Assuring Quality in After School Programs: What's Working in Other States?

Presentation to the
Illinois Family Impact Seminar

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The Youth Program Quality Assessment[1]

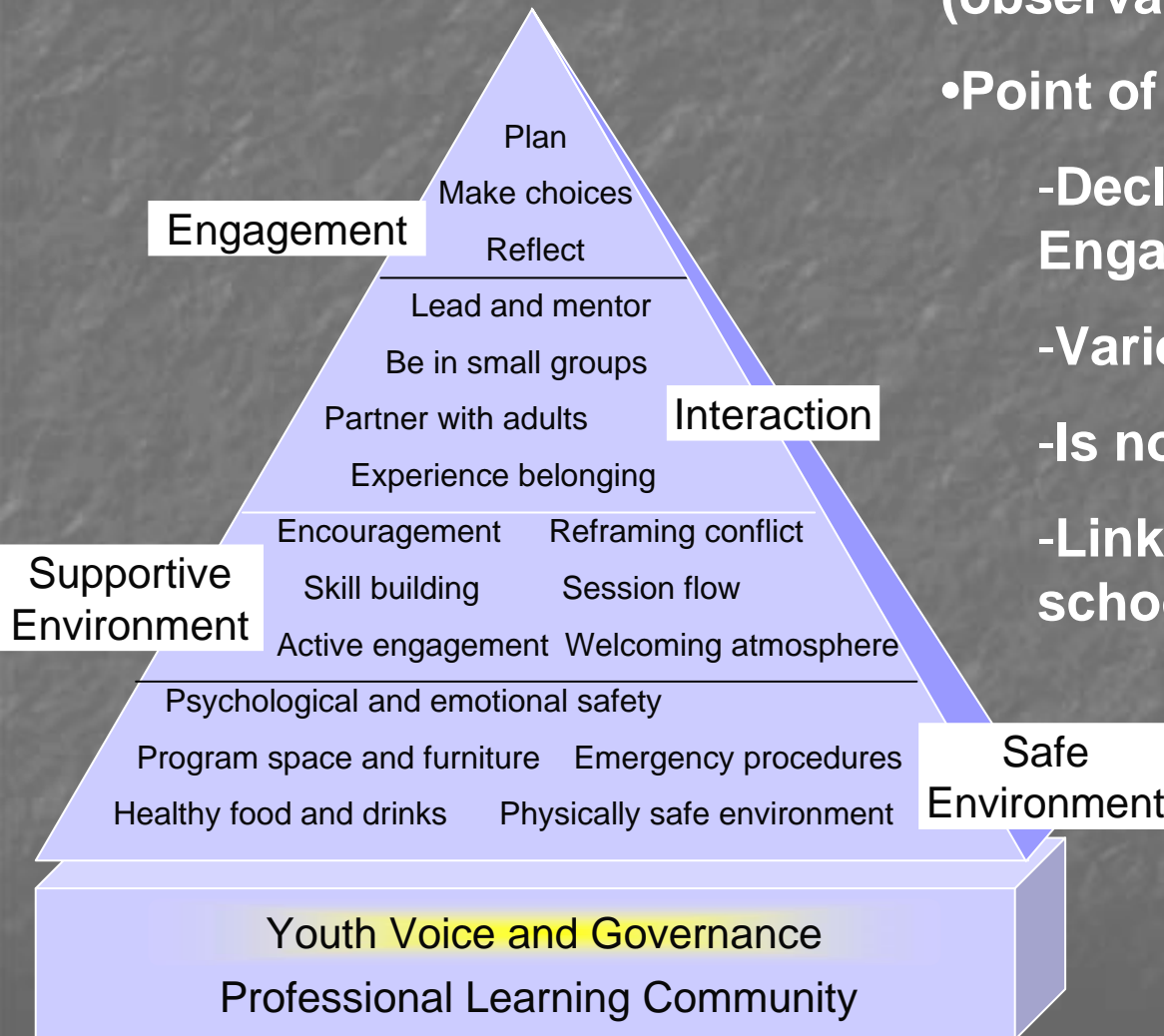- **Measures Quality at Point of Service (observation & interview)**

