

Youth Opportunities Advisory Board Meeting

Friday, December 3, 2021

9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Alpine Room, West Age Well Center: 909 Arapahoe Ave., 80302

Facilitator(s): Wanda and Cathy

Present: Madelyn Barnes, Elliott Dobbs, Osvaldo García Barrón, Henry Keig, Daniel Lin

Guest: Brian Brady

[Presentations and meeting materials](#) can be found in the YOAB Google Drive

9 - 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Guest: Brian Brady, Founder of Youth Engage and The Mikva Challenge

- Brian Brady was a teenager that didn't love school, but loved to learn
- He suffered from depression a little and lived in an area prone to gang activity
- Years later he worked with out-of-school, gang-involved teens
 - He recognized that there was so much wisdom and knowledge to gain from youth
- In 2007, he coined the term "action civics": a modern and alternative form of civics education in which participants learn about government by examining issues in their own community

Brian gave an abbreviated version of the **Do's and Don'ts for Designing Municipal Youth Councils**. ([full presentation](#) is in the Google Drive)

- Why youth councils should be formed
 - Young people are important members of their communities
 - Young people provide critical feedback, insights and ideas on city issues and programs
 - When given a voice and opportunity to engage, young people gain trust in local gov't and the democratic process
 - Young people want to learn
- Three Best Practices of Youth Councils
 - Design diverse and equitable councils that represent the community population
 - Build a structure that supports youth needs
 - Evaluate the needs, the work and the programs
- Why youth councils fail to thrive
 - Youth councils require a real commitment of time, resources and strategy
 - The "Goldilocks Problem"
 - too hot: work isn't appropriate, expectations are too high, youth aren't provided the correct tools and guidance
 - too cold: the council is only a "token"
 - Adult leaders need to be transparent and clear about the power that they are willing to share
- The Do's of Good Youth Councils
 - Design diverse and equitable councils
 - Recruit youth with diverse backgrounds and identities
 - Recruit youth that don't normally engage or receive leadership opportunities
 - Create a selection process with high level participation from youth
 - Don't overly focus on academics; reward passion for improving one's community and unique life experiences

- Build a youth council structure that supports youth needs
 - Support basic needs: provide stipends, food, transit passes
 - Create emotionally and physically safe, engaging spaces
 - 50% time: socializing, team building and leadership development
 - 50% time on issue/task work
 - Celebrate! Hold a yearend event every year to acknowledge work
- Hire a professional, experienced in working with youth
 - City staff is busy and pulled in different directions; youth need a dedicated adult
 - Engage community organizations and partners
- No shortcuts: launching a youth council takes time and planning
 - Take time to teach about municipal gov't., develop critical skills and teambuilding
 - Invest about 40 hours of “launch time” to prepare for the upcoming work
 - Provide specific and focused training
 - The adult leader should focus on each youth: build trust, support skills and learning, set goals, evaluate
 - Orientation, events and celebrations should include parents and guardians
- Determine the right scope and size
 - Young people are capable of tackling difficult issues, but they are also busy with family and social obligations, school, and growing up
 - Align to student schedules and strengths
 - Learning should be experiential, interactive, fun and engaging
 - Determine appropriate age group and size: 12-25 is a great size; 20 youth is recommended
- Youth and Adult Partnerships: Get real about power
 - Find ways to create positive and authentic partnerships with city leaders
 - Operations and decision-making practices should be written down and agreed to by everyone
 - Public officials should be honest with youth even when they disagree with them
 - Be transparent about the youth council’s power
 - Look for win-wins
 - Determine the model/design for governance
- Celebrating success and culminating events
 - Set goals for three-four months with interaction/reporting to critical stakeholders
 - Organize a “closing meeting/graduation/sendoff” with key leaders every year
- Evaluate
 - Identify core goals and measurement tools to track those
- Youth Councils ≠ Youth Organizing
 - While these share common goals and strategies, power is different in these (that’s ok)
 - Cities need both; the two can work together when clear goals, etc. are established
 - They need to respect each other’s work without undermining

YOAB’s main takeaways

- Power should not be overwhelming; give the right amount of power; power dynamics needs to maintain a balance

- Selection of youth council should reflect community and incorporate youth from different backgrounds; diversity racial, socio-economic, home life, all avenues, lived experience, “creek kids”
- Not liking school, but loving to learn is a standpoint from which kids can relate to
- The YOAB adult should not necessarily be a teacher rather someone with very specific, focused youth experience

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Work Session: Reimagining YOAB: Research and Fact finding

- Cathy Hill from GUB presented local, regional and national [Youth Council Models](#)

12 – 1 p.m. Lunch: Walk and Talk (downtown)

1 - 3 p.m. Work Session: Reimagining YOAB conversation continued

- As part of this work, YOAB will interview key stakeholders: YOAB alumni and other local youth council and organization members, past YOP Coordinator, City Manager
 - **Madelyn:** her cousin who serves on a youth Council in Michigan
 - **Henry and Osvaldo:** their sisters who are YOAB alumni
 - **Daniel and Elliot:** Colton Huff (Project VOYCE)
 - **Wanda:** invite previous YOP Coordinator, Allison Bayley to a monthly meeting
 - **Wanda:** (future) set up a time for YOAB and new YOP Coordinator to meet with City Manager, Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde; Council dinner in the spring
 - **New YOP Coordinator:** (future) connect with Lafayette Youth Advisory Committee and other regional and national councils
- A variety of [Interview Questions](#) were developed to inform Reimagining YOAB and the YOP Coordinator hiring process.
 - Use these for guidance. You don’t need to ask every question
 - Complete interviews over break and come prepared to discuss at 7 January monthly meeting

3 – 3:30 p.m. Wrap Up: check in December and January sessions

- Mon., Dec. 6: Two (maybe three potential new members)
- Mon., Dec. 13: Canceled so you can focus on yearend tests and projects
- Mon., Dec. 20 & 27: No meetings. Winter Break
- Fri., Jan. 7:
 - Welcome new members
 - Interview Report Outs
 - Potential guest: Allison Bayley (prior YOP Coordinator)
 - Maybe three new YOAB member interviews (via Zoom)
 - Discuss hiring process for new YOP Coordinator

3:30 p.m. Adjourn