3. Removing community barriers

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COUNTY	<u>WHITFIELD</u>				
Which Promise area did you choose?	Describe the strategy it relates to in the Family Connection Plan.	Summarize your Action Plan - Who, What, When, Where and How	Victory Statement: If you are successful, how will things be different for youth in your community one year from now?	How will you measure the success of your strategy?	How can the State and Regional Level Partners assist your efforts? (i.e.: capacity building, training, identifying and removing barriers, community education, etc.)
<p>#2 - Safe places with structured activities after school</p> <p>#4 - Marketable skills through effective education</p>	<p><u>1.1:</u> Provide ongoing caring and supporting relationships with adults; provide safe places and structured activities, and enhance academic achievement.</p> <p><u>1.3:</u> Build protective factors in youth and create opportunities for activities that increase self-esteem and life values.</p> <p><u>2.3:</u> Community Development-strengthen the array of family supports for children, youth and families. Build protective factors that enable families to effectively parent their children</p>	<p>Summer Program: Target both high risk and mainstream youth for next summer. Provide technical skills training, marketing, etc. Utilize Junior Achievement, policy makers, school staff. Also address problem-solving on community issues.</p>	<p>That it happens!</p>		