



**TESTIMONY  
BEFORE**

**New York State Senate and  
New York State Assembly**

**Elementary and Secondary Education Budget Hearing**

**TESTIMONY BY  
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**ExpandedED Schools**  
by TASC

Good afternoon. My name is Lucy Friedman and I am the President of TASC. I want to thank Senator Flanagan, Senator DeFrancisco, Senator Smith, Assemblymember Nolan and Assemblymember Farrell for the opportunity to testify today.

TASC is dedicated to giving all kids expanded learning opportunities that support, educate and inspire them. Our vision is that kids from all backgrounds will have access to the range of experiences and world class education that all families want for their children. Schools will support students' intellectual, creative and healthy development and prepare them to thrive in a democratic society.

Our roots are in New York State's movement to equalize educational opportunities. From an initial \$125 million investment from Open Society Foundations, TASC leveraged more than \$1 billion in New York City for after-school programs, revolutionized standards for after-school programs throughout New York State, and helped create many initiatives which have sustained and grown the after-school field. Since our inception 14 years ago, TASC has helped more than 450,000 kids by supporting after-school and expanded learning programs at more than 500 public schools in New York City and beyond.

At the end of our first decade, we challenged ourselves to apply the lessons from our long-term external evaluation studies, which demonstrated that in the most effective programs, the host school and its community partner operated as one team with a common vision for student progress. Together the principal, teachers, parents and community educators planned learning activities that reinforced and expanded on what kids learned during the school day. They shared responsibility and accountability for supporting and educating the whole child. We were also compelled by lessons from charter schools, showing a connection between more learning time and positive student outcomes.

In our expanded learning time model, ExpandedED Schools, elementary and middle schools work with TASC to expand the time and ways kids learn. We do this by building an active, balanced learning day that gives students approximately 35% more learning time at 10% additional cost to the school day. By making better use of existing public funds, ExpandedED Schools is affordable and will attract both new public and private investments.

It is this experience that informs my testimony today. While we are very supportive of the concept of extended learning time in the Governor's budget proposal, there are some changes which we believe would make it even stronger.

### **1. Definition of Extended Learning Time.**

To ensure funds are used to deliver effective models of extended learning time, it is critical to define extended learning time in budget language. Without such a definition, guidance or competition language might divert funds away from what is understood or intended by the legislators. A strong definition may also help agency staff to align other funding streams to create more cohesive and efficient programs to extend learning.

We believe the best legislative definitions of extended or expanded learning time include the following components –



- Adding significantly more time by expanding the school day, school week, or school year to increase learning time for all students;
- Using the additional time to support a well-rounded education that includes time for academics and enrichment activities;
- Providing additional time for teacher collaboration and common planning; and
- Partnering with one or more outside organizations, such as a nonprofit organization, with demonstrated experience in improving student achievement.

## **2. Mandatory Community Partners.**

We believe that community partners are an essential component to expanded learning. Community partners can help strengthen schools and help teachers and principals give all kids the support, instruction and inspiration that add up to a great education.

### **Community partners get results.**

The federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center program supports school-community partnerships across the nation. Annual performance data shows that students who regularly participate improve their reading and math grades. According to teachers, more than three-quarters of participating students improved homework completion and 72 percent showed improvements in behavior.

### **Community partners bring resources.**

Community partners bring a variety of funds to expanded learning initiatives. These funds, when leveraged with traditional school day funds, allow programs to maximize resources especially in times when budgets are so tight. All resources are used to support student learning. TASC recently did a fiscal analysis of public funding sources that can support more learning time - we identified 29 at the federal level alone. Those include youth development funds available to community organizations to develop multiple dimensions of students' skills, creativity and grit.

### **Community partners bring talent.**

They enrich school faculty and combat the narrowing of the curriculum with talented teaching artists, science leaders, coaches and college students who model success. AmeriCorps members and other community educators team with teachers to offer small group instruction and meet the needs of each child.

### **Community partners build safety nets.**

One trauma—like an eviction or the absence of a parent—can derail a student and disrupt a classroom. Teachers make heroic efforts but have only have so much capacity to deal with hardships while also providing excellent instruction. Community partners connect families to needed services and get kids the help they need. Through soccer or chess or robotics, they give even the most demoralized students a chance to be great at something.



**Schools are stronger when communities and families get involved.**

Community educators build bridges between families, teachers and principals. Many come from the neighborhoods schools serve and speak the language of parents. They represent community interests and goals within school leadership teams. They contribute to the sustainability of school reinvention by giving families a voice from the start.

**3. Enrichment.**

The current language in the budget bill describes extended learning time as a way to allow for “additional time spent on core academics.” While we agree strongly that students need additional learning time and supports in the core academic subject areas, we also think it is important that additional time is used towards a balanced curriculum. When schools have to whittle their curriculum, they narrow opportunity and inspiration when they should be expanding it.

In our core elements, schools are able to offer an additional 35% more learning time. Schools, their community partners and families sit down together to assess the needs and interests of their students. They set explicit goals for school improvement and student advancement. Then they program the school day with more small-group instruction, a longed-for school band, a daily dose of hands-on science or whatever it takes to meet the needs of their particular student body.

