

Empowering Youth in Local Government Olathe, KS

**ICMA Best Practices 2004
April 22-23 2004
Annapolis/Anne Arundel County, Maryland**

Presenters:

Kory Norris
Staff Counsel for Student Services
Olathe District Schools
315 N. Lindenwood
P.O. Box 2000
Olathe, KS 66063-2000
PH: 913.780.7047
Fax: 913.780.8104
Email: norrisk@olatheschools.com

Susan Sherman
Assistant City Manager
City of Olathe
100 E. Santa Fe
P.O. Box 768
Olathe, KS 66051--768
PH: 913.971.8600
Fax: 913.971.8703
Email: ssherman@olatheks.org

Erin Vader
Youth Services Specialist
City of Olathe/Olathe District Schools
100 E. Santa Fe
P.O. Box 768
Olathe, KS 66051-768
PH: 913.971.8996 or 913.780.7046
Fax: 913.971.8703
Email: esvader@olatheks.org

Molly Chen, Student
Nick Cunningham, Student
Michael Obermeier, Student
Ankita Trivedi, Student

Facilitator:
Guerdon H. Stuckey
Director of Neighborhood & Community
Services
City of Rockville
Ph: 240-314-8302
Fax-240-314-8309
E-mail: gstuckey@rockvillemd.gov

Empowering Youth in Local Government Olathe, KS

**ICMA Best Practices 2004
April 22-23 2004
Annapolis/Anne Arundel County, Maryland**

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Form of Government | Council – Manager |
| Legislative Body | Mayor, 6 council members (2 “at large”) |
| Terms | 4-year staggered terms |
| Population | 110,661 |
| Area | 55.6 sq miles |
| Budget | \$191,210,658 |
| Revenue Sources | Fund Balance (carryover 22%) Sales Tax 17.9% Ad Valorem 13.4% Water & Sewer Fees 11.5% Franchise Fees 3.6% Intra Governmental Charges 4.5% Self Insurance 3.7% Transfers 5.1% Solid Waste 4.0% |
| Bond Rating | Standard & Poor's AA Moody's Aa3 |
| Socio Economic Indicators | Median Income: \$65,111 Median Age: 30.8 Average Home Cost: \$175,560 |
| Leading Industries | 1. Retail Trade - 17% 2. Construction - 15.9% 3. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services - 10.9% 4. Other Services - 8.9% 5. Wholesale Trade - 8.3% |

Empowering Youth in Local Government Olathe, KS

ICMA Best Practices 2004

April 22-23 2004

Annapolis/Anne Arundel County, Maryland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic engagement continues to be a top priority across North America. In 1997, the city of Olathe and Olathe District Schools began a process of developing a comprehensive Youth Services program. Youth Services seeks to involve youth in positive, meaningful, educative activities within the community—most notably within local government.

With a population of 110,000 and growing, Olathe is the second largest among the 21 communities in prosperous Johnson County and the fifth largest city in the state of Kansas. It is located just 20 miles southwest of downtown Kansas City, with all the cultural advantages of a major metropolitan area. There are 22,970 students enrolled in the Olathe District Schools, for the 2003-2004 school year and roughly 11,000 students are secondary students. The district has 39 total schools and 3 learning centers—including 7 junior highs and 4 high schools. In 1997, Olathe began a transformation unlike any other—the community began solidifying its inclusion of youth as important and viable stakeholders. These efforts—to create a cohesive Youth Services body—were made jointly by the City of Olathe (www.olatheks.org) and Olathe District Schools (www.olathe.k12.ks.us).

Olathe's development of a comprehensive youth services program initiated not as an answer to a specific problem, but rather a proactive engagement of youth—complimenting class work, furthering civic engagement and reaching Olathe's relatively young population (a median age of 30.8). Many programs throughout the country exist that allow youth to participate in mock decisions. Olathe youth, on the contrary, are engaged in real community-wide decision-making and are able to express their concerns and ideas to improve the community. Olathe Youth Court, Olathe Youth Congress and Olathe Teen Council comprise the three branches of government for Olathe youth.

The development of the program came in several steps beginning with the formation of Olathe Youth Court (1997), Olathe Teen Council (1998), Olathe Youth Congress (1999), Hispanic Olathe Leadership Academy (2003), 4 the Birds Café (2003) and Assets to Build Leaders and Entrepreneurs (2003-2004). The process began in 1997 after a city Building Community Conference was held where youth and community leaders committed to forming 3 branches of government for youth. Consequently, a plan was developed that included the formation of Olathe Teen Council and Olathe Youth Congress as additions to the already existing youth court

program. From these three programs, youth, staff and community organizations began developing and implementing the priorities as set by area youth.

Youth Services was developed to serve as proactive investment in current and future civic involvement throughout the Olathe community.

As part of Olathe's continuing commitment to 21st century learning and education, the city and school district committed themselves to serving the youth of the community through the ongoing support of Olathe Youth Services to further service learning through life experiences.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Olathe Youth Court

This program provides a peer-to-peer judicial system that tries first-time offenders of minor juvenile offences. Youth serve in all court positions including: jury, clerk, bailiff, service officer, attorney and judge. They then work in teams to assist and learn from one another. The teams often work closely with volunteering professionals who share insight, and guide and mentor students. Youth defendants that participate in the program are encouraged rather than shamed and are invited by their peers to serve in officer roles upon completing their jury-assigned sanctions. Since its inception, this program has grown in strength, numbers and depth. Beginning with just 20 members, the program now encompasses well over 1,000 Olathe students and is open to all youth grades 7-12. As the program has grown, it has developed complementary programs such as a leadership and development class where former defendants and student officers learn the key aspects of leading effectively. Furthermore, the growth of this program has broadened the ability for youth to help youth as well as take caseload off the county juvenile justice system.

