

# TASC Expanded Learning Time

New Schools for a New Generation

## What is TASC Expanded Learning Time?

TASC Expanded Learning Time is a strategy to educate our persistently lowest-performing students far better than we do now and to bring sustainable reform to urban public schools, where currently more than one-third of students fail to graduate on time. In a global economy, the future belongs to the country whose citizens are best equipped to drive progress in a workplace we can't even imagine today. Our goal is to help all kids develop into adults who can innovate, create and think for a living.



Building from the evidence base of high quality after-school and summer programs, we re-engineer schools to give students more time and opportunities to learn, and to fortify them against lives often marked by stress and

hardship. We know the least advantaged kids need more hours to learn in multiple ways, and that adding remediation to a narrowly focused school day is not enough. TASC ELT is a model for an active, balanced learning day that gives struggling students academic support and helps high achievers go farther. It is not school plus after-school. It is a seamless, expanded school day delivered by a new kind of blended workforce.

Over three years, TASC has piloted a model in 17 New York City public elementary and middle schools to increase learning time during the school year. Because educational excellence should not be rationed in a democratic society, we are preparing to launch a national demonstration in the 2011-12 school year of this model to bring sustainable, cost-effective reform to any kind of public K-8 school serving all comers from the school community. Participating schools provide 1,600 hours of learning at an incremental cost of \$1600 per student—35 percent more time than the average American student gets each year at 10 percent of the cost of the school day.

ELT schools give American kids equal learning time with their international peers.

# How Does ELT Make Schools More Effective?

There are no silver bullets in education. TASC helps schools and partners re-engineer the learning day through a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy.

- **Joint planning:** Community is included from the start. Teams of parents, teachers, the principal and a community partner jointly plan to deploy more learning time and coordinate their resources to meet their goals for students. Creating this kind of culture shift within a school requires that all parties buy in: families, school personnel and community partners.
- **Community partners:** Each school teams with a partnering community agency. Teachers and community educators (including youth development and instructional specialists) work side-by-side to meet their shared goals for improving student outcomes.
- **Student engagement:** Because motivation is at the root of all learning, we bring the engagement power of after-school into the school day to build on kids' passions and natural drive to learn, create and explore.
- **Technical assistance:** We give school teams a framework, staff training and intensive operational support to multiply the ways kids learn and round out their healthy development.
- **More time:** We increase time for core academics and experiential learning.
- **Leveraging resources:** We use private investment to leverage sustainable public funding.
- **Comprehensive evaluations:** We evaluate schools on progress in attendance, behavior and academic achievement, the early markers that predict graduation success.
- **Student-centered supports:** We help students take ownership of a balanced education that includes relevant, real world experiences, three healthy meals and sports daily.
- **Equity:** Kids from all backgrounds get the high-quality instruction and range of experiences that distinguish a comprehensive education.

## Core Elements and Fidelity Markers

The TASC ELT model is built on five core elements backed by a set of fidelity markers to assure consistency among participating schools.

### Element One: More learning time leads to a balanced curriculum.

- Curriculum plans align with state standards for instruction in all subjects and offer opportunities for academic support, enrichment, fitness and leadership development

### Element Two: Every school partners with a community organization

- Schools and their community partners operate from a common set of goals.
- Teachers and community educators share accountability for student outcomes under the leadership of the principal.
- Teams participate in intensive planning and year-round communication.
- Teachers and community educators engage in shared professional development, faculty meetings and community and family outreach.
- The principal is engaged, as evidenced by commitment of time and financial resources.

### Element Three: Engaging and personalized instruction is delivered by a blended workforce.

- Teachers and community educators share student data and use that to drive development of schedules, lessons, activities and supports that meet the needs of individual students and the school community.
- School teams use diverse instructional strategies including digital, hands-on, project-based and experiential approaches through which students apply knowledge and skills.

### Element Four: Schools adhere to a cost model public funding can sustain.

- Schools and community partners each contribute resources to expand the learning day by at least 35% at an incremental cost of \$1,600 per K-8 student (300 students minimum).

### Element Five: Schools include all students or commit to phasing in the whole school.

- Many after-school programs serve only a portion of students in a school. This is a whole school model for improvement.

ELT schools give low income students the same growth opportunities as the most fortunate.

## The Evidence

TASC ELT builds on the proven successes of TASC-model and other high-quality out-of-school time programs, fused with innovations found to be most effective by high-performing public schools, including charters.

A growing body of scientific evidence shows that high quality expanded learning – focused on the development of the whole child – positively affects students’ behavior, school attendance, and academic achievement. Kids not only develop the characteristics they need to succeed in school, but to become active leaders in a collaborative workplace (*Durlak and Weissberg, 2010; Halpern, 2003; Huang, et al., 2005.*)

An independent, five-year evaluation of 10,000 students who participated in TASC programs showed that students improved their school attendance, attitudes toward learning and academic achievement (*Reisner, 2004*). Students in third through eighth grades had significantly greater gains in standardized math scores than matched non-participants. The more time students spent in TASC programs and the more regularly they attended, the greater their gains and motivation to learn and achieve.

