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FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Facilitating Implementation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Susan D'Annunzio • January 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day

Highlights

- State-level Student Services Supervisor, Susan D'Annunzio shows how the state of Pennsylvania allots funding, monitors, and evaluates out-of-school-time programs.
- The monitoring and evaluation plan was designed with the program and state education goals in mind.
- The state provides guidance and technical assistance to programs in order to ensure high-quality implementation that meets students' needs.

About the Interviewee

Susan D'Annunzio joined the Pennsylvania Department of Education in August 2006 as a program officer for 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and Educational Mentoring. She was promoted to the position of student services supervisor in September 2007, where she currently supervises the statewide efforts in a number of federal and state programs, including 21st CCLC, Learn and Serve K-12, Refugee Education, International Education, Community Schools, and is the Social and Health Team lead for the Accountability Block Grant. She is a member of the Resiliency Core Team of Trainers and Leadership Team within the Bureau of Community and Student Service. She comes to the Bureau of Community and Student

Services from the Harrisburg Area Community College, where she served as the Coordinator in the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Ms. D'Annunzio holds a bachelor's degree in humanities from the Pennsylvania State University and a teaching certificate in secondary English education with a minor in public speaking. She has taught in a number of Pennsylvania school districts and has served as center director and director of education for an international supplemental education provider. Her broad range of educational experience has enabled her to teach a variety of grade levels and students, from kindergarten to the college level.

With comprehensive educational experience gained in public and private schools, Ms. D'Annunzio has an understanding and appreciation of working with special populations of students in at-risk situations. She has functioned in liaison roles with parents, district administrators, teachers, and community leaders. She has a working understanding of education law and special education advocacy, is a certified test administrator with hands-on experience administering testing and interpreting results of standardized tests, has conducted community training for parents on study skills, and has presented a back-to-school study skills spot on News 27 Early Edition.

Full Transcript

My name is Susan D'Annunzio. I am the student services supervisor in the Division of Student Services and Migrant Education, the Bureau of Community and Student Services, at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It provides federal funding for the establishment of community learning centers that provide academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local standards in the core academic subjects.

Pennsylvania grantees are required to submit program implementation and results data annually at two different online sites. The first site is the federal online reporting system for the federal government, the Profile and Performance Information Collection System, affectionately called PPICS. And additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has a state evaluator that elicits information from Pennsylvania State grantees along with the federal reporting, this information is used not only by the U.S. Department of Education but also by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to monitor the services and activities that are being provided by 21st Century grantees across the state, inform us who is participating in grant-funded activities, and what progress is being made in achieving the performance indicators associated with the 21st Century program.

21st Century applicants in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are required to submit an evaluation design

with their initial proposal, and that initial proposal should include the types of data that they will be collecting, when they are going to collect the data, the designs and methods that they will be using, the instruments that will be developed and when they will be developed, an indication of how the data will be analyzed, and when the reports of results and outcome will become available. And additionally, an important part of the evaluation process is how the information, once it's collected, will be used by the program to monitor the progress and to provide the accountability information to stakeholders about success at the program sites.

We have a technical assistance provider who is contracted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide training and technical assistance to our 21st Century grantees, and they conduct the majority of the monitoring visits with our guidance. Programs in Pennsylvania are typically monitored between September and March each year, and the grantees receive advanced notification of the pending monitoring visit with preparation instructions.

The technical assistance team in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania meets on a regular basis, typically the first Monday of every month. We spend about four to five hours together discussing what the grantee needs are, the calls we have received, and the e-mails that we have gotten. Although it's not always directly about the evaluation data, it is most often about the questions and the concerns that grantees bring to our attention or statewide advisory board members bring to our attention. And that information is used in conjunction with the data that we extract from the PPICS system, as well as the state evaluation system to design professional development that is going to be supportive to the grantees in helping them to continue to implement quality and sustainable programs in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education established the 21st Century advisory board on a statewide basis in 2002, to make recommendations and develop after-school program tools and resources to strengthen the Commonwealth's 21st Century program. Currently, the committees are a Board Excellent Committee, Program Quality, Public Policy, and Sustainability. The Program Quality Committee, I think, most easily fits in with our discussion about evaluation, and the program quality for the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program in Pennsylvania has provided a lot of input and information for what kinds of tools they would like the state to develop that would help them do a better job and help them to have and to operate better programs throughout the Commonwealth.