Olathe Teen Council

The teen council is modeled after a city council with representation from all four local high schools and seven junior highs. This body meets once a month and collaborates with other youth organizations and school student councils to cohesively represent Olathe youth. These youth are selected by the current body through an application process and are reviewed on a yearly basis. Somewhat formal, the council follows basic protocols to assist in conducting its business efficiently and respectfully. Council youth work with city and district staff to give valuable youthful insight on current issues affecting Olathe. Furthermore, Olathe Teen Council partners with Olathe Youth Congress to implement many of the congress' yearly resolutions. Individual projects undertaken by the council have included: a teen coffeehouse, a yearly SummerFest, a winter toiletry drive and a teen police academy. The council's main event—the SummerFest—gives area youth a safe and fun end-of-summer party, which reaches between 600 and 1,000 Olathe students.

Olathe Youth Congress

This large, inclusive body is loosely modeled after the US Congress to pass resolutions that youth committees work to implement following an annual general assembly. Youth work with adults in overcoming current community trends and developing innovative solutions to community challenges. Olathe Youth Congress student-representatives generate ideas in a legislative format consisting of five committees—teen issues, leadership/development, school issues, environment and working resolutions. These committees generate recommendations based on their ideas and receive assistance from city and district staffs as well as other community organizations. Committees bring recommendations to the general assembly where legislators debate, amend and then prioritize these resolutions. This program has tripled in membership during its four-year existence to 350 members. Furthermore, its projects reach well over 800 Olathe students.

Program Development, History, and Improvements

Olathe Youth Court (1996-1998)

Olathe Youth Court (then called “Johnson County Youth Court”) began in January 1996 through Johnson County District Court, in particular Honorable Judge Janette Sheldon, Office of the Johnson County District Attorney, Bench-Bar Committee-Juvenile Division of the Johnson County Bar Association and Olathe District Schools. From January 1996 to December 1997, youth court handled about 13 cases and had a total of 16-20 high school students involved. Youth court did not work during the summers ('96 or '97). In December 1997, about 4 youth volunteers were willing to participate in youth court. Several Olathe schools and administrators supported youth court efforts and Olathe District Schools hired a full-time facilitator of youth services. Originally, youth court handled students from 13-17 years of age, volunteers were high school students only, and offenses handled were those occurring only on school property. In addition, adult lawyers prepared the criminal cases, and contacted all defendants, witnesses and interested parties. Student volunteers arrived at the courthouse on the night of a youth court session, and adults handed students the prepared materials for students to read.

In April 1998, Judge Sheldon instructed youth court to change its name to Olathe Youth Court (from Johnson County Youth Court) since Olathe District Schools was the only participating school district. The student volunteers grew from 4 students to 45 students in April 1998. Olathe Youth Court also grew in the number of referrals from the District Attorney’s Office. In addition, the District Attorney’s office expanded the age of offenders from 13-17 to 10-17 and the offenses from only those occurring on school grounds to the same types of crimes that occurred anywhere within the boundaries of Olathe District Schools. *(See list of crimes, Figure A)*

In 1998, students and staff determined interest and commitment to the program was such that continuing throughout the summer was viable and important. Consequently, incoming

sophomores were invited to attend as jurors and to become further involved with the program in officer positions.

Today cases are given to students 2 to 4 weeks in advance with teams of students contacting clients and witnesses; developing and discussing case strategy; consulting with staff, school resource officers, police officers and attorneys; taking depositions when needed and presenting cases. Students often spend 5-10 hours a month preparing cases for either trial or sanction hearings. Area mentoring attorneys, student officers, and school resource officers often work together with staff to develop trainings for students. These students work with more experienced peers and adults to refine skills in the areas in which they work. These areas include judge, attorney, bailiff, clerk, juror, and/or service officer—all positions that are completely student run, trained and driven. At each youth court evening, several school resource officers from the Olathe Police Department attend as police witnesses. Students often ask the officers to testify and to answer any questions concerning police reports that arise. Additionally the officers offer encouragement and positive reinforcement to participants.

Upon students sanctioning defendants, the student defendant must reappear at youth court for two months to serve as a juror. This guideline, enforced by his or her student service officer and staff members, serves to reinforce positive behavior on behalf of the student defendant. Often these students stay involved with the program beyond the role of juror to become attorneys and judges among the many other positions.

The Olathe Youth Court has assisted the district court by reducing the number of minor crimes it hears, providing added attention to cases that might have not otherwise have received such attention and enabling students to receive reinforcement of positive and pro-social behavior. Not only do youth court defendants rarely re-offend—less than 5% return to the juvenile justice system—but also over 50% of the student defendants remain in Youth Services programming after completing their mandatory sanctions. Additionally, the program serves as a preventive piece for student volunteers who work with student defendants.

Olathe Teen Council (1997-1998, 2003)

The partnership between the city and school district began in 1997 as a result of both the Youth Development Report conducted by the city's Community and Neighborhood Services Department and the Building Community Conference, where youth expressed a desire to form both the teen council and youth congress programs.

