

# Unlocking the Power of Expanded Learning Time: Year Two Report

“We need to lengthen the school day. We need to lengthen the school year. Children in India and China are going to school 25, 30, 35 more days a year. . . . When schools truly become centers of the community—where you have the best teachers, the best principals, great nonprofit partners coming in during the non-school hours to support and do enrichment activities and social services—then those students will beat the odds. They will go to college.”

*U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, December 7, 2010.*

## What’s Different about TASC Expanded Learning Time Schools?

Motivation is at the root of all learning. If a student does not want to learn, it’s hard to make him. If he’s excited to learn, it’s hard to stop him.

In our global economy, the future belongs to the country whose citizens are most capable of driving innovation and creativity. TASC Expanded Learning Time is an initiative to help students dramatically improve their school achievement and develop into adults who can innovate, create and think for a living.

TASC ELT is a network of 17 New York City public elementary and middle schools that are expanding the school day by three hours with our leadership and support. Each school partners with a community organization, such as a settlement house, to expand learning time by at least 35 percent – more than 60 extra days of school a year – at 10 percent of the cost of the school day.

We know that students who enter school with the greatest disadvantages need more learning hours and opportunities. We also know that piling hours of remediation atop a narrowly-focused, six-hour school day won’t change results for the millions of kids getting left behind in a knowledge economy.

TASC ELT unlocks the power of community organizations to help teachers teach and children learn. In ELT schools, teachers work side-by-side with community educators who specialize in child development. Together they help kids learn in different ways than they do during the typical school day, through active, hands-on activities in science and literacy and arts. They bond kids to school through sports. They involve parents as leaders and learners. They fortify kids socially and emotionally against lives full of stress and hardship. They give struggling kids intensive academic support during longer learning hours, and help high achievers accelerate their learning.

In the spring of 2010, seven New York City middle and elementary schools began to phase in ELT, together with their community partners. They joined ten schools that were finishing their second year of piloting TASC ELT.

### This update on Year Two of the TASC ELT pilot covers:

- TASC analysis of student need, which finds that more than two-thirds of students in ELT schools show early warning signs for dropping out
- TASC’s goal for the initiative and a new benchmarking strategy
- Research evidence that supports our approach

- A look at how school teams are using additional time to meet student needs
- Early lessons learned

## The Need

In America, the poorest kids are the least likely to have opportunities to keep learning after 3 PM. They are also the least likely to attend schools that educate the whole child – intellectually, socially and emotionally. In a society that values fairness, this is not only wrong. It’s a formula for growing inequality between those who can do the jobs of the future and those who can’t.

Just 60 percent of New York City students graduate from high school (fewer than half of black and Hispanic young men). The brutal truth is that we are raising the first generation of Americans who are likely to be less well-educated and less internationally competitive than their parents.

To gauge the extent of the problem in the 17 New York City public schools that are piloting or phasing in TASC ELT, the TASC research team analyzed the schools’ student achievement, attendance and disciplinary data. According to our analysis, fewer than 30% of students in those schools are fully on track to graduate based on their current attendance, achievement and behavioral profiles.

We tell kids that if they apply themselves at school, they can expect to experience fulfilling careers instead of life-long financial insecurity. At a minimum, this requires them to graduate from high school equipped with a breadth of core knowledge and the reasoning and collaboration skills to be college ready. That’s why we’ve identified progress toward high school graduation as the standard against which we measure the success of TASC ELT.

## A Drop-Out Early Warning System

Our goal is to get all kids who attend ELT schools on track to graduate from high school. Our promise to low-performing schools is this: Within three years of implementing ELT, we will help schools move up at least one-third of kids who are not yet on track due to weaknesses in attendance, behavior or achievement.

We are measuring progress toward that goal in two ways.

TASC has commissioned an independent evaluation of TASC ELT by Policy Studies Associates and Abt Associates. PSA and Abt are assessing how schools are implementing ELT; measuring effects on student achievement; and determining which practices are most closely linked with student success.

Drawing on extensive research that links student performance and habits in elementary and middle school with on-time graduation, we are developing and will continue to refine an internal benchmarking tool called Grad Tracker.

## How Does Grad Tracker Work?

We use Grad Tracker to help us analyze New York City Department of Education school and student data. We are measuring how many students in TASC ELT elementary and middle schools are on track to graduate; how many are closing in on that status; and how many are not on track to graduate, putting them at risk for dropping out.

