



Expanding **minds** and Opportunities

Leveraging

the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success

This article is an excerpt from the groundbreaking book, ***Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success***. This landmark compendium, edited by Terry K. Peterson, PhD, is composed of nearly 70 research studies, reports, essays, and commentaries by more than 100 researchers, educators, community leaders, policy makers, and practitioners.

Collectively, these writings boldly state that there is now a solid base of research and best practices clearly showing that quality afterschool and summer learning programs—including 21st Century Community Learning Centers—make a positive difference for students, families, schools, and communities.

Together, the collection of articles demonstrates the power of quality expanded learning opportunities to:

- **promote student success and college and career readiness;**
- **build youth assets such as character, resilience, and wellness;**
- **foster partnerships that maximize resources and build community ties; and**
- **engage families in their children's learning in meaningful ways.**

For information on how to order the full book, download sections and individual articles, or explore the topic areas, visit www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds.

About the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project

The Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project is a 50-state initiative harnessing the power of networks and leaders to help schools and communities leverage the time beyond school to accelerate student achievement. A partnership of funders led by the C.S. Mott Foundation support the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project. More information about the book and the project, as well as additional resources, can be found at www.expandinglearning.org.

Lucy N. Friedman
President, TASC

Reinventing the Learning Day: How ExpandedED Schools Blend the Best of School and Afterschool Through Community Partnerships

The traditional school calendar was designed for life a century ago, when Americans could thrive and be successful without even earning a high school degree. Today disadvantaged students, and those who are poorly served by conventional public schools, need better learning opportunities—and more of them—that capitalize on the best assets of their schools, communities, and families. By partnering with community organizations, schools can give students more time and a wider range of opportunities to learn by broadening school faculty to include a mix of certified teachers, teaching artists, and role models such as AmeriCorps members. We can help 21st century learners prepare to succeed in the information age by using more learning hours to engage, support, and challenge all students more effectively.

ExpandedED Schools offer at least 35% more learning time at 10% of the cost of the school day.

ExpandedED Schools, developed by TASC, offer a promising model for educators and communities to reinvent the learning day. The model incorporates research-based practices that have been found effective in improving students' school attendance, attitudes and achievement. Each school partners with an experienced youth-serving community organization to expand the conventional school day by approximately 3 hours to match parents' working hours. By partnering with their communities, schools can draw on a blend of education and youth development funds. This is

a cost-effective way to expand learning opportunities, even in difficult economic times. In fact, ExpandedED Schools offer at least 35% more learning time at 10% of the cost of the school day. Families are valued partners in establishing a shared vision for student success and planning the redesign of their schools.

This article will lay out the rationale for this approach, provide examples of effective practices within TASC's ExpandedED Schools national demonstration project, and offer resources for getting started.

Rationale

Starting in 2008, TASC supported a pilot of the ExpandedED Schools model (formerly called Expanded Learning Time/New York City) that grew over 3 years to include 17 New York City public elementary and middle schools. This informed the design of a subsequent 3-year national demonstration of 11 ExpandedED Schools currently operating in New York, Baltimore, and New Orleans. This initiative builds on the broad evidence base of effective afterschool programs and successful charter schools in order to offer an active, balanced learning day.

TASC afterschool programs get positive results. TASC developed a quality model for school-based afterschool programs that are operated by a community partner, such as a YMCA or community development corporation. Programs are designed to serve hundreds of children in a school and offer a variety of enriching activities.

From the beginning, in 1998, TASC encouraged parents to get involved. TASC staff quickly discovered that a child's afterschool program was a natural entry-point to a school for parents. Parents could communicate with afterschool staff during dismissal about their child's progress. Many afterschool programs encouraged parents to volunteer, to participate in parent-and-child literacy and science events, and to join in parent workshops. In collaboration with the New York State Afterschool Network, TASC developed an afterschool quality checklist for parents.