The report recommended a partnership between the city and school district. A memorandum of understanding was developed discussing youth development issues confronting the educational, governmental, social services, business, judicial, and recreational entities. Secondly, a memorandum was signed outlining the creation of the Olathe Teen Council. Thus, in 1998, Olathe Teen Council began.

Council members were selected to represent the varying public and private schools in Olathe. Private school students are encouraged and invited to participate, yet without a formal partnership, it is often challenging to coordinate activities. Currently only 2 or 3 private schools are involved in all Olathe Youth Services' programming.

Originally, school administrators selected members. Since that time, current teen council members have selected new members based upon applications submitted.

In 2003, Teen Council members re-evaluated the program structure as a result of little participation relative to both youth court and youth congress. Participation of the 30 members dropped to 13-17 members, which often created problems in meeting 50% plus one quorum requirements. Members determined that a 4-year term—freshman to senior—might be too long. Consequently, the members drafted new bylaws with clearly delineated guidelines for involvement and created a committee to oversee membership and attendance of fellow peers. *(See bylaws Figure B)*

Currently, students meet monthly and discuss agenda items such as the 4 the Birds' Café, the Hispanic Olathe Leadership Academy, re-structuring the council, developing a new Teen Fest and strategizing on how best to communicate leadership opportunities to other students. Beginning in February 2004, students and staff have begun to jointly prepare annual reports for the coffeehouse and the teen council to be given to the Olathe City Council for review. This offers a hands-on experience to the council into the working and responsibilities of local government.

Olathe Youth Congress (1998-2000)

After the Building Community Conference, held in 1997, the city and school district committed themselves to the formation of a citywide legislative body for the youth of Olathe. In 1998, a group of students, staff, and community leaders formed the planning body—Olathe Community Connection. The group worked for a year planning the inaugural youth congress, which was held in the fall of 1999.

After evaluating the format of the first and second youth congress general assemblies, the city's organizational consultant, Michael Ashcraft, assisted in some simplifications. A team of steering committee members (youth) and Mr. Ashcraft met to devise a format that adhered to legislative style, while making it easy to follow and allowing work to move quickly. *(See Figures C1 and C2 for agenda and flow of events)*

Throughout the year, students get together to discuss and develop individual resolutions prioritized at the yearly general assembly. Meetings are held at least monthly, but more frequently during peak periods of implementing resolutions. These sessions often include: discussions of local and national news pertinent to meeting topics, developments and activities of other committees and organizations and strategizing with staff and guest organizations on how to best implement student ideas.

As with Olathe Teen Council, Olathe Youth Congress participants work with pre-existing school organizations for recruitment and on a project basis. Many student participants in youth services programming are not fully involved with school student councils; however, there is often cross-participation of students in youth services programming.

Youth Services

Since the inception of youth court in 1997, Olathe Youth Services existed in the realm of the Olathe District Schools separate from youth development and activities that fell under the auspices of the city's Community and Neighborhood Services Department. The two departments worked with one another often on programs like teen council and then in 1999, youth congress. As the programs developed the reliance each had on the other became greater and the need to solidify this partnership became apparent.

In 2003, the city and school district partnered in hiring a Youth Services Specialist to further integrate and utilize resources at the city and district levels for a greater impact on students in youth services programming. A pilot began in June 2003 with the hiring of a part time employee of youth services at the city level who worked contractually for Olathe Youth Services at the district level. As a result of this trial, a new permanent Youth Services Specialist was hired in January 2004.

Results (1997 - present)

The development of the three core programs of youth services—youth court, youth congress, and teen council—set the framework for the on-going, youth-driven civic activity and development. The following are projects and programs designed by and for Olathe youth:

1. 4 the Birds Café

Students at the 2000 Olathe Youth Congress General Assembly set the creation of a teen coffeehouse as a priority for the community. The youth felt the creation of a coffeehouse would prevent youth from involving themselves in negative activities throughout the community. The coffeehouse would be a safe, alcohol- and drug-free place for the community youth. Following the fall 2000 session, a joint committee was formed of youth congress and teen council participants, along with key community leaders and sponsors. In January 2003, the coffeehouse—4 the Birds Café—opened with the support of the city and schools, and with funding from an alcohol tax collected within the community (Special Alcohol Fund). Beginning with an \$87,300 pool, the café currently has a balance of around \$57,000. Operating costs have included part-time salaries, food/beverage costs, contractual services, supplies for the café, equipment purchases, etc. In January 2004, staff and students began preparing an operations manual and business plan to revamp the café's operations—being more fiscally responsible while still allowing more opportunities for students.

4 the Birds shares facilities in the Mill Creek Center with the Johnson County Senior Center. This coffeehouse does not resemble area cafés in that it only operates on Friday and Saturday evenings. Additionally, only Olathe students, grades 9-12, are permitted to use the café. The coffeehouse offers varying activities including bands, computers, games, a big screen television, and pool and foosball tables.

2. Leadership & Development

Leadership development classes were created as a response to both youth court and youth congress student input and work. Youth court defendants were being assigned classes for improved social behaviors as part of the jury-imposed requirements. Olathe Youth Court wanted to design opportunities for past defendants that were meaningful, positive and asset-based as opposed to classes focused on theft, anger management, conflict resolution, etc. Students also expressed a desire for a more involved role in working with past defendants. In the meantime, Olathe Youth Congress passed a resolution at the 2000 General Assembly calling for “Leadership Development Activities for All Students.” Thus, students worked with an area social worker to design classes that were meaningful, asset strengthening, positive, leadership-building, interactive, teamwork-oriented and free of charge. The goals of the classes were to strengthen teamwork, sensitivity and respect for others as well as to maximize potential and commitment. Other goals included customization to individual needs as well as creating a worthwhile and rewarding program for all youth--volunteers, leaders, offenders, et al.