**We consider students who meet these three benchmarks to be fully on track to graduate:**

- They’re proficient in math and English as measured by standardized test scores and grades
- Their school attendance is excellent
- They’ve experienced no school suspensions.\*

When students fall short in just one way – they fail a course, have less than excellent attendance or score just below proficiency in English or math – they are closing in on the goal of being on track to graduate, according to our benchmarking system. Students who fail to achieve proficiency in math or English, have at least one suspension or are chronically absent are considered to be at risk for dropping out.

As students get older, we adjust Grad Tracker benchmarks. TASC has developed benchmarks for four age groups: Grades K-to-2, 3-to-5, 6-to-8 (middle school) and 9-to-12 (high school).

## The Evidence Base

TASC ELT builds on research evidence which shows that when students participate regularly in high quality after-school programs for at least two years, they improve their achievement, school attendance and engagement in learning. A five-year independent analysis of TASC-model after-school programs (operated by community organizations inside schools) showed that students who participated had significantly greater gains in math proficiency than their peers who did not. Longer-term participants also significantly increased their school attendance rates compared to non-participating students, and they continued to have better attendance records even after they went on to high school. The least advantaged students gained the most from participating.

A growing body of research, including that compiled by Durlak and Weissburg (2010), shows that when kids participate in high quality expanded learning opportunities led by trained and caring adults, they raise their grades and test scores, bond more closely with their schools, improve their attitudes toward learning, exhibit

fewer problem behaviors and are more likely to graduate from high school. Halpern (2003) found that expanded learning opportunities are most powerful in helping kids engage in deeper, more student-centered learning outside of regular class time. Through these experiences students develop essential skills in problem-solving, collaboration and independent scholarship.

TASC ELT builds on these elements of the most effective after-school programs in our evolving effort to reinvent the learning day.

## How Are TASC ELT Schools Using More Time?

Within each pilot school, a team decides how best to deploy three extra hours a day of learning time. The team includes the principal, teachers, community partners, parents and a school staff member who is the educational liaison between teachers and community staff. TASC provides schools with guidelines for achieving a holistic educational balance in extended hours.

We tell low-performing schools that they should spend

### GRAD TRACKER: MIDDLE SCHOOL

	ON TRACK	CLOSING IN	NOT ON TRACK
<b>School Attendance Rate</b>	95%+	89.4%-94.9%	<89.4%
<b>Academic Proficiency</b>	Proficient on all exams AND passed math and English courses	Low proficient on at least one exam AND passed math OR English	Not proficient on math or English exams and grades
<b>Behavior as Measured by Suspensions*</b>	No Suspensions	No Suspensions	1 or more Suspensions

As students age, the criteria for whether they are on track to graduate evolves. This shows the benchmarks by which TASC measures whether middle school students are on track to graduate.

at least **40 percent** of added time on academic support and enrichments. At least **30 percent** should be spent on arts, sports, service and leadership activities. A third daily meal, recreation and parent pick-up should be accommodated in no more than 45 minutes a day. To support kids' fitness and boost their brain function, kids should spend at least **90 minutes** of added school time each week in vigorous movement.

