

# Executive Summary

The ExpandedED Schools model for expanded learning is designed to transform schools by changing the use of time, both as experienced by students in learning and by teachers in instruction. The model is grounded in the belief that strategically adding time to the school day can enhance skills and knowledge and broaden horizons by engaging students in enriched learning opportunities beyond core academics. Community partner organizations play an instrumental role in supporting this expanded learning experience in ExpandedED schools.

Policy Studies Associates (PSA) has evaluated the national demonstration of ExpandedED Schools since the demonstration, supported by The Wallace Foundation and others, was launched in the 2011-12 school year in 10 schools in New York City, NY; Baltimore, MD; and New Orleans, LA. Over four years, the evaluation explored the approaches that participating schools took to adopting the ExpandedED Schools model, in particular seeking to understand the conditions that support—or hinder—the implementation of an expanded day. These conditions and factors are summarized below.

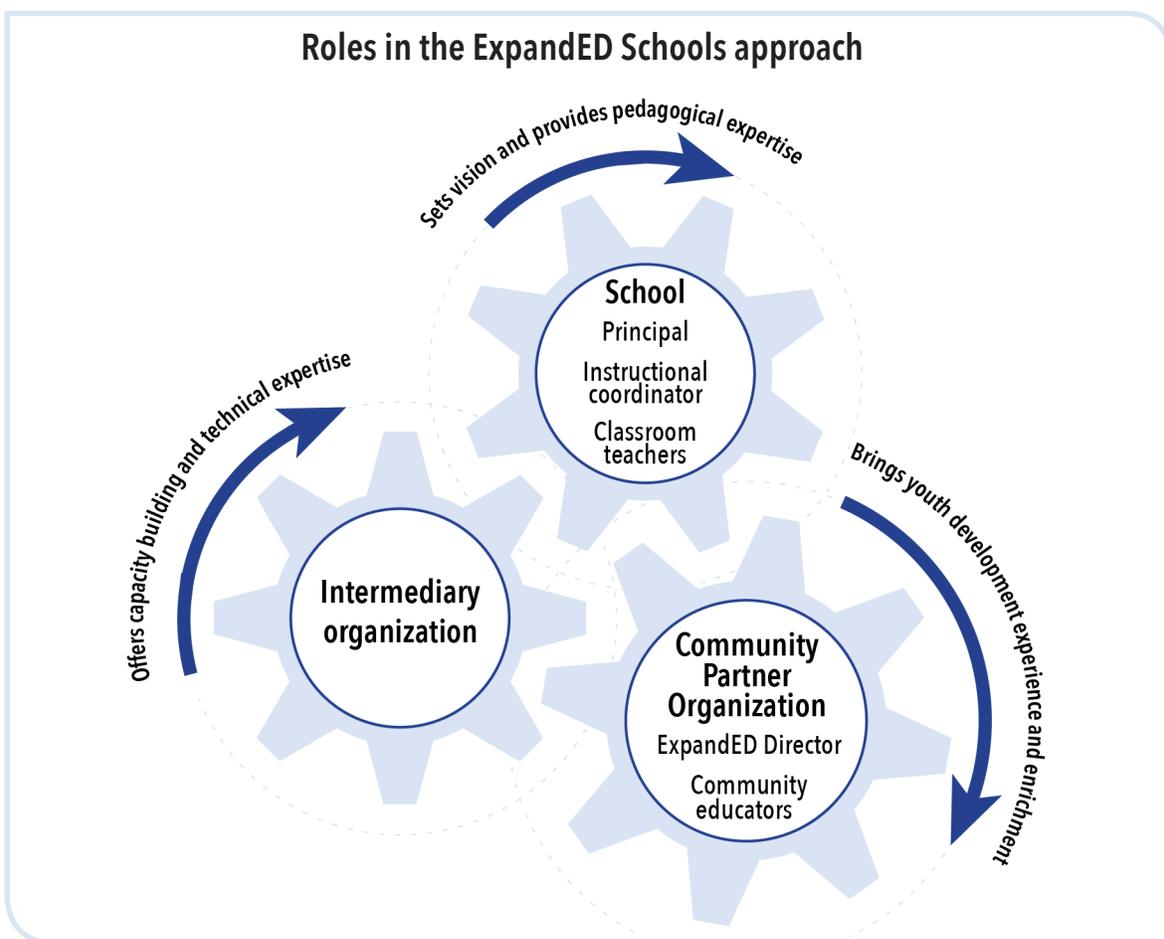
## The ExpandedED Schools Model

A central feature of the ExpandedED Schools model is a deep partnership between a school and a community-based partner organization strategically working together to plan and implement a balanced, seamless school day that complements core academics with enriched learning experiences grounded in positive youth development.

