

MORE AND BETTER LEARNING

Year One Report on Expanded Schools

An analysis of data from TASC's national demonstration of a longer school day shows that elementary and middle school students improved their academic achievement, attended school more often and benefitted from improvements in school culture.

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, TASC launched a national demonstration of its ExpandED Schools initiative in 11 elementary and middle schools in New York City, Baltimore and New Orleans. TASC helps each school partner with a strong youth-serving community organization, such as a settlement house or community development corporation, to add three hours to the conventional six-and-a-half hour school day. Teachers and principals coalesce with their community partners into powerful teams that support students cognitively, physically and emotionally. Together they redesign schools to meet their shared goals for students and deliver on the promise of a great public education for every child.

ExpandED Schools align and efficiently deploy the resources that each partner brings to the school (including human capital and revenues). As an example, community partners enrich each school's faculty by bringing in talented teaching artists, sports coaches, AmeriCorps members and others who help reverse the narrowing of the curriculum, support kids in dealing with stress and hardship

and free up teachers to plan, collaborate and deepen instruction.

Our collective goal is to give disadvantaged students in urban schools more opportunities to develop their talents, more support to overcome the challenges of poverty, and more time to achieve at the high levels essential for success in the modern workplace. The ExpandED Schools framework offers enough structure to get results on student outcomes, but enough flexibility so that each school community can customize the learning day to meet the needs of its students.

TASC provides principals and faculty with tools and coaching on everything from incorporating arts into the common core to beefing up hands-on science. To leverage public investment, we raise private investments from major supporters of expanded learning opportunities including The Wallace Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the Ford Foundation. We work with local intermediaries (Partnership for Youth Development in New

Orleans and the Family League of Baltimore City) to embed this school improvement strategy in participating cities. And we advocate at the state, city and school district levels to create the conditions needed to spread and sustain this innovation.

ExpandED Schools incorporate these four core elements into their redesign:

- More time for a balanced curriculum
- School-and-community partnerships
- Engaging and personalized instruction
- A sustainable cost model

The core elements grew from what TASC learned through our leadership of a pilot project to expand the learning day in New York City public schools from 2008 to 2011. That pilot, in turn, was built on proven practices and results TASC achieved by developing a strong model for after-school programs operated by community organizations in public schools. We also drew on research from the most successful charter and other public schools that showed additional learning time was a critical factor in better student outcomes. The research suggests that more time alone will not drive improvement, but that more time used well can offer significant extra support for students to thrive academically and build important life skills for success in college and career.

This report presents findings from the first year of this demonstration project. We also share lessons learned by TASC and our partners as schools begin to break from the outdated, 19th-century school calendar.

RESEARCH

This report is based in part on an evaluation of ExpandED Schools by Policy Studies Associates (PSA), TASC's external evaluator for the national demonstration. In the first year of

its three-year evaluation, PSA focused on how well schools were implementing the elements of the TASC ExpandED approach.

The PSA researchers developed a rubric intended to measure fidelity to the ExpandED Schools model. The rubric was designed with a very high bar for excellence in order to measure growth from year to year. PSA conducted interviews and observed learning activities to score each ExpandED School using the rubric.

In addition to PSA's external evaluation, TASC engaged in a careful analysis of official student data. To establish this report's findings and lessons learned, we also relied on our own school visits, observations, conversations with and feedback from school-and-community partners and reports from schools to TASC.

FINDINGS

1. Students increased their math proficiency in ExpandED Schools, surpassing citywide gains in each of the three cities.

Since the implementation of ExpandED, students improved their math proficiency in all cities at rates that exceeded citywide gains as measured by state tests (see charts beginning p.5). New York City students improved their math proficiency over two years at better than double the rate of improvement citywide.

