



**Using Expanded Learning to  
Support School Reforms:  
Funding Sources and Strategies**

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EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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## **Using Expanded Learning to Support School Reforms: Funding Sources and Strategies**

Educators, policymakers, and community activists are all struggling to find new and better ways to prepare students for successful futures. One strategy for bolstering educational achievement that is gaining widespread acceptance focuses on adding more learning time into children's days. This idea is not new: Twenty-five years ago, *A Nation at Risk* argued that children need more time in school—longer days and longer years—if they were to succeed (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). What is new is that today's leaders are looking at a wider array of approaches for expanding learning time.

Further bolstering this strategy is a growing body of literature that shows that out-of-school learning plays a key role in educational achievement and school success. Based on a growing sense that schools cannot do this work alone, states, districts, and individual schools are seeking ways to tap the resources of community partners to help ensure that every child is ready for success (see also "Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities," by Priscilla Little, pp. 9–23). The strategy is consistent with a growing body of research indicating that what children and youth do in the nonschool hours is as important as what they do in school, and that nonschool supports for learning and development support school and life success. Finding ways to finance expanded learning opportunities by bringing together resources from the education sector and other state and community partners and by taking advantage of the flexibility built into many funding sources to support innovations is central to expanding this strategy.

The information presented in this paper builds on several research projects conducted by Cross & Jofus over the past 1½ years on the financing and design of programs that expand time and learning opportunities to support education reforms. Throughout this work, our definition of expanded learning has been intentionally broad and includes initiatives that expand the traditional school day and/or school year, provide afterschool and summer programs, support community and service learning projects, and support online learning and mentoring programs. Data to support this work were collected from telephone and in-person interviews with school and district leaders, interviews with operators of nonprofit organizations and local intermediaries, and from pertinent websites. Together, these data provide insights into the ways that states, cities, and districts are using their resources to expand learning in support of a wide variety of reform approaches.

### **A Renewed Call for More Time and Learning**

The introduction of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001 ushered in a new era of accountability. NCLB has emphasized the need for students to achieve proficiency in core academic subjects and has drawn attention to achievement gaps across races and socioeconomic backgrounds. Strategies for increasing time for learning have grown in

popularity as more schools fail to demonstrate adequate progress toward education goals within the confines of the typical school day and school year. Because all children spend more time out of school than in school, programs that support children in the out-of-school hours are viewed by many as a key strategy for helping to narrow the achievement gaps.

The recent addition of powerful and influential voices in the field has also helped to propel this agenda, as follows:

- In June of 2008, a coalition of prominent educators and activists introduced the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education. This agenda is based on the belief that schools alone cannot close the achievement gaps highlighted by NCLB. The new coalition is seeking “to build working relationships between schools and surrounding community institutions” (Economic Policy Institute Task Force, 2008, p. 2).
- In January 2007, the Time, Learning, and Afterschool (TLA) Task Force, supported by the C.S. Mott Foundation, released a report titled *A New Day for Learning*. Built on the belief that critical learning happens both within and outside the traditional school day and school building, the report’s authors laid out a vision for educating children and youth that relies on a collaborative effort by schools, families, and community partners to create a seamless learning day (TLA Task Force, 2007). In November of 2008, the Mott Foundation announced grants to support two cities, Providence, Rhode Island, and San Francisco, California, to implement local New Day for Learning initiatives.
- In May 2008, the United Way of America announced that it would focus its giving and advocacy toward a 10-year goal of cutting the national high school dropout rate in half. With over 1,200 recognized affiliates across the country, United Way has a unique ability to support family, community, and school partnerships that promote better student outcomes by connecting in-school and out-of school supports (United Way of America, 2008).

In addition to these noteworthy efforts, President-elect Obama has called for an expansion of high-quality afterschool opportunities by doubling funding for the main federal support for afterschool programs, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, to serve one million more children (“Education: Expand,” 2008).

The support of these powerful champions, coupled with a growing number of expanded learning programs in states, cities, and districts across the country, have focused a spotlight on the role expanded learning opportunities can play in helping to support educational reforms and improvements.