- **Point of Service Quality:**
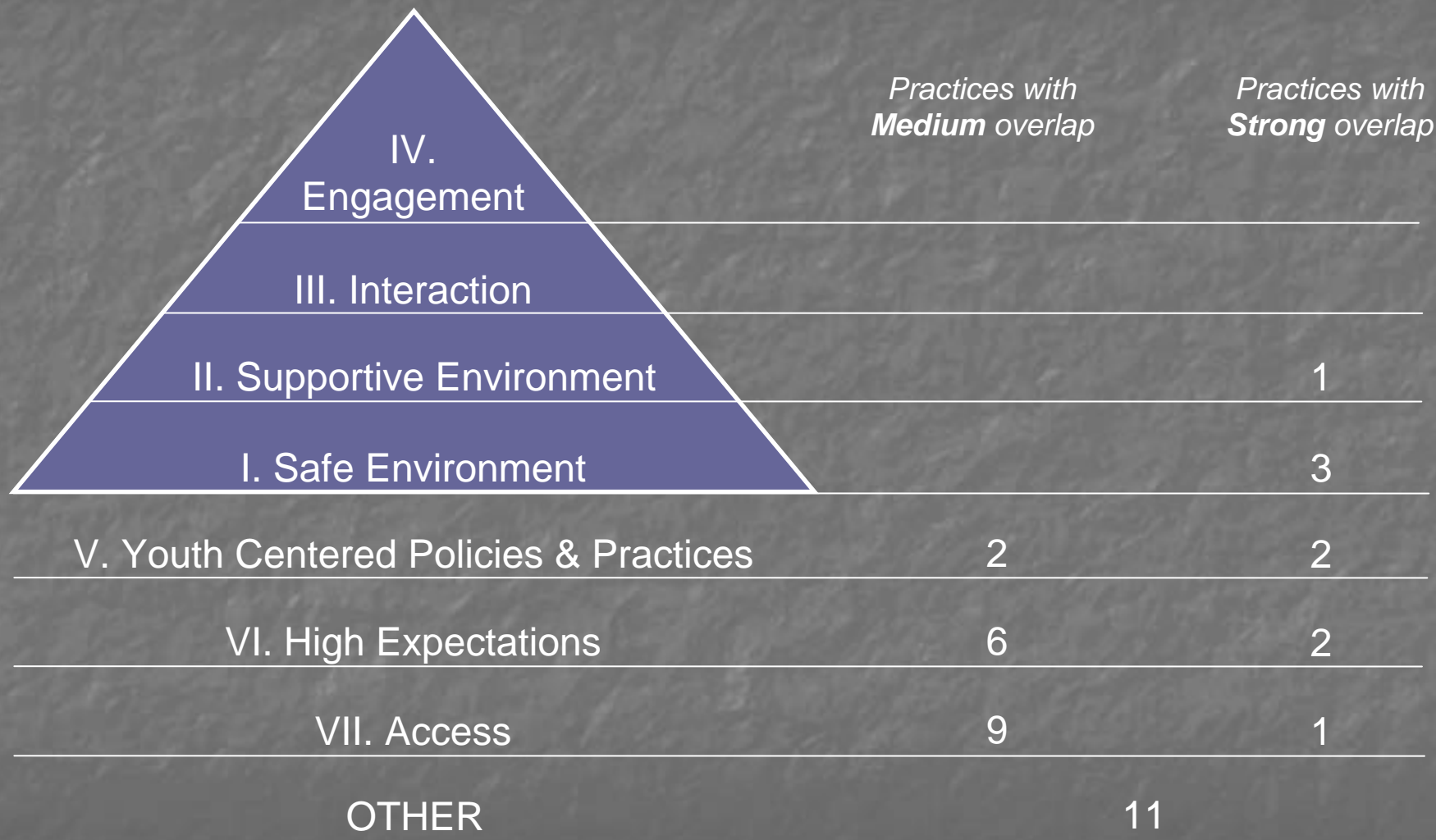
  - **Declines from Safety to Engagement across samples[2]**

  - **Varies within organizations[2]**

  - **Is not related to content[2]**

  - **Linked to both motivational and school-day outcomes[3]**

Engagement
- Plan
- Make choices
- Reflect

Interaction
- Lead and mentor
- Be in small groups
- Partner with adults
- Experience belonging

Supportive Environment
- Encouragement   Reframing conflict
- Skill building   Session flow
- Active engagement   Welcoming atmosphere