2. Students improved their school attendance in ExpandED schools.

Policymakers and others have expressed concern that adding time to the school day will drive down attendance. In New York City (the only city for which TASC was able to obtain overall attendance data), students in ExpandED Schools increased their attendance rate by a meaningful .9%, translating into an additional 1.6 more days of school, on average,

for every student. As did other city schools, we saw decreases in chronic absenteeism (students who missed 20 days of school or more). The percentage of students attending school 98% of the time or more rose by more than five percentage points, from 29.6% to 35%.

3. Students, teachers and parents ranked ExpandED Schools higher than citywide averages on safety, communication, student engagement and academic expectations.

Each year, the New York City Department of Education administers a survey intended to assess each school's learning environment. ExpandED Schools' communities responded to surveys at higher rates than schools citywide, suggesting teachers and families felt their voices would be heard. Teachers, parents and middle school students rated ExpandED Schools higher than schools citywide in all four survey categories, and ExpandED Schools outpaced citywide improvements. In ExpandED Schools, 97% of parents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their children's education.

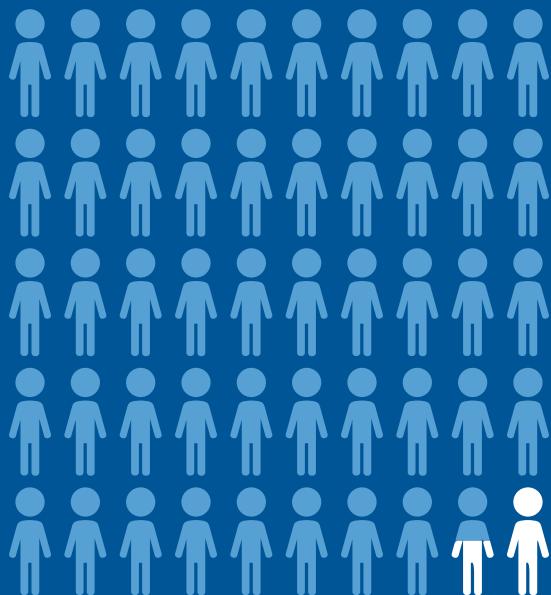
4. Students have an enriched curriculum in ExpandED Schools.

Students at ExpandED Schools engaged in more of the following learning experiences than students citywide, according to parent reports: physical education, art, music, computer skills/technology, tutoring, dance, team sports, health, foreign language and theater.

5. Middle school ExpandED students feel supported and challenged.

Students in grades 6 to 8 in ExpandED Schools in New York City reported a more positive school experience than did students citywide. Nearly 97% said that adults at their schools help them understand what they need to do to succeed. More than 98% said they need to work hard to get good grades.

NEARLY 97% OF PARENTS ARE SATISFIED OR VERY SATISFIED WITH THE EDUCATION THEIR CHILD RECEIVED LAST YEAR AT THEIR NYC EXPANDED SCHOOL:



6. Schools varied in how successfully they communicated school change to families.

PSA found wide variation among schools in how successfully schools communicated with families. Those that were more successful clearly articulated to parents that the school now had a longer learning day, and that community educators were full partners in redesigning the school day with a broad and balanced curriculum.

7. ExpandED Schools varied in the proportion of teachers who worked expanded hours, and teachers varied in their desire to work expanded hours.

Teachers at ExpandED Schools are not mandated to increase their hours. Across all ExpandED Schools, between 10% and 100% of the teachers elected to work additional

The ExpandED Schools framework offers enough structure to get results on student outcomes, but enough flexibility so that each school community can customize the learning day to meet the needs of its students.

hours (for which they received additional pay). Some continued with their grade and subject focus, others brought a passion such as yoga to students. Teachers who did not participate cited reasons including family responsibilities and long commutes.

8. ExpandED Schools used academic data well to guide instruction among traditional school staff but did not systematically share with partners.

ExpandED Schools use various tools to assess student progress, primarily in English and math. Often through data inquiry teams, teachers and administrators used data to guide instruction in these core areas but did not systematically share data on student progress with community educators in all schools. Schools reported they do not have adequate tools to gauge students' progress in developing habits such as resiliency, persistence and positive teamwork.

