

3S Expanded Learning Time

The Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Working Group worked for six months to develop the action plan described in the full report for an expanded learning time initiative in Rhode Island. This action plan is based on the original ELT recommendation submitted to the Governor in December 2008, the subsequent research on best practices, and outreach to Rhode Island and regional stakeholders. Because it is critical to the success of such an initiative to include all stakeholders from the beginning, the membership of the Expanded Learning Working Group was broad and inclusive (see the end of this supplement for a complete list of members).

The Working Group held mini-conferences with Massachusetts 2020 and the After-School Corporation in New York City, both of which have instituted versions of expanded learning time. Representatives of the ELT Working Group and Massachusetts 2020 have met with almost all of the core urban superintendents and some union representatives in Rhode Island. The Working Group visited an ELT middle school in Massachusetts and held a forum on ELT for community-based organizations on June 15, 2009. The group also conducted outreach with legislators and legislative staff.

ELT: Not Just an Add-On

A movement has been growing to see ELT as an integral part of the school day, with clear academic and youth development benefits, rather than as an “add-on.” As Robert Stonehill and colleagues (2009, p. 9) observe:

From the education leaders of the New Day for Learning Task Force to the signatories to the Broader, Bolder Approach to

Education statement to President-elect Barack Obama, there is growing momentum in the education policy arena to educate the children and youth of the United States in more intentional and aligned ways. This momentum is creating a range of increasingly integrated education approaches at multiple levels, including those that rethink the use of time across the school day and year, such as expanded learning opportunity models. At the same time, increased investments in afterschool and summer learning over the past decade have resulted in a substantial evidence base about the academic, social, health, and other benefits of afterschool programs and have created a strong case that they are important pathways to learning, particularly when they work with schools to support student success. Yet, too often, these supports continue to be seen as “add-ons,” not integral to in-school education efforts.

And as Melissa Lazarin (2008, p. 1) notes:

Expanded learning time . . . can be particularly beneficial for ELLs [English-language learners]. . . . Time plays a unique role in the educational career of the English-language learner. Time affects the facility of learning a new language and the likelihood of high school graduation, especially among immigrant ELLs in high school.

The Importance of Partnerships among Schools and Community-Based Organizations

The diagram below, from the Program for Afterschool Education and Research at Harvard, prepared in 2002, demonstrates the evolution of the relationship between expanded learning time and the traditional school day. As the diagram shows, partners move from operating as separate entities with separate goals and outcomes to working in conjunction with one another to create an expanded learning system with a shared vision, mission, and outcomes.

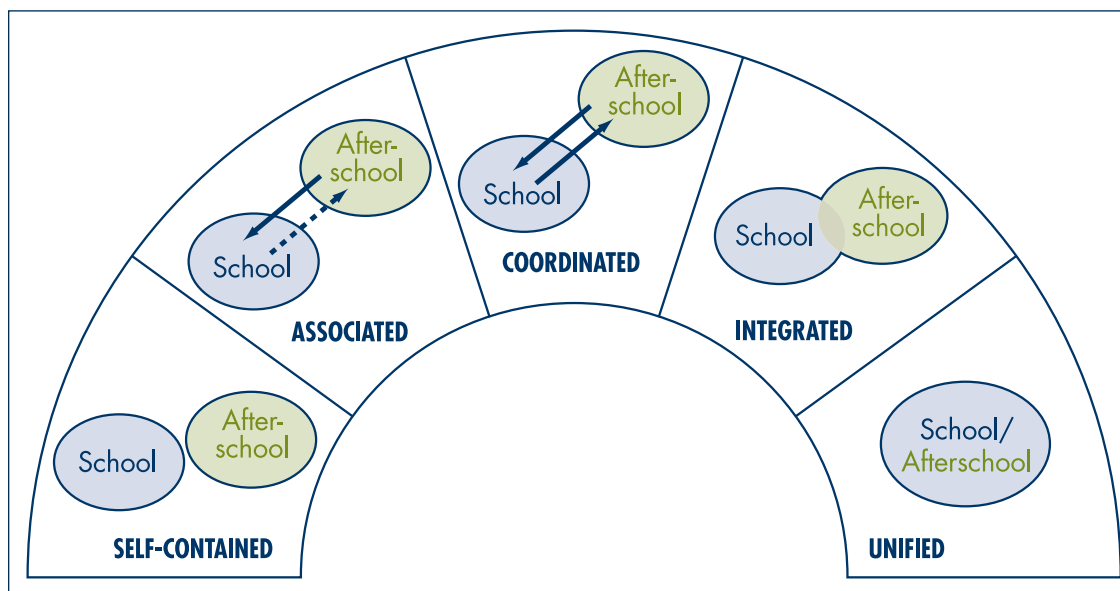
At the heart of successful expanded learning opportunities are sound, sustainable partnerships among afterschool and summer program providers and schools working together to support learning. Although partnership development does not happen overnight, over time, effective partnerships move from being transactional to transformative in nature. (Enos & Morton 2003)

