

## Youth Voice: Inspire Change Through Collective Empowerment

pennsylvania statewide  
**afterschool**  
youth development  
network

### Ask Yourself:

How often does your program hold a youth voice forum?

- Once a month
- Every quarter
- Twice a year
- What's a youth voice forum?

## Meeting Goals

The goals of today's workshop are:

- understanding importance of youth voice
- benefits of youth voice empowerment
- strategies to empower youth voice
- brainstorming next steps

## Importance of Youth Voice

Why is this important?

- Essential for addressing issues in society
- Encourages individuality
- To help adults provide ideal support and development
- To develop essential life skills

## Outcomes from Youth Development

The 2013 Education & Youth Development Research Summit conducted a study showing that youth development is essential for three main components of development:

- Civic engagement
  - Youth Voting
  - Involvement and belongingness in community
- Life Skills
  - To be a functional member in society
  - Preferred job skills
- Youth/Adults Partnership
  - Improve communication with a common goal of improved community

## Empowered Youth Skill Development

### Empowered Youth Skills:

- Positive Attitude
- Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork
- Self-management
- Cognitive Skills
  - Problem Solving
  - Decision making
  - Creative Thinking
  - Critical Thinking

### Employer's Preferred Skills:

- Positive Attitude
- Communication Skills
- Teamwork
- Self-Management
- **Technical Skills**
- Cognitive Skills
  - Problem Solving
  - Decision making
  - Creative Thinking
  - Critical Thinking
- **Resilience**

## Benefits of Youth Voice Empowerment

- Program quality
- Child Satisfaction/Involvement
- Efficiency of goal achievement
- Advocacy

## Strategies for Empowering Youth

Where are the youth?

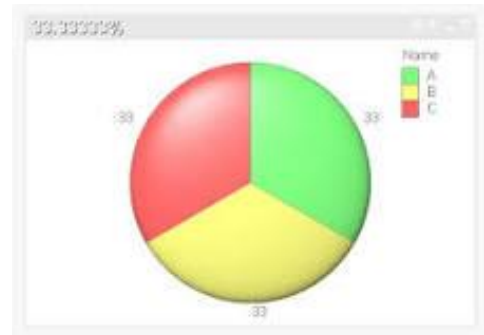
- Home
- In the community
- Schools/OST Programs

## Strategies for Improvement: Home/Community

- Open communication
- Break down barrier between home and outside
- Encourage reflection
- Ask opinionated questions (develops individuality and critical thinking)
- Allow opportunity for reflection
- 33% Rule

## 33% Rule?

- 33.33% of time be spent interacting with mentors/educators
  - 33.33% of time with peers
  - 33.33% of time spent as a mentor/educator
- \*All three components are essential to holistic growth



## Strategies for Improvement: Family Engagement

Five ways to empower youth in your community:

- Encourage them to follow their passions
- Share stories of youth who worked hard and fought to achieve success
- Encourage them to start as soon as possible
- Make it known that their opinions matter and what they have to say is important
- Treat them with humility

## Strategies for Improvement: School/OST Programs

- Critical thinking centered work/activities
- Group work
- Institutional opportunity for leadership
- Stretches/Posture warm ups

## Posture: Power Posing!

- Adults Nonverbal communication
- Expanding vs. Contracting
- “V” Shape
- Sitting up right
- Head up



## Strategies for Empowerment: Schools/OST Programs

### Institutional Opportunities:

- Youth councils
- Youth governance
- Youth serving on boards
- Youth voice
- Youth leadership programs
- Youth advocacy
- Youth service
- Youth organizing



## Importance of OST in Youth Voice/Development

### Classroom

- Paulo Freire 'Banking' Method
- Classroom Connotation
  - Sit still
  - Wait for response
  - Answer questions
  - Power dynamic

### OST Programs

- Third Learning Place
- Promote:
  - Resilience
  - Social Skills
  - "Grit"
- Cognitive Skills
  - Creativity
  - Problem-solving
  - Decision-making

## Best Practice:

- Vermont Afterschool, Inc.
- Marian Barry's Youth Leadership Institute (MBYLI)
- YMCAPA Youth & Government
- Sci Tech High School



## Vermont Afterschool Inc.



### Youth Rights Summit 2017

- Participants included youth ages 9-22
- Youth Declaration of Rights
- Purpose: knowing what is “pressing and important” to youth to create better and effective programs and resources

<http://197yqv2yy2wnqk9ni14nx82z.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Youth-Declaration-of-Rights-letter-size.pdf>

### YPQI - Voice and Choice

- workshop that focuses on:
  - providing real choice and meaningful participation to youth
  - nurturing leadership
  - activities and opportunities for youth input

## Marian Barry’s Youth Leadership Institute

- Founded in 1979 as a year-round program to engage youth in leadership and self-development
  - practical, hands-on experience



- MBYLI Youth Government - a replication of the District government
- Overnight residential training on local college campuses and local campsites
- Serving as hosts to youth visiting the Nation's Capital from cities across the United States and from countries around the world.
- Developing and publishing a MBYLI newsletter
- Hosting an annual public speaking competition for youth
- Hosting an annual Community Awards Banquet
- Performing community service work
- Sponsoring issues forums with local government officials and prominent industry professionals

## YMCAPA Youth & Government

Youth and Government™ is a national program of the Y that involves thousands of teens nationwide in state-organized, model-government programs. Students from every corner of the U.S. have the opportunity to immerse themselves in experiential civic engagement and to, quite literally, practice democracy. Teens from across every state meet in their local Youth and Government™ groups throughout the year to discuss and debate issues that affect citizens of their state and to propose legislation. The program culminates with teens serving as delegates at their state conference, debating bills on the floor of the legislature.



## Harrisburg's Sci Tech High School

2018 National Blue Ribbon High School

Facilitator:  
Teacher, Kevin Varano

Students:  
Layani Lester  
Jailah Wilson  
Zyon Stewart



## Sources:

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## Q&A Wrap Up

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