

Impact Lab 1

Team 7

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Project Topic

Providing Learning Opportunities to Keep Kids Off the Street

Project Target

Getting low income children to a secured and meaningful place between 3pm to 6 pm.

Target population

The target population are children between the ages 12 - 16. The reason we are targeting this audience is because the children at this age could be at high risk and are vulnerable to bad influences. If the social circumstances changes or the home environment begins to affect the child there is a tendency that the child loses interest in school which can get compounded with time for multiple reasons.

Issues Faced

- The content of these after school program is mostly academic oriented which does not attract all profiles of students.
- Additionally the transportation facilities are not supportive enough for the selected age range.
- Most of the high quality afterschool programs require payments from parents. This fee is an additional expense which sometimes lower income families cannot afford.
- With multiple free after school programs that are currently available in Pittsburgh the students are still not going to them because of the lack of transport system, poor quality of content and lack of awareness of these programs.
- Statistically, a lot of public schools provide after school programs most of which are academic oriented. Additionally these school are in partnership with outside after school programs which charge a fee. But through these partnership these schools provide transportation to these programs once school is over.
- There is no single root causes of this issue. It is a complex issue which requires efforts from different sectors. So the real challenge for this project is how we can bring all sectors and stakeholders together to work towards the same goal. Education reform is not a new topic, but after school programs reform has not yet been excavated. The fast speed of social development, in addition to the high attention to education sector as always justify our effort to change after school programs. Such changes may create a breakthrough point for longstanding effort in education reform.

Related Policy

- There are 501 public school districts in Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh public schools is a district has 345,503 population, 65 public schools with 29,445 students. It is divided into 9 geographic regions and each of them has an elected director composing a 9-member board.¹ Among the whole nation, 10% of students are in private school while 85% of students are in public school, and there is a small percentage of students choose home schooling.²
- There are three acts we may need to put into consider when we construct our project.

- **The Pittsburgh promise (2008)**

It is a scholarship program starting in 2006. It provides grants for students who meet the criteria including city residency, PPS enrollment requirements, GPA and attendance requirements, etc. It aims at helping students in public school to access to education beyond high school, increasing the enrollment rate of public school and increasing students' academic performance.³

Critics argue that the Pittsburgh promise is 'broken' since it cannot reach its goals - the enrollment rate dropped rather than increased during 2006-2013; a small percentage of students could meet the scholarship requirement since '47% of senior high students absent more than 10% of the days in a given school year'⁴; and the scandalized test score of public school students hadn't got significant improve. However, the supporter claims that it is just a scholarship program not an education program, so it indeed helps students in low-income families for example to get into college which otherwise they cannot.⁴

- **No Child Left Behind (2002)**

No Child Left Behind is a highly controversial education reform effort. It promotes periodic tests to monitor students' academic performance, provides free supplemental educational aid for eligible students, provides financially support, and it requires all the teachers must have bachelor's degree and pass standardized skill test.⁵

The supports argue that students' academic performance have been increasing and 'the achievement gap between minority students and the white majority has decreased'. Also, the quality of teachers also has significant improvement.⁶

However, people argue against this act since it is mainly focus on the test score regardless students' background (e.g. language level, socioeconomic status) and it fails to take students' soft skills into account. Thus, teachers teach "to the test" rather than improve students' overall ability.⁶ "The basic strategy is measuring and punishing" Ravitch, an educator, says about No Child Left Behind. "Thus many states have 'dumbed down' their tests or changed the scoring of their tests", she said, "We are lying to the kids!"⁷

¹ "Pittsburgh Public Schools." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 09 Oct. 2014. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

² "United States Census Bureau." *The 2012 Statistical Abstract*. N.p., 2012. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

³ "The Pittsburgh Promise - It Lives in All of Us." *The Pittsburgh Promise - It Lives in All of Us*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

⁴ "Broken Promise: The Pittsburgh Promise Scholarship Program Is a Failure." *TribLIVE.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

⁵ "No Child Left Behind - Overview." *Background & Analysis*. New American Foundation, 24 Apr. 2014. Web. 23 Sept. 2014.

⁶ "Pros and Cons of NCLB." *Pros and Cons of NCLB*. Care to Vote, n.d. Web. 23 Sept. 2014.
<http://www.carleton.edu/departments/educ/vote/pages/Pros_and-Cons.html>.

⁷ Inskip, Steve. "Former 'No Child Left Behind' Advocate Turns Critic." *NPR*. NPR, 2 Mar. 2010. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

▪ **My Brother's Keeper(2014)**

February this year, Obama launched 'My Brother's Keeper' which aims to help young men of color. It is an example of how leader use his/her own experience to lobby and implement an initiative. It includes 'providing prekindergarten education, lifting third-grade reading proficiency, leading schools away from "zero tolerance" disciplinary policies that kick misbehaving students out of school, and persuading businesses to train and hire young men of color.'⁸

Under the influence of Obama, this initiative brings businesses, non-profits organization, private schools and community groups together. Some people think it is 'a worthwhile effort' if all Americans not only politician can participate⁹, and some people argue that it is a 'progressive fantasy' which is '100 times worse than disease',¹⁰ but most of people are still on the fence. It is definitely interesting to see what the outcome for such initiative is.

