**Evidence-based Policy Principles for Expanded Learning Time/Opportunities[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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 outcomes:**

Focus additional time on student learning—broadly conceived to include academic, social, creative, and emotional development. Activities are aligned with the school’s learning goals. Expanded programming is aimed 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 these needs are.

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 after-school and summer offerings) must provide additional time to accommodate both academic and enrichment activities.

Establish standards for quality and use them as the basis of quality control, review, and improvement processes.

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.

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.

Include teachers, nonteaching staff, their professional organizations, and community members as key partners in designing and implementing plans that lengthen the school day or year, change staffing arrangements, and in collaborations with community-based organizations.

Remove unnecessary barriers to facilities sharing between the school system and community-based organizations.

Target funds and other supports to high-need schools.

Ensure sufficient and sustained funding for program stability.

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

**Characteristics of high-quality implementation[[2]](#footnote-2)**

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 after-school 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.
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.

1. **Excerpted from the Partnership for the Future of Learning, *Community Schools Playbook,* 2018** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Excerpted from the *Community Schools Playbook*** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)