

# **Collaborating to Build** a New Day for Learning

A Guide for Principals,  
Afterschool, and Community Leaders

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National Association of  
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**Principals**

The mission of the National Association of Elementary School Principals is to lead in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle level principals and other education leaders in their commitment for all children. NAESP is principal led, member driven, member centric, and business focused.



The NAESP Foundation advances excellence, innovation, and equity in schools by endowing leadership and learning for principals for the benefit of all children. To learn more, contact the NAESP Foundation at [foundation@naesp.org](mailto:foundation@naesp.org).

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# Foreword

The National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National AfterSchool Association have been strong advocates for afterschool since the 1980s—NAESP in its publication and subsequent update of guidelines for principals in developing, supporting, and evaluating afterschool programs, and NAA in the adoption of standards for quality programs, the creation of an accreditation process based on the standards, and advancing the afterschool profession. Underlying the efforts of both associations is the common goal of providing children with the academic and social skills they will need to become successful and productive citizens of our global society.

Given this common purpose, a partnership between NAESP and NAA is quite natural. Together at the national level—and in collaboration with our respective affiliates in the states—we can present a powerful case for the continued funding and support necessary to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool experiences. But even more important is our hope that we will inspire our members to form their own partnerships at the local level. As the leaders who are most closely involved with the provision of learning experiences for children every day, collaboration among our members can have a profound effect on outcomes for these children.

This guide and its companion Web resources and podcasts provide information, guidelines, and proven strategies for successful collaboration between school and afterschool. We hope you will find these resources useful in your work and that you will share them with staff, parents, and community leaders to ensure that the vision of a New Day for Learning becomes a reality for all children.

Gail Connelly, Executive Director, National Association of Elementary School Principals

Judy Nee, President and CEO, National AfterSchool Association

# Introduction

While almost everything touching children's lives today has changed dramatically, from how we work, live and organize family life to the availability of remarkable technology, we cling to an agrarian calendar for defining how children spend their time. We want them to achieve at higher levels, but we continue to isolate and fragment learning so that millions of students struggle to find learning relevant. We often disregard the many ways children learn outside of the current school day—from forming cultural bonds to multi-tasking with technology tools.

*(A New Day for Learning, 2007)*



# Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Opportunities and Challenges



Today, the pace of change is accelerating at an exponential rate, and life is becoming increasingly unpredictable. Many of the things students may need to know and be able to do in 20 years have not yet been determined, or perhaps even imagined. How do we prepare young people to be successful and productive citizens in this rapidly changing and increasingly global society? How can parents, schools, and communities (be they defined by geography, culture, or virtual connection) help young people cultivate the habits and skills they will need to become life-long learners? And, how do we ensure that young people who are especially vulnerable—children living in high-poverty situations or English language learners, for example—are given the opportunities and supports needed to succeed?

Though answers to these questions vary, one thing is becoming clear: our notions of school, afterschool, community, and learning must change. Learning, as we know, happens all the time. And yet, in most communities across the United States we hold schools primarily responsible for educating our children and cling to school calendars and schedules designed for a different age.

In this publication, we'll explore how school, afterschool, and community leaders can build a new day for learning. This guide and companion Web-based tools (see [www.naesp.org/After-School.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/After-School.aspx)) are designed specifically to help elementary and middle school principals and afterschool providers work together to improve and connect learning; and to help teachers, other school leaders, afterschool program directors, community and business leaders, and parents and students collaborate to integrate learning across sectors of our society.



“We believe that *collaboration across all sectors* must begin at the school level. By working in partnership, school and afterschool leaders can be strong advocates for greater collaboration locally, statewide, and nationally.”

(“Leading a New Day for Learning: A Joint Statement from the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National AfterSchool Association,” 2009)

Our aim is not to add to the already long list of responsibilities each of these individuals face everyday, but rather to help people make connections and develop collaborations that benefit everyone. As those who are doing this work will attest, children, families, schools, businesses, and community members all stand to gain when learning is integrated and supported throughout the community.

In this guide, we begin by looking at key elements of the New Day for Learning approach, how our understandings of time, learning, and afterschool are shifting, and some of the benefits to this approach. Second, we identify various systems of support for expanded learning opportunities. Third, we look at models for collaboration and highlight some of the ways in which partnerships are boosting learning and helping to create the conditions for children, schools, communities, and our society to be healthier and more productive. Finally, we identify resources and tools leaders can use to build effective and lasting relationships and programs (to see a full complement of tools and resources, including downloadable podcasts, visit [www.naesp.org/Afterschool.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Afterschool.aspx)).



