



**TESTIMONY
BEFORE
THE NEW YORK EDUCATION REFORM COMMISSION**

NEW YORK CITY HEARING

**TESTIMONY BY
LUCY N. FRIEDMAN
PRESIDENT, TASC**

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Good afternoon. My name is Lucy Friedman and I am the President of TASC. I want to thank the New York Education Reform Commission and especially Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and Commission Chair Richard Parsons for the opportunity to testify today.

TASC is dedicated to giving all kids expanded learning opportunities that support, educate and inspire them. Our vision is that kids from all backgrounds will have access to the range of experiences and world class education that all families want for their children. Schools will support students' intellectual, creative and healthy development and prepare them to thrive in a democratic society.

Our roots are in New York State's movement to equalize educational opportunities. From an initial \$125 million investment from Open Society Foundations, TASC leveraged more than \$1 billion in New York City for after-school programs, revolutionized standards for after-school programs throughout New York State, and helped create many initiatives which have sustained and grown the after-school field. Since our inception 14 years ago, TASC has helped more than 450,000 kids by supporting after-school and expanded learning programs at more than 500 public schools in New York City and beyond.

At the end of our first decade, we challenged ourselves to apply the lessons from our long-term external evaluation studies, which demonstrated that in the most effective programs, the host school and its community partner operated as one team with a common vision for student progress. Together the principal, teachers, parents and community educators planned learning activities that reinforced and expanded on what kids learned during the school day. They shared responsibility and accountability for supporting and educating the whole child. We were also compelled by lessons from charter schools, showing a connection between more learning time and positive student outcomes.

In ExpandED Schools, elementary and middle schools work with TASC to expand the time and ways kids learn. We do this by building an active, balanced learning day that gives students approximately 35% more learning time at 10% additional cost to the school day. By making better use of existing public funds, ExpandED Schools is affordable and will attract both new public and private investments. **We propose that the Commission adopt ExpandED Schools as a key strategy to reach its goals to improve student achievement and increase parent engagement.**

What's Different about the ExpandED Schools Model?

- **The Team** - Each school partners with an experienced youth-serving organization to bring to the school new resources and staff such as AmeriCorps members. Teachers, administrators, parents and community partners work together to reinvent the school day to meet the needs of their kids. Community educators help teachers personalize instruction, build a lively culture of exploration and achievement and fortify kids against lives often marked by stress and hardship.
- **The Schedule** - The school day expands by roughly three hours to match parents' working hours without mandating longer hours for teachers.
- **The Curriculum** - Schools have more time for academics and offer a wider variety of learning opportunities such as music and web design that support and expand on core knowledge.



This approach has wide appeal, because it has the right balance of structure to deliver results and flexibility to meet local needs. The result is a sustainable and scalable way to expand learning opportunities for students.

Demonstrated Results

TASC worked with 10 New York City public schools from 2008 to 2011 to pilot its expanded learning initiative. An external evaluation of TASC's three-year pilot found that 85% of teachers reported that expanded learning had improved learning for participants. In schools implementing the model with fidelity, there was a positive and statistically significant effect of TASC's expanded learning model on academic achievement and attendance.

These results persuaded The Open Society, Wallace, Ford, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations to invest in a three-city demonstration (New York City, Baltimore and New Orleans) of TASC's ExpandED Schools model.

A New Way Forward for New York State

ExpandED Schools work in all types of elementary and middle schools, enabling the Governor, Commission and State Education Department to scale across the state. We have seen remarkable success when the model is core to a turnaround strategy. Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration replaced the failing P.S. 304 in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn. One in five children lives in transitional housing, including two nearby domestic violence shelters. The school opened with an additional three hours of academics and enrichments per day, and in its first year, students proficient in English Language Arts jumped nine percentage points, from 34% . In math proficiency, they increased from 64% to 73%. In 2007-08, the school that the Young Scholars' Academy replaced had an attendance record of 88%. After the school's inaugural year, the rate had climbed to more than 92%. Surveys of parents and teachers in 2011 show a remarkable satisfaction for a school that confronts a challenging set of issues. The school continues to outperform the city in its progress in academics and parent engagement.

ExpandED Schools leverage existing public education and youth development funds and use them more efficiently, without taking resources away from existing providers. A combination of local, state and federal funding sources could be re-purposed to fund ExpandED Schools throughout New York State. TASC successfully redeployed existing public funds to cover, on average, \$950 of the total \$1600 per student cost. Those public funds leveraged more than \$650 per student in private investment. ExpandED Schools can also capitalize on currently untapped resources, such as funds for children's healthy development, pregnancy prevention, crime prevention, and workforce development. In addition, the model is well positioned to incorporate local community assets such as parks, museums, libraries and student teachers.

There are benefits to schools, students and families, and communities.

How do schools benefit?

- They restore physical education, arts and other critical disciplines while increasing academic rigor and relevance.
- They are able to let students choose specialized learning activities like chess and debate, further engaging them in their education.
- They reduce absenteeism.

- Teachers have more time for teaching, planning and professional development.
- Community educators join the faculty, enlivening the curriculum and adding additional caring adults in children's lives.
- Principals have greater flexibility in staffing and scheduling instruction and targeting help to struggling students.
- Youth-serving organizations align their support of kids' healthy development with teachers' efforts to raise achievement.
- Community partners share accountability for results.

How do students and families benefit?

- Less advantaged kids get the top-notch instruction and motivational opportunities that are standard in middle class communities.
- Struggling students discover activities in which they can be great, and bond with adult role models from their communities.
- Students get more opportunities to create and apply learning and more support for their holistic development.
- Kids' learning hours align with most parents' working hours.
- Students make greater achievement gains than peers in traditional local schools.

How do communities benefit?

- They're empowered to help redesign their schools.
- They gain a voice in school leadership.
- They have productive, engaged young people participating in civic life and protected from risks between 3 and 6 PM, the most dangerous hours of a young person's day.

We all benefit.

When schools and community organizations build their capacity to work together more effectively and efficiently, we get greater results from the tax dollars we invest in education and youth. ExpandED Schools reverse historic inequalities by closing the opportunity gap, which in turn, closes the achievement gap.

For example, at the Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School (TMALS), in Harlem, teachers and community educators are trained in a hands-on science curriculum. For some teachers, it is the first time they've had science training. Students have time in the expanded school day to apply science concepts and skills. The STEM program at TMALS was nationally recognized as one of five examples described in *Strengthening Science Education* by Kathleen Traphagen and commissioned by the National Center on Time and Learning. For example, in one lesson, Mouse Count, students see how a snake's skeleton is constructed and compare it to their own spines. They then go on to create their own meadows and learn about the interactions between snakes and mice, applying new concepts, gathering evidence and reasoning from the evidence about what snakes need to survive. And, absolutely critical to STEM learning, they reflect on those experiences, talking with one another about their ideas, as a community of fellow scientists. On the 2010 New York state standardized science test, nearly 92 percent of TMALS fourth graders scored proficient or above compared to 71% the year before and New York City's average of 83 percent.



Governor Cuomo’s commitment to students, championed by the Board of Regents, and New York’s rich tradition of collaborative partnerships present an unparalleled opportunity to re-design the school day to meet the needs of students and parents. New York State has the opportunity to lead the country in the quest to expand the time and ways kids learn. We are pleased to propose ExpandED Schools as an education reform strategy that will deliver on New York’s promise to provide all our state’s students with a high-quality education that prepares them to contribute to a thriving New York State and become productive citizens in a global economy. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.