## **Resources to Support Expanded Learning**

Almost universally, communities are using a combination of public and private funding to support education reform efforts that connect learning inside and outside of the school day. For the most part, states, districts and individual schools that are expanding learning time have

paid for these efforts by securing funding from public education budgets, a patchwork of other federal and state funds, local government programs, and by leveraging private resources from community partners and foundations (Deich, 2008).

## Federal Funds

Many of the public sources that reformers rely on for expanding learning come from federal sources, including the following:

- **Title I.** Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), most recently reauthorized under the NCLB Act, is the largest federal education program that supports disadvantaged children and youth. Title I funds are distributed to states and localities by formula to improve the academic performance of students who are failing or at risk of failing state standardized tests. Both districts and individual schools have discretion in how Title I funds are being used, and many are using Title I funds to help support expanded learning time, both inside and outside of the school day. For instance in Providence, Rhode Island, some of the district's Title I funds are being used to fund a coordinator at each middle school to connect students with community organizations providing afterschool programs. Many districts are also using Title I funds for summer school or other summer learning programs for students at risk of educational failure. In 2008, funding for Title I was \$13.9 billion<sup>1</sup> (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a). It is not clear, however, how much of that funding supports expanded learning programs. In addition to funding through the basic Title I program (Part A), other Title I subparts also support expanded learning—most notably the Supplemental Educational Services program.
- **Supplemental Educational Services.** The Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program, Section 1116e of the Title I program, provides additional academic instruction for eligible students in schools that have not met their goals with regard to state testing standards for three straight years. These services, which must be provided outside of the regular school day, include tutoring, remediation, and other educational interventions with the goal of helping more students to pass state tests. SES programs provide limited services to students—generally a few hours a week and rarely for the entire school year. Expanded learning programs are looking for ways to connect SES services to their initiatives. For instance, in Massachusetts several SES providers are working with Expanded Learning Time schools. This partnership allows schools and providers to take full advantage of the SES funding by aligning programming with other expanded learning activities. States can use up to 20 percent of Title I funds for SES and school choice, but it is likely that the amount spent on these services is much smaller due to low utilization of SES services (Zimmer, Gill, Razquin, Booker, & Lockwood, 2007).
- **Funding for School Improvement.** Section 1003(g) of the Title I program provides new funding for School Improvement grants. This funding enables states to support a variety of reform options for Title I schools that do not make adequate yearly progress for at

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for 2009 is currently under a continuing resolution.

least two consecutive years. States establish priorities for use of the funds and select which districts and schools will receive this funding. Authorized activities include the development and implementation of school improvement plans, professional development for teachers and staff, corrective actions such as instituting a new curriculum, and development and implementation of restructuring plans. These funds can support the integration of activities provided by community partners into the school day and expanding the school day and school year. The fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget for the School Improvement program included almost \$500 million<sup>2</sup> (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2009). This funding is relatively new, and many districts are receiving their first grants for the 2008–09 school year. Given the flexibility in how these funds can be used, it is likely that they will become an important source for expanding learning and other school reforms.

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers.** The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, authorized in Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is the only federal education program dedicated to providing programming before and after-school and during the summer. This state formula grant program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic and enrichment opportunities for students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. Schools in every state have 21st CCLC grants that support important pieces of their expanded time and learning strategy. In FY 2008, funding for 21st CCLC program was just over \$1 billion<sup>3</sup> (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b).
- **National School Lunch Program: Afterschool Snacks.** This federal child nutrition program, one of the few remaining entitlement programs, provides funding for meals and snacks in afterschool, summer, and before-school programs.<sup>4</sup> The federally subsidized meals and snacks often help attract children to out-of-school-time programs. Programs receive reimbursements for the cost of a healthy snack according to a schedule set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is estimated that afterschool programs receive approximately \$350 million annually in reimbursements from this program.
- **Americorps.** Administered by the Corporation for National Service, Americorps provides opportunities for 75,000 adults to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups. Americorps volunteers address critical needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security and other areas. In some states, nearly half of the Americorps members are working in schools or afterschool programs. Many expanded learning time programs utilize Americorps members to help manage and staff programs and to connect in-school and out-of-school learning. The 2008 budget for Americorps was approximately \$260 million.
- **Full Service Community Schools Program.** In 2007, Congress set aside \$5 million from the Fund for Improvement of Education (Title V, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary

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<sup>2</sup> Funding for FY 2009 is currently under a continuing resolution.

