

## Making the Most of Homework Time

October 25, 2010

9:30am-11:30am

Meeting Minutes

### Introduction

### Announcements

- **Amber Toole** - OIC of America. New funding to present free program on teen pregnancy to OST programs.
- **Matan Barnea** – JEVS. Offer resume-building, job skills, etc.
- **John Price** – **OSTRC**. OST Resource Fair on November 8, and new Online PD Calendar.
- **Mighty Writers**—Weekly teen lounge. Watch movies, poetry. Every Wednesday night 6-8 PM.

### Panelists

#### 1. Rachel Loeper, Mighty Writers:

Rachel distributed a handout on homework time and tips, entitled “Connecting With Kids.” Their program provides snack first, to accommodate students who come later. The topic this month is “Scary, Scary Stories” – they begin with rapid-fire question. She also distributed “Writing Process Sheet,” through which one tutor can communicate with another. Her third handout was: “10 Ways to Mightier Informative Writing.” Their lingering question is – how to provide break-time and down-time to gather energy for doing homework? Sometimes kids only need a few minutes; computer games can assist with this break. Theme: utilizing writing to create relationships.

#### 2. Sterling Baltimore, Lea Community School Site Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

Sterling emphasized that it’s important to retain schedule; important for person running class to facilitate smooth transitions into homework help. They remind students that, if doing a research-based curriculum, do that from 3:30-4:15. “Class contract” – only one person speaks at a time; do not use the word “no,” kids sign at the bottom. Relationship-building is very important. In terms of strategies, be up front with students and parents that it’s not the program’s job to ensure that children complete homework. Supplemental homework: “Homework Pack” for kids that do not have homework. Include a school-day teacher who comes in right after school.

#### 2. Maria Walker, ASAP.

ASAP uses others’ programs homework time in which to implement afterschool clubs. Described ASAP Chess club and competitions, and the degree to which kids are fully committed and invested. ASAP also offers trainings for afterschool club facilitators. Success story: boy from under-resourced neighborhood, who participates in ASAP chess, has visited Eagles locker room; also received chess scholarship to attend Community College.

### Group Discussion

**Q:** More information about staff training.

**MW:** Concerned about electronic registration for trainings.

**Q:** For Rachel: Tutor training – ratio of 7-65. How are you able to recruit so many tutors?

**A:** Diverse recruiting strategies and volunteer match websites. MW also pays volunteers per hour of training; also prefers to “train-the-trainer” rather than train all individual volunteers.

**Q:** For Sterling: Can you explain student incentives?

**A:** Money given to kids as rewards for completing homework – can be used for additional pizza, games, etc.

**Q:** How do you balance creative and rich uses of homework time with parents’ need for doing school-generated homework?

**A:** Participant: be honest upfront with parents. Participant: be upfront about exposing to diverse activities. Sterling: Let them know at parent meeting – short-term and long-term goals for students.

**Q:** For Sterling: Do signed contracts work?

**A:** Yes

(Break into small groups for more in-depth conversations with panelists)

**Big Ideas from Small Group Discussions:**

Maria: Group encouraged ASAP to... Will coordinate an additional training to accommodate diverse schedules; Maria also referred to research/documentation on academic/personal gains from youth involvement in Chess and Scrabble.

Rachel: Discussed how to ensure that homework is completed (tutor training).

Sterling: Group discussed connecting with students and making sure that program is intentions; also talked about adequate training for staff.

Nancy (Rogue group from center of room): Group discussed difficulty of reconciling the fact that kids say they do not have homework when they do, parents want homework done even when told ahead of time what the program is about, have to also offer PBL 3 times a week, etc.