Other ongoing projects stemming from “Leadership and Development Activities for All Students” are:

- Assets to Build Leaders and Entrepreneurs: a program designed for grades 6-12 to learn asset-based skills and how to apply them to civic engagement, education, and everyday life.
- *Kansas City Star* internship and monthly youth newspaper (development on-going)
- Release of Olathe Youth Services Website (Spring 2004). This student co-developed site will be maintained by students and staff following district and city guidelines for Web content.

3. Teen Issues Forums

Students at the 2000 Youth Congress General Assembly expressed a desire to meet and dialogue with peers about teen issues, hold discussions to serve as supportive and non-judgmental forums, and have caring adults available if needed. Due to the deep and powerful outcomes of the leadership development classes, youth services began hosting teen issue forums following the classes to maximize the availability of trained adults, diverse and interested teens and a safe, healthy environment. District social workers and counselors began holding after-school forums. Following the first 25 Teen Issues Forums, this activity was folded into the new ABL program in 2003.

4. Assets to Build Leaders and Entrepreneurs (ABLE)

During the summer 2003, Youth Services youth and staff began working with ProComm Consulting, the city and schools to develop a comprehensive asset-based development and education guide to complement the existing civic and community programs offered by Olathe Youth Services. Based on the Search Institute's 40 developmental assets, the program concentrates on strength-based healthy development of youth. These asset-based skills include: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, time use, civic engagement, educational commitment, values, social competencies, positive identity, and personal well-being. These skills help youth pull together many small aspects of self into a vision of what they need to thrive. The well-liked program has since grown in potential and size and will begin to be offered throughout the district. (Currently it is being offered to select junior high school and youth services students.) Teachers, administrators and students have overwhelmingly liked the program and the activity-based learning involved. The ABLE programming has been incorporated into course curriculum of leadership classes being offered at two Olathe junior highs. *(See Figure D for list of asset categories)*

5. Hispanic Olathe Leadership Academy

The Hispanic Olathe Leadership Academy (HOLA) began in March of 2003. The program is a bilingual organization that provides Hispanic students an opportunity to learn valuable leadership skills, discuss pertinent issues affecting Olathe and the Hispanic community and develop strategies to address these issues. Issues are discussed with Olathe Youth Congress, the city of Olathe, Olathe District Schools and other community leaders and organizations. The Fall 2003 HOLA program included short ABLE sessions, guest speakers and a "pay-it-forward" project. The "pay-it-forward" project enabled HOLA participants to work collaboratively to donate to and work with a partnering program. The exercise—where each student is given a dollar and told he/she may do with it as he/she pleases, while the group as a whole is asked to find a charity or program they would like to donate to and work with—teaches consensus building and teamwork. Exercises like these help reinforce the assets. *(See sample agenda and Fall 2003 Calendar, Figure E)*

SWOT Analysis for Olathe Youth Services

Strengths:

- Strong partnership between city and school district
- Strong support of city managers and school district administrators (namely the superintendent, city manager and mayor, board of education, city council)
- Youth are valued in the community
- Many leadership opportunities for students
- Ability to expand and enhance programs

- Great community partnerships
- Strong, diverse volunteer base
- Relationship with ProComm—consultants helping Olathe Youth Services partner and evaluate program direction.
- Leadership and service learning opportunities for diverse populations.

Weaknesses/challenges

- Limited budget
- Limited staff (for “big picture” dream plan)
- Don’t have “buy-in” from ALL city/school personnel (a.k.a. “the skeptics”)
- Database/communication with students for ongoing/changing programs (youth services continually faces challenges regarding turnover of students graduating and thus needing new leadership).
- Measurement outcomes (or lack of)
- Time constraints due to family, school, etc. (youth)
- Accountability (the number of “individuals” Youth Services is accountable to)

Opportunities

- Many community organizations wishing to partner with Olathe Youth Services to offer greater opportunities
- Potential to expand youth services programs
- Model program for other cities/districts
- Expansion and depth through education and schools
- Improving a diversified student base as more students come on board and student turnover
- Prevention and early intervention programs as positive alternatives
- Great for inter-generational relationships

Threats

- Resistance from individuals who see Youth Services as a “threat” instead of enhancement to curriculum/classroom instruction, etc. (persons see Youth Services as taking students away from their programming).
- Adult ownership from related projects
- Individuals who do not see youth as community leaders and ignore their influence and work
- Future turnover of city/district staff
- Budget cuts
- Staff shortage
- As programs are established, youth perceive less ownership and input. Students were excited by the planning and implementation of both the Teen Council and 4 the Birds; yet, after implementation interest level has seemingly weakened.
- Boredom, over-commitment and stress of students
- Youth programming is not mandated under education