A common factor among charter schools that have achieved impressive gains for students is the addition of more learning time to the school day and/or year. A review of various studies on expanded learning time found that the most at-risk students appear to derive the greatest benefits from extending the day or year. Key to this success, however, was classroom and school quality in schools that implement multiple reform efforts, in addition to delivering more time on task (*Pattell 2010*).

Our model builds on the lessons from these strands of research to structure reform in a way that gives schools flexibility to make the best use of additional time to meet the needs of their individual students and communities.

## Evaluation and Advocacy

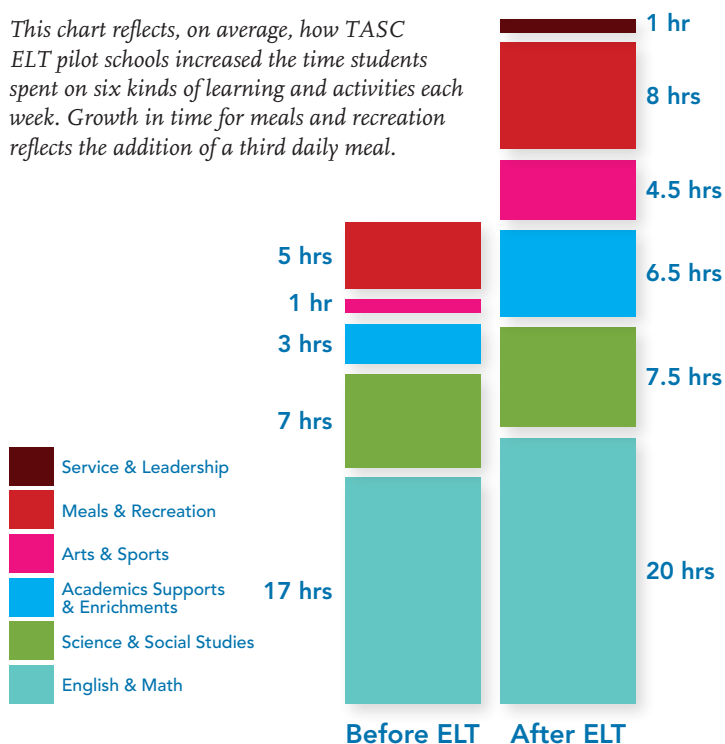
TASC will measure its progress toward the long-term goal of increasing high school graduation rates and college readiness through evaluating both the process and the impact of our work. The process evaluation will assess the degree to which schools adhere to the core elements and identify the promising practices that shape high quality implementation. An impact evaluation will determine the effect of the initiative on student performance and outcomes related to high school graduation.

TASC has developed its own measurement tool, the Grad Tracker, to assess year-to-year student progress on school attendance, behavior and academic achievement. These are the strongest early markers for graduation among K-8 students.

TASC will deploy a “case to cause” approach toward demonstrating a model, building capacity and advocating for public investment in expanded learning for all students. The end goal is to help the nation break free of a school calendar that limits opportunity, engagement and equality in educational excellence.

## More Learning in ELT Schools

This chart reflects, on average, how TASC ELT pilot schools increased the time students spent on six kinds of learning and activities each week. Growth in time for meals and recreation reflects the addition of a third daily meal.



## About TASC

TASC's mission is to give all kids expanded learning opportunities that support, educate and inspire them. Since our founding in 1998 we have helped 375,000 kids, supported 486 New York City public schools, partnered with 328 community and cultural organizations and colleges and trained 16,000 community members to work in schools.

TASC developed the model for comprehensive, daily after-school programs that led to New York City's establishment of the largest municipally-supported after-school system in the country.

- We build public-private partnerships to support bringing expanded learning opportunities to scale in New York and selected other cities.
- We work to increase the quality and effectiveness of programs and schools that expand the time and ways kids learn.
- We help leaders do a better job of coordinating the dollars we already spend on school and after-school to help more kids.

TASC has a 12-year track record for helping schools efficiently coordinate and re-program private and public investments to serve more kids with more learning time for every dollar invested. By braiding education funding with city, state and federal after-school funding streams, we help schools stretch every dollar. We help busy principals focus on their real jobs – leading instruction – while we do the work of gathering and maximizing resources.

Our track record includes successfully leveraging public funds with private sector investment. We generated \$538 million in our first decade – greater than 4-to-1 return on our founding investment by the Open Society Foundations.

## For More Information

We invite you to visit a TASC Expanded Learning Time school. To arrange a visit or learn more about the initiative, please contact:

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