## How to Use this Guide, Online Resources, and Podcasts

- If you are a principal, school administrator, or teacher, you can use this guide to begin conversations with school staff as well as out-of-school time, district, and community leaders. Use the guide and resources as a jumping off point to discuss the major issues surrounding time and learning in today's world and how to collaborate more effectively.
- If you are an out-of-school time or community leader, you can utilize this guide and resources to work with principals, school, and district leaders in your community to build new learning networks, that bridge traditional divides. If you are a parent or a student, share the guide and resources with your principal and other learning providers in your community.
- Access the online resources to listen to podcasts with foundation, school and community leaders, or to find specific collaboration tools such as PowerPoint presentations, sample Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), responsibility checklists, and much more. You can download a PDF of the guide and access the resources and podcasts online at [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx).



# New Day for Learning

"New Day for Learning is not a curriculum or one-size fits all program; it's a 21st century vision for learning that builds on a foundation of core academics by leveraging community resources to incorporate strategies such as hands-on learning, working in teams and problem solving."

([www.newdayforlearning.org](http://www.newdayforlearning.org), 2009)



Initiated by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in 2005, the Time, Learning and Afterschool Task Force brought together experts in the field of education and afterschool to take a comprehensive look at connections between time, learning, and afterschool. Led by former NAESP Executive Director, Vincent L. Ferrandino, the group looked carefully at what kids do during out-of-school time and at the opportunities and challenges facing youth and families from different socio-economic backgrounds. They also looked at the various ways in which young people learn, at how learning works in different contexts, at the ways in which approaches to in-school and out-of-school learning are similar and yet different, and at how these approaches to learning could be connected to create a seamless learning day for children.

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## New Day for Learning—Key Elements

The published report of the Task Force’s work—A New Day for Learning—outlines a vision for learning designed to build on the best approaches to learning in and out of school. In this new vision, there are five key elements of a new learning system.

### **1. Expands the definition of student success**

Reading, math and science are critical to a solid educational foundation but must be bolstered by applied skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork. Beyond merely teaching students these skills, we must thoughtfully assess them to ensure that today’s young people are fully prepared to succeed in school, work and life.

### **2. Uses research-based knowledge about how students learn best**

Students can’t learn if they are not engaged. Educators and community stakeholders must utilize research-based knowledge about how students learn best to effectively frame their programs and instruction.

### **3. Fosters collaboration across all sectors**

To focus all resources on supporting academic and developmental goals for students, new collaborative structures must be built across sectors in communities and up and down government hierarchies. The vital involvement of community, business, civic and municipal leaders, parents and social service providers is critical to student success and pays economic, civic and social dividends to all stakeholders.

### **4. Integrates various learning approaches and places**

Engaging strategies that incorporate the arts, technology, service learning and apprenticeships can amplify core academic learning and provide students with opportunities for enriching their education and connecting it with the adult world that they will enter. Schools are just one of the many places in the community where learning and student success can happen.

### **5. Provides new opportunities for leadership and professional development**

While most current leadership development and certification programs are school-based, the importance of community-building skills is growing. Teachers and youth development staff can forge partnerships that result in heightened professionalism for both—and in better outcomes for students.

([www.newdayforlearning.org](http://www.newdayforlearning.org), 2009)

## New Language—Expanded Learning Opportunities

Since the release of *A New Day for Learning* in early 2007, our understandings of how the learning day is constituted have begun to shift. As Anne Bowles and Betsy Brand point out in *Learning Around the Clock: Benefits of Expanded Learning Opportunities for Older Youth* (2009), even the language surrounding school and afterschool learning has changed. What used to be described primarily as *afterschool*, began to be called *out-of-school time* to include the productive activities students engaged in on weekends and during the summer. More recently, leaders and practitioners have begun to use the term *expanded learning opportunities* to describe the myriad learning options for youth (see also Little, 2009).



**Expanded learning opportunities (ELOs)**, particularly for older youth, occur in a 24/7 environment, draw upon the resources of the community, blur the lines between schools and other valuable teachers, such as colleges, community organizations, museums and employers, and incorporate virtual learning when appropriate. ELOs include traditional afterschool activities with an academic focus, but also incorporate activities such as internships with employers, independent study in alternative settings, classes on college campuses for high school students and wrap-around social supports. ELOs are more fully integrated into the fabric of services and programs provided to all children and youth and contribute to the notion of community-wide learning systems (Bowles and Brand, 2009).

