



Date: July 25, 2018

To: Members of Working Group Four, Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

From: Ellie Mitchell, Director, Maryland Out of School Time Network

Re: Comments for Working Group 4 Meeting August 9, 2018

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide youth development organization, dedicated to more and better opportunities in the out of school hours for all of Maryland's young people. MOST also serves as the backbone organization for the new Maryland Coalition for Community Schools (MD4CS).

In reviewing the Workgroup 4 materials from the July 13, 2018 meeting there are a few clarifications and recommendations we would like to share with the workgroup as you move to finalize your proposals.

First, we want to commend the workgroup for explicitly including and costing out community schools and expanded learning time as research-based strategies that will have a profound impact on the lives of students, particularly student who have been denied equity of opportunity because of living in communities with concentrated poverty. More than 80% of a student's waking hours are spent outside of the school day (Fig.1), and yet education policies frequently ignore the importance of out of school time and the resources available to students and their families.

Within the Concentration of Poverty Weight, the recommendation to increase the expanded learning time funding from 50% of students to 100% does require additional considerations. When full school expanded learning time initiatives are implemented successfully they require comprehensive school day redesign (not just adding hours to the day but reimagining what the school day and school year looks like), a new approach to partnerships, and engagement and support for the model at the school and district level.

Just a few of the issues raised by implementing full-school expanded learning initiative include: 1) Deciding if attendance is compulsory and communicating attendance policies to families; 2) Determining if expanded learning opportunities will provide credit; 3) Addressing staffing and union regulation concerns; 4) Maintaining provisions of IEP and Section 504-Plans during expanded learning time; and 5) Adjusting bus transportation.

Transportation is a particularly important consideration for OST programs, particularly in rural communities where walking options are often not available and in districts of choice where students rely heavily on public transportation and may travel significant distances from home to school.

We recommend that schools and districts are best suited to determine what kind of expanded-learning model is implemented with an **up to** 100% of students option which could include a variety of programming during afterschool and summer hours.

The Workgroup 4 documents from July 13th do not specifically state the estimated per-youth cost for expanded learning time at either the 50% or 100% of students. We encourage the workgroup and consultants to explore the Wallace Foundation's Out of School Time cost calculator: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/pages/default.aspx> which lays out both the variables and the significant variability of program cost based on implementation and to share the cost assumptions which are being calculated to be included in the poverty weight.

For example, using the calculator, a 150 student, school-based afterschool program operating in Baltimore City for 35 weeks/ 15 hours per week with an academic focus and student to staff ration of no greater than 15 to 1 was estimated to

cost in the range of \$3000 - \$4500 per student for the year. An additional \$1800 would be necessary to operate a six-week summer program.

The OST calculator is based on high quality implementation. Programs that follow the best practices in youth development result in better outcomes in youth, whereas low quality programs are shown to have an effect that is equivalent to not attending a program at all (Child Trends, 2010). Many districts do not currently have the capacity to provide training and professional development for expanded learning. There should be sufficient funding set aside (at least 2- 3% of overall investment) to provide system level support for continuous program quality improvement.

From the Community Schools perspective, we question separating community schools for categorical funding as historically categorical funding is often first targeted for decrease and or elimination. A community school strategy will require sustainable funding to demonstrate success over time. To address school and district readiness, we support a tiered phase-in of community-schools which would be part of the school districts implementation plan. Another way to fully integrate the community school strategy would be to align expanded learning and community school funding. Expanded learning programs that operate within community schools benefit from increased recruitment and retention and increased alignment and collaboration with school day staff. Community schools with expanded learning opportunities are more successful in engaging parents.

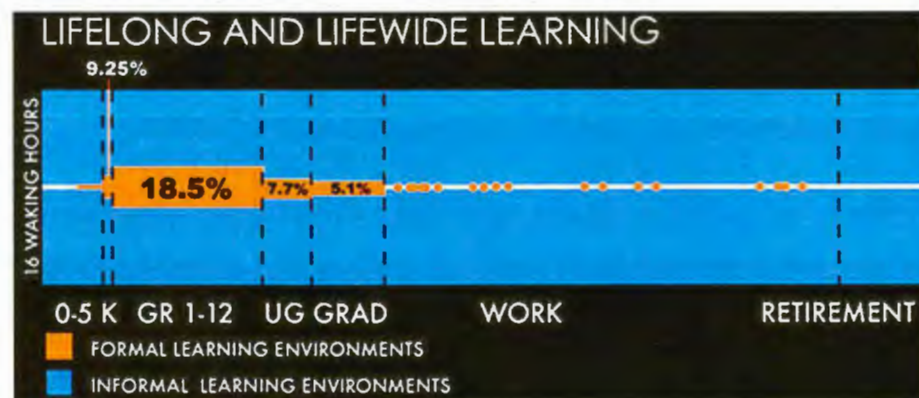
In addition to the coordinators salary, we recommend including the cost of community school activities (for example parent family engagement, special events, professional development, attendance and behavior improvement strategies etc., college and career), which would be proportionate to the size of the school in the range of \$20,000 - \$100,000. Several real-life examples of the kinds of activities that need financial support, provided by Elev8 Baltimore and Promise Heights include:

- Bringing parents and student from three schools on a 2-day college tour in North Carolina
- Hiring Parent Outreach Workers to work directly with students and families on attendance and engagement
- Developing an emergency fund to cover family challenges not otherwise covered by public assistance
- Presenting Parent University--symposia to build capacity of parents, understand IEP, high school choice, workforce development, mindfulness practices/trauma informed activities

On the question of school size and the number of coordinators needed, while there is no definitive standard, practitioners have recommended that schools of 700 or more students would benefit from at least an assistant to the coordinator position. Schools over 1000 students, particularly high schools, require at least two full time coordinators.

MOST and MD4CS Coalition members are available to provide any additional information the workgroup and consultants may request. Please feel free to reach out by email to Ellie Mitchell, Director, Maryland out of School Time Network at emitchell@mostnetwork.org or 410-374-7692, x.101.

Fig. 1



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