

SECTION II

The Four Pillars of a Comprehensive Community Schools Strategy



Courtesy of Ben Filio for Remake Learning

First Pillar: Integrated Student Supports

Second Pillar: Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities

Third Pillar: Active Family and Community Engagement

Fourth Pillar: Collaborative Leadership and Practices

SECTION II

Second Pillar: Expanded and Enriched Learning Time and Opportunities

Expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, the second pillar of community schools, are essential to schools' capacity to support students' academic growth, as well as to help them develop socially, emotionally, and physically. In addition to supporting rich, student-focused instruction in classrooms, community schools provide students with as much as one-third more learning time, in which they experience arts, physical activity, small group, or individualized academic support, and hands-on learning activities across a range of subject areas.

In high-quality community schools, educators collaborate with community partners to provide well-structured learning activities during out-of-school time and summer, using school facilities and other community spaces. This approach makes clear that enriched learning time is the responsibility of both schools and communities. Programs vary depending on community priorities. For example, in Boston, students visit communities to examine environmental justice topics with a broad range of community partners, including Outward Bound, Boston Harbor National Park, Boston Nature Center, and the University of Massachusetts, Boston. In Oakland, academic learning is organized around career themes and partners with local businesses for internships, job shadowing, and volunteer opportunities.

In many community schools, partner organizations, in collaboration with teachers, also support academic and other learning during the regular school day, through internships, service learning, Linked Learning, STEM programs (science, technology, engineering, and math) and other community, arts, or work-based opportunities.



Enrichment activities emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving.

After-school, weekend, and summer programs provide academic instruction and individualized support.

Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities

Some community schools lengthen the regular school day and/or year to provide more required classroom time, as is the case in New York and Boston. Whether required or voluntary, well-designed, expanded learning time and opportunities are aligned with the schools' curriculum and learning goals.

Why Expand and Deepen Learning Time and Opportunities?

Young people spend a small fraction of their waking hours in schools. However, those who live in more affluent communities have access to academic support and enrichment beyond the school day and year, including tutoring, experiential learning (science and computer coding camps, for example), sports, music, and art. Consequently, these students have more learning time and more opportunities to succeed in life.⁷ These advantages are not accessible to all students. Due to uneven distributions of both public and private resources, families living in low-income communities usually lack access to these rich supplementary learning opportunities.

“These differences in learning opportunities widen the achievement gaps between young people from high- and low-income households.”

These differences in learning opportunities widen the achievement gaps between young people from high- and low-income households. Policies that expand and deepen learning time and opportunities can help close these gaps.⁸ Rich opportunities to learn can increase academic and beyond-academic outcomes, including improved student attendance, behavior, and achievement, higher graduation rates, development of social, emotional, and leadership skills, and reduced involvement in juvenile crime.⁹

In community schools, community partners can provide supplemental academic instruction, enrichment, one-on-one mentoring and tutoring, projects where students pursue their own interests, and learning activities beyond the school campus, including community-based learning. These partners should work in collaboration with the schools' educators so that the learning is connected and not just an add-on. This strategy allows community schools to draw on the rich cultural and social resources in communities that are often absent from traditional

schools. It also increases the number of knowledgeable adults from whom students can learn—again, something that advantaged families are able to routinely provide to their children. These additional adults can support and mentor students, increasing their access to expertise and community role models. They also provide students a greater chance to develop trusting relationships that foster meaningful learning and development and can offer additional support that responds to students' needs.

Another compelling reason to make expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities a key element of community schools is that this approach supports curricula and instruction that leads to deeper learning and fosters sustained school improvement. This is especially important in schools where testing and accountability pressures have reduced or, in some cases, eliminated students' access to a broad array of content—social studies, science, art, music, and physical education. When teachers and community partners collaborate to plan and provide access to a broader curriculum, students have the opportunity to pursue non-tested content and deeper learning pedagogies, such as project-based and experiential learning, both during and beyond the conventional school day.