Though Bowles and Brand are focused primarily on older youth in their study, the language of expanded learning opportunities applies to youth of all ages (Stonehill and Edelstein, 2009; Little 2009). And this call for a new perspective has begun to take other forms as well, as evidenced by campaigns such as A Broader, Bolder Approach to Education—a national initiative supported by education and civic leaders across the country—which calls for a similar understanding of expanded learning and more attention to the whole child (see [www.boldapproach.org](http://www.boldapproach.org)).

## Benefits of this Approach

In many schools and communities across the country, leaders are working to develop and connect integrated and high quality systems of learning that confer substantial benefits, including but not limited to:

### Academic gains for youth

- lower dropout rates
- improved test scores
- better grades
- better communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and writing skills
- better overall academic performance
- increased school attendance
- improved homework completion

### Social and emotional gains for youth

- boosts to overall physical and mental health
- healthier eating habits
- better relationships with peers and mentors
- improved physical activity
- and a variety of youth development outcomes fostered by having safe and high-quality opportunities to learn and grow

### Improved outcomes for parents, families, schools, communities, and society

- better relationships between parents and schools
- improved care and expanded learning opportunities for children who would otherwise care for themselves
- richer connections across communities
- improved community-based problem-solving capacities
- a better-educated and more globally-prepared and integrated workforce and citizenry

Dozens of studies of afterschool programs and initiatives repeatedly underscore the powerful impact of supporting a range of positive learning outcomes, including academic achievement, by affording children and youth opportunities to learn and practice new skills through hands-on, experiential learning in project-based afterschool programs, which complement, but do not replicate, in-school learning.

(“Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities,” 2009)

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This is what we see: students coping with realities never imagined even one generation ago—and public schools trying to respond to growing academic demands by overloading an outmoded structure. In the six- to seven-hour day, basically unchanged for decades, many educators must cram more subject matter coverage—with extra drill in reading and math for millions of students—and administer more standardized testing as an answer to the pressure to improve student achievement. Generally left out of the picture is the research-based knowledge on how students learn best: with a rich curriculum, multiple ways of reinforcing it, and relevance. Communities and resources around schools often can provide these commodities. The development of essential skills is vital, but must be coupled with broader ways of schooling to fully prepare students to be effective workers and responsible citizens.

*(New Day for Learning, 2007)*

# Following the Money

How are effective and lasting collaborations built? What does it mean to create a new day for learning? What roles do principals and afterschool providers (or expanded learning opportunity providers) play in connecting learning? In order to begin to answer these questions, it's important to understand some of the systems and networks that have developed over the last few years to support expanded learning opportunities, especially as they relate to schools.



# A Snapshot of the Funding Streams and Networks of Support Surrounding Expanded Learning Opportunities

## Federal Support

Since the mid 1990s, federal attention to learning during the out-of-school time hours has increased significantly. For over 10 years, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs) program, funded through Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, has supported school-based community learning centers throughout the United States. Though the amount of funding has remained relatively flat for a number of years—around \$1 billion annually—the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program has become an important source of support for expanded learning opportunities.

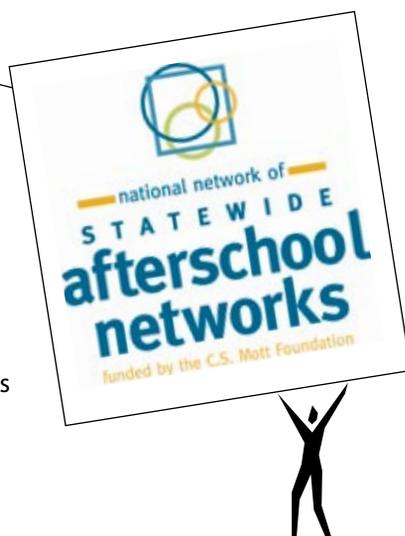
Other federal sources of support for expanded learning opportunities directed specifically to the education sector include:

- Title I, the largest source of federal education funds devoted to serving low-income and disadvantaged youth; Supplemental Services, also a part of Title I; and School Improvement Funds, which are also allocated by states through Title I. This funding—increased dramatically through the Department of Education’s Race to the Top fund—is likely to be leveraged in new ways to support struggling schools and school systems and to foster expanded learning opportunities.
- Full-Service Community Schools funding, which supports the development of schools that provide a full-range of community services alongside the traditional school program, has also increased recently.
- Other programs include: the federal child nutrition program, which funds afterschool snacks and meals for low-income children and youth; Americorps and Learn and Serve programs, which provide grants and volunteer support; and grants from the Departments of Justice and Labor.