<sup>3</sup> Funding for FY 2009 is currently under a continuing resolution.

<sup>4</sup> Entitlement programs guarantee funding to every individual who meets established criteria.

Education Act) to establish the Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) program. An FSCS is a public elementary or secondary school that coordinates with community-based organizations and public/private partnerships to provide students, their families, and the community access to comprehensive services. The funding is awarded on a competitive basis to local education agencies and one or more community-based organization, nonprofit organization, or other public or private entity to help public elementary or secondary schools function as an FSCS (U.S. Department of Education, 2008c). In the fall of 2008, the first 10 grants were awarded to communities to expand and enhance community schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2008d).

- **The Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance Act.** The Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Progress (STEP UP) Act was authorized into law as part of the America COMPETES Act in the summer of 2007. STEP UP addresses the achievement gap among schoolchildren in Grades K–8 by establishing a pilot grant program to support high-quality summer learning opportunities for children in high-needs schools. This federal grant program supports six weeks of summer learning and enrichment, with curricula that emphasize mathematics, reading, and problem-solving skills aligned to the state’s academic content standards of school-year classes. State education agencies will be eligible to apply for funding under this program to provide summer learning grants for students in districts in their states. To date, no funds have been appropriated for this program.

In addition to the most commonly used federal funds identified above, many other federal sources can support programs in the out-of-school hours, including funding from the Child Care and Development Fund, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, Youth Opportunities grants, Social Services Block grants, Community Development Block grants, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, Juvenile Justice funds, Workforce Development funds, and funding for substance abuse prevention and obesity prevention. While districts and schools can use a variety of federal funds to support expanded learning, each program has its own purposes and comes with its own set of rules and requirements (Afterschool Investments, 2006). Aligning and coordinating multiple funds, where the original purpose was not expanded learning, generally make these funds harder to use effectively in the context of education reform.

## **NCLB Reauthorization—Potential Opportunities for Expanded Learning**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act authorizes many of the federal programs that are supporting expanded learning, including Title I, SES, 21st CCLC, and School Improvement fund grants. NCLB was scheduled for reauthorization in 2007, but agreement on a new bill was never reached; the law will remain in its current form until it is reauthorized. Reauthorization provides an important opportunity to modify the law and to improve, change, add, or eliminate programs or requirements. Several of the proposed changes in 2007 draft legislation provide insights into the kinds of changes being considered that could bring additional funding for expanded learning, including the following:

- **Proposed Expanded Learning Time Demonstration.** The 2007 House proposal to reauthorize NCLB contained language and funding to implement an expanded learning time demonstration similar to the program already underway in Massachusetts. The bill included funding for new competitive grants to state and local education agencies to develop expanded learning time schools. The proposal called on schools and local education agencies to form partnerships with community-based organizations and other community partners to help schools expand learning time by at least 30 percent. A version of this bill was reintroduced in 2008 as Senate Bill 3431, The Time for Innovation Matters in Education Act of 2008.
- **Proposed Teaching Fellows for Expanded Learning and After-School Act of 2007.** Also introduced in 2007 was legislation to establish a highly trained National Service Corps to support expanded day and afterschool learning opportunities. The bill called for partnerships with school districts and community-based organizations to recruit and retain new educators and leaders to support expanded learning. This program would provide funding for an important piece of the infrastructure for connecting in-school and out-of-school learning. This legislation was also reintroduced in 2008 as House Bill 7154 with the same name.
- **Changes to the Supplemental Educational Services Program.** The Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program came into being as part of NCLB's focus on accountability. The timing of reauthorization has reignited discussions about the program's structure and function. Although many proposals called for significantly changing or eliminating this program, one group of proposals is calling for better ways to integrate SES into school reform efforts. This could provide additional opportunities to support expanded learning.

Source: Deich, Sharon with Heather Padgette, *Dollars and Sense: A First Look at Financing A New Day for Learning*, December 2008 Prepublication Copy.