Five principles support movement toward transformative, sustainable school-afterschool/summer partnerships (adapted from Stonehill et al. 2009, pp. 13–14):

- a shared vision for learning and success, including academic, social, and emotional success;
- blended staffing models that enable crossover among school, afterschool, and summer staff;
- school-afterschool/summer partnerships at multiple levels within the school and district;
- regular and reciprocal collection, sharing, and communication about information on student progress;
- intentional and explicit contrast between school and afterschool environments.

Specifically, partnerships with afterschool and summer learning can help schools to

- provide a wider range of services and activities, particularly hands-on learning enrichment and arts activities that are not available during the school day;



Source: Program for Afterschool Education and Research, Harvard, 2002

- support transitions from middle to high school;
- reinforce concepts taught in school;
- support students who struggle with classroom instruction by offering alternative ways to learn and interact with educators and peers;
- engage students in fun at school, enhancing the learning experience throughout the day and preventing dropout;
- improve school culture and community image through exhibitions and performances;
- gain access to mentors and afterschool staff to support in-school learning.

Partnerships with schools can help afterschool and summer programs to

- gain access to and recruit groups of students most in need of support services;
- improve program quality and staff engagement;
- foster better alignment of programming to support a shared vision for learning;
- maximize resource use such as facilities, staff, data, and curriculum;
- develop targeted strategies to engage youth with attendance and discipline issues.

Finally, strong school-afterschool/summer partnerships benefit students in important ways beyond academic support. They can

- provide continuity of services across the day and year;
- facilitate access to a range of learning opportunities;
- share information about specific students to best support individual learning.

Implementation of the ELT Initiative in Rhode Island

Following are further details regarding implementation of the ELT recommendations.

Key Components

- Participation in the ELT initiative is voluntary.
- Input from youth on the design of the new learning day is critical.
- Applications must be submitted by partnerships between at least one community-based organization and a public school/district (including charter schools) with high-poverty rates; and/or districts with a high percentage of students not achieving proficiency as reported through the New England Common Assessment Program.
- Funding will be appropriately and equitably divided among the participating school and its partners and will include alignment of existing afterschool funds at the schools participating in ELT.
- Sites will be expected to use data for continuous improvement.
- To qualify to participate in the ELT initiative, applicants must meet the following guidelines.
 - ✦ Applications must contain, but not be limited to, the process the district and its partners will use to create a collaborative expanded learning time implementation plan, the stated intent to add no less than 300 hours to the current school schedule for all students in participating schools, the rationale for expanded learning time including specific goals and outcomes, the data system that will be used to collect relevant data, and the anticipated budget.

- ✧ Schools must demonstrate how they will meaningfully include partnerships with high-quality community partners, including afterschool and summer programs, higher-education institutions, arts and cultural institutions, businesses, and other youth development organizations that have the experience and capacity to serve as a partner in a comprehensive ELT program.
- ✧ Applicants must demonstrate how the expanded learning time will include an appropriate mix of additional time spent on: 1) academics; 2) enrichment opportunities such as small-group tutoring, music, arts, sports, and project-based experiential learning; and 3) time for teacher preparation and/or professional development, including joint professional development with community-based partner staff.
- ✧ Planning/design teams must include teachers, union representatives, principals, parents, community-based partners, and youth, who together share responsibility for ensuring ELT's success.
- ✧ Applicants must demonstrate a staffing structure that includes teachers from the participating school and staff from partner community-based organizations and/or staff from an existing school-based afterschool program partner; a full-time or part-time site coordinator (could be a CBO employee or school employee); and at least one school employee who devotes a portion of the day to ensuring high educational goals, standards, and alignment. Staff-to-student ratios may vary, but average 1:10 to 1:15.

Proposed Timeline

- Fall 2009 Design and release request for proposals for ELT planning grants
- Late October/early November 2009 Proposals due
- November 2009 Demonstration sites selected for planning
- November 2009 Assemble design teams and map planning process
- Ongoing Communicate with youth, teachers, parents, and community partners
- Ongoing Schedule periodic meetings with unions and community
- Ongoing Provide technical assistance
- Ongoing Secure additional funding
- November–December 2009 Identify clear goals, priorities, and desired outcomes for ELT redesign
- December 2009–January 2010 Prepare preliminary ELT plan to submit to RIDE
- February–April 2010 Map out details such as staffing, budget, schedules, etc.
- February–May 2010 Establish any necessary union/district labor agreements for staffing ELT
- April–June 2010 Prepare final ELT plan to submit to RIDE
- July 2010–June 2011 Implementation of demonstration sites

Examples of Potential Partner Organizations

Please note: A more comprehensive list is available in the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance database <www.afterschoolri.org>.

- YMCAs
- YWCAs
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Providence After School Alliance

- Woonsocket After School Alliance (collaboration of several organizations)
- Newport County Collaborative for Youth
- New Urban Arts
- Newport Community School
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Child Opportunity Zones
- Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance
- Mt. Hope Learning Center
- Traveling Theater
- Apeiron Institute
- Save the Bay
- Volunteers in Providence Schools
- Rhode Islanders Sponsoring Education
- Capital City Community Centers
- Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence
- Urban League of Rhode Island
- City Year Rhode Island
- Girl Scouts of Rhode Island
- Rhode Island 4-H/University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension
- Big Sisters of Rhode Island
- Newport Art Museum
- Kids First
- Dorcas Place
- Plan USA
- Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership
- Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
- Public libraries
- John Hope Settlement House
- AS220
- Providence City Arts for Youth
- Washington County Coalition for Children
- Youth Pride

Promising Work under Way

The Task Force believes it is important to recognize and build on structures that already exist in Rhode Island. There are also successful programs in Massachusetts and New York that can serve as models to adapt to the Rhode Island context.

Rhode Island

RIDE: Graduation Requirements and Basic Education Program Regulations

Rhode Island is on the cutting edge of secondary school redesign, looking to broaden instructional delivery and definition of student success, all without compromising quality and standards. Clear progress toward meaningful secondary school redesign is currently happening in Rhode Island. Our transition away from traditional Carnegie units to a more individualized, competency-based assessment of student success is highly conducive to the integration of expanded learning opportunities into the overall assessment process.

RIDE has also just finalized the new Basic Education Program (BEP) regulations. There are several provisions that speak specifically to expanded learning opportunities and engagement with community-based organizations. The BEP regulations call for local education agencies to “develop a system for the provision of a broad array of high-quality expanded learning opportunities that will strengthen school engagement, support academic success, and expand all students’ educational experiences.”

District Initiatives

In all of the five core Rhode Island urban districts, there are robust afterschool and summer programs already working closely with the schools. These partnerships represent a step along the way in the evolution toward enhanced collaboration and integration into a fully redesigned and expanded learning day. In Newport at the elementary level, there are an extended school-day program and an extended school-year program that focus on special education students. At the middle and high school levels in Newport, there is a comprehensive Community School model in place. Central Falls, beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, will be implementing an expanded day for all sixth-graders.