<b>Core element</b>	<b>Sub-elements</b>
More Time for a Balanced Curriculum	All students are engaged in expanded learning  Students are exposed to rigorous, skill-based instruction as well as enrichment and other youth development opportunities
School-Community Partnership	School and community partner organization share responsibility for implementation of expanded learning  Family engagement in learning is encouraged and evident
Engaging and Personalized Instruction	Expanded day instruction addresses the individual needs of students  Expanded day instruction is data-driven
Integrated Funding Model	School and community partner organization budgets are coordinated  Partnerships are strategically managed  Both school and community partner organization support fundraising

The ExpandED school and community partner organization work together to transform the school and implement the core elements. The principal serves as the initiative leader, communicating the vision for a longer school day. An ExpandED Director manages the daily operations of the community partner organization in the school, and works closely with an instructional coordinator identified by the school to determine learning opportunities for the expanded day. School staff, including the instructional coordinator and classroom teachers, provide pedagogical insights and expertise in curriculum and instruction. Community educators bring youth development expertise and professional experience in delivering specialized activities, such as the arts.

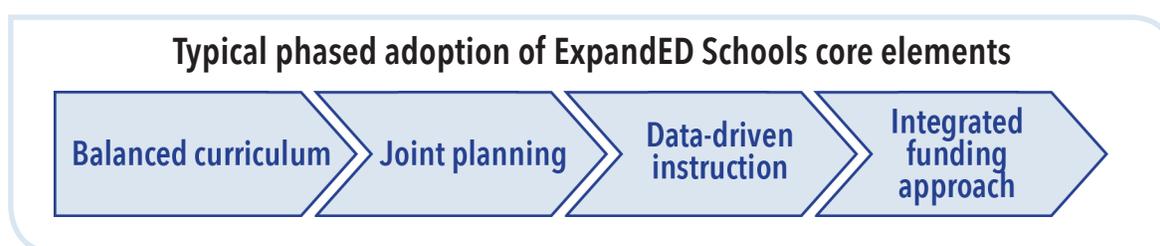
Intermediary organizations also play a key role in the implementation of the ExpandED Schools approach, bringing an important set of capacity-building skills to schools and community partner organizations, including technical assistance, facilitation, and resources. Schools are also supported nationally by ExpandED Schools, which offers additional guidance, data, and advocacy.



### Adoption of the Core Elements in the National Demonstration

In the national demonstration, schools did not adopt the ExpandED Schools model wholesale, but rather made incremental changes over time as they explored the feasibility and value of the expanded day in their schools. Demonstration schools adopted first and most readily those core elements that were most clearly meeting gaps in their curriculum, where they could envision community partner organizations making the biggest and most immediate impact.

In general, the demonstration schools first embraced the balanced curriculum element of the ExpandedED Schools approach to the expanded day. With the traditional school day increasingly devoted to boosting performance in core academic subjects, the schools saw a clear need for the enrichment and youth development opportunities that the expanded day could bring. Next, over time and with facilitation and support from ExpandedED Schools and other intermediaries, the demonstration schools deepened their partnerships to include more strategic and joint planning around these enrichment opportunities to ensure that they were complementary to the school day and addressed the needs of students. Not surprisingly, the core elements slowest to gain traction were those that are most difficult for schools in general, including the effective use of data to drive instruction and identifying long-term sources of funding that support collaboration and innovative approaches to the school day.



