

Re-Imagining the 21st Century School Day

Expanded Learning Time / New York City

What is Expanded Learning Time / New York City?

Expanded Learning Time / New York City is a city-wide network of public elementary and middle schools that are expanding the school day by three hours under the leadership of The After-School Corporation (TASC). ELT/NYC schools expand learning time by at least 35 percent – more than 60 extra days of school each year – at 10 percent of the cost of the school day. TASC’s model builds on research-tested school-and-after-school partnerships that demonstrably improve students’ achievement, intellectual and creative development and their motivation to succeed.

Ten New York City public elementary and middle schools will enter their third year as ELT/NYC schools in 2010-11. An additional group of schools will join the network in the 2010-11 school year in preparation for becoming ELT/NYC schools.

The ELT/NYC strategy sends teams from community organizations, into schools to partner with teachers in offering kids more learning time and opportunities. Empowered principals use the additional staff, curriculum and TASC’s technical assistance as a lever to boost school quality and student outcomes.

ELT/NYC schools have the time and staffing which most schools lack to offer more core academics and round out the curriculum with arts, music and

other activities that resonate with kids. They give kids life-changing opportunities to try out sports such as crew and fencing, and technology such as digital cinematography. Science inquiry – often squeezed out of the typical six-and-a-half-hour school day – is a staple of expanded learning hours. Schools offer individualized instruction to kids who need it, and support to kids and families who live with the stress poverty engenders.

As part of their basic education, middle class kids can explore activities that spark their interest and get help with schoolwork when needed. ELT/NYC schools provide those same opportunities to kids who lack advantages, but have vast potential we can’t afford to waste.

Why Now?

Public education must change. One-third of students don’t graduate from high school and another third don’t succeed in college.

Since the 19th century, American schools have largely operated from 9 AM to 3 PM, a scant 180 days a year. A typical public education takes up 20 percent of a child’s waking hours. While the skills demanded of 21st century professionals keep accelerating, schools are frozen in the agrarian calendar. This mismatch demands we stop doing business as usual and break the mold, stretching the learning day and year.

For today's students to avoid dead-end futures, they need a richer kind of learning experience that allows lessons to be deeply absorbed in multiple ways. They need to work through questions that require inquiry and reason, not just checks in the right boxes. They need opportunities to work collaboratively on projects and learn to problem-solve as professionals do in technology-driven workplaces.

But we must do it at a cost public investment can sustain. TASC's ELT/NYC model contains cost without sacrificing quality by expanding school time and content through a mix of certified teachers and youth development staff. Exclusive use of certified teachers to extend the day by three hours would cost \$2,900, nearly double what the ELT/NYC partnerships costs.

Under the leadership of Mayor Bloomberg, New York City has invested in two complimentary arenas: reforming schools to raise standards and achievement, and building the capacity of community organizations to deliver high-quality out-of-school time programs. Pairing dedicated teachers with after-school specialists is a force multiplier with the power to break the most intransigent patterns of failure.

TASC is committed to leveraging its own resources and partnerships to expand the ELT/NYC network and demonstrate a results-driven model for schools of all kinds: charters, community schools, and the regular public schools the vast majority of kids attend. Some 1.1 million New York City students should not have to depend on the luck of school lotteries or other sorting mechanisms to get an inspiring, comprehensive education.

TASC and Partners

TASC created and is managing ELT/NYC in partnership with the New York City Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development. TASC takes the lead in helping schools partner with community organizations to jointly plan and execute a re-design of school schedules, curricula and budgets. TASC provides school teams with technical assistance to implement the model with fidelity and tap multiple funding sources, providing grants that leverage additional investments.

The original ten pilot schools (among them two charters) include eight elementary and two middle

schools in four boroughs. Community partners include settlement houses and family support agencies with deep neighborhood roots.

Policy Studies Associates and Abt Associates are evaluating implementation and results.

Design, Staffing and Cost Model

ELT/NYC builds on the framework of TASC-model after-school programs to create more closely aligned school-community partnerships. The principal leads each school's ELT/NYC team. A fulltime site coordinator from the community agency works with an educational liaison from the school staff, typically a teacher or administrator. Activities after 3 PM are staffed by a combination of teachers and teaching artists, sports instructors, and community staff that include young adult role models who volunteer through AmeriCorps.