Planned Improvements/Projects

1. *Internship/partnership with Kansas City Star*
Olathe Youth Services plans to begin an innovative educational internship program with the *Kansas City Star* as an addition to the district's commitment to develop 21st century education. This program will allow students the opportunity to learn and work alongside various professional departments (advertising & marketing, circulation, editorial, production). Students during this internship will also be responsible for an 8-page all-district newspaper, which will allow students to apply and evaluate their work and progress at the *Star*. The initial phase of the pilot program will remain an after-school and voluntary internship. However, Olathe Youth Services and the *Kansas City Star* foresee this program becoming a credit-bearing career pathways internship. This program offers career-oriented experiential education while promoting literacy for those within the program and for those throughout the district via the monthly newspaper. It also promotes engagement into local, state, and national events.
2. *Development of multiple HOLA and OLA programs*
After the Fall 2003 HOLA sessions, students and adults decided a program like HOLA was needed for all Olathe students. Thus, a multi-track system is being evaluated at the district and city levels for further implementation (*see Figure G*). Additionally, the fall session evaluations indicated some students were too advanced for the material while others were confused and wanted to slow down. Consequently, school-based programs will be created along with introductory and advanced levels.
3. *Youth Services integration*
Further city-district integration of Olathe Youth Services anticipates programming and projects. As of January 2004, the city and school district hired a new Youth Services Specialist who works both at the city and district levels to bring the partnership together into a more cohesive, mutually beneficial project.
4. *Release of Olathe Youth Services Website*
As part of the youth's effort to offer leadership opportunities to all their peers, they indicated a desire to create a Website to act as a central information source on activities involving youth throughout the community. Youth and staff have worked since summer 2003 to create and release the website (release date TBA). Youth will work with district and city staff to update and maintain the site.
5. *Implementation of Distinguished Scholars*
A new Distinguished Scholars program will be implemented in Fall 2004, to allow students to work with city and school district staff to learn and participate in their daily jobs. The program will mix service learning with specialized curriculum for interested students.

Sustaining the Improvements

Youth Services anticipates implementing a continuous improvement plan to provide quantitative results and to provide quarterly feedback to staff from student participants. The plan will cover such areas as community work impact, follow-through of yearly resolutions, evaluation of program results and new program creation. This improvement plan will assist Olathe in tracking the growth and on-going success of Olathe Youth Services.

FISCAL IMPACT/COSTS

Olathe Youth Services receives its funding from both the school district and the city.

Youth Services Budget

Revenue

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Olathe District Schools | \$ 103,100.00 | |
| City of Olathe | \$ 146,800.00 | |
| Local Private Foundations | \$ 4,700.00 | |
| Local Government Grants | | |
| Total Revenue | \$ 254,600.00 | |

Expenses

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Salaries | \$ 139,446.65 | |
| Consultants | \$ 12,639.77 | |
| Program Expenses | \$ 23,661.69 | |
| Buses | | |
| T-shirts | | |
| Food | | |
| Youth Congress | | |
| General Assembly | | |
| Operational Expenses | \$ 9,388.14 | |
| Printing | | |
| Notebooks | | |
| Supplies | | |
| Materials | | |
| Total Expenses | \$ 185,136.25 | |
| TOTALS: | \$ 185,136.25 | \$ 254,600.00 |
| Difference | \$ 69,463.75 | |

LESSONS LEARNED

Olathe Youth Services has enhanced both the city and school district's service efforts by including more youth and by improving lines of communication between youth, the city and schools. The programs have enabled youth to more easily and openly express their opinions and actively involve themselves in civic activities. Further results include: better understanding of youth needs, more inclusion of youth as viable stakeholders in community decision-making and specific youth generated and led plans and actions. Parents and other adults—encouraged by the example set by students—have often become more actively engaged in city government. Because of Olathe Youth Services' efforts, current and future residents do and will have a larger involvement in city affairs.

The success of Olathe Youth Services has hinged on youth-driven ideas and collaboration with community partners. The youth are key to the program. Youth services consciously remembers to encourage the youth to lead and develop their own ideas. The staff often serves as a resource and guide for students rather than leaders themselves. This allows students the freedom to develop “outside-of-the-box” ideas.

As the city has partnered with school district staff, it has been able to more easily and effectively reach the community's youth. As the partnership has been solidified through the creation of a staff member employed both by the schools and city, the collaboration and utilization of resources has grown. The city's effort to reach youth with less collaboration with the school district came with little to no success. In addition, youth services' partnerships with local rotary, optimist, and other civic clubs enables youth to make connections and reshape adults perceptions of youth as important sources of information and ideas as well as strong community leaders. These partnerships have enabled youth to receive financial assistance for programming, receive recognition from these organizations, attend international conferences and supplied programs with needed adult volunteers to assist the youth services programming. Community involvement of youth stretches through all of Olathe Youth Services programming, where youth are consistently learning of community issues and are asked to address them on a continuing basis.

This integration of youth services did not happen suddenly. Rather, the programs developed over a period of evaluating and re-evaluating with students as resources and guides. Youth Congress, Youth Court and Teen Council all changed in structure, size and responsibility since their inception. Flexible, changing programs have proven successful for Olathe in meeting the changing needs and desires of the community and its youth. The yearly general assembly allows youth to shift focus to better meet their ever-changing needs and ideas.

Moving the partnership forward, the city and school district are currently working to permanently institutionalize Olathe Youth Services into the framework of the respective organizations. As the partnership has evolved and offered more opportunities for students, the two organizations have slowly removed roadblocks—budgeting, personnel, coordination, active involvement at the city level, etc. The city is working to shift its participation from intermittent

and surface involvement to deep, active engagement with students—all a goal of the new position of Youth Services Specialist.

Empowering Youth in Local Government Olathe, KS

**ICMA Best Practices 2004
April 22-23 2004
Annapolis/Anne Arundel County, Maryland**

SMALL GROUP EXERCISES

Exercise A

1. How do your communities actively involve youth in local government? What challenges have you faced in doing this?

2. What are the benefits of involving youth (long-term and short-term)? Money aside, what are the costs of involving youth (e.g., in time, organization, etc.)?