Federal dollars for out-of-school time also flow through Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), many of which go to low-income families in the form of vouchers, and through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which can also be allocated by states to support out-of-school time activities (for detailed national and state federal funding profiles see [www.nccic.org/afterschool](http://www.nccic.org/afterschool)).

## Foundation Support

To seed and increase connections between schools and out-of-school time providers, a number of foundations have worked to build networks and systems at the national, state, district, and city levels. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has invested heavily in this work. In addition to working in partnership with the Department of Education to fund 21st CCLCs, the Mott Foundation has supported the development of statewide networks (currently in 38 states), through the National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks. The networks, in turn, have built extensive support systems within their states (see below). The Mott Foundation has also supported a wide variety of efforts at the national level, including the development of this guide and resources, designed to connect quality learning in and out of school.



### The National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks

The National Network of Statewide afterschool Networks brings together established statewide afterschool networks in their collective mission to build partnerships and policies that are committed to the development and sustainability of quality afterschool programs.

These partnerships—funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation—are focused on actively engaging key decision makers in support of school-based/school-linked afterschool programs, particularly in underserved communities. Currently 38 statewide afterschool networks are funded to coordinate and influence the systems that support the success of children and young people.

The network is focused on three goals:

**Goal 1: Create a sustainable structure of statewide, regional, and local partnerships, particularly school-community partnerships, focused on supporting policy development at all levels.**

**Goal 2: Support the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing afterschool programs.**

**Goal 3: Support statewide systems to ensure programs are of high quality.**

Principals are involved with statewide networks in a number of ways. To connect with your statewide network, please visit: [www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net).

The Wallace Foundation has also invested significant resources to support the development of quality out-of-school-time systems, primarily at the citywide level, through direct and long-term support to five cities—Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Providence, RI—and through dissemination of research and tools developed around this effort. This systems-level work has been further enhanced by the development of groups like the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (or CBASS), a network for citywide out-of-school-time programs, funded with support from the Atlantic Philanthropies.

## Support from National Education and Civic Groups

The development of networks and systems of support has also been cultivated at the national level by groups working in the both the education and civic sectors. In addition to NAESP and the National AfterSchool Association (NAA)—who have entered into a long-term collaborative effort—other national players include:

- The Afterschool Alliance, which has garnered increased attention around the need to provide youth with safe spaces to learn and grow during out-of-school time hours through the development of an extensive policy support network, with affiliates across the country
- The Center for Summer Learning, Learning Point Associates, the National Institute of Out-of-School Time, the Harvard Family Research Project, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, The Finance Project, SEDL's National Center for Quality Afterschool, AED's Center for Youth Development's Promising Practices in AfterSchool, American Youth Policy Forum, the Forum for Youth Investment, and others who have developed resources and tools to foster the growth of quality expanded learning opportunities
- School administrators and governance organizations including, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP), the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) who have each issued policy statements and developed resources on expanded learning opportunities
- Civic groups such as the National Governor's Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the National League of Cities have also voiced support, and in many cases developed standards, tools, and other resources, for the development of quality extended learning opportunities

While NAESP and NAA recognize that everyone—from the highest-level policy makers to front-line teachers and afterschool staff—has a critical role to play in creating this new learning day, we believe that principals and afterschool directors, who are most directly involved and responsible for children's day-to-day learning experiences, are key to moving the vision from concept to reality.

(“Leading a New Day for Learning: A Joint Statement from the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National AfterSchool Association,” 2009)

### Fostering Collaboration Across Traditional School-Community Boundaries—NAESP and NAA's Joint Efforts

In 2007, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) officially launched an effort to encourage deeper collaboration between principals and afterschool providers. Since then, NAESP and NAA have held joint national conferences and issued a joint statement supporting collaborative work to advance the new day for learning approach. The organizations have also begun offering “Aligning the Learning Day” collaborative professional development sessions for principals and afterschool providers.

## State Support

States are playing an increasingly important role in this work as well. In addition to administering 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Title I, CCDF, TANE, and other federal funds, states such as California and New York have also begun to provide state-supported funding for school-based afterschool programs, to reach children who might not otherwise have access to quality programs (for more information on state funding, see Earle, 2009).

