

Youth Coordinating Board

Established in 1985 through a State authorized joint powers agreement among the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Minneapolis Library Board and the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB) was an intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting the healthy, comprehensive development of Minneapolis children and youth ages 0-20 through collaborative action.

The YCB was governed by a 13 member board of elected officials that includes the Mayor of Minneapolis, two Minneapolis City Council members, two Minneapolis School Board members, two Hennepin County Commissioners, one Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioner, one Minneapolis Library Board member, the Chief Judge of Hennepin County District Court-Juvenile Division, the Hennepin County Attorney, and chairpersons of the Minneapolis delegations to the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota State Senate. In 2002 the YCB made the bold move to strengthen the policy function of the Board by focusing on specific priorities and moving away from the direct management of programs. The Board believed that programs and services should be delivered at the community level and that the most effective role of a policy board is to develop and work towards common goals and strategies for children and youth.

Programs, Partnerships and Initiatives

Minneapolis Way to Grow – Minneapolis “Way to Grow” (WTG) was a citywide school readiness program that sought to assist families and children (newborn to six years old) through a community driven approach that built on family strengths and the natural support systems within each community. WTG connected families with services and resources available in their community and encourages prevention and early intervention services. Way to Grow will become an independent non-profit agency in 2004.

Minneapolis Redesign - The “Minneapolis Redesign” was a collaborative effort of families, communities, schools, and other public, private and nonprofit organizations working together to bring health, social services and other community resources into school buildings. The effort made it easier for families to access resources and for schools and human services to work together on behalf of children and families. With the goal of healthy development and school success for all Minneapolis children and youth, the “Minneapolis Redesign” coordinated two separate efforts for children. The program also operated three Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in Andersen Complex, Northstar School and Northeast Middle School. The FRCs served as regional hubs to coordinate resources for the schools in their communities. The FRCs served nearly 7,000 children in 2003 and formed more than 40 partnerships with outside agencies. The second major program of the “Minneapolis Redesign” is the Attendance Liaison Project (ALP). This project provided funding for 17 Minneapolis Public Schools to hire an Attendance Liaison to do early intervention work with students experiencing attendance problems. ALP has shown success in increasing the number of children attending school at least 95% of the time. The Attendance Liaison Project was transitioned to Minneapolis Public Schools’ management in April 2003 and the Family Resource Centers will be transitioned to MPS management in 2004.

Minneapolis FATHER Project - The “FATHER Project's” mission was to assist fathers in overcoming barriers that prevent them from fully supporting their children, both financially and emotionally. The “FATHER Project” sought to help low-income, non-custodial fathers overcome barriers so they could become and/or remain consistently involved in the lives of their children. Eligible fathers were between 16 and 30 years old, unemployed or under employed, and dealing with child support issues in Hennepin County. The demonstration period of the project ended successfully on December 31, 2003 through the supportive involvement of the major collaborating partners: the Minneapolis Youth

Coordinating Board, the City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program, the Neighborhood Employment Network, Hennepin County Child Support Division, and the Minnesota Child Support Division. These partners remain involved through the post-demonstration transition. The "FATHER Project" plans to continue to offer the same critical services to fathers in 2004, expanding its partnership with Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota.

What's Up? Youth Information Line – "What's Up?" originally began when the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board commissioned the 1996 "Places to Grow" study. The study reported that a lack of information about youth programs created a significant barrier to participation. In June 1996 the YCB responded by creating the "What's Up?" Youth Information Line that provided callers with information about local youth programs and activities. Replicated in the east metro area in 1998 through an agreement with the United Way of St. Paul, the combined "What's Up?" established an extensive database of local youth opportunities. In January of 2003, "What's Up?" employees and youth initiatives were moved from the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board to "YO! The Movement," a non-profit youth membership organization. In 2004 "What's Up?" will be expanding its service area for the creation of the "What's Up?" network that will help link thousands of young people throughout the greater metropolitan area to thousands of positive youth development activities, events, programs, people and opportunities for growth and leadership. YO! plans to consolidate "What's Up?'s" Minneapolis and East Metro operations while expanding services to include the Northwest and South metropolitan areas.

Minneapolis Youth Council (MYC) - The Minneapolis Youth Council originated as the Minneapolis Mayor's Youth Council, through the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, and was created to engage young people in public policy at a state and local level. MYC is now housed inside "YO! The Movement." MYC identified areas of concern for young people in Minneapolis and worked to bring about positive change. These opportunities for civic engagement and youth leadership allowed MYC members to positively influence their neighborhoods.

Youth Coordinating Board School Readiness Initiative - In late fall 2002, YCB launched a \$1 million "School Readiness Initiative," funded by a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) grant with a 15% match from the YCB. The Initiative's goal was to increase the number of Minneapolis children entering kindergarten ready to learn. YCB "School Readiness Initiative" strategies and 2003 outcomes included:

- Increasing the quality of early care and education by offering free early literacy training (180 providers trained), T.E.A.C.H.® teacher scholarships (28 scholarships given) and retention grants (103 grants given) to child care providers/early childhood teachers in Minneapolis;
- Promoting early childhood screening at age 3 to identify learning problems well before kindergarten entry. The "Screen at 3" campaign, launched in April 2003, has dramatically increased the percentage of children screened at younger ages;
- Strengthening the connection between families and appropriate school readiness resources through development of a "school readiness clearinghouse" concept that will offer referrals for families to appropriate resources;
- Disseminating early literacy materials to parents through a free book and early literacy strategy that is being implemented in 10 community clinics and multiple community agencies;
- Measuring progress by developing a "State of Young Children in Minneapolis" report card, to be finalized in 2004;
- Helping to shape an early childhood system by connecting early childhood partners and inventorying gaps and overlaps.

Step Up Initiative – "Step-Up" was a new initiative of the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board designed to connect Minneapolis youth to opportunities in employment, education, and recreation to connect youth to positive activities such as jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities, recreational

opportunities and sports. Employers assisted young people ages 14 to 21 by giving them the chance to explore career options while earning money at on-site workplace training through employment and internships. In 2004, "Step Up" will become part of CPED's "Close the Gap" Initiative and has received funding to continue in summer 2004 through "Close the Gap" funding. The Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP) has contracted with "Achieve! Minneapolis" to run "Step Up" through summer 2004. The focus of this initiative has been narrowed since 2003 – "Step Up" will focus on securing private sector jobs for 16-21 year old Minneapolis youth and on making sure the young people are "work ready" to meet employer needs. The goal is 200 new private sector jobs and 200 young people certified as "work ready."

Youth Sports Initiative - The YCB "Youth Sports Initiative" aimed to build a youth sport system in Minneapolis that provided opportunities for young people to engage in sports at all levels. In filling a gap in providing girls' sports, in the fall of 2003 YSI increased girls' volleyball teams by 50%, adding 17 additional teams and adding more than 200 girls to the rosters. In the spring of 2004 the YSI is kicking off a major fundraising campaign and will be exploring new and creative ways to support sports. Youth in Minneapolis After School Program (Y-MAP) - Youth in Minneapolis After School Program (Y-MAP) was supplemental funding given to parks, schools and libraries to provide after school activities for Minneapolis young people in grades 6 through 8. The Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board reimbursed eligible expenses through dollars provided by the Minneapolis City Council.

Phat Summer - operated jointly by the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minneapolis Public Schools' Family and Community Educational Services, and endorsed by the Mayor, this program ran for eight weeks from mid-June to mid-August serving youth ages 12-18. In 2003, 12 to 139 youth per site per night attended one or more of the 25 programs offered at various sites with a total of 3,611 youth participating in Phat Summer in 2003, with 23,224 total contacts.