The overall cost per student of ELT/NYC at scale is \$1,600. Programs are funded through a mix of school and after-school funds, such as Title I, per pupil allocation, 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, state after-school funds and New York City Out-of-School Time grants. Community partners receive at least 50 percent of program funds to help staff longer school days.

Research Underpinnings

ELT/NYC's design is based on years of rigorous research investigating how the hours from 3 to 6 PM can best be spent to help students thrive academically and socially. This rich body of evidence on after-school programs reveals that sustained participation in high-quality, hands-on activities with trained, caring adults demonstrably improves academic performance, attendance, and physical health.

Children in programs with opportunities to exercise have lower percentages of body fat than other children. Program participants have fewer behavioral issues, and involvement with the criminal justice system decreases. Participants are less likely to drop out of high school than their peers who do not take part in afternoon learning activities. A recent study found that after-school programs have had as much impact on student success as lowering class size or Title I programs.

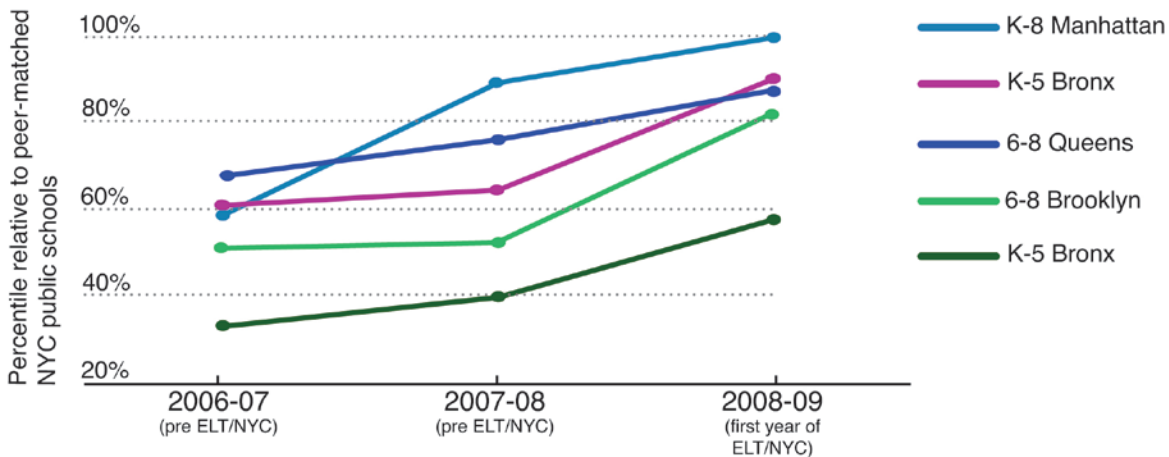
Early Results

An independent evaluation of ELT/NYC is on-going, with results to become available after the 2010-11 school year. An analysis of data published by the New York City Department of Education shows the following results for the six ELT/NYC schools for which data is available.