## State Funds

A growing number of states are also providing funding to expand learning, generally through afterschool and summer programs usually focused on supporting low-income children. The following states provide examples of this trend:

- **California**, through its After School Education and Safety Program (Proposition 49), is providing \$550 million for afterschool programs for low-income children in kindergarten through eighth grades. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to school districts and local partners (California Department of Education, 2008).
- **Kansas** is providing \$400,000 in grants for the Middle School Afterschool Activity Advancement Program that is designed to support academic enhancement and help middle school youth prepare for career and college opportunities during the school year and the summer. Grant funding is awarded on a competitive basis (Kansas State Department of Education, 2008).
- In **Connecticut**, the state provides approximately \$3 million to priority school districts for extended day programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2006).
- In **South Carolina**, the state is providing nearly \$7 million for Afterschool-School Program/Homework Centers to improve academic outcomes for children in schools that are not making progress according to NCLB guidelines (South Carolina Department of Education, 2008).
- In **Oklahoma**, the state superintendent appointed a Time Reform Task Force (2007) that has proposed lengthening the school year by 15 instructional days to improve the quantity and quality of learning time.

In addition, lawmakers in Minnesota, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Utah and Washington are considering proposals to expand learning time (Collaborative for Building After-School Systems, 2008).

## Local Funding

Many cities invest substantial amounts of local funds on programs that provide additional time for learning. These include efforts such as the Beacon program in New York City, a Saturday Scholars program in the District of Columbia, and a School-Age Child Care Program for elementary and middle school students in Palm Beach County, Florida. Most often, local funding comes from school district budgets, and city agencies. Not surprisingly, when funding comes through school districts, the main focus is supporting the academic needs of students. Programs supported with funding from city agencies such as Parks and Recreation, Community Development, or Police and Safety usually focus more on recreation and prevention activities, although a number of localities are working to infuse more academic content into city-

sponsored programs. Local funds are also an important source of support for summer jobs programs for older children and youth. (Visit the National League of Cities website at [www.nlc.org/iyef/education/afterschool/index.aspx](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/education/afterschool/index.aspx) for more information on local funding.)

## **Private Funding**

In many communities, private funding is playing a critical role in supporting expanded learning. Private partners supply funding to encourage innovation; directly support programs; and help build systems to improve program quality, accessibility, and financing. This involves direct fundraising as well as providing essential direction through participation on boards and steering committees (Deich, 2008).

Private funding is also used to fuel innovation. Many initiatives, including New Hampshire's Supporting Student Success through Extended Learning Opportunities Program and Chicago's Community Schools (see Expanded Learning in Practice section) have relied on private money to support pilot sites and model development. After these new models have proven their value—often through evaluations funded with private donations—advocates have been able to seek additional funding, both public and private, to expand programming.

Likewise, private funding is also helping support program operations in many communities. Even in places where public funding is available to support expanded learning, program leaders indicate that available public money is usually not sufficient and that many programs also rely on private funding to help support programming. This is the case in the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (see Expanded Learning in Practice section) schools as well as in many charter schools (Deich, 2008).

Finally, private funding is also behind much of the system-building work in cities and states. For example, the Wallace Foundation is supporting local intermediary agencies in five cities. These intermediaries are helping connect schools with out-of-school time opportunities that enhance learning (Wallace Foundation, 2008). Likewise, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is helping support statewide afterschool networks in 38 states (visit [www.statewideafterschoolnetwork.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetwork.net) for more information on the Mott-funded networks).

These networks provide a state-level forum to advocate for additional funding to support more high-quality afterschool and summer programming. And private money from Atlantic Philanthropies is behind the Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS). This group of local intermediary organizations from New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, Providence and Washington, D.C. is conducting research, sharing promising practices, and supporting a public policy agenda for more high quality afterschool opportunities (visit [www.afterschoolsystems.org](http://www.afterschoolsystems.org) for more information on CBASS).

## Expanded Learning in Practice—Examples From the Field

The rethinking of time and learning is at the center of many education reform efforts at the state, district and building level. This section discusses how education reform models at state, district, and building levels are being structured and financed.

### State Departments of Education

State departments of education have the ability to try out carefully crafted reform models at a scope and scale that can demonstrate effective practices. Through the design and funding of new models, they also have the ability to encourage partnerships with community organizations that help to blur the line between in-school and out-of-school learning. The following examples illustrate two different state approaches to education reforms that rely on expanded learning to improve opportunities and outcomes. While both of these initiatives are relatively new and serve only a small proportion of children in their respective states, they each hold the promise of more wide-scale reform.