The Need is Great and Public Support is Strong

Curriculum inequalities between schools serving different communities are such that white and more advantaged students are more likely than those in low-income communities of color to have enriched

learning opportunities (including the arts and advanced academics) as part of their schools' regular programming.¹⁰ More than half of all families expressed a desire for a summer learning program for their children, including two-thirds of those living in communities of poverty and half of those living outside poor areas.¹¹

In 2014, parents reported that more than 11 million children (1 in 5 of all school-age children) were unsupervised between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m.¹² Parents of approximately 19.4 million children who were not in an afterschool program (including both unsupervised and supervised children) said that their children would participate if a program were available. Although this view is shared by parents across all types of communities, 83% of parents in communities of concentrated poverty said that their children would participate.¹³

Families in all communities believe that afterschool programs can help their child develop social skills (86%), gain workforce skills, such as teamwork and critical thinking, and improve his or her school behavior (77%) and attendance (74%). They also agreed that this additional time can excite their child about learning (79%) and reduce the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors (83%).¹⁴

Families also view afterschool and summer enrichment programs as a source of support for working parents. This is true in all communities, and more than 8 in 10 parents in communities of concentrated poverty agreed that such programs help working parents keep their jobs (83%).¹⁵

Eighty-five percent of parents (across political parties, geographies, neighborhoods, and racial and ethnic backgrounds) favored public funding for afterschool and summer opportunities in communities that have few opportunities for children and youth.¹⁶

Ninety-two percent of the general public favor public funding of afterschool programs and 75% agree that schools are justified in seeking additional public funds to pay to provide such services.¹⁷



Courtesy of Ben Filio for Remake Learning

Policy Principles

For maximum impact, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities should be key elements of policies establishing and supporting community schools, along with the other three pillars discussed elsewhere in this resource. That being said, many states and localities have enacted expanded learning time and opportunities policies on their own, rather than as part of a community school approach. The discussion and principles that follow draw from the best policies on expanded learning time—whether alone or as part of a comprehensive community school approach.

The effectiveness of expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities depends on the quality of the policy design and implementation. Policies that include the following strategies are most likely to have a positive impact on school conditions and student:

1. Focus additional time on student learning—broadly conceived to include academic, social, creative, and emotional development. Align activities with the school’s learning goals. Aim expanded programming at strengthening curriculum and instruction during the regular day, as well as providing additional enrichment and support. Effective programs are not just about safety and supervision before and after school and during summer breaks, as important as those needs are.
2. Provide sufficient additional time, as research shows that more time is associated with better outcomes. For students to receive the greatest benefit, policies lengthening school days and/or years should add at least 300 hours (or a 25% increase over existing class time). Out-of-school time programs (including afterschool and summer offerings) must provide additional time to accommodate both academic and enrichment activities.¹⁸
3. Establish standards for quality and use them as the basis of quality control, review, and improvement processes.
4. Support partnerships with community organizations, public agencies, and employers who provide additional staffing and augment programming. These include expanding the spaces in which students learn, as well as increasing the number of adults with whom they are learning and the content of what is being learned.
5. Design schedules to accommodate families’ needs for supervised settings after school and during summer. In programs that are voluntary, attendance should be monitored and reported. Attention should also be given to student recruitment and ensuring that families have information about available resources and voluntary activities.
6. Include teachers, nonteaching staff, their professional organizations, community-based organizations, and community members as key partners in designing and implementing plans that lengthen the school day or year or change staffing arrangements.
7. Remove unnecessary barriers to facilities-sharing between the school system and community-based organizations.
8. Target funds and other supports to high-need schools.
9. Ensure sufficient and sustained funding for program stability.

10. Allocate funding to support school system partnerships with community-based organizations and professional learning opportunities for both educators and community staff.

Policy Types/Examples

States and localities have used different policy mechanisms to support expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities. Below are some noteworthy examples.

State funding and guidance for out-of-school time learning partnerships. State legislatures have enacted measures that provide funding for school-community partnerships that expand and deepen learning time and opportunities by providing additional programming and staff. In the strongest cases, as illustrated below, these measures provide renewable grants to high-need schools or community partners, along with clear guidance about how programs should be implemented. Some are connected to child and community well-being goals and are jointly administered by education and other agencies.