In 2006, Massachusetts launched a state-sponsored expanded learning initiative to provide funding and support for schools to provide 300 additional hours of learning for every student in each participating school. The competitive program requires an intensive planning process involving parents, community partners, teachers, and other stakeholders; whole-school re-design; a focus on academics and enrichment; and involvement of community partners. The Massachusetts effort is being watched closely, and is likely to serve as a model for district- or state-level initiatives in other states (National Center on Time and Learning, 2008).

## City- and District-Level Support

A number of cities and districts, beyond the Wallace-funded sites, also have well-developed networks to support expanded learning opportunities. The City of Los Angeles works in partnership Los Angeles Unified School District and the private sector to support LA's BEST—Better Educated Students for Tomorrow—which provides programming at over 180 elementary schools throughout Los Angeles. And, as part of the Mott Foundation's New Day for Learning initiative, a number of cities including Providence and San Francisco are developing partnerships between city, school, and community partners to build rich networks of expanded learning opportunities.

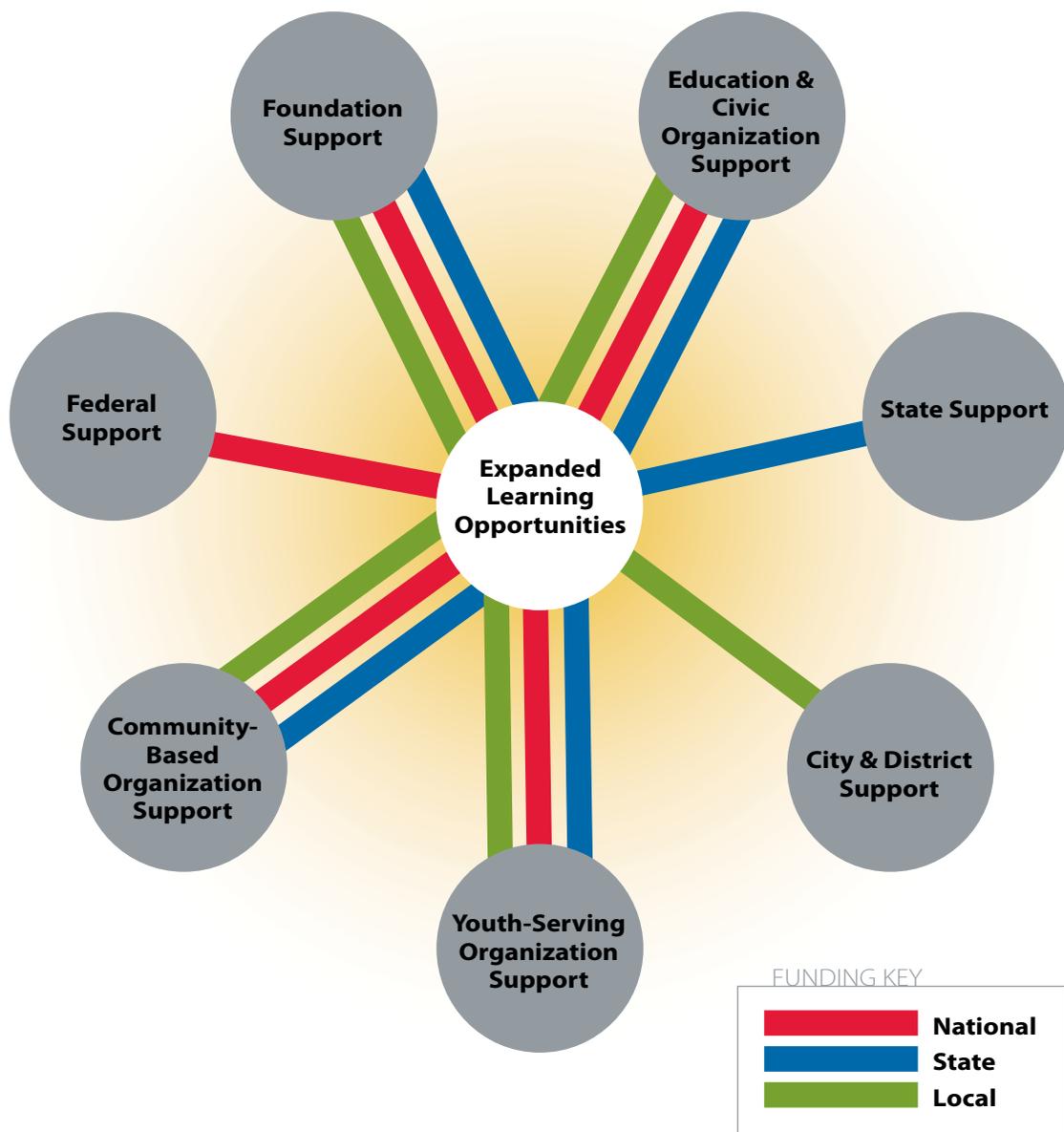
## Support from Youth-Serving and Community-Based Organizations