Community-Based Initiatives

In addition to district initiatives, there are several community-based initiatives under way in Rhode Island.

NEW DAY FOR LEARNING INITIATIVE

The New Day for Learning initiative in Providence is a partnership between Providence Public Schools, the mayor's office, and the Providence After School Alliance. The purpose of this three-year initiative is to build upon Providence's afterschool and school systems to design and implement a seamless day for learning that redefines how, where, and when students learn so they can complete Rhode Island's new graduation requirements and succeed in the twenty-first century. New Day for Learning (2009) describes its vision:

New Day for Learning is not a curriculum or one-size-fits-all program; it's a twenty-first-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. Before-[school], after-school, and summer programs are a few of the places in and out of the classroom that are already using these learning approaches to engage students and increase their chances for success.

If we want our students to excel academically, explore careers, and develop the rigorous knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in today's global society, we need to start thinking and talking about education differently. Imagine all students everywhere fully engaged in learning.

A unique and promising feature of this new initiative is the hiring of a director of expanded learning. The director of expanded learning opportunities is employed by the Providence After School Alliance (PASA); is housed at the Providence School Department; and reports directly to the superintendent, with oversight from the executive director of PASA, the mayor, and the PASA board of directors. For more information, see <www.mypasa.org> or <www.edutopia.org/new-day-for-learning-two>.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers are federally funded through the U.S. Department of Education, Title IV, Part B, and administered by RIDE. The purpose of the funds is to provide resources for out-of-school-time programs, especially afterschool and summer programs, for students in high-poverty, low-performing schools. There are programs in Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, Newport, Cranston, North Kingstown, and West Warwick. Programs operate for ages K-12; there are sixty-

five school/community sites serving about 15,000 students. Each program operates as a partnership between a school(s) and a community partner (community and/or faith-based organizations). The fiscal agents include schools, districts, and community-based organizations.

CHILD OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Managed by RIDE, Child Opportunity Zones (COZs) are school-based or school-linked family centers that provide services and supports to students and their families to promote school success and academic achievement. There are ten COZs throughout Rhode Island targeting high-poverty neighborhoods, including centers in Bristol/Warren, Central Falls, Cranston, Middletown, Newport, North Kingstown, Pawtucket, Providence, Westerly, and Woonsocket. COZs work to address the education, health, and social service needs of children, youth, and families to reduce barriers to learning and promote positive outcomes.

RHODE ISLAND AFTERSCHOOL PLUS ALLIANCE

The Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA), a statewide policy intermediary organization, is in the process of implementing two projects that incorporate elements of expanded learning time.

- **Expanded Learning Opportunities and High School Graduation Credit** The Nellie Mae Education Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, in partnership with RIASPA and RIDE, released a request for proposals (RFP) for planning grants for up to two pilot sites to devise methods of attributing credit toward high school graduation to students who participate in high-quality expanded learning opportunities, including afterschool and summer programs. For a full copy of the RFP, please visit <www.afterschoolri.org>.

- **Rhode Island Summer Learning Demonstration Project** Managed by RIASPA and funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the Rhode Island Summer Learning Working Group has been working to identify best practices around summer learning. Their goal is to mitigate summer learning loss of underserved learners through the provision of programming that connects the best aspects of in-school summer programs with the best aspects of community-based enrichment and experiential summer learning. To test their theories, the working group will support pilot summer learning projects among partners who
 - ◇ implement effective ways to link summer programming with public schools to create a seamless system of education that addresses summer learning loss through the use of high-quality, engaging, experiential summer programs;
 - ◇ design programs that integrate learning with engaging, experiential, project-based activities in ways different from the regular school day.

Massachusetts ELT Initiative

The Massachusetts Department of Education, in partnership with Massachusetts 2020, a private nonprofit organization, began implementation of an expanded learning time initiative in 2006. There are now twenty-six schools in twelve districts participating in the program, serving well over 5,000 students. Schools that are accepted in the program receive state funds of \$1,300 per child to implement an expanded schedule. Partnerships between schools and community-based partners are so critical that Massachusetts 2020 recently encouraged joint proposals from ELT schools and external

organizations for multi-year, integrated school-community partnerships meant to enrich the experiences of students, teachers, partnering organizations, and families.