- A voter-initiated ballot proposition established California’s [After School Education & Safety Program \(ASES\)](#), which mandated that \$550 million each year be made available for kindergarten through 9th grade afterschool programs. The policy is strong because it targets high-need communities, requires that schools collaborate with and leverage community partners to provide safe and educationally enriching alternatives for children and youth during nonschool hours, provides technical assistance, and requires regular assessments and a data-driven approach to program quality improvement. The California Department of Education administers the program, which is guided by [A Vision for Expanded Learning in California Strategic Plan](#), and evaluated by a set of [Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs](#).
- In **Maryland**, [House Bill 1402](#) in 2016 created the Public School Opportunities Enhancement Program to provide grants to local school systems, community schools, and nonprofit organizations for expanding or creating extended day and summer enhancement programs, and for some school-day programs. This policy is strong because it requires use of the Maryland Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs’ Quality Standards Framework to monitor and assess the quality of funded OST programs. It also requires the governor to allocate \$7.5 million in annual program funding for fiscal years 2018 through 2021.
- **New York’s Advantage After School Programs (AASP)**, administered by the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), is an outstanding example of how funds outside of education can be used to support expanded learning time and opportunities. The policy is strong because it requires substantial additional time, provides a mix of academic and enrichment activities aligned to the instructional program during the regular school day, and gives preference to communities with high levels of poverty. Five-year grants are awarded to organizations providing youth development opportunities to school-age children and youth for at least three hours directly after school five

“State legislatures have enacted measures that...expand and deepen learning time and opportunities by providing additional programming and staff.”



Courtesy of Brian Cohen for Remake Learning

days a week during the regular school year. (Some programs also extend into the evening hours and operate during school breaks.) AASPs are supported by school, community, public, and private partnerships and offer a broad range of educational, recreational, and culturally and age-appropriate activities that connect to curriculum and instruction during the school day. Youth and family involvement in program planning and implementation is a key component.

AASPs are funded primarily through state funds and a contribution of federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds. The program received approximately \$19.76 million in the state fiscal year 2017–18 budget appropriation. These funds enable OCFS to continue contracting with 137 community-based organizations to provide afterschool services for approximately 17,000 children and youth at 176 program sites across New York State.

- **New York** has also adopted expanded learning time programming as part of a comprehensive approach to school safety. In January 1999, Governor George Pataki created the Task Force on School Violence, whose report, *Safer Schools for the 21st Century: A Common Sense Approach to Keep New York's Students and Schools Safe*, was issued in October 1999. The task force report led to the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act. The law includes the [Extended School Day/ School Violence Prevention \(ESD/SVP\)](#) program and provides three-year grants to organizations that support students through extended school day and/or school violence prevention programs. These collaborative projects can be initiated either by a school district or by community-based organizations. The program is strong in that it encourages a comprehensive approach, providing a balance of academic enrichment and youth development activities, such as tutoring in areas of math, reading and science, recreation, student leadership development, peer intervention training, and conflict resolution programs. Priority is given to high-need school districts, as defined by poor school performance and high frequency of violent incidents. ESD/SVP is administered by the New York State Education Department. The program was funded at \$24 million in 2017.

- In 2017, **Washington’s Senate Bill 5258** established the Washington Academic, Innovation, and Mentoring (AIM) Program. The program enables eligible neighborhood youth development entities to provide out-of-school time programs that include educational services, social-emotional learning, mentoring, and linkages to positive enrichment and recreational activities for youth ages six to 18 years. The policy’s strength lies in its requirement that 60% or more of the academic, innovation, and mentoring program participants must qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and that organizations applying for the grant have an existing partnership with the school district and develop a data-sharing agreement in order to engage in a continuous effort to improve program quality. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction must submit a report annually, including pre-/post-testing results. The program was funded in 2017 at a total of \$125,000.

State funding for longer school days/years. State legislatures have enacted measures that provide a solid foundation for longer school days and years by authorizing, defining, and/or funding expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities with incentive grants programs, an increased formula funding, and support for professional development and technical assistance.