Safe Environment
- Psychological and emotional safety
- Program space and furniture   Emergency procedures
- Healthy food and drinks   Physically safe environment

Youth Voice and Governance

Professional Learning Community

Spread of Illinois Teen REACH Benchmarks Across Youth PQA Domains of Quality

Domain	Practices with *Medium* overlap	Practices with *Strong* overlap
IV. Engagement		
III. Interaction		
II. Supportive Environment		1
I. Safe Environment		3
V. Youth Centered Policies & Practices	2	2
VI. High Expectations	6	2
VII. Access	9	1
OTHER	11	

The IL Teen Reach benchmarks contain 38 practices within 7 "Principles"

Advantages for Users

- For evaluators
  - Is fair (reliable) and meaningful (valid)
  - Can be aligned with standards
- For programs
  - Produces data that supports learning, planning, and change (consequential validity)
- For policymakers
  - Is a foundation for effective accountability
  - Applicable across DOE, DHS & Community-based

Uses in Public Sector A-S Programs

- **Program Self-Assessment in MI and MN**

  Low stakes systems where mangers and staff observe each other and evaluate practices

- **Monitoring in ME and IA**

 Low stakes systems where data is collected by trained external assessors and shared with decision-makers

- **Accountability in Palm Beach County**
  Higher stakes systems programs are responsible to either meet quality cut-points or demonstrate positive change

Costs

- Three current projects with substantial T&TA for start up range between $323-$450 per site per year (1-3 years)[4]. T&TA Includes:
  - On-line training, instant reports, and data dashboards
  - On-site training for reliable assessors and TOT
  - Customization of the assessment tool
  - Quality Coach Certification
- System maintenance costs for the three projects drop to between $50 and $175 per site per year[4]
- Staff time varies depending on the purpose for assessment and stakes of use
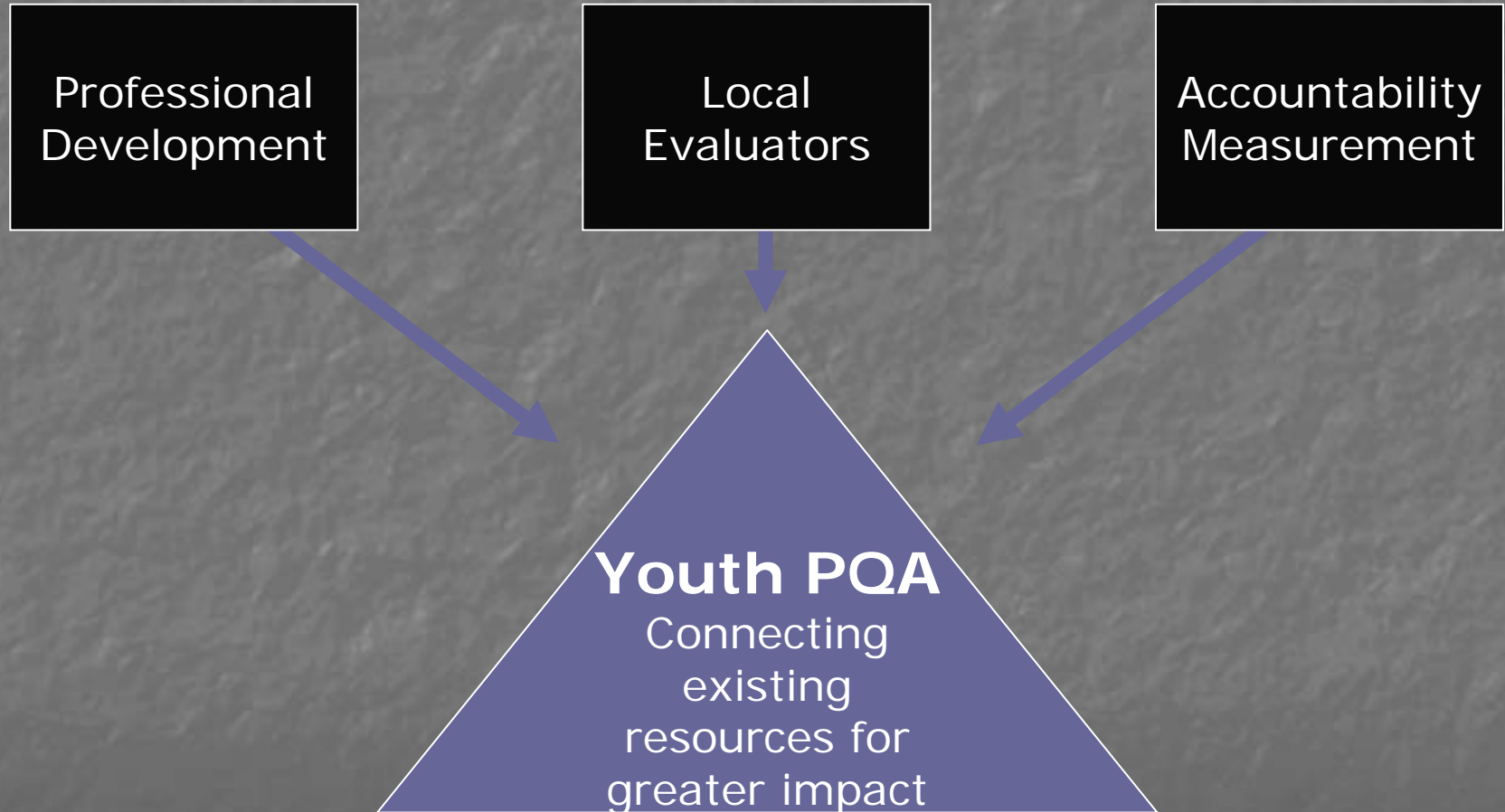
Science and Public Policy Converging on the Quality of Youth Experience in Places