School-Level Design Principles

- Significantly more school time: at least 300 more hours per year (e.g., two hours per day)
- All students participate
- Balanced use of expanded time: redesign adds time for: 1) core academics; 2) enrichment; and 3) teacher planning and professional development
- Redesign planning process: small school redesign teams – including teachers, administrators, union representatives, school partners, and parents – create data-driven redesign plans
- Partners to expand opportunities: schools encouraged to partner with community organizations, businesses, higher-education institutions, art and cultural organizations, and health institutions to expand opportunities for students

Policy-Level Design Principles

- Voluntary school participation
- Technical assistance for redesign and implementation
- Public financing: implementation funded with public money, ideally through a state policy framework, to ensure future sustainability and connections to the broader reform agenda
- Per child allocation: figure depends on local factors and the amount of added time (in Massachusetts, \$1,300 per student)
- Evaluation and continuous improvement: constant review of data to ensure continuous improvement and learning

Results

- Students have shown promising gains in achievement.
 - ◊ Two years of data show students across the Cohort 1 ELT schools achieved higher rates of proficiency compared to their historical performance in all three subject areas.
 - ◊ Students in middle grades (sixth through eighth) performed especially well, with six of the seven ELT schools with middle grades narrowing the achievement gap with the state in math and five of the seven in English Language Arts.
 - ◊ Several middle school grades in a number of schools posted particularly impressive gains, narrowing the achievement gap by at least 50 percent in just two years.
- Students express high satisfaction, particularly because of expanded enrichment programs (music, arts, drama, apprenticeships, physical fitness, etc.) and more hands-on learning opportunities. There are over 150 partner organizations that support the enrichment programming.
- Parents and teachers are highly satisfied.
 - ◊ Parents see academic gains for their children and more engaged learning.
 - ◊ Teachers are able to enhance their teaching and believe students are learning more.

New York City ELT Initiative

The After-School Corporation (TASC) and the New York City Department of Education are just completing the first year of a three-year, privately funded ELT initiative in ten elementary and middle school sites throughout the city.

Core Elements of TASC ELT Model

- The principal leads the school's ELT program. The principal includes ELT in the school's vision, sets the expectation that it is part of the school day, and recognizes that the community-based organization offering enrichments is part of the school community.
- A lead community-based organization (CBO) provides learning opportunities for students that are diverse, varied, and engaging. A full-time site coordinator works with a diverse staff (e.g., teachers, CBO staff, AmeriCorps Corps service members) to offer students a variety of academic and enriching hands-on activities across a range of topics.
- Students in ELT/NYC have 30 percent more learning time. Most programs run from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., five days per week.
- CBO and school teachers and administrators collaborate and communicate. An ELT planning team develops and maintains a collaborative plan, and school and CBO staff members communicate regularly about day-to-day issues. A school staff member who is designated as an education liaison ensures continuity between day school and CBO-led activities.
- ELT program meets cost and sustainability models. Overall cost of the ELT/NYC program is \$1,600 per student for more than 300 students, and \$1,800 per student for fewer than 300 students.

Leadership and Staffing

- Ten participating schools, grades K–8
- At least half the school population or 300 students participate in each school (currently student participation is voluntary)

- 30 percent more learning time for students
- Principal has financial and programmatic leadership
- The school and community organization work in partnership; community partner manages at least 50 percent of budget
- Full-time CBO site coordinator
- School staff assigned to ELT
- Diverse staff (e.g., ethnicity, age, professional affiliation, experience)
- Low adult to student ratios

Approach

- Additional time aligned to school's culture and goals
- Rigorous, child-centered learning experiences used to support academic achievement and twenty-first-century skills
- Shared planning time and professional development for all staff
- Engages parents as partners
- Expands learning through new experiences not offered during the traditional school day

Expanded Learning Time Working Group Members

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