Alongside these systems and networks of support, thousands of youth-serving and community-based organizations provide expanded learning opportunities to youth in communities. Traditionally, groups like Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA and YWCA, Girls Inc., 4-H, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, Campfire USA, and others have worked in communities across the United States to provide afterschool, weekend, and summer learning opportunities for young people. Communities in Schools, which has affiliates in 27 states and works collaboratively with families, volunteers, businesses, community groups, and schools, also provides extensive supports for collaboration around before-school and afterschool programs.

As the focus on creating a new day for learning expands, additional organizations are emerging around this initiative. In 2008, the United Way announced that it would direct its giving and advocacy to a 10-year goal of cutting the nation's dropout rate in half. Combined with county and city parks and recreation programs, activities sponsored by various religious groups, as well as a host of other community-based organizations, these groups make up part of a complex system of supports for school- and community-based expanded learning opportunities.

## Potential Supports for Expanded Learning Opportunities

The model below shows how various sources can provide support for expanded learning opportunities at the national, state, or local levels. These linkages represent possible opportunities, and do not necessarily guarantee that all funding streams or networks of support are available for expanded learning opportunities in all locations.



# Building a New

"Quite simply, unless we profoundly change our thinking and policies about when, where and how children learn and develop, our steady progress as an economy and as a society will end."

*(New Day for Learning, 2007)*



# Day for Learning

## Moving From Co-Existence to Collaboration



In communities where learning is connected, enriched, and integrated across sectors—in school and out of school—we see collaborative structures and practices that facilitate connection and integration. As outlined in the previous section, there are multiple sources of support—funding, training, technical assistance, and networks—that can and, when properly leveraged, do connect time and quality learning opportunities across sectors of our communities.

What can school, afterschool, and community leaders, not to mention youth and families, do to take full advantage of these supports—to build a new day for learning?

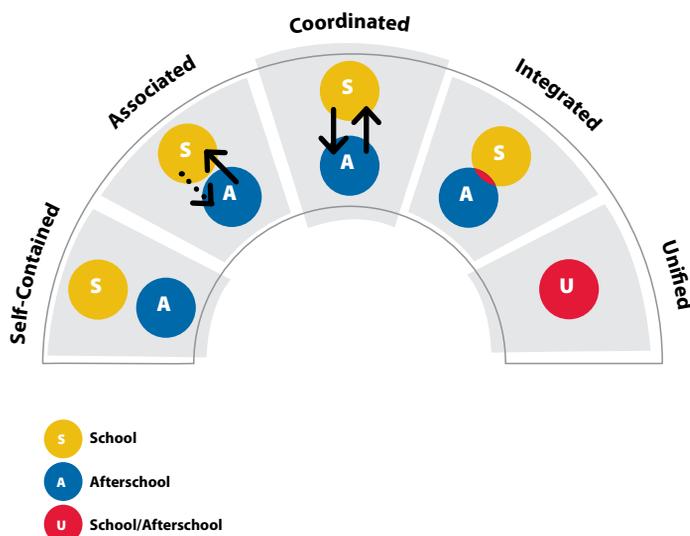
First, participants in this process must approach learning from a new vantage point. In most communities, schools and afterschool programs have often operated independently of each other. Principals have focused on the school day, and afterschool leaders have focused on out-of-school time. As a result, different expectations around learning, play, and care developed; different definitions of “success” emerged; and different professional networks were established.

Under the New Day for Learning vision, school, afterschool, and community leaders work together to develop a shared vision and goals—to connect learning and development for children and adults; to develop common definitions of success; to provide joint professional development opportunities for school and afterschool staff in which they can learn from one another; and to leverage and share funding, space, transportation, and other resources.

As Gil Noam, founder and director of the Program on Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR), and his colleagues at Harvard University have argued, collaboration typically moves along a continuum.

To move from the self-contained approach on the left of the continuum to integrated collaboration on the right, collaborators must work intentionally across traditional boundaries. Programs need not be fully unified (like the Massachusetts model), but they can be much more integrated and connected.