- In 2005, the **Massachusetts** Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with Massachusetts 2020, launched the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative. Believing that children, especially those at risk, need more time to achieve proficiency in the standards-based curriculum and that all children deserve the opportunity to experience enrichment programs such as the arts, music, and sports, the ELT initiative provides state funding and technical assistance to schools that extend their school calendar by at least 300 hours per year (Massachusetts 2020, 2009). As of fall 2008, 26 schools were implementing ELT. ELT schools receive an additional \$1,300 per child to pay for the expanded day from funds provided by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.<sup>5</sup> This extra time is used to provide additional instruction in core subject areas, as well as more time for teachers to plan and learn. Schools partner with community-based organizations to provide enrichment and experiential learning opportunities. All ELT schools collaborate with partner organizations to bring additional programming into their schools. Partners help with programs that range from apprenticeships and mentoring to hands-on science and history lessons to athletic and arts classes. And the initiative is demonstrating results; the first cohort of schools participating in the ELT has made greater gains on state standardized tests than in past years (Annenberg Institute, 2008).
- In **New Hampshire**, the State Department of Education is changing its high school curriculum by introducing real-world learning as an integral part of students' experiences. Under the new program, Vision for High School Redesign: Supporting Student Success through Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs), high schools can voluntarily implement extended learning opportunities as an alternative way to earn credit toward graduation. The vision of this initiative is to expand the options of the

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<sup>5</sup> This does not include funding to support Massachusetts 2020 or other resources provided by community partners.

traditional high school classroom. In ELO schools, students of all abilities will have the option to learn in rigorous and relevant real-world settings and gain high school credit for that learning, based on demonstrated mastery of predetermined course-level competencies (New Hampshire Department of Education, n.d.). In the fall of 2008, students from seven high schools started earning credit for ELOs. The initiative—a partnership of PlusTime NH, the New Hampshire Department of Education, and the Concord Area Center for Education Support and QED (a local business)—is funded primarily by the Nellie Mae Foundation.

## Local School Districts

Local districts are finding new and innovative ways to expand time for learning as part of education reform efforts. Sometimes reforms are districtwide, and sometimes they target particular schools or students. Many of these reforms are piloted at individual schools with the hope of scaling up successful practices to serve more students. Districts smooth the way for reforms at individual schools by garnering support and providing resources and technical assistance. The following examples highlight two different district approaches to expanding time for learning as a piece of their reform strategies:

- In the fall of 2008, the **Syracuse, New York**, school district began implementing a districtwide adoption of the Say Yes to Education (SYTE) model to increase the high school graduation rate and college entry of low-income students. The model supports students throughout their school careers by providing afterschool, summer school, tutoring, and mentoring for all children—“giving them whatever it takes,” in the words of one official. Students who graduate from a Syracuse High School are then eligible for fully paid college scholarships at a large group of participating postsecondary institutions. The program began this school year for kindergarten through third graders in six elementary schools. Additional grade levels and schools will join the program each year until all schools and students are covered. SYTE in Syracuse is a partnership between Syracuse University, the School District of Syracuse, and the Say Yes to Education Foundation. It is receiving new funding from the state, city, and the SYTE foundation to assist with start-up, but over time, as the initiative is expanded to more schools, the district will have to reallocate resources to expand and sustain the reform. (Visit [cnycf.org/cnycf//tabid/161/Default.aspx](http://cnycf.org/cnycf//tabid/161/Default.aspx) for more information.)
- The **Chicago** public school system has invested in several initiatives to expand learning time that focus on providing both additional academic support and more enrichment. These include:
  - **A large Community Schools initiative.** Chicago Public Schools now has one of the largest community schools initiatives in the nation with 150 campuses. These community schools are true neighborhood hubs connecting the resources of diverse community partners to a range of activities including before-school and afterschool enrichment opportunities for students. Schools partner with at least one nonprofit organization and employ a full-time site coordinator who not only oversees and

coordinates programming but also serves as the liaison among parents, students, school personnel, and the community. A public-private partnership with the school district and private partners supports this growing effort. (Visit <http://cpsafterschool.org/program/> for more information.)