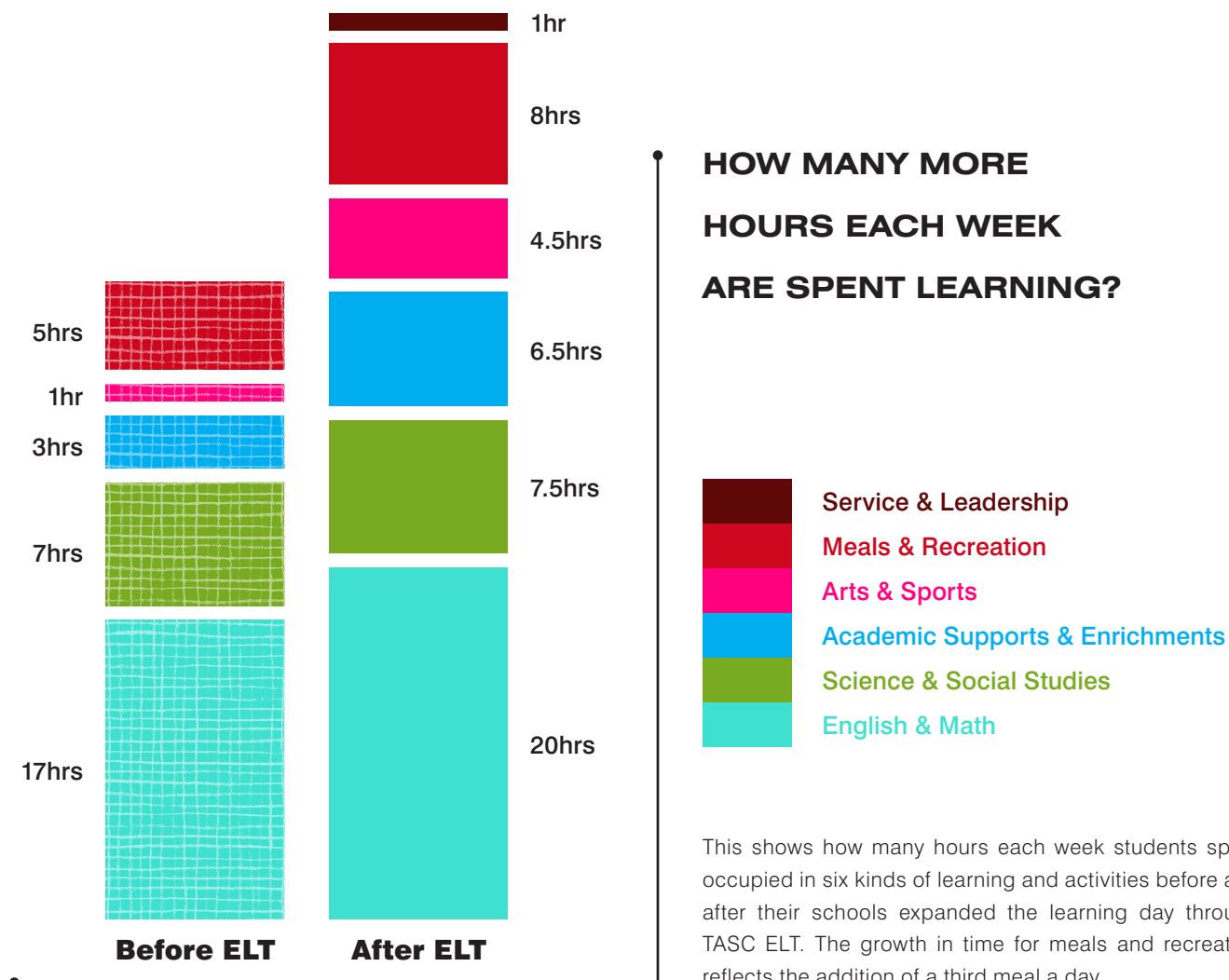
Each school has flexibility within these guidelines to offer instruction and enrichments that best meet student needs and connect with their interests.

TASC collected scheduling information from the original 10 pilot schools and found that schools are dedicating the greatest amounts of additional learning time to English and math instruction; academic support and

enrichment; sports and arts; and the addition of a third daily meal. (See illustration below for details.)

Among the ways schools are using additional time are these:

- At PS/IS 214 in the Bronx, the school launched its first Regents Algebra class for high-performing 8<sup>th</sup> graders by adding math periods after 3 PM. A late-day journalism project immerses English language learners in writing.
- PS 188/Manhattan school leaders made up for a deficit of time for Social Studies by teaming teachers with Educational Alliance community educators to teach Social Studies through the arts from 2:30 to 3:30.



This shows how many hours each week students spent occupied in six kinds of learning and activities before and after their schools expanded the learning day through TASC ELT. The growth in time for meals and recreation reflects the addition of a third meal a day.

- At Haven Academy, a Bronx charter school, community educators from New York Foundling join teachers in classrooms beginning at noon to support instruction and recreation. From 3 to 4 PM, teachers and community educators work together on small group instruction in math and English. Art, dance, music and other enrichments continue until 5:45.
- At PS 186 in Brooklyn, some members of the school staff work staggered hours to support learning experiences after 3. The parent coordinator, for example, comes in later and stays later to help students produce a school newsletter for parents.

### Early Lessons Learned

- In order to achieve school transformation, expanded learning time must include all students in a school. Schools can start by