Five types of bridging intensity between schools and afterschool programs



# Keys to Effective Collaboration

## 1. Clear Understanding of Needs and Resources

Perhaps the most important first step leaders can take along the path to more meaningful collaboration is to gather information about what needs and resources exist in particular communities, and to establish mechanisms for regularly monitoring both needs and resources. Even in communities where it appears that there are rich out-of-school time resources available to students, in-school and out-of-school time learning opportunities may be disconnected or fragmented; children from high-poverty neighborhoods may not have meaningful access to rich learning opportunities; and learning itself may be timeworn.

**Collaborators can begin by asking questions such as:**

- Where do young people go after the school day is over? How do they spend their time?
- What are the various learning opportunities available to them (in school and out of school)?
- How many children are able to take advantage of various learning opportunities?
- What do various opportunities cost? How are those costs covered—through grants, vouchers, fees, or some combination of these?
- What do parents or caregivers want and need for the children in their care?
- What kinds of learning opportunities do young people want and need?
- What do business and community leaders want and need?
- What is the school's vision for learning?
- How is the school day structured?
- What's missing—in school and out of school?
- How could school and afterschool resources—space, funding, personnel, and time—be shared to build a new day for learning that meets various needs?
- What additional resources are needed? Available?

It is important to keep in mind that needs and resources will vary considerably from community to community and will shift over time. As we develop this resource guide, the United States is in the midst of a severe recession, and both needs and resources are changing rapidly—in Los Angeles, for example, summer school has been canceled for everyone except those who need it to graduate. In order for principals and expanded learning opportunity providers to work together effectively, it is vital for participants to understand the constraints others face, and conversely the opportunities that are available. Visit [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx) to find tools for assessing needs and resources.

## 2. Shared Vision and Common Goals

Along with a rich and nuanced understanding of needs and resources, it is also important for leaders to establish a shared vision and common goals. Essentially, this means that school, afterschool, and community leaders must work together to craft a vision for a new learning day that reflects the needs, concerns, and interests of all involved. Though challenging, this process is also rewarding and essential if we are to truly build a new day for learning. For examples of visioning and goal-setting tools, see [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx).

### **The San Francisco Vision: What Will Student Success Look Like in a *New Day for Learning***

All young people will graduate college- and career-path-ready and be prepared with the skills and capacities required for success in school, work and life.

Specifically desired outcomes for young people include the following:

- Academic competence;
- Technological fluency;
- Creative, critical and innovative thinking, reasoning and problem-solving;
- High-level communication skills;
- Environmental, civic and social responsibility;
- Strength of character;
- High-level multilingual and multicultural skills;
- Aesthetic sensibility;
- Collaborative and team orientation; and
- High levels of engagement in one's own learning and direction.

([www.newdayforlearning.org](http://www.newdayforlearning.org), 2009)

## 3. Agreement on Responsibilities and Accountability

Agreement on responsibilities and accountability is also an essential component of a successful collaborative relationship, and this may best be outlined in a memorandum of understanding or contract. It should also involve regular communication and tracking. In the online resources that accompany this guide, see [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx), there are several tools and checklists for helping collaborators agree upon, monitor, and continue to improve shared responsibilities and to hold each other accountable.

## 4. Effective Data Collection, Sharing, and Assessment

Along with clearly delineated responsibilities and accountability, it is also essential to develop agreed upon data collection, sharing, and assessment processes. School administrators, principals, and teachers have come under increased pressure in recent years to ensure that students meet and exceed state learning standards. And recently, 46 states have agreed to work toward commonly agreed upon and internationally benchmarked standards of learning.

At the same time, a number of statewide afterschool networks and city-based afterschool systems have developed quality standards for afterschool. Leaders must work together to connect data collection and assessment systems across sectors. Though some of this work must happen at the national, state, and district levels, principals and afterschool providers can work within these systems to develop processes and protocols that work at the school and community level. For examples and assessment tools, see [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx).

It's also vital for principals, afterschool providers, and other stakeholders to push boundaries on the assessment front—to work together to build and connect authentic assessments, such as portfolio-based evaluations, that go beyond high-stakes tests.

## 5. Connected Professional Development and Overlapping Staffing Arrangements

Connected professional development is another key building block for effective collaboration. Depending on the school system or community, it can take many forms. In some cases, afterschool or summer educators are also in-school teachers or staff members. In other cases, youth interact with a different set of staff before and after school or during the summer.