- **A summer enrichment program: Keep Kids Learning.** This comprehensive summer school program affords students in Grades 2–12 opportunities for academic, recreational, and social enrichment. The program enables schools offering mandatory summer school to enrich and expand their offerings into the afternoon period as well as expand services to students not required to attend summer school. Younger students enjoy an array of afternoon activities and regular field trips; older students spend the afternoon as “counselors,” earning money for working at elementary schools with Keep Kids Learning programs. Keep Kids Learning also employs teaching fellows—college students majoring in education—to provide more attention to individual students. In 2008, the program was offered in 20 elementary schools and two high schools, serving more than 3,200 students. School district funds support this program. (Visit <http://cpsafterschool.org/program/> for more information.)
  
- **A community-based afterschool program for teens: After School Matters.** After School Matters is a nonprofit organization that partners with the City of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and Community-Based Organizations to expand out-of-school opportunities for Chicago teens. Named for the original Block 37 arts program that was housed on a vacant city block, the city’s innovative gallery37, science37, sports37, tech37, and words37 programs provide Chicago teens with engaging activities that develop skills to help get them ready for the workplace. This program is funded by coordinating city resources from partner organizations, and by raising funds from private sources including business and philanthropy. (Visit [www.afterschoolmatters.org](http://www.afterschoolmatters.org) for more information.)

## Individual Schools

Schools are also finding creative ways to add more time for learning to help struggling students. The following examples highlight a variety of approaches that public schools are using to provide additional time:

- **Barcroft Elementary School** in Arlington, Virginia, began a whole-school reform designed to better meet the needs of its students, many of whom are low income and English language learners. With the backing of parents and teachers, an entrepreneurial principal was able to win over the district and school board on the idea of modifying the school calendar. By shifting the traditional calendar to a year-round schedule, school staff minimized summer learning loss for students and limited burnout for the many students who attended summer school. The new schedule includes the same number of

school days with several breaks interspersed throughout the school year. During these intersessions, students can choose from a menu of enrichment camps that infuse math and literacy into the lessons. Intersession activities are led by community partners, parents, and other professionals in the community. And all this is being done using current funding. By combining their basic school funding, Title I money, summer school funding, and an exemplary-projects grant from the district, Barcroft leaders are able to manage this new schedule with their current funding. This includes most of the cost of intersession programming. If a family is able to pay it, a \$50 fee is collected for a student's three weeks of intersession programming. While the program is still too new to determine results, the teachers, who helped design the program, believe that the new schedule is helping to improve learning.

- **Achievable Dream Academy** in Newport News, Virginia, is a unique partnership between Newport News Public Schools, the City of Newport News, and the local business and military communities. Achievable Dream Academy provides at-risk students in kindergarten through 12th grade an expanded learning program that includes year-round school for 8 hours a day, 180 days a year. The schedule includes three mandatory, 10-day intersessions where students participate in enrichment and accelerated activities or remediation work if necessary. The curriculum at an Achievable Dream Academy raises the level of expectations students have for themselves; intensive reading programs, accelerated math courses, and mandatory etiquette classes are just a few examples of the varied approaches to learning that underlie the school's philosophy. The school receives its regular public school allotment that covers core expenses. Additional funding from other sources—mostly the business community—covers the costs of all of the expanded time activities. In 2007, the business community raised \$1.5 million to support expanded learning at Achievable Dream Academy.

## **School-Community Partnerships: The Key to Success for Financing Expanded Learning**

A growing body of research is pointing to the central role of partnerships between schools and community organizations in financing more time and learning. By pooling expertise and resources, schools and community partners are breaking down barriers between in-school and out-of-school learning and finding new ways to help students succeed at school and beyond. The following lessons and suggestions provide ideas for building or expanding school-community partnerships that support expanded time and learning initiatives.

