



# Expanding **minds** and Opportunities

Leveraging

# **the** Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success

This collection of articles is excerpted from the groundbreaking book, ***Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success***. This landmark compendium, edited by Terry K. Peterson, PhD, is composed of nearly 70 research studies, reports, essays, and commentaries by more than 100 researchers, educators, community leaders, policy makers, and practitioners.

Collectively, these writings boldly state that there is now a solid base of research and best practices clearly showing that quality afterschool and summer learning programs—including 21st Century Community Learning Centers—make a positive difference for students, families, schools, and communities.

Together, the collection of articles demonstrates the power of quality expanded learning opportunities to:

**promote student success and college and career readiness;**

**build youth assets such as character, resilience, and wellness;**

**foster partnerships that maximize resources and build community ties; and**

**engage families in their children's learning in meaningful ways.**

For information on how to order the full book, download sections and individual articles, or explore the topic areas, visit [www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds](http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds).

## About the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project

The Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project is a 50-state initiative harnessing the power of networks and leaders to help schools and communities leverage the time beyond school to accelerate student achievement. A partnership of funders led by the C.S. Mott Foundation support the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project. More information about the book and the project, as well as additional resources, can be found at [www.expandinglearning.org](http://www.expandinglearning.org).

**William S. White**  
President and CEO  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

## Foreword

*Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success* couldn't be more timely. Debate abounds today on how we should reform education to provide the learning experiences and opportunities students need to prepare for jobs in our sophisticated, technological age.

We all know there is no silver bullet for what ails our education system. Improving educational achievement will require the knitting together of multiple approaches. And as we look for workable solutions, I believe we should focus some serious attention on the hours before and after school—not because they are the answer to the problems facing our education system but because they can be an important piece of the puzzle.

To build a stronger system, we need to create more opportunities for young people to learn, to experience a full range of enrichment activities (including music and the arts), to be exposed to the latest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, and to become more connected with their communities.

This book provides a window into how educators, schools, and communities are working together in cities, states, and towns—from San Francisco, California, to Dallas, Texas, to Woonsocket, Rhode Island—to provide these opportunities, develop solutions, and break down barriers to student success.

With almost 70 entries by leading educators, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers, *Expanding Minds and Opportunities* demonstrates the powerful benefits of afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities for students, their families, and communities across America.

Of course, with so many diverse articles, representing so many different viewpoints and perspectives, not everyone will agree with all of the material presented here. But differences of opinion can often catalyze dialogue and stimulate new ideas that in turn can increase the quality and capacity of the field.

At the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, through our years of funding community education and afterschool initiatives, we've learned that the productive use of time before and after school and during the summer can provide an important foundation for learning. That is why we have focused over the years on taking afterschool to scale across the country, including growing statewide afterschool networks from 9 in 2002 to 41 today, and supporting the development and implementation of the federal afterschool grant program known as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. Today, that program serves 1.6 million students across the country in rural communities, small cities, and suburban and urban neighborhoods.

Many of the articles in *Expanding Minds and Opportunities* illustrate how the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the networks, and many other afterschool efforts can be an important part of the solution to improving our education system. Moreover, they describe how these initiatives are successfully bringing multiple stakeholders to the table to support the education of children and their families, resulting in more cost-effective and efficient solutions.

There is no question that much remains to be done to ensure that all our young people have the opportunity to participate in high quality afterschool programming that expands their learning experiences and helps them succeed in school and life. Continuing to build strong programs and policies are fundamental to that effort. This publication—which contains a wealth of wisdom gleaned from experts—should help advance this important agenda.