Exercise B

1. What public and private organizations might you partner with to actively engage youth? How might you evaluate these partnerships and their impact on the inclusion of youth as viable stakeholders?

2. Involving youth requires a dramatic shift in the mindsets of many employees. How might you work with staff to openly listen to and accept student-driven ideas? What role can/will the local school district(s) play? How might you continually engage youth as the programming becomes well-established?

3. How do you effectively delegate responsibility to teenaged colleagues to truly empower and develop skills within the youth?

ATTACHMENTS

Figure A:

Youth Crimes Adjudicated by Olathe Youth Court
(whether they occur on or off school district property):

- Theft
- Assault
- Battery
- Criminal Damage to Property
- Criminal Deprivation of Property
- Criminal Trespassing
- Criminal Use of Explosives
- Cruelty to Animals
- Disorderly Conduct
- Harassment by Telephone

Figure B:

City of Olathe, Kansas
TEEN COUNCIL

BY LAWS

Article I: Purpose

Youth development issues require the collaboration of our community, including public, private, and not for profit agencies serving the youth of Olathe. The City of Olathe and Olathe District Schools, along with Kansas State School for the Deaf, and private schools within the city limits, have, therefore, agreed to establish a Teen Council to address the issues and concerns of our youth, as well as to provide our young citizens a positive connection to the community, its values, resources and opportunities in a supportive and constructive manner.

Staff support will be provided to the Teen Council by the City of Olathe and Olathe District Schools, as well as any other private schools that participate in the Council. It is agreed that the City of Olathe will take a leadership role in the continuation of Teen Council.

The City of Olathe and Olathe District Schools will cooperate in planning, financing, and pursuing joint development of facilities, where feasible and appropriate. The purpose of this will be to provide multi-purpose community usage of city/school district facilities in the development of neighborhood centers for family and recreational use by the youth of Olathe.

The City of Olathe and Olathe District Schools will invite a coalition of youth service providers to participate in the Teen Council as resource personnel. Coalition members will include representatives from local churches, city leaders, interested school district personnel, YMCA, Olathe Children’s Initiatives, Kansas School for the Deaf, TLC for Youth and Families, Family Investment Center, and other private entities/parties that serve our youth and express an interest to become “signatories” to the Teen Council.

Olathe District Schools and the City of Olathe will assign staff from their divisions to work with this coalition, as well as the Teen Council. Assigned staff will support and assist the Teen Council in meeting the objectives of the mission statement written by the Teen Council members.

Article II: Membership

From each high school there will be a five-student limit on juniors and seniors. Sophomores will not be limited and there will be a two-member cap allowed from each junior high school. The Teen Council will continue to add members via an application process developed and approved by a consensus of the council members. Reapplication is necessary at the end of each term. To maintain membership, the members must attend or be excused from at least two thirds of all mandatory meetings.

Article III: Terms

Once appointed, the members will serve a one-year term as representatives of their respective schools. If a teen is unable to complete his/her term or is no longer able to continue the term due to behavior or lack of interest, he/she will submit a formal letter of resignation and assist in encouraging his/her peers to apply to the council for membership.

Article IV: Officers

Officers will be elected by the Council members through a campaign process. The Officers will serve a one-year term, and can be re-elected for a second term by vote.

Positions will include: two Co-Chairpersons, Secretary, Treasurer, Timekeeper, and a Public Relations Coordinator. In the event that one of these positions is unfilled at a mandatory meeting, the next highest level of authority will assume the duties for the duration of that meeting.

The election process will be held every year, or as needed, to maintain constant leadership among the Council membership. Parliamentary procedure will be the method utilized in conducting the mandatory meetings and special committees can be formed and used to complete specific projects or duties.

Article V: Meetings

The Teen Council will meet, at least once a month, during the school calendar year, on the second Tuesday afternoon of each month at City Hall, unless otherwise designated by the Council. Meetings will be held at 3:30 p.m., in most cases. The Chairperson may call special meetings, if at least three days notice is given to all members, as well as Staff support.

Article VI: Quorum

A majority (one half of total, plus one) of Council will constitute a quorum.

Article VII: Resignation Procedures and Vacancies

Upon voluntary or involuntary resignation of a member, a formal letter must be provided, outlining the reasons for resignation. The Chairperson will assume the responsibility of supplying the letter to Staff support and will also notify the secretary of the resignation, as early as possible. If a vacancy is not filled by application within a time period of two months, after notification, the school administration will be called upon by Staff support, to appoint a student to serve as his/her school's representative for the vacancy until the term has expired.

Article VIII: Conduct of members

Members of the Teen Council are subject to all rules and regulations established by the student code of conduct, administered by Olathe District Schools. If a student is expelled from the school because of arrest for a felony charge, they will automatically be terminated from membership of Teen Council, and a similar letter of termination will be sent to the student, his/her school administration and the staff support.

Article IX: Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws can be initiated at any time during a regular Teen Council meeting. All amendments will require a majority vote during a regularly scheduled meeting. Amendments passed will be placed into effect immediately, unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.