9. ExpandED Schools draw on multiple funding sources to support more and better learning time.

School and community partners tapped multiple public and private education and youth development funding streams to create cohesive longer school days with a different

funding pattern in each school. For an example of how PS 186 and NIA Community Services Network funded an expanded day with support from TASC, see chart on p. 9.

10. ExpandED Schools varied in the comprehensiveness of their redesign.

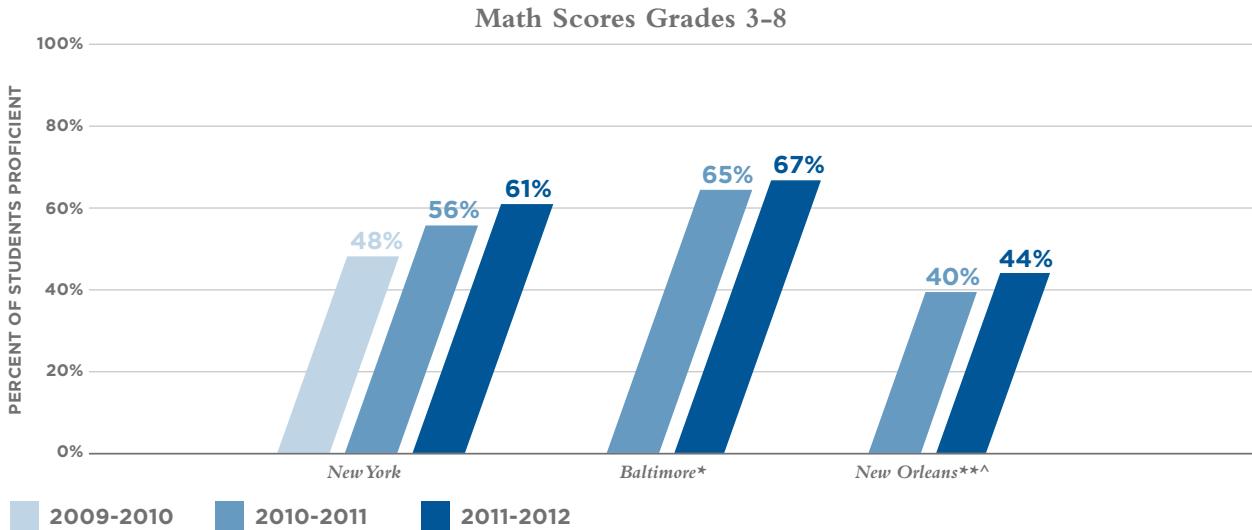
PSA researchers found that seven of the 11 schools demonstrated overall fidelity to the core elements of TASC's ExpandED model: more and better learning time for a balanced curriculum, school-and-community partnerships, personalized and engaging learning and sustainable cost. Schools that piloted an early version of TASC's model from 2008 to 2011 were more likely to show high fidelity.

11. Schools varied in how successfully they engaged families.

While ExpandED Schools and their community partners identify family involvement and communication as high priorities, PSA found that in Year One, members of the school staff and their community partners were not always aware of each other's outreach strategies, or they did not systematically coordinate their communications with families.