- The **Massachusetts** Legislature in 2005 established the **Expanded Learning Time Initiative**. Funded through a state budget line item, the initiative provides competitive grants that enable schools serving high-need students to provide an additional 300 hours of support and instruction by lengthening the school day, by adding days to the school year, or a combination of both strategies. The strength of the policy is that it directs the additional time to be used for high-quality learning opportunities that will motivate and engage students with more and better instructional time in math, literacy, science, and other core subjects and with enrichment and applied learning activities that align with state standards. The policy also requires that schools schedule time for planning, analysis, lesson design, and professional development for teachers and professionals from partner community-based organizations.
- **New Mexico’s K-3 Plus program**, a legislative initiative, increases time in kindergarten and the early grades to narrow the achievement gap between students from low-income families and other students and to increase cognitive skills and test scores for all participants. The program extends the school year in eligible schools for grades K-3 by 25 instructional days by starting the school year early. Eligible schools include those in which 80% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch or schools that have received a D or F grade in the state’s accountability system. To strengthen the policy, the legislature has added for FY 19 a pilot program “K-3 Plus 4 & 5” that keeps students who participate in K-3 Plus with the same teacher and cohort of students during the regular school year. The strength of the policy would be further increased if it was made a schoolwide program, rather than the current one that is based on voluntary student enrollment.

Municipal policies that support out-of-school time learning opportunities. Mayors and other municipal leaders play a leadership role in advancing expanded time policies and supporting coordination among programs. Over the past 5 years, at least 77 of the 275 largest U.S. cities have worked to coordinate afterschool options.¹⁹ These citywide efforts tend to be governed by public agencies (the mayor’s office, a city agency, or the school district), nonprofit organizations, or by networks of organizations that share management and oversight responsibilities. City departments that oversee out-of-school time programs include parks and recreation, community and neighborhood



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services, police, or youth services. In most localities, partnerships among the city, school districts, and community organizations are key. Mayors, local government, and school boards can increase access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities by redirecting existing local revenue or creating new funding sources to support such programs.

- In 2003, **Denver, Colorado** Mayor John Hickenlooper contributed \$300,000 to the Denver Public Schools Foundation to invest in afterschool programs. The Mayor's Office for Education and Children, the Denver Public Schools Foundation, and Mile High United Way partnered to form the [Lights on After School initiative](#) that funds programs in public elementary and middle schools; it also provides professional development for Denver afterschool providers. In addition, the partnership is supported by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. The city also invests over \$1 million from its general fund to support center- and school-based afterschool programs through the parks and recreation department.
- **Los Angeles'** Better Educated Students for Tomorrow ([BEST](#)) program was created in 1988 by Mayor Tom Bradley to increase adult supervision of children during after school hours. The public-private partnership, including the Office of the Mayor, the city of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the private sector, operates as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation and provides afterschool programs for children ages 5-12 in low-income communities at no cost to families. Activities include homework assistance and academic support, as well as enrichment and recreation activities. In 2016, the program was funded at \$31 million (7% private dollars) and served 25,000 children and their families at 193 school sites.
- Since 2006, **Rhode Island's** Providence [After School Alliance \(PASA\)](#), with the leadership of mayors and school superintendents, has raised over \$24 million from a mix of public and private funds. One-half of PASA's budget is raised from city and public education funding sources. The other half has been supported by national and local corporate funders as well as a growing list of individual donors. PASA's system serves 14,000 middle and high school youth at a cost of approximately \$1,200 per student, including investments in transportation, meals, staffing, and programs. The program uses school facilities after hours and budgets approximately \$500,000 to pay the instructors in [80 community organizations](#) committed to serving youth.