**Partnerships Take Time.** Bringing schools and community partners together requires a significant time commitment both for start-up and for ongoing operations. Initiatives that had the luxury of a planning grant or a planning year indicated that it made a large difference for implementation. Planning time allowed faculty, parents, and school administrators to work out a variety of details that could have hampered the transition to a new schedule or reform model. Partnerships also appear to benefit from time for joint training for school personnel and staff from community organizations. Finally, many expanded learning initiatives provide a staff

person who allocates dedicated time for working with community partners. These partner liaisons ensure that all partners have what they need to work together in this new environment. A dedicated source of funding to support partnership development can help ensure success and lay the groundwork for securing additional resources down the road.

**Flexibility From All Partners Is Needed for Success.** Equally as important as dedicated time for working together is a willingness to learn about, and be respectful of, different organizational cultures. School districts are accustomed to being independent actors with a bureaucracy often separate from other public entities and community organizations. In addition to their own bureaucracies, many schools also must work closely with union representatives when making changes to school calendars and curricula. Community organizations are accustomed to their own rules and sometimes are frustrated by the slower action of schools or government agencies. For partnerships to work, each partner must come to understand and respect the others' strengths and limitations. When done right, these partnerships open new avenues for coordinating existing resources and provide access to a wider array of resources.

**A Pot of Flexible Funding—Even a Small One—Can Make All the Difference.** Almost universally, program leaders indicated that they could not do their work without some discretionary funding. Leaders indicated that these funds are needed to deal with “emergency” situations for individual children, urgent needs in particular classrooms, or time-sensitive opportunities that arise. One program leader reported a last minute invitation to take a group of students on a field trip to see a museum exhibit that would close in a few days. Museum staff would accompany the class and help make connections between the exhibit and the science curriculum at the school. The principal used his discretionary funds to pay for the bus for the field trip, indicating that he never would have been able to get approval from the district for a bus within the tight time frame.

**Successful Initiatives Rely on a Dedicated Entity to Coordinate the Work.** In many cases, districts and communities that are successfully expanding time and learning have an organization or entity that functions as the hub for expanded time and learning activity. The entity can act as the go-between for schools and community partners, as a vehicle to bring in the community and youth voices, and as a neutral party for convening community partners and stakeholders. In some cases, these entities also work to build public will and garner additional resources for expanded learning time programs. This role is often played by a local intermediary organization such as Mass 2020 in the case of the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time initiative, or Afterschool Matters in Chicago. The role of coordinator also can be played by a school or school district, government organization, local foundation, or other entity (e.g., the mayor's office plays this role in many cities). Leaders of expanded time and learning initiatives have been clear about the need for this type of centralized support, which includes dedicated staff and resources to coordinate this work. States and communities seeking to expand time and learning will need to consider the best way to make sure resources are available to support these coordination tasks.

**Expanded Time and Learning Programs and Initiatives Benefit From a Shared Identity and a Common Language.** While many states and localities are interested in new ways to expand time for learning, few speak about their initiatives using similar terms. Is it *expanded learning*, *extended learning*, *summer learning*? Finding the right words to convey this work is critical for communicating with community partners, parents, and policymakers. One way to address this is by branding—a strategy that has worked well for the early-care field and for many of the initiatives highlighted in this paper. When a name and identity have been created for the work, parents, students, policymakers, and community partners understand exactly what is being offered.

## **Conclusion**

The reality that out-of-school learning plays a key role in student achievement and success is motivating states, districts, and schools to find ways to expand time for learning. Finding the resources necessary to support more time and learning is a key challenge in adopting this strategy. This paper shows that the states, districts, and schools currently expanding time and learning are doing so by utilizing resources from federal, state, and local funds, as well as from private sources. Most commonly, initiatives rely on education funds from federal, state, and district programs to implement reforms. The paper also shows that school districts can take advantage of a variety of current resources, such as Title I and 21st CCLC, to jumpstart expanded learning programs.

This paper also makes clear that school-community partnerships are a key to success for many expanded learning reforms. Community partners provide facilities, staff, know-how, and programming that can complement school curricula. They also provide an opportunity to engage students who are not succeeding during the traditional school day by offering a different type of learning experience. Furthermore, community partners can provide access to other sources of funding from libraries, arts councils, community development agencies, and parks and recreation departments to help support expanded learning reforms.

Finally, this paper illustrates a variety of reform approaches for states, districts, and schools that may serve to inspire others and lead the way for new efforts to expand time and learning.

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