

# TXPOST Strategic Plan: 2020-2023

Eighty percent of a child's waking hours are spent outside the classroom, and yet we continue to rely on the school day as the only place to prepare our youth for strong futures. Only 15% of school-age kids in Texas participate in critical afterschool programs that create more learning opportunities and drive equity in a system that often fails to adequately serve those most in need.

Students who participate in out of school time (OST) programs attend class more regularly, do better in school, and develop key 21st Century skills vital for today's economy. High-quality OST programs improve academic outcomes, help develop workforce skills, and promote individualized exploration of interests and talents that lead to success in the classroom, career, and beyond.

Today, far too many young people in Texas lack these kinds of opportunities to develop the competencies they will need for economic success, community belonging, and personal fulfillment.

Youth who participate in afterschool programs benefit in terms of academic performance, social and emotional learning, juvenile justice incidences, and health and wellbeing. Through music lessons, STEM exploration, sports, academic supports, mentoring, and more, OST prepares our young people for college and careers by exploring new ways to ignite their passions and engage them in learning.

**TXPOST believes that all Texas youth deserve the opportunity to participate in high-quality afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs.**

And it's more important now than ever. Our national dialogue on racial justice demands that we address inequities in our communities at a time when they have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have to do better by and with our young people to build a future we all can be proud of.

TXPOST's 2020-2023 strategic plan reflects the immense needs of Texas youth and the OST programs and providers who serve them. We are committed to fostering and facilitating strategic collaboration and public investment to:

- Drive equity and create opportunities for marginalized youth;
- Promote whole-child development within and beyond the sector; and
- Support OST professionals in their own career journeys.

OST is closing the opportunity gap so that, together, we can build communities where every child in Texas is supported and fulfilled.

**Here's how we partner with OST providers and their communities to support Texas kids:**



## **CONVENE**

Nourish our network's ecology to better support OST programs, improve youth outcomes, and broaden our coalition.



## **EDUCATE**

Drive continuous quality improvement in OST programs across the state.



## **ADVOCATE**

Promote sustainable access to high-quality OST programs for all Texas children.

# CONVENE

TXPOST will nourish the ecology of our network to better support OST programs, improve youth outcomes, and broaden our coalition. We are committed to fostering cross-state connections, touting program successes, deploying professional development resources, and developing new OST champions.

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Demonstrate TXPOST support for regional networks and programs

#### Engaging Texas' six regional networks

Texas has six regional OST networks in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio, and each plays a unique role in its community's OST space. With distinct infrastructures and local and regional priorities, these organizations and their leaders bring diverse perspectives about the best ways to support programs and staff across the state.

To fully support our own mission of improved quality and increased access, TXPOST takes an active role in supporting their missions as well. TXPOST intends to convene regional networks regularly to enable these six entities to share information and learn from one another.



By building relationships among practitioners and programs, together we can better leverage our collective work for the benefit of all Texas kids.

#### Supporting programs and providers without a regional network

Across Texas there are hundreds of programs and thousands of educators who are not part of a regional network. These organizations and professionals also need access to resources for professional development and quality improvement.

In these communities that most need additional infrastructure and OST capacity, we may play the role of a traditional regional intermediary by coordinating resources and investing in quality improvement and staff professionalization.

As we aggregate quality resources, TXPOST will curate them to make them available efficiently, without creating redundancies or burdening the organizational capacity of these partners.

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Recognize the unique needs of regions and local programs

#### Identifying metrics that matter

TXPOST and our partners must connect the successes of Texas programs with metrics that matter to Texas leaders. We are jointly leading a steering committee of OST leaders to:

- Explore what quality means to OST programs;
- Identify obstacles to quality improvement that exist on local and statewide levels to in turn support collaboratively designed solutions; and
- Agree to outcomes that exemplify the impact of high-quality OST programming for all youth.

#### Amplifying partner voices and practices across the state

TXPOST promotes meaningful and powerful storytelling among regional networks and individual programs to foster a sense of community and raise awareness of the importance of OST and OST educators.

By building relationships among practitioners and programs, together we can better leverage our collective work for the benefit of all Texas kids.

## OBJECTIVE 3

### Serve as the convening body for an increasingly diverse statewide afterschool network

#### Establishing a Youth Advocate Council

TXPOST will incorporate youth voices into our planning and advocacy efforts, developing youth champions for OST and bringing their voices to the table as key stakeholders and agents for change.

#### Establishing a Corporate Advisory Council

Representing the industrial, commercial, and geographic diversity of the state, our Corporate Advisory Council will enable TXPOST and program partners to gain key insights into what is driving business decisions and investment in OST.

This dedicated group of advisors will support TXPOST's organizational operations through counsel, resources, and meaningful connections.

#### Cultivating OST advocates across the state

TXPOST will broaden our reach by educating stakeholders as future thought leaders and champions in individual communities. In proving the value of expanded learning to school district and business leaders, TXPOST will cultivate advocates for the field.

# EDUCATE

TXPOST drives a culture of continuous quality improvement in programs across the state. We are committed to identifying where need is greatest and what resources will most quickly support the field.

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Advance professionalism and professional development in the field

#### Building the community

TXPOST will bring together professionals in the field to support their respective programs and one another through a virtual community. The community portal will be a place to share best practices, research, curriculum, and other program content.

Programs and providers can engage with the virtual community in three ways.

- All practitioners will have access to TXPOST's portal of resources.
- Targeted cohorts of programs and providers will commit to deeper quality improvement work across the state, setting improvement goals, measuring growth, and quantifying impact.
- Leaders who have driven quality improvement in their own organizations will mentor the next round of programs who are endeavoring to do the same.