- In 1991, **San Francisco** voters approved an amendment to the city charter that guaranteed funding in the city budget for youth programs. The [Children’s Amendment](#) created a new [Children’s Fund](#) and designated a portion of property taxes each year—3 cents per \$100 of assessed value—for supportive programs and services. The fund was reauthorized in November 2000. The Children’s Fund, administered by the city’s Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, supports child care, recreation, afterschool care, arts, health, workforce readiness, youth empowerment, violence prevention, educational enrichment, and family support. The program is particularly strong, as the department undertakes a three-year planning cycle that involves assessing community needs, determining what types of services will be supported, and using a competitive process to select nonprofit organizations that will receive funding. The department also leads a citywide effort to foster collaboration among city departments, the school district, private funders, families, and community organizations to enhance program access and quality.

Local policies that support longer school days/years. In cities where the mayor has some authority over the school system, the city—in partnership with school boards and teachers’ unions—can lengthen the school day and/or year.

- In January 2015, **Boston**, with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) agreed [to expand the school day by 40 minutes](#) at 60 elementary and middle schools beginning with 20 schools in the 2015–16 school year. The agreement was ratified by a vote of the BTU teachers by a 4-to-1 margin. The city contributed the additional funding needed to cover extra pay for teachers and additional staff, such as music and art teachers who provide more enrichment during the longer day. Expanded learning time (ELT) schools submitted implementation plans, with each school having a unique focus based on the needs of its students, ranging from world languages to project-based learning. Among the program’s strengths are its inclusion of summer hours, teacher-led trainings for teacher facilitators of the ELT program in each school, and a 40-minute block of teacher-led collaborative planning time that all ELT schools have incorporated into their schedules. By 2018, [BPS](#) had offered extended learning time to over 23,000 students.
- In **Meriden, CT**, Superintendent Mark Benigni and the local teachers’ union, in partnership with the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club, added 100 minutes of engaging, personalized, technology-rich learning time every day (the equivalent of 40 additional school days) at three low-performing schools in communities that lacked activities and support for children during after school hours. Teachers and community partners work together to review the overall curriculum and align enrichment activities with the schools’ instructional goals, and community partners participate in professional learning communities. The project has led to greater student and family engagement, decreased absenteeism, and student growth data that has exceeded district targets and state averages.²⁰
- **New York City** Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2015 established a program that designated 94 of the city’s lowest-performing schools as [“Renewal Schools,”](#) and required a range of interventions, including an extra hour of instructional time each day. Schools were also

“The project has led to greater student and family engagement, decreased absenteeism, and student growth...”

encouraged to offer summer school. The Renewal Schools were incorporated into the NYC Community Schools Initiative (described in Section I, “Policies That Advance Community Schools”).

Additionally, in some local school districts, school boards, superintendents, and educator unions have collaborated to support longer school days.

Implementation

High-quality implementation is a crucial determinant of positive program outcomes. High-quality programs do not happen by chance. They result from policy choices, resource allocations, and technical assistance that support both staff capacity and student participation. They also depend on active family and community engagement, which is addressed in Section II, “Third Pillar: Active Family and Community Engagement.”

Characteristics of high-quality implementation

1. Expanded learning is part of the core work of the school site. District leaders communicate their commitment to strong expanded learning partnerships and school site leaders communicate that the afterschool program is a site priority.
2. High-quality programs monitor attendance, reach out to families when a student is absent, build close relationships with families and youth, and provide support around issues that might undermine attendance.²¹
3. Staffing structures blend roles across school day and after school time, so that some staff work in both settings. Many districts hire school day teachers as “academic liaisons” to the expanded learning programs. These staff members help bridge the school day and after school or summer learning strategies and structures.
4. District leaders encourage and facilitate collaborative staffing through personnel policies, investments in planning time, union contract provisions, and compensation structures.
5. Teachers, teacher unions, and other school staff are active partners in program development and implementation.
6. Professional development around integrating and aligning regular day and out-of-school-time programming enables educators and partners to develop consistent practices, shared language, and collaborative relationships.
7. Community participation is incorporated at every point in the process, from program design to evaluation and plans for program improvement.

Endnotes

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About The Partnership for the Future of Learning

The [Partnership for the Future of Learning](#) is a national network dedicated to an affirmative, equitable, evidence-based vision of a racially-just remodeled public education system. This playbook makes available research and tools to create a future of learning together, for all of us.

Back Cover Photography

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