Research has shown that TASC afterschool programs increase student achievement and school attendance and improve students' likelihood of high school graduation. (Russell, Mielke, Miller, & Johnson, 2007; Reisner, White, Russell, & Birmingham, 2004). In particular, Reisner et al. (2004) conducted a large-scale, longitudinal evaluation of TASC-model programs. The results revealed that participants had greater gains in their math standardized scores and maintained a higher rate of school attendance than nonparticipating peers. Middle school participants had significantly higher attendance rates in the ninth and tenth grades (Reisner et al., 2004). Researchers also found that length of time enrolled in TASC programs and number of days attended were significant correlates of educational outcomes (Reisner et al., 2004). Students who were eligible for free lunch, English language learners, and special education students who attended TASC programs regularly performed significantly better on math standardized scores than matched nonparticipants. In addition, highly engaged black and Hispanic participants showed greater gains over nonparticipants than did white and Asian participants in math achievement. Overall, students who participated in TASC-model programming for at least 2 years and attended at least 60 days of programming experienced the greatest gains on math standardized test scores relative to matched

nonparticipants. Together, these findings provide evidence that TASC programs helped to close the achievement gap between students of high and low socioeconomic status and between students of different racial groups in New York City (Reisner et al., 2004).

Thousands of children and youth continue to be served by the TASC afterschool programs. TASC provides schools and community partners with technical assistance and professional development to support continuous improvement.

Expanded schools offer a new learning model with community partners. TASC began testing a school-improvement model in 2008 in New York City elementary and middle schools. The goal of the 3-year pilot was to build partnerships between schools and community organizations to provide all students with a well-rounded education that would help them grow into adults who can innovate, create, and think for a living. The pilot schools incorporated into expanded school days the best of what afterschool programs have to offer, including the adult mentorship of community educators who fortify students against the stresses and hardships of poverty. They differed from schools with afterschool programs by treating the hours between the time students arrived and roughly 6:00 p.m. as one unified learning day. They encouraged teachers and their partners to set goals jointly and build curriculum and activities around each individual school community's needs and student and family interests.

Pilot schools innovated in several ways, including

- *teaming teachers with artists to integrate arts into other academic subjects;*
- *having AmeriCorps members do small-group academic interventions with students before 3:00 p.m. and lead enrichments afterwards; and*
- *offering joint planning time and professional development for teachers and community educators.*

Close examination of the impact of these reform elements in schools prepared TASC for the next phase of work—a more ambitious, fully-integrated national demonstration of what can be achieved with more time, balanced curricula, an expanded school labor pool, and the coordination of education and youth development funding streams. Now, in 11 Expanded Schools, partners are customizing additional learning time and opportunities to the needs of their students.

All Expanded Schools embrace these four core elements: (1) more time for balanced learning, (2) school-community partnerships, (3) engaging and personalized instruction, and (4) a sustainable cost model of \$1,600 per student at scale. The model is designed to serve whole schools, with the potential of phase-ins through whole grades.

Parents play a crucial role. For example, if a neighborhood lacks safe spaces for children to play outdoors, parents can advocate for devoting time and resources to rigorous physical activity. Parent involvement is an ongoing process. Schools survey parents and students throughout the year and use their feedback to adapt staffing and curriculum.

Evidence

TASC contracted Policy Studies Associates and Abt Associates to conduct an evaluation of its 3-year pilot of TASC Expanded Learning Time/New York City. The study found that 85% of teachers reported that the expanded time had improved participants' learning, and 67% of teachers reported that nonparticipants gained from the presence of expanded learning in the school. Schools also increased fidelity to the model over the course of the pilot. Higher fidelity schools demonstrated greater student outcomes. In schools implementing the model with high fidelity, there was a positive and statistically significant effect of expanded learning time on math achievement in Year 3 and attendance in all 3 years (Policy Studies Associates & Abt Associates, 2012).

Additionally, these schools outperformed their city peers on New York State English language arts and math exams. The two schools that implemented the model with the greatest fidelity (including offering the program to all students by Year 3) produced impressive results. At Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, which partners with University Settlement (a New York City settlement house), the percentage of third, fourth, and fifth graders achieving proficiency increased by 26 percentage points in English language arts between 2009–10 and 2010–11, compared to 3.3 percentage points citywide, and 17.3 percentage points in math,

compared to 2.6 percentage points citywide. At Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School, which partners with Abyssinian Development Corporation, the percentage of students in grades 3–5 achieving proficiency increased by 13.1 percentage points in English language arts, compared to 3.3 percentage points citywide, and by 18.5 percentage points in math, compared to 2.6 percentage points citywide (NYC Department of Education, 2012).