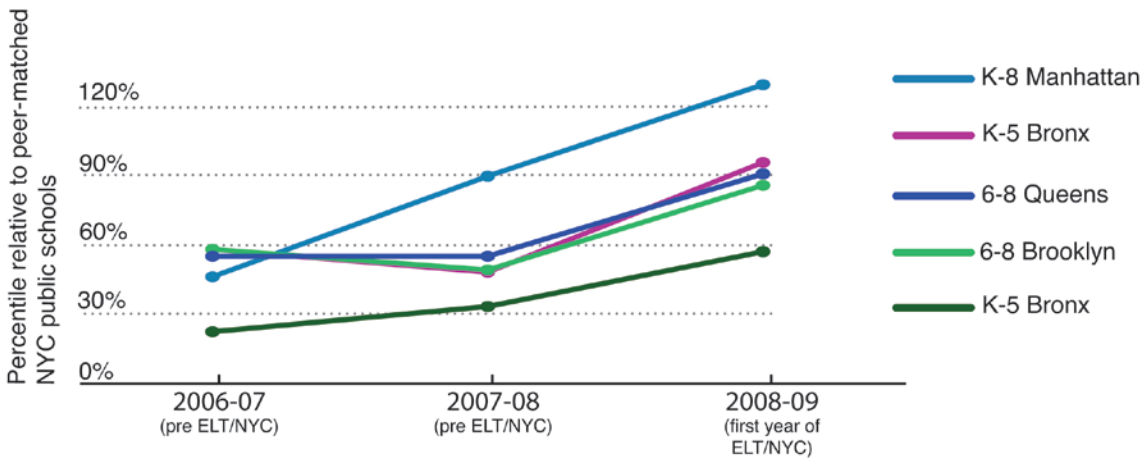
Improved Academic Performance

Compared to their peer schools, ELT/NYC schools outperform in English Language Arts and Math (see below).

Improvement in the Proficiency in Math, Relative to Peers (Peer Horizon Score)



Improvement in the Proficiency in ELA, Relative to Peers (Peer Horizon Score)

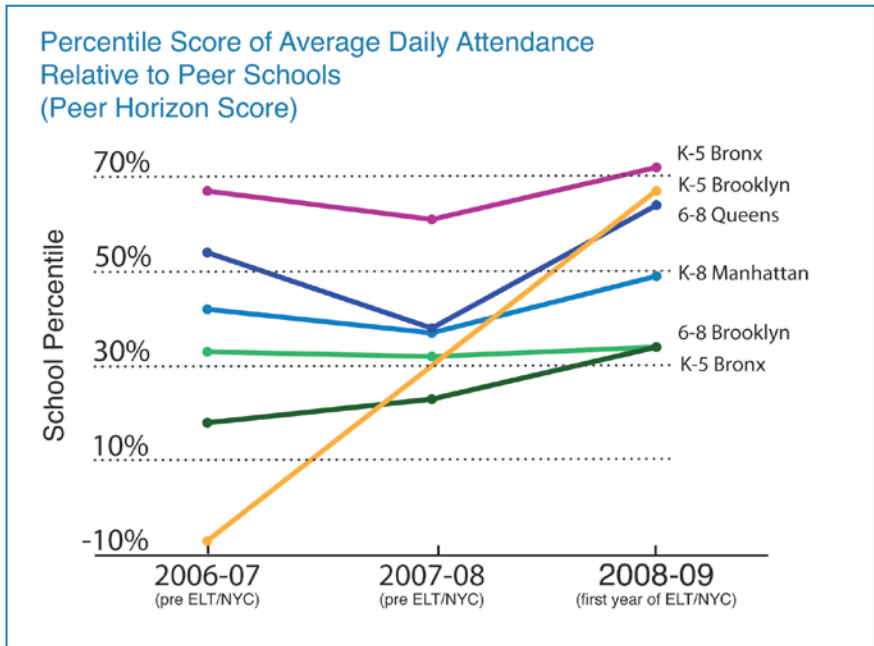


Improved School Attendance

After implementing ELT/ NYC, all schools increased daily attendance compared to prior years (see right).

Improved Behavior and More Engagement

Students developed a better attitude toward school and decreased un-productive behavior. After ELT began at JHS 185, disciplinary referrals among participating students dropped from 40 to 8 in a year, and suspensions dropped from 17 to 9. All six schools with longitudinal data demonstrated increases in engagement scores on the Department of Education school surveys of teachers and parents.



Sample School Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3:00pm	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Dance & Movement
3:45pm	Supper & Academic Support	Supper & Academic Support	Supper & Academic Support	Supper & Academic Support	Supper & Academic Support
4:30pm	Drama	Robotics	Fencing	Robotics	Drama
5:15-6pm	Comic Book Club	Videography	Cooking and Nutrition	Videography	Cooking and Nutrition

Case Study

PS 636/University Settlement Society

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

“I notice that kids are more vocal. They’re taking ownership of their learning. They’ve developed a sense of confidence because they are part of a conversation about the activities we do in expanded learning time. School is a completely different place now.... We’re all one community in this school.” – Principal Danika LaCroix

Overview

PS 636 -Young Scholars’ Academy for Discovery and Exploration is a new school that launched in the 2008-09 school year on the site of a failed school, serving largely the same students. The school is now in its second year as an ELT/NYC school. University Settlement Society, a community organization, partners with the school to engage students from 8 AM to 6 PM five days per week and on Saturdays.