Mayor, City of Olathe

Date

Superintendent, Olathe District Schools

Date

Figure C1:

YOUTH CONGRESS AGENDA
10/21/2003
OLATHE NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

- 7:45 City, District Schools staff, and Senators arrive for briefing and set-up
- 9:00 Welcome
- 9:05 Congressman Dennis Moore (video)
- 9:10 Mayor Michael Copeland
- 9:15 Deputy Superintendent Dr. Pat All
- 9:20 Overview, outline of day, instructions (sub-committees, committees, general assembly, voting, old resolutions)
- 9:25 5th committee Presentation by Senators: working resolution of recommendations and voting
- Go to Gym
- 9:40 Ice-breaker in sub-committees
- 9:45 Sub-committee (discuss related old issues, generate new issues, select presenter)
- 10:20 Standing Committees (listen to all ideas, discuss/debate, reduce ideas to 3 using paddles, use 50% plus 1 rule)
- 11:00 Sub-committees (Refine and detail up to 3 resolutions, answer who, what, when, where, who, how, and how much- using resolution worksheet- use resources to answer questions, select presenter)
- 11:30-12:05 Lunch (in hall in front of gym)
- 12:05- 12:30 Standing committees (Listen to presentations, discuss, prioritize, modify/amend, finish writing resolutions with any/all changes, take to master scribe to enter into the computer, select presenter)
- Return to Flex Theater
- 12:30 General Assembly (present resolutions, debate each, amend, vote, prioritize top 2 resolutions, vote on senate recommendations)
- 2:15 Closing, thanks, evaluations, commitment cards
- 2:35-3:00 Senators Debrief

Figure C2:

“Flow of Events”