⁸ News, Liz Goodwin Yahoo. "Obama Launches 'My Brother's Keeper' to Help Young Minority Men." *Yahoo! News*. Yahoo!, 27 Feb. 2014. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

⁹ Bouie, Janelle. "The Flaw in My Brother's Keeper." *The Daily Beast*. Newsweek/Daily Beast, 27 Feb. 2014. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

¹⁰ Weissberg, Robert. "Articles: How 'My Brother's Keeper' Stands to Destroy Already Bad Schools." *American Thinker*, 17 Mar. 2014. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

¹¹ A 30-year History of the Future. Dir. Ted Talk. Perf. Nicholas Negroponte. Ted Talk, Mar. 2014. Web. 25 Sept. 2014.

¹² Build a School in the Cloud. Dir. Ted Talk. Perf. Sugata Mitra. Ted Talk, Feb. 2013. Web. 23 Sept. 2014.

¹³ "Massive Open Online Course." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 19 Sept. 2014. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

¹⁴ 鄭, 志凱. "鄭志凱:大學教育的革命前夕." *Opinion.cw.com.tw*. N.p., 1 July 2013. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.

Education initiative

One laptop per child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://one.laptop.org/ • Initiator: Nicholas Negroponte (Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab) • Started in 2005, it aims at providing \$100 laptop to kids in developing country to narrow the achievement gap between rich and poor.¹¹
Self-Organized Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.theschoolinthecloud.org/ • Initiator: Sugata Mitra • Started in 2013, it aims at building a school with self-organized learning environment. With the help of cloud technology, it tries to stimulate the greatest potential of students.
Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a relatively new way of learning - online learning. Famous online learning website/organization includes: Coursera, Udacity, edX, ewant, Share Course and Proera. • The development of MOOC affects the way of traditional teaching - students learn about courses on line off school and discuss, do exercise in the classroom with other students. • One senior manager in Udacity predicts under the influence of MOOC, there will be only 10 top universities exist in the world after 50 years.
Websites/blogs for collecting innovative ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ted.com/conversations/topics/Education%20Innovation • http://www.educationinnovations.org/ • http://www.ed.gov/blog/ (Education Innovation Clusters) • http://educationinnovation.typepad.com/my_weblog/

After school program in U.S.A.

Positive outcomes²

1. Move barriers to learn
2. Increase standardized testing
3. Increase social competence
4. Increase motivation and confidence
5. Change in behaviours⁴

What a good after school program should look like?³

1. Strong community and family involvement
2. Exemplary programming
3. Excellent staffing
4. Sound financial practices
5. Research and evaluation

Some important numbers

1. After school programs (ASPs) are well established within public, nonprofit and private sectors. **44%** elementary schools, **5%** secondary schools, **14%** combined schools offer ASPs.¹
2. Among all the ASPs, **34%** are fee based programs, **39%** are pure academic programs.¹
3. **38%** of the interviewees (parents and teachers) think cost is the biggest problem, and **23%** of them think transportation is the biggest problem.¹
4. **12 million** youth in U.S. need assistance to avoid negative social and economic factor associated with at risk environment.²
5. Students spend **75%** of waking hour outside of school. **26%** of children are on their own after the school until their parents get back from work.⁸
6. **1 in 2** youth in U.S. public schools are kids from low-income families.⁷
Low-income students are **6** times more likely to drop out of high school.⁶

At-risk students are students⁵

1. With low grade
2. With low performance
3. Have characteristic associated with low achievement
4. Have high-risk behaviour

Common successful program schedule²

1. Begin immediately after school
2. 15 min snack time
3. 30-40 min concept review/homework
4. 30 min game/sports/activity

Reference

1. Parsad, Basmat, and Laurie Lewis. After-School Programs in Public Elementary Schools. N.p.: Institute of Education Science, 2009. PDF.
2. Davies, Susan C., and Lindsay J. Peltz. "At-risk students in after-school programs: Outcomes and recommendations." *Principal Leadership* 13.2 (2012): 12.
3. Making the Most of After-School Time. Rep. N.p.: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2005. Print.
4. Huang, Denise, and Ronald Dietel. "Making afterschool programs better." *CRESST Policy Brief*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California (2011).
5. Maynard, Brandy R., Kristen E. Peters, Michael G. Vaughn, and Christine M. Sarteschi. Fidelity in After-School Program Intervention Research A Systematic Review. Rep. N.p.: SAGE, 2013. Web.
6. "World Socialist Web Site." Low-income Students Six times More Likely to Drop out of High School -. N.p., 10 Apr. 2013. Web. 24 Sept. 2014.
7. WHAT MAKES Y SCHOOL PROGRAMS MEAN SO MUCH MORE. Dir. YMCA. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Sept. 2014<<http://www.ymcaofpittsburgh.org/locations/before-after-school/>>.
8. Afterschool Child Care - Number of Kids Home Alone After School Has Risen. (n.d.). Retrieved 09 24, 2014, from childcare.about.com: