

Designing a Local Project to Advance Inclusive Practices in Out of School Time Programs

How You Can Do It

Ten Steps and Questions to Consider

Developed by the team leading the OST and Inclusion Project in Baltimore, Maryland

1. Set a clear goal

Example: Increase opportunities for low income youth with disabilities to participate in Out of School Time (OST) programs in

2. Identify who you are / what voices are missing? / Always keep an eye on racial diversity

3. Identify allies

The statewide after school network in your area

<http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/>

OST program leaders who run high quality programs who are already serving youth of all abilities but want to learn more and feel more confident

Organized groups of parents/caregivers of youth with disabilities

Local disability experts

Legal and non-legal advocates for children with disabilities (local Protection and Advocacy Agency <http://www.ndrn.org/> , local parent information and training centers <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>)

Community activists

Funders of OST programs and summer programs

Others?

4. Prioritize allies and develop a strategy to recruit allies

5. Identify what background information and local data you need to launch an organizing drive to accomplish the goal

Examples:

- What outcome measures improve when youth participate in OST programs?
- Are youth with disabilities currently under-represented in OST programs?
- Who funds OST programs?
- Do the funders already care about inclusion or will you need to educate them on the issue?
- Why do OST programs matter?
- Why does it matter to include youth with disabilities in OST programs?
- Who are the national leaders on OST and Inclusion & how can they help?
- What are the laws/legal requirements?
- Can you make connections between increasing access to OST programs for youth with disabilities and broader social justice issues including racial equity, public school reform and reducing arrests of young people?

6. Who/how/when you will gather the information identified above?

7. Understand your local landscape

Are others working on efforts and/or initiatives that may be connected with your goal? Examples: grade level reading, attendance, expanded enrichment and learning opportunities, improving school climate, improving school and community safety, reducing arrests of juveniles.

8. Do you understand biases that exist in your community on race and disability?

- Enlist support from a local organization that is dedicated to creating individual and organizational capacity to engage in robust engagement in conversations about race
- Secure training in racial equity
- Engage in discussions about race

- Examine biases of program staff
- Use a working definition of race
- Ask good questions
- Gather data that isolates differences by race
- Understand the role of history and structural racism.
- Identify the factors that you can influence and take action.
- Establish policies, procedures, practice and habits to support racial equity
- Consider and understand biases toward people with disabilities
- Teach disability awareness
- Consider misdiagnosis
- Consider culture, values and social norms
- Teach person first language and universal design for learning

Locally, along with the disability experts, we asked for support from Baltimore Racial Justice Action, BRJA: www.bmoreantiracist.org. BRJA provides training and support to the OST and Inclusion Project Steering Committee members to support racial equity transformation and race awareness. BRJA helps identify questions and information that may be needed. Together we are examining complex intersections of race and disability biases.

9. What financial support do you need to launch the effort?

10. What barriers do you think you'll face?

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Material provided by Pat Halle, Inclusion Strategist, Baltimore, Maryland,
pathalle808@gmail.com