MATH ACHIEVEMENT IMPROVES IN EXPANDED SCHOOLS

NYC, Baltimore and New Orleans



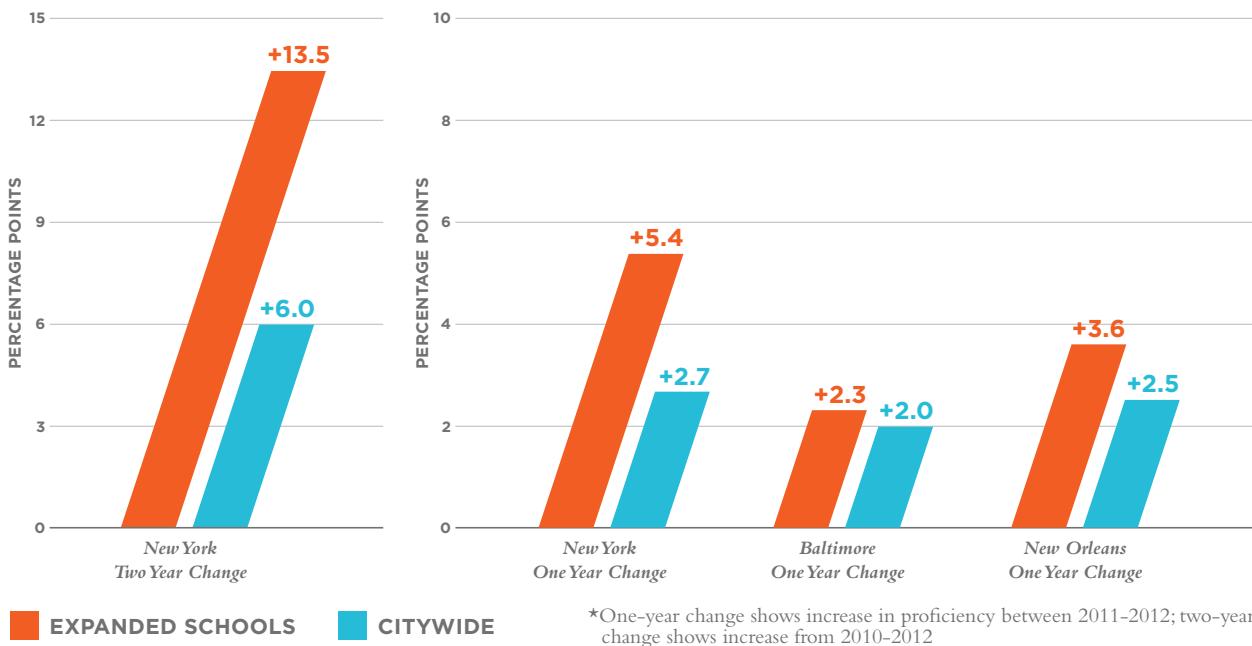
*Two Baltimore schools included Harlem Park and Hilton Elementary School.

**Two New Orleans schools included McDonogh #32 and Batiste Cultural Arts Academy.

[^] ExpandED rates are based on whole school proficiency rates in 2012 school report cards and weighted by whole school enrollment numbers on test score results on Louisiana DOE website. 2011 ExpandED numbers were previously reported on the Louisiana DOE website but have since been removed. New Orleans citywide data are based on unweighted averages of grade level proficiency rates as reported on the Louisiana DOE website.

EXPANDED SCHOOLS OUTPACE CITY GAINS IN MATH

NYC, Baltimore and New Orleans

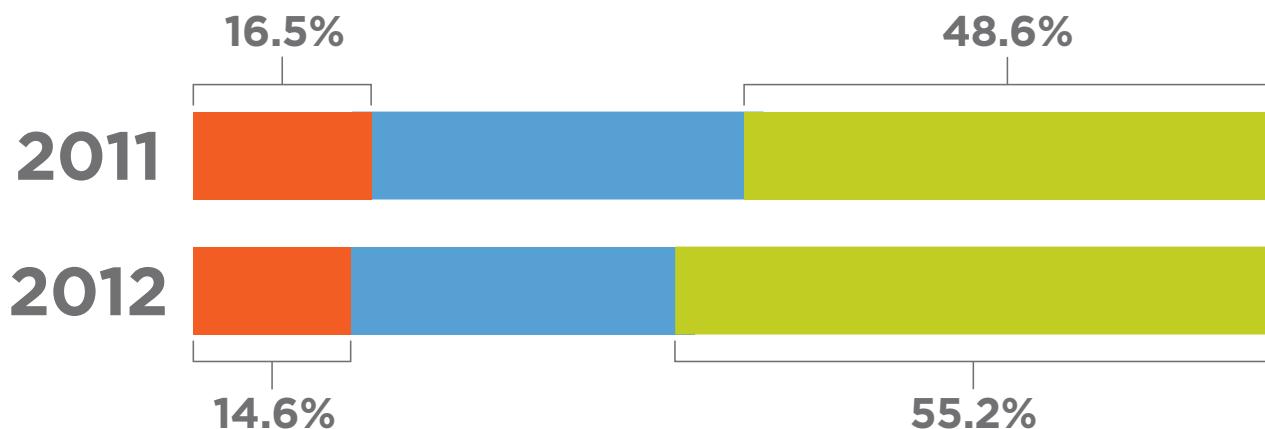


SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVES IN NYC

Expanded vs. Citywide Elementary and Elementary/Middle Schools



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM DROPS AND EXEMPLARY ATTENDANCE INCREASES IN NYC EXPANDED SCHOOLS



Average Daily School Attendance: █ CHRONICALLY ABSENT █ 89%-95% █ 96%-100%

*Grades 3 through 8

LESSONS LEARNED

Transforming a school's culture, schedule and approach to learning doesn't happen in one year.

Even with intensive advance planning by principals, teachers, community partners and families, changing the roles and responsibilities of faculty as well as the expectations and schedules of students and parents is an iterative process. Shared leadership and accountability requires partners to intentionally and continuously plan together, share student data and results and engage in a constant feedback loop.

It's important to develop mechanisms for real-time feedback loops among partners.

While ExpandED Schools analyze data to make decisions during spring and summer planning sessions that precede the school year, TASC is committed to helping schools create a process for acting on real-time school-year student information to ensure instruction meets each student's ongoing needs. Schools would benefit from measures of student habits and attitudes, including social and emotional well-being and character growth, to drive decision-making. TASC is testing such measures in the 2012-13 school year.

Schools should define and provide support for family engagement.

TASC and its partnering intermediaries will work with ExpandED Schools teams to help them better articulate family engagement goals and coordinate activities. TASC will ensure PSA's evaluation rubric captures the variety and effectiveness of family engagement activities underway at schools.

Multi-year, large-scale funding for expanded learning time is necessary to support sustainability.

Schools cannot pay out of current education funds alone for an expanded day that

incorporates the opportunities students need to develop their talents; the adult support they need to deal with poverty and life challenges; and the time they need for core academics. Schools should blend their resources with youth development funds that community partners bring to yield the greatest returns on public investments. TASC and its partnering intermediaries in New Orleans and Baltimore work to ease the burden for school-and-community partners that devote significant staff time to raising and reporting on several public and private funding streams. Our ultimate goal is for schools to receive per-pupil allocations for expanded learning to alleviate the need for schools and community organizations to apply for competitive grants, and report to multiple private funders and government agencies.

Decisions about teachers working extended hours should be made at the school level and not prescribed externally.

Teachers should have a significant presence in extended hours, however each school team – including teachers, families and community partners – should determine the staffing blend that works best to meet each school's goals. Those decisions should take into account the needs and interests of students, the skills and talents of community educators and the desires and capacity of teachers.

Success is best achieved through whole-school implementation.

The best implementation of the Expanded Schools approach is for the whole school and school day to be redesigned. This can take time in larger schools that may have to phase in all students or all grades as funding is available. Research suggests that school redesign is most successful when leaders prioritize their goals for school improvement and focus on one or two features that are essential to school success, rather than trying to improve fidelity to all core elements simultaneously.

One size does not fit all.

TASC's framework for expanded learning is intended to be customized to each community. The advantage is that schools and communities take ownership of the curriculum, activities and learning strategies they jointly plan and implement. There is, however, no simple plug-and-play model for schools or school districts to follow.

Principal leadership is key. Principals will not buy in if they see this as just another initiative to manage.

Not all principals have had experiences working closely with partnering community agencies. For this expanded learning time approach to work, principals must perceive the partnership as a way to address the school's top priorities and challenges, and their partners as educators who share responsibility and accountability for better outcomes.