School Profile

PS 636 enrolls 235 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

- 100% of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch
- More than 20% live in temporary housing
- 60% are African-American, 37% are Hispanic and 2% are white
- 97% of students participate in ELT/NYC; only students who are bussed are unable to participate
- 13% have special needs

Principal’s Vision

As part of her training through the NYC Leadership Academy, Danika LaCroix completed a residency at PS 321 in Park Slope, a public school that attracts relatively affluent, well-educated parents who ensure that the school offers a full complement of enriching activities. Her first assignment as a principal was to launch PS 636.

Motivated by her time at PS 321, Ms. LaCroix was determined that her students, all of whom live in financial hardship, would experience as fully engaging, rigorous and enriching an education as the students at PS 321. She saw ELT/NYC as a way to fulfill that vision. She applied with the express purpose of bringing community partners and resources to the school, and offering students more time to master challenging content and pursue exciting activities that would strengthen their ties to school. She is especially keen on exposing kids to sports that are not traditional in Brooklyn such as fencing and golf.

Perhaps most importantly, Ms. LaCroix wants students to help select the enrichment curriculum so they take responsibility for their own learning and have a voice in their school. Parents, especially fathers, are also encouraged to be active in the school community. Together with University Settlement, she works to surround students with positive, caring adults who are attentive to all students’ needs.

Distinctive Elements: Curriculum and Staffing

The school offers students an exceptionally broad array of activities including robotics, drama, art, cheerleading, basketball, swimming, a kindness curriculum, discussion of world issues, TASC Masters of Literacy, Afterschool Science Plus, Cookshop, Comic Book Project, Everyday Math, Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop and Latin American and African dance and music.

During the first part of expanded learning time, community staff members work alongside teachers with small groups of students who need intensive instruction in math and literacy. During the same time, students who are more advanced do their homework with help from community staff.

This school hosts monthly Family Nights, and this year has achieved a remarkable 88% attendance among parents and guardians at these events. University Settlement is working with the principal to establish a student and family mental health clinic in the school.

University Settlement staff are fully integrated into the work and life of PS 636, down to their burgundy shirts that match the color of student uniforms. The University Settlement Site Coordinator serves on the school's leadership and planning committees. The principal is involved in hiring the community staff, and a University Settlement representative consults on the hiring of teachers.

A teacher serves as the school's Educational Liaison to ensure all activities are aligned in support of student achievement. She reviews lesson plans weekly, conducts observations and provides feedback to community staff.

One Student's Story

Typical of the problems of students in this school, one fifth grade boy was taken in by an uncle after he was left by his mother. School staff attempted to persuade the uncle to get the student badly needed glasses, but were unsuccessful. It was clear that, in addition to the problems with his daily school work, the student would not be able to read the upcoming citywide fifth grade Social Studies test.

At the principal's request, University Settlement staff found an organization that would provide the student with free glasses. With glasses, not only has the boy's performance on tests improved, but he is more outgoing and engaged in the life of the school.

Impressive Results

- ✓ In one year, PS 636 students proficient in **reading** increased from 34% to 43%. In **math**, proficiency increased from 64% to 73%.
- ✓ On the New York State 5th grade **social studies** tests, the percentage of students scoring above grade level jumped from 69% to 85%.
- ✓ In 2007-08, the school that PS 636 replaced had an **attendance** record of only 88%. After one year, the rate had climbed more than 4%.
- ✓ Surveys of parents and teachers show remarkable satisfaction in a school that confronts a challenging set of issues and that in 2007 was one of the worst schools in the City.

In **parent engagement**, the school is now at the 89th percentile relative to all city public schools, with 93% of parents reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied with how well the school communicates with them and 98% reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied with opportunities to be involved in their children's education.



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