The curriculum will differ from school-to-school, but all should embrace these priorities:

**STEM Learning (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)**

Some 80 percent of future jobs will require a STEM background but American students rank 25th out of 34 developed nations in mathematical literacy and problem-solving, and girls and disadvantaged students are disproportionately under-prepared in science. A school with expanded learning can facilitate both formal STEM learning and informal activities that excite kids' interest in science and tech.

For example, at the Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School (TMALS), in Harlem, teachers and community educators are trained in a hands-on science curriculum. For some teachers, it is the first time they've had science training. Students have time in the expanded school day to apply science concepts and skills. The STEM program at TMALS was nationally recognized as one of five examples described in *Strengthening Science Education* by Kathleen Traphagen and commissioned by the National Center on Time and Learning. In one lesson, Mouse Count, students see how a snake's skeleton is constructed and compare it to their own spines. They then go on to create their own meadows and learn about the interactions between snakes and mice, applying new concepts, gathering evidence and reasoning from the evidence about what snakes need to survive. And, absolutely critical to STEM learning, they reflect on those experiences, talking with one another about their ideas, as a community of fellow scientists. On the 2010 New York state standardized science test, nearly 92 percent of TMALS fourth graders scored proficient or above compared to 71% the year before and New York City's average of 83 percent.



## **ExpandED Schools by TASC**

### **Hands-On Collaboration and Problem Solving**

These are the skills most in demand by employers. But they're also the most overlooked by time-pressed schools.

### **Physical Education and Exercise**

Research shows that daily exercise improves kids' physical health and boosts their thinking and math skills. The poorest kids are the most likely to have recess eliminated and often have limited opportunities to be active outside of school. Additional time will allow students daily opportunities for sports and movement.

### **Arts Education**

Many students get less art instruction than required by state regulations. Community partners can bring in teaching artists to allow students to explore creative outlets.

TASC's ExpandedED Schools model includes the points referenced above – a balanced curriculum with enriching learning opportunities and community partners. This approach has wide appeal, because it has the right balance of structure to deliver results and flexibility to meet local needs. The result is a sustainable and scalable way to expand learning opportunities for students.

It's important to note that expanded learning with community partners also has demonstrated results. TASC worked with 10 New York City public schools from 2008 to 2011 to pilot its expanded learning initiative. An external evaluation of TASC's three-year pilot found that 85% of teachers reported that expanded learning had improved learning for participants. In schools implementing the model with fidelity, there was a positive and statistically significant effect of TASC's expanded learning model on academic achievement and attendance.

### **Funding**

We believe that the right path for expanding learning in New York and elsewhere is for schools to partner with community organizations to expand the day. It is both more cost-efficient and more cost-effective – we are able to leverage existing public education and youth development funds and use them more efficiently, without taking resources away from existing providers.

Let's take an example, P.S. 186 in Bensonhurst, which adds 3 hours to each school day. The school has adjusted some schedules to provide additional time in the afternoon. And, 10 out of 35 classroom teachers willingly stay into the afternoon and are paid the union-contract rate of \$41.98 per session. The school picks up the tab for this by allocating funds from flexible Title I funds and other dollars. Youth development funds cover 50 community educators and teaching artists who offer new instructional practice and offerings that balance the curriculum (e.g., videography, science lab, arts and sports). The community organization and school administrators work together to coordinate activities and align learning to the common core-based state standards. Providing the same model using only teachers would be cost-prohibitive.

Compared to a model using only extended teacher time, school-community partnership is more cost-efficient. Each school dollar leverages two youth development dollars. The school-community partnership is also significantly more cost-effective, requiring only \$200,000 in additional funds to serve 500 students (\$400 per student), compared to an estimated \$1.1 million in new dollars to expand the day using only teachers.



## **Community Schools**

We were also pleased to see \$15 million in support of community schools that become hubs of student and family services. Community schools offer another opportunity to offer an extended school day. While we appreciate that the legislation recognizes community partners as a criterion for a quality proposal, we would encourage you to mandate community partner involvement in community schools. As mentioned above, community partners bring a wealth of resources to expanded learning opportunities and schools – their involvement is critical to ensuring children receive the well-balanced curriculum and services they need to grow up healthy and to be prepared for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

## **Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention Program**

In addition, we're grateful that funding for the Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention remained level at \$24.3 million. The program currently supports 40,000 kids in more than 200 programs throughout New York State.

When schools and community organizations build their capacity to work together more effectively and efficiently, we get greater results from the tax dollars we invest in education and youth. Expanded learning opportunities that join schools and community partners together reverse historic inequalities by closing the opportunity gap, which in turn, closes the achievement gap.

## **Conclusion**

I'd like to thank you once again for the opportunity to testify again today. New York State a chance to give disadvantaged students the learning time and opportunities they need to meet the ever-escalating demands of life in a knowledge economy. By including community partners in any plan we also give New York's kids and families all the supports they need to succeed. I would urge the Legislature to double the amount of funding available to \$40million to allow even more students from throughout New York State to benefit from an expanded learning opportunity in their school.

TASC looks forward to working with the Assembly, Senate, Governor's Office and the State Education Department to reinvent schools to encompass great teaching, exciting hands-on learning in topics like science, and support for students to develop the traits they need to overcome poverty's stresses.