Community partners need targeted support to improve instructional strategies and practices

As states and schools adopt new Common Core-aligned state learning standards, AmeriCorps members, tutors and other community educators who are leading art, science and other activities need professional development to support literacy across content areas and to ensure the activities they lead are goal-oriented, rigorous, engaging and supportive of lifelong learning habits. This requires more intensive training on pedagogical methods and strategies than is customary.

ABOUT TASC

The mission of TASC is to expand the school day to give disadvantaged students more opportunities to discover and develop their talents; more support to overcome the challenges of poverty; and more time to achieve at the high levels essential for success in the global workplace. Since our founding in 1998 we have helped more than 460,000 kids, supported more than 525 public schools, partnered with more than 360 community and cultural organizations and colleges and trained 21,000 community members to work in schools. For more information, please contact Chris Caruso, Senior Vice President of ExpandED Schools, at ccaruso@expandedschools.org or (646) 943-8700.

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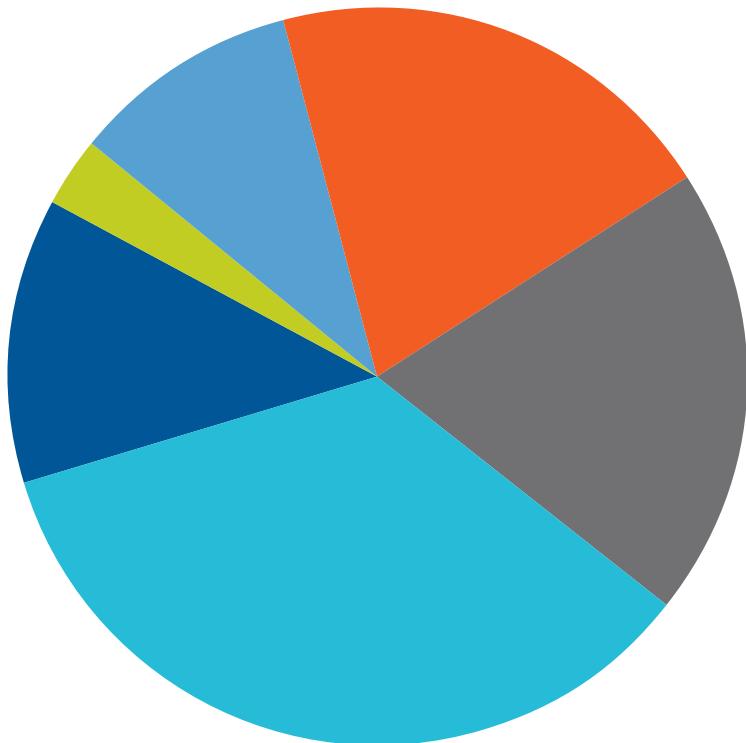
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BUILDING AN EXPANDED SCHOOL DAY BUDGET



Where does the \$800,000 come from to add three more learning hours to the conventional school day for 500 kids? Here is how PS 186, a Brooklyn elementary school, built a school year 2012-13 budget together with its partnering community agency, NIA Community Services Network. The partners used private investment to leverage an efficient blending of city, state and federal education and youth development funds. But accessing multiple funding streams—including four that are time-limited and require competitive grant applications—places a heavy administrative burden on school teams.

DYCD OUT OF SCHOOL TIME - \$280,000

New York City tax levy funds issued through a competitive grant process to community organizations that offer students a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities after school, during holidays and in the summer.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS - \$159,565

Federal dollars administered through a competitive grant process by New York State to support learning and enrichment before, during or after school, in the summer or on weekends.

SCHOOL FUNDS - \$160,000

Public education dollars that come through local taxes and federal programs including Title I (for disadvantaged students) and Title III (for English Language Learners).

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL - \$100,000

New York City tax levy funds granted to TASC to support community organizations working in schools to enrich learning beyond the traditional school day.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT - \$79,250

The bulk of private investments are raised and granted to the school by TASC.

AMERICORPS - \$24,515

Federal funds administered through a competitive grant process by New York State pay for Corps members to support learning and to lead students in community service during and after the traditional school day.