By establishing multiple mechanisms for professional development and staffing—joint staff development programs held alternatively at schools or community centers, for example, around agreed upon topics—principals and afterschool providers can bridge this gap. Teacher externships and classroom-based internships can also be used to connect adult learning.

Contract hours for both in-school and out-of-school staff pose perhaps the greatest barrier to shared professional development. To surmount this barrier, both groups can work together to plan professional development time—based on the shared vision and goals—so that there are overlaps in working hours. This creates the possibility for professional learning communities built around topics such as project-based learning or an emphasis on the whole child. Even monthly or quarterly joint planning sessions can be very helpful. For tools related to connected professional development, see [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx).

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### The Importance of Coordinators, Afterschool Directors, and Liaisons

In conversations with principals and providers of expanded learning opportunities about essentials for effective collaboration, everyone points to the importance of having an expanded learning opportunities coordinator, afterschool director, or staff liaison. Though position descriptions vary, the person in this role serves as a bridge between in-school and out-of-school time, helping to connect people—teachers, afterschool educators, leaders, parents, and students—and learning in different contexts.

## 6. Effective Communication—Understanding and Connecting Different Learning Cultures

If collaborations are to grow and flourish, everyone must communicate effectively. Leaders must understand and be able to navigate norms, expectations, and communication styles as they operate in different learning arenas, for example:

- How school cultures differ from various out-of-school cultures (e.g. before and after school; summer; school-based vs. community-based; work-place based)
- What communication expectations surround formal and informal learning
- How organizational communication works within different schools and within various community-based organizations
- How cultural norms affect communication styles, (around written or spoken language, for example)
- How key individuals—the principal, teachers, out-of-school time staff, students, and parents communicate
- Barriers to communication, and ways they can be overcome

“When I meet with principals and afterschool directors across the nation, the most common concerns I hear are communication concerns. Effective communication is a prerequisite to just about everything else. Without it, all the good intentions, planning and resource sharing in the world won’t help.”

(Interview with Paul Young, former elementary school principal, NAESP Aligning the Learning Day Trainer and director of the West After School Center, Lancaster, Ohio)

As collaborators work to understand and bridge different communication norms, practices, and styles, they should be guided by a commitment to a shared vision and goals. For tools and resources on communication, see [http://www.naesp.org/Foundation\\_Initiatives/New\\_Day\\_for\\_Learning.aspx](http://www.naesp.org/Foundation_Initiatives/New_Day_for_Learning.aspx).

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Expanded learning opportunities benefit from having a staff member, either employed by the school or the afterschool program or shared across both, whose primary responsibility is to coordinate resources among partners, create learning plans for students based on those resources, and facilitate communications and relationship-building. In addition to a designated staff member, expanded learning opportunities should encourage school and program staff alike to participate in governance and leadership committees as well as grade-level and content-specific teams in order to be fully integrated partners.

(“Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities,” 2009)

# Conclusion



“U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been a leading proponent of two education innovations that could bear fruit for OST (Out-of-School Time): expanding learning time and opening up school buildings to serve as hubs of community recreational, social service and educational activity.”

*(Opportunity in Hard Times: Building Out-of-School Systems that Last, 2009)*

We recognize that it may take years—or perhaps decades—to build a new day for learning. There are many hopeful signs, however. Despite the current recession, state budget cuts, increased unemployment, and rising poverty rates, the federal government has taken unprecedented steps to provide funding for innovative approaches to school improvement. Through initiatives such as the Race to the Top Fund and the Invest in What Works and Innovation grants, school leaders will have access to funds and support to develop new learning networks across communities. President Obama’s agenda also includes support for Promise Neighborhoods that would replicate the Harlem Children’s Zone Project—a birth to graduation approach to learning designed to educate children, parents, and community members, to fundamentally break the cycle of poverty in a neighborhood encompassing nearly 100 blocks in central Harlem—in high-need communities across the United States. At the same time, groups such as the United Way, America’s Promise Alliance, and many others are working to build new public-private partnerships in cities and towns throughout the country.

Perhaps the current crisis will serve as a catalyst, enabling potential collaborators to come together in new and more effective ways. In this era, school, afterschool, and community leaders can play a primary role in realizing the vision of a new day for learning.

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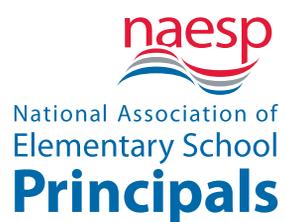
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