#### Sustaining career pathways

We must invest in the diverse, capable workforce serving our youth in out of school time. Finding consensus around requisite and recognized knowledge and competencies, highlighting alignment with professional growth opportunities, and demanding adequate, holistic compensation will carry this invaluable workforce forward.

Building capacity for OST professionals means more than merely sufficient compensation or accepted credentials. We must cultivate a broader cultural shift that respects and values the consequential influence of these educators.

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Promote high-quality programming and a system of OST assessment and improvement

#### Auditing where OST programs exist, along with gaps in coverage

Through statewide outreach, TXPOST identifies and encourages programs serving youth to more formally engage with the network, cultivating new relationships and developing a comprehensive and dynamic map of OST services statewide.

This map helps TXPOST to better understand where need is greatest and what resources will most quickly support the field and quality improvement.

#### Promoting ongoing progress in quality programming

TXPOST meets programs where they are in their journeys with quality assessment and improvement, positively promoting progress rather than identifying a final destination in this work. A culture of improvement and accountability to Texas youth will unite all providers in their efforts for continuous reflection and quality improvement.

We are developing a framework that will examine the frequently used quality standards in Texas—including the TXPOST standards, Texas ACE Quality Blueprint, and certain child care licensure requirements—to explore how best to equip programs and providers for this important quality improvement work.

Identifying the components most common, essential, and generally agreed upon, we will promote statewide collaboration on quality and leverage what is learned to build tools that will help programs pursue continuous quality improvement.

We are committed to identifying where need is greatest and what resources will most quickly support the field.



## OBJECTIVE 3

### Tell the story of OST

#### Drawing connections between quality standards and youth outcomes

TXPOST and our partners will explore the connection between OST quality standards and desired youth outcomes, highlighting both school-day focused metrics and more expansive youth development goals. TXPOST will align specific learning frameworks with existing policy objectives to build a robust coalition around the impact of OST amongst businesses, elected officials, and advocates.

By educating stakeholders about these connections, TXPOST can bridge diverse communities to create an understanding of common interests and broadly supported goals.

A coordinated and strategic communications campaign will help us to better organize passionate practitioners, engaged youth, appreciative families, and long-time partners in ways that we haven't done in the past. The better we share the work of OST, the more likely it is that Texas will be a better place for all our children.

#### Creating tools and amplifying experiences in OST

TXPOST will build an advocacy toolkit for use by programs and educators across the state. Developing tools responsive to the needs of professionals will allow them to be their own best advocates in their communities while maintaining messaging cohesiveness that TXPOST can echo and amplify statewide.

# ADVOCATE

TXPOST pursues opportunities to sustainably expand access to participate in high-quality OST programs for all Texas children. We are committed to identifying and empowering advocates who will support kids when they need it most.

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Deepen and broaden corporate engagement

#### Engaging business leaders, Chambers of Commerce, and statewide roundtable organizations

TXPOST intends to survey business leaders across key industries in Texas to produce a *Portrait of a Graduate* that reflects community and corporate needs. This resource will demonstrate how OST develops valuable skillsets and competencies among youth that benefit the business community.

We will continue to engage Chambers of Commerce and individual businesses who already believe in the value of OST. We seek to celebrate these early champions, deepening connections with existing partners and building upon these relationships to help cultivate new partnerships.

#### Investing in infrastructure to foster relationships

TXPOST is instituting processes and investing in technology solutions to better manage existing relationships, leads, and potential partnerships.

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Propel philanthropic funding and advocacy toward whole-child development

#### Demonstrating the power of the whole child

A growing body of research confirms what we already know to be true: to lead full and fulfilling lives, our young people need to think critically and creatively. They need a solid foundation that meets their basic needs before they can be expected to learn and engage during the school day. And, perhaps above all else, they desire belongingness and connectedness. We must recognize the interconnectedness of health, safety, and education to prepare our young people for the future.

## OBJECTIVE 3

### Identify budget opportunities to fund quality improvement and encourage OST investment in best practices

#### Analyzing funding opportunities to ensure sustainability

TXPOST will analyze the landscape of available funding in Texas to target the right strategies to fund quality improvement. We will map state-level sources of funding for various components of OST, including federal programs and state initiatives. In addition, we will identify who is supporting the work beyond state and federal dollars, working with partners across Texas to understand their current and desired funding supports in their own communities.

This analysis will both identify opportunities to spend public money more efficiently and demonstrate the need for further public investment.

We must recognize the interconnectedness of health, safety, and education to prepare our young people for the future.



#### Gaining clarity on resources currently supporting OST in Texas cities

Many Texas municipalities fund OST programming, but we lack an understanding of how extensive or meaningful such funding is in Texas communities. To gain that clarity, we will:

- Study municipal relationships with OST programs and intermediaries;
- Craft best practices for collaborative and integrated OST support;
- Develop guidance for communities not fully leveraging such coordination; and
- Build credibility and increased support from municipalities across the state.

### About the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time

The Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) was founded in 2011 to improve youth outcomes by supporting strategic, cross-sector collaboration and public investment in out of school time programming in Texas. Its mission is to convene, educate, and advocate to strengthen the quality and availability of afterschool and summer programs for Texas kids. We believe every child deserves programs rich with creativity and opportunities for enrichment.

The Texas Partnership for Out of School Time is a registered 501(c)(3). Gifts are tax-deductible.