The national demonstration revealed several concrete strategies that enabled ExpandedED schools to implement the core elements of the approach. These included:

- **Clear and consistent messaging** about the value of the expanded day for learning in all communications to families, setting the expectation that the expanded day is an essential part of the school day, rather than an optional afterschool program.
- Identification of a **strong instructional coordinator** to work with community educators to align the traditional day and expanded learning time instruction, identify opportunities to infuse enrichment into core content, and support engaging, skill-based enrichment.
- **Embracing creative staffing patterns** such as **"push-in" staffing** wherein community educators came in before the end of the traditional school day and assisted classroom teachers in their lessons, increasing opportunities for relationship-building, common planning, and differentiated instruction.
- Establishing **joint leadership for the expanded day**, for example by shifting the hours of a school administrator to stay during the expanded hours to co-manage with the director from the community partner organization, making the day more seamless and deepening the alignment and relationship.
- Development of **teacher champions for the expanded day**, so that staff at all levels are committed to the expanded day approach and advocate for it when leadership transitions occur.

The phased adoption of the ExpandedED Schools approach in the national demonstration suggests that the elements of an expanded day do not need to be adopted all at once for a school to take steps towards transforming the school day. Even if schools do not achieve implementation of an expanded day for all students, or grapple with how to effectively engage community partners in data-driven, personalized instruction, evidence suggests that they can still implement other aspects of the expanded learning approach. They can deliver a balanced and integrated learning experience for students and conduct strategic planning with the community partner organizations, in ways that begin to achieve the goals of changing learning and instructional experiences in schools.

However, one core element appears to be essential: the ExpandedED Schools approach hinges on the strength and depth of the partnership between the school and the community partner organization. Without a partnership built on shared vision and shared responsibility, it is very hard to gain or maintain traction on other core elements of an expanded day.

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## Factors That Support an Expanded Day

Three drivers influenced whether the ExpandED Schools approach gained traction and became part of the institutional fabric of national demonstration schools. First, a **shared vision for the expanded day**, often set by the principal but adopted and informed by all partners, solidified the partnership. Second, a **high level of engagement with families** built buy-in and communicated expectations for an expanded day as an integral part of the learning experience. And finally, for the commitment to remain strong, there needed to be **quality instruction and programming**, demonstrated through a high level of professional skill among all involved, to solidify a high level of trust among partners and to demonstrate the value of the expanded day.

The presence of several factors can facilitate the development of these drivers to scale and sustain an expanded day approach, including:

- **Adoption of incremental steps** to test the expanded day approach and establish its relevance to the school, build buy-in and trust, and identify appropriate adaptations. In each year of the demonstration, schools figured out steps to implement, improve, and deepen their relationships.
- **Commitment by both the school and community partner organization** to truly work together, share information, share responsibilities, and build new skills and capacities, in roles that differ from traditional school partnerships and service relationships.
- **Strategic planning** on an ongoing basis between the school and community partner organization to identify needs, opportunities, and the integrated programming across the school and expanded day that can best address students' learning goals.

In addition, the knowledge, skill, and identity of stakeholders will affect how rapidly schools and community partner organizations forge the strategic partnership of the ExpandED Schools approach. The environmental context in which the approach is being scaled will affect capacity for adoption and sustainability, as schools grapple with leadership changes, transportation issues, or other operational concerns. The policy context influences by the priorities of school districts, reform initiatives, or funders will also affect the adoption of an expanded day.

## Recommendations for Adopting an Expanded Day

Each school system considering an expanded day approach should consider how its environmental and policy context, as well as the knowledge of system stakeholders, will influence strategies and capacity for:

- Identifying the key champions and getting buy-in for expanded learning
- Negotiating operational supports, such as transportation and use of facilities
- Integrating the expanded day into teachers' schedules
- Setting and upholding expectations for a longer school day with parents and students
- Sharing resources and ideas across schools

Assessing readiness to enter into an expanded learning partnership, and the strengths and capacities that the school and community partner organization would each bring to the partnership is key before embarking on this type of transformation effort. School districts, charter management organizations, intermediary organizations, community partner organizations, and technical assistance providers can all contribute to the development of an expanded day approach. Identifying the specific supports that are available to support expanded day partnerships is necessary to ensure strategic implementation, adaptation, and sustainability of an expanded day approach and to advocate for it when leadership transitions occur.