October 21, 2003

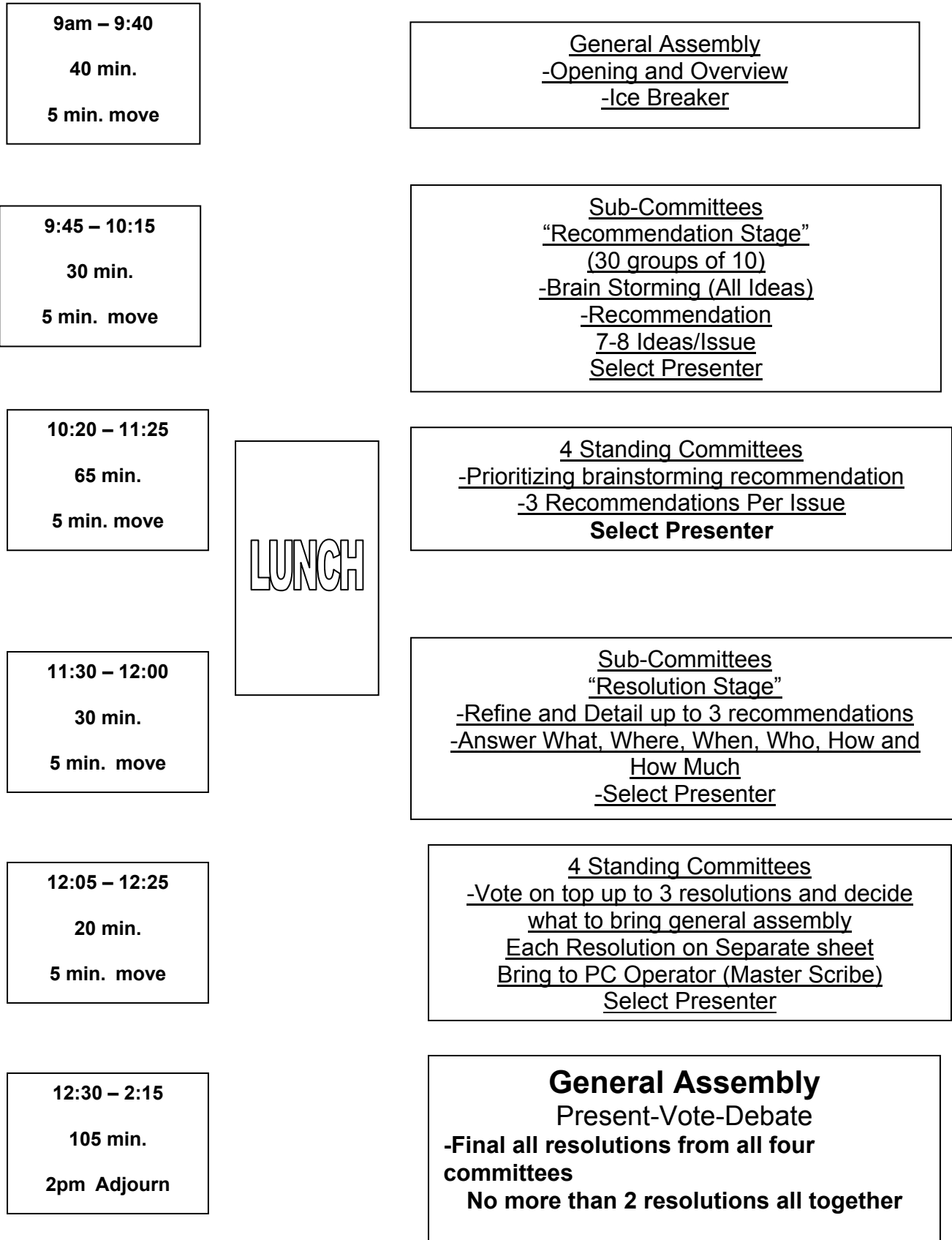


Figure D: ABLÉ asset categories

Facilitator’s Guide: A.B.L.E. At-A-Glance

| Module | Objective | Length & Tools |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Introduction to ABLÉ and 10 Assets | Understanding the basics of leadership through the 10 asset categories. Create an asset inventory - laying the personal foundation. | 1 hour Worksheets |
| 2. Support | Identify variety of support systems; learn the value of giving and receiving support to strengthen leadership opportunities. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 3. Empowerment | Learn about personal potential, gaining confidence and the meaning and purpose of individual control through choices. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 4. Boundaries & Expectations | Explore the concepts of external and internal goals; control over situations; respect for self and others. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 5. Time Use | Time management skills; learn about organization, creative expression and internal/external balance for success. Stress management and prioritizing | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 6. Civic Engagement | Explore how community involvement expands sense of purpose, confidence in future and opens up leadership opportunities. | 45 minutes Experiences Olathe Youth Services |
| 7. Educational Commitment | Learn the benefits of constant growth and life-long skill-building. | 45 minutes Experiences |
| 8. Values | Identify value sources and resources. Learn how and why choices lead to opportunities or consequences. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 9. Social Competencies | Learn how to expand opportunities through a global lens, respect for self | 45 minutes Exercises |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| | and others and the impact of social interaction. | |
| 10. Positive Identity | Learn the difference between perception and reality and how to gain confidence and trust in self and others. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 11. Personal Well-Being | Learn how to gain self-control for a positive, healthy, safe and secure future. Stress management and mental/physical balance. | 45 minutes Exercises |
| 12. Ready, Willing and ABLE | ABLE review and summary of experiences. Putting the assets into practice through a personal leadership plan. | 1 hour Worksheets, Celebration and Plan |

Keys to success:

- Self-discovery and open processing**
- Personal experiences**
- Stories/examples**
- Application to daily life of student**
- Diversity: Cultural, perspective, thought, challenges**
- Fun**
- Consistently linking A.B.L.E. assets to leadership**

Figure E: HOLA Fall 2003



Hispanic Olathe

Leadership Academy

Fall 2003 Session

- Thursday, September 18, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
 - Get to know other members
 - Issues important to you
 - Banner for DREAM act & discuss Freedom Riders
 - Learn about asset development
- Thursday, September 25, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (*meet at 4 the Birds Café*)
 - Learn about leadership and why leadership is important
 - Trust building
 - Introduce service project
 - Attend Olathe Youth Court following session – dinner provided
- Thursday, October 2, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
 - Learn how to write a resume
 - Learn about applying to college
 - Talk about different career tracks
 - Hear about 21st Century Education in Olathe
- Thursday, October 9, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (*meet at Olathe Police Department*)
 - Public Safety Mini-Civic Academy
 - Police Department tour and learning experience
- **Wednesday**, October 15, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
 - Immigration & Immigration Rights
 - 4 Corners
 - Political Cartoons
 - Conozca sus Derechos
 - Timeline with world events & immigration & Latino history
- Thursday, October 23, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
 - Congressman Dennis Moore, Mayor Mike Copeland and Board of Education member Steven Hougland
- Thursday, October 30, 2003 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
 - Hear about other leadership opportunities offered to you in Olathe
 - Work on service project in partnership with other youth programs
- Thursday, November 13, 2003 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
 - Celebration & graduation!
 - Dr. Wimmer

All meetings will be held at the North Lindenwood Support Center (NLSC), 315 N. Lindenwood, Olathe, KS 66062, unless otherwise indicated.

Figure F: HOLA & OLA development plans:

HOLA Tracks (2004-2005)

| <u>Mission</u> | <u>Semester</u> | <u>Length</u> | <u># Students</u> |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>HOLA I</u> (6-10th grades) Qualifications: Application Introduction to: HOLA ABLE Community Resources Immigration Issues Olathe Government Community Service College Opportunities | Spring | 6-weeks | 25 |
| <u>HOLA II</u> (7-12th grades) Qualifications: HOLA I ABLE Application Applying Assets through: Community Ascertainment Olathe Diversity Issues Community Service Presentations | Summer | 6-weeks | 25-50 |
| <u>HOLA III</u> (7-12th grades) Qualifications: HOLA I&II Leadership Application Multi-cultural expansion ELL Positive Partners Program Diversity Plan Development Community Presentations | Fall | 6-weeks | 25 |

School-Based

Purpose: To expand HOLA/ABLE opportunity to more students, on a limited basis, for those schools/students wishing to participate and support.

Structure: After-school “HOLA” club on non-HOLA days held as desired by students—during seasons HOLA I, II, III are not offered. HOLA I students help organize “club” at their school and share HOLA experience; serve as facilitators and organizers of activities and community/public service programs.

| <u>Mission</u> | <u>Semester</u> | <u>Length</u> | <u># Students</u> |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>OLA I</u> (11th&12th grades) Qualifications: Application Introduction to: HOLA ABLE Community Resources Immigration Issues Olathe Government Community Service College Opportunities | Spring | 4-weeks | 25 |

Qualifications: Application
 Multi-cultural
 ABLE Advanced
 Application to:
 College
 Job skills
 Leadership for Life
 Positive Partners Program

OLA II (11th & 12th grades) Summer 4-weeks 25

Qualifications: OLA I
 Multicultural
 ABLE community facilitator trainings
 Community Ascertainment- community
 Resources
 Community Service
 Civic Engagement
 Internships

OLA III (11th & 12th grades) Fall 4-weeks 25

Qualifications: OLA I&II
 Multicultural
 Youth Advisory Board
 Community presentations
 ODS Ambassadors
 Positive Partners Program