- Science:
  - William T. Grant Foundation – www.wtgrantfoundation.org
  - Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning - www.virginia.edu/vprgs/CASTL/

- Policy Entrepreneurs:
  - Forum for Youth Investment
  - America's Promise
  - Search Institute
  - CS Mott Foundation

Customer Satisfaction

" High/Scope has developed a tool that offers both practitioner-relevant rubrics for understanding what good practice looks like and research-based measures for assessing and improving the quality of all settings where young people spend time – in school and in the community."

Karen Pittman
Executive Director,
The Forum for Youth Investment

Over 1,500 Trainees	Mean Score Scale (1-5) 5=excel
Applicability of Youth PQA to current work	4.29
Level of agency support for implementation	4.21
Level of agency support for training	4.32

" I found the Youth PQA very helpful because it takes out subjectivity and gives the observer a way to dig deeper and assess the quality of the program's supports, opportunities, and program environment."

Janay J. Brower
City of Grand Rapids Office of Children, Youth & Families

"Using the Youth PQA has taught me how to look for a quality program – those specific qualities within a program – that I would want my kids to attend."

Kynisha Chaney-Johnson, *Youth PQA Data Collector & Mother*

References

- ## Michigan DOE 21st CCLCs
  Lorraine Thoreson, Lead consultant, Michigan 21st Century Programs

- ## Maine DOE 21st CCLCs
  Lauren Sterling, Director, Maine Children's Cabinet and 21st Century Program

- ## Palm Beach County, Florida: School-age A-S programs
  Suzette Harvey, Executive Director, Prime Time Inc. Palm Beach County

- ## City of Grand Rapids, Michigan: Citywide A-S programs
  Janay Brower, city of Grand Rapids, MI, Office of Children and Families

Notes

1. High/Scope Foundation (2005). Youth Program Quality Assessment Administration Manual. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

2. Smith, C. (2005). The Youth Program Quality Assessment validation study: Findings for instrument validation. Report available from the High/Scope Foundation at http://youth.highscope.org. Smith, C. (2005). What matters for after-school quality? Presentation to the W.T. Grant Foundation After-school Grantees Meeting, December 19,2005. Available: http://youth.highscope.org

3. Durlak, J. & Wiesburg. R. (2007). The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning; Rusell, C. and Reisner, E. (2005). Supporting social and cognitive growth among disadvantaged middle-grades students in TASC after-school projects. Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; Author. (2005). Pathways to success for youth: What counts in after-school. Intercultural Center of Research in Education, Arlington, MA and National Institute on Out-of School Time, Wellesley College; Blazevski, J. (2007) Quality in the Grand Rapids 21st Century Programs: Final Report. High/Scope Research Report.

4. High/Scope Memorandum regarding CA Proposition 49.