



SERVING MIDDLE GRADES YOUTH AFTER SCHOOL

The Project My Time Lesson

DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME...?

- What is your fondest memory from middle school?
 - What is your least fond memory?



“...I’m a 6th grader and I’m going to tell you what I like about Project My Time...First I like the teachers. Second I like the programs. Third I like the great snacks. Now, I’m going to tell you what I would want next year. I would want more field trips, better snacks, more programs and more teachers and bigger classrooms...”

Jared (Jefferson MS)

WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

□ WHO IS THE MIDDLE GRADES YOUTH?

- Physically?
- Interests?
- Important Relationships?
- Values?

..."I think it's a good thing to have Project My Time because you get to make new friends..."

DeShawn (Jefferson MS)



BACKGROUND

- Project My Time (PMT) an initiative of the Trust to serve middle grades youth
- Funded by Wallace Foundation to build a system of service delivery
- 5 components to PMT strategy
 - City Leadership
 - Communications Strategy
 - Program Quality
 - Data and Evaluation system
 - Service Delivery



PMT CONTEXT

- Change in key city leadership happening in the City
 - New Mayor
 - New Chancellor

- Restructuring of DCPS
 - New governance structure
 - New school site leaders

- DCPS New Out-of-School Time Strategy (DC One)
 - OST Steering Committee

- PMT Site Expansion/New School Leaders



PMT MODEL

- Coordinated strategy for OST service delivery in DC
 - Primary Focus on DC middle school youth
 - Robust program design that allowed programs & systems to feel supported in its delivery
 - Model aligned with Trust Best Practices & Indicators for OST Programs



PMT MODEL – Key Elements

- High Dosage
 - ▣ (youth attend 2 or more afternoons a week for at least 10 weeks in a row)

- Highly qualified, trained, full time Site Directors

- Alignment with the school day staff, curricula, and goals

- Empowering youth voice



PMT MODEL – Key Elements

- Age appropriate marketing and recruitment
- High quality, age appropriate activity choices with a minimum of 4 areas: academics, arts, sports/recreation, and character development
- Rigorous provider screening, monitoring, and training
- Intentional parent engagement
- Data driven evaluation and program monitoring



WHAT WORKED?

Project Structure

- ▣ Designed to increase the frequency & duration of attendance w/ clear dosage
 - Enrollment Goals – 50% of school population
 - Participation Goals – 50% attend 2 or more days a week

- ▣ Session Length Activities

- ▣ Marketing

- ▣ Mix of program providers



WHAT WORKED?

Summer Structure

- Enrollment Goals
 - ▣ 200 per site
 - ▣ 3 days/week for 6 hours/day (6 wks)
- End with culminating activity or event
- Attrition in the 4th week resulted in retention strategies
 - ▣ Lead agency with comprehensive program
 - ▣ Activity tracks
 - ▣ Specific outreach
 - ▣ 4 day program weeks w/ optional Fridays



WHAT WORKED?

FT Site Director

- Liaison between school day and after school program
- Site Based
- Central point of information & coordination
- Benefited school & leadership team
- Joint selection for Director



WHAT WORKED?

Quality of Diverse Providers

- Trust's RFP Process
- Indie Providers
 - ▣ Built capacity to serve more youth
 - ▣ Offered more diverse mix (increased # of arts and recreation by 350%)
 - ▣ Increased flexibility
 - ▣ More success in recruitment and retention of youth
 - ▣ Expense based grant system



WHAT WORKED?

Intentional Alignment to School Day

- Principal Support
- Academic Power Hour
- LAWG – Local Academic Working Group
 - ▣ Ensure coordination with LAWG priorities into School Improvement
 - ▣ Integrate data about student achievement early



WHAT WORKED?

Including Youth Voice

- Youth role in decision making and change efforts of OST
- Youth Council
 - ▣ Informal & formal strategies for student involvement

“The Youth Council at Lincoln who met monthly over pizza has been responsible for the planning and implementation of such activities as holiday parties, session end (event) themes, selection of program offerings, and student recruitment and retention strategies at the school.”

Site Director, Lincoln MS

WHAT WORKED?

Age Appropriate Marketing & Recruitment

STUDENTS VOTE WITH THEIR FEET

- Marketing plans to attract and retain students
- Incentives
- Session end events
- School day demonstrations & sponsorship of school events
- Annual site-wide events
- Site level recruitment plan, supported by budget, guided approach



WHAT WORKED?

Quality & Capacity Building of Providers

- Specific knowledge and skills of providers required
- Quarterly affinity groups
 - ▣ Training
 - ▣ Networking
 - ▣ Community Building
- Data on enrollment and attendance tracked and used to inform trends



CHALLENGES

ENROLLMENT!

- Year 2 30% enrollment w/ 30% attending 2 days/wk
- Upward trend in the following year with 45% enrollment and 30-50% attending 2-3 days week



CHALLENGES

- Administrator and Staff Support
- School Climate
- Safety Leaving School After 3pm
- Cool Factor
- Mix of Providers



CHALLENGES

- Competing with Choices Outside of Schools
- Site Directors
- Mandatory Academics
- Space Usage
- Parent Engagement



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

□ SECURE CITY LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

- Business leaders and political figures
- Expand reach to more than just public schools
- Enact City wide communication campaign on benefits of OST geared toward youth, parents, and school leaders



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

□ CONTINUATION OF INDIE PROVIDERS

- Increase minimum requirements for professional dev't with flexible schedule
- Use as viable set of program providers
- Clear recruitment and retention targets



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- CONTINUE PROVIDER CAPACITY AND QUALITY SUPPORT
 - Provider evaluation tool to create baseline for quality
 - Continue middle grades specific training
 - Opportunities for peer to peer networks



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- SECURE SENIOR LEVEL SCHOOL AND LOCATION SUPPORT
 - Focus on relationship building with principals
 - Include metric for principal performance assessment
 - Principals training
 - Youth development training for all staff



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ENHANCE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL
 - Parent engagement strategy with measure on impact of youth participation
 - Academics as an enrichment option
 - FT Site Directors
 - Include college and career awareness focus



PMT Model – Looking Forward

- Visibility and attention on programming for middle grades youth
- Focus on 8 key elements of PMT Model
- Grant making methods (use of indie providers)
- Provider quality support
- Continue to professionalize the OST field through emphasis on data and systems that support quality program