According to parent surveys in 2010–11, 93% of parents at Thurgood Marshall Academy and 96% at Young Scholars' Academy agreed their child's school offers a wide enough variety of courses and activities to keep them interested, compared to 84% of parents citywide. The survey also found that 96% of parents at Thurgood Marshall Academy and 97% at Young Scholars' Academy agreed their child was learning what he or she needed to succeed, compared to 91% citywide (NYC Department of Education, 2011).

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ExpandedED Schools Success Stories

The most successful partnerships team teachers with community educators in classrooms before and after 3:00 p.m.

- The principal at PS 188 in Lower Manhattan was concerned that social studies was getting squeezed out of the regular school day schedule. Teachers now collaborate with teaching artists hired through Educational Alliance, the school's community partner, to explore social studies through the arts in the expanded day. Together they deliver a rich curriculum that incorporates art forms such as drama and painting. As an example, fifth grade students who were studying government worked with a drama coach to stage mock elections.
- Fannie C. Williams, a K–8 school in New Orleans, re-opened 2 years after Hurricane Katrina. The school partners with Vietnamese Initiatives in Economic Training (VIET) to expand the learning day. Teachers and community educators continuously share data to identify students struggling with reading and math and target them for small group interventions. VIET community educators lead students in targeted skill-building activities.
- Strong collaboration is also evident at Young Scholars' Academy. When Principal Danika LaCroix was assigned to reconstitute a failing Brooklyn elementary school, she vowed to give her students as rigorous and broad an education as children get in more affluent neighborhoods. The school divided 3 extra hours among intensive math, English, and enrichment experiences chosen by students and parents, including dance and robotics. While community staff members work alongside teachers with small groups of students who need intensive instruction in math and literacy, students who are more advanced do homework with help from community staff.

Recommendations

- *School districts or schools and community organizations that are interested in expanding learning time and opportunities should start by assessing their readiness. Learnings from quality afterschool programs and strong community-school partnerships should inform their efforts.*
- *Schools that are considering more time as a turnaround strategy should partner with strong community organizations. By blending their resources and coalescing as teams, they can educate the whole child at a cost public funding can sustain. Schools and their community partners should involve families in school redesign and ongoing feedback to sustain progress.*
- *When thinking about increasing learning time, schools and their partners should assess gaps in the curriculum and identify student interests in order to ensure a well-rounded curriculum that deeply engages students and leads to higher achievement. More time will neither yield better results nor engage students more deeply unless it is used well.*
- *Schools should consider expanding the learning day to 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. to match parents' working hours and give students a third meal.*
- *Schools should track students' progress in attendance, grades, and behavior as well as academic achievement. Students who are chronically absent, fail math or science, or have significant behavior problems during the elementary and middle grades are at highest risk for dropping out of high school.*

For More Information

www.expandedschools.org

Is Your District Ready to ExpandED? A System-Level Readiness Tool

This tool was designed for school districts, cities, and intermediaries to assess their readiness to implement the core elements of ExpandedED Schools. A school-level tool is also available.

Three Ways to Expand Learning

These schedules show how ExpandedED Schools in Baltimore, New Orleans and New York City have re-engineered time and resources to an expanded school day.

A Fiscal Map for Expanded Learning Time (ELT)

TASC developed this fiscal map, analysis, and set of policy recommendations in an effort to (1) show how many sources of funding schools and community partners can bring to expanded learning approaches—29 at the federal level alone—and (2) highlight for policymakers who control one or more of these funding streams just how complex this picture is.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lucy N. Friedman is the founding president of TASC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to giving all kids expanded learning opportunities that support, educate, and inspire them. Under her leadership, TASC has helped 442,000 kids, supported 528 public schools, partnered with 369 community and cultural organizations and colleges, and trained 21,000 community members to work in schools. She holds leadership positions in organizations including the Afterschool Alliance, the Coalition for Science After School, the New York State Afterschool Network, and the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems.

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