



How did you engage stakeholders in the process of creating statewide quality standards?

We brought together several example standards: the Baltimore Standards for Afterschool Opportunities in YouthPlaces and the Maryland Afterschool Opportunity Fund Standards, in addition to examples of standards from other states (specifically Missouri, New York, and California). We convened a two-day retreat for the working group to review the examples and begin framing out a new set of standards that broadly address almost any type of program and specifically help developers to think through program design. The two-day convening was facilitated externally. Then, Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) staff produced a draft of the standards, which went through review and revision by the working group, was cross-walked with the Youth Program Quality Assessment, and then put out for public comment (including utilizing our statewide conference as a venue for feedback). The resulting document was finalized and published in 2010.



What advice do you have for other states before they start to develop or implement their own quality standards?

The main reason to develop standards at the local level is to build buy-in from constituents; otherwise, there is no major need to recreate the wheel. A state can use standards that have a research base and have been accepted and well regarded at either the national level or from another state or region to get started. Because our standards were created more than 10 years ago, we did them in a rather static document format. Our next phase is to make the standards live more interactively through online self-assessment tools. Just like our commitment to continuous program improvement, we need to reflect on the standards and continue to update them for relevance and the expanding knowledge base for youth development.



Ellie Mitchell

Executive Director

Emitchell@mostnetwork.org

Please share your thoughts with us via e-mail at SANSupport@air.org. We look forward to hearing from you.



What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

Since our goal was to develop standards that could apply to almost any youth development program, they had to be very high level. We would like to, in our upcoming revision process, develop more detailed standards for specific content areas and program types.



What successes are you most proud of?

We are proud that the standards continue to be used and recognized at the state level first through the Governor's Office for Children and now through the Maryland State Department of Education Public School Opportunities Enhancement Grants. We believe they were a great foundation for encouraging programs to be reflective and intentional about the choices they make. The standards complement our work with the Youth Program Quality Assessment and continuous program improvement processes.



Who did you work with to create your quality standards?

In 2009, MOST convened a large group of stakeholders to develop the first set of statewide quality standards. Representatives on the working group included the Governor's Office for Children, the Maryland State Department of Education, Recreation and Parks Department, afterschool program providers, child care resource and referral and local management boards (county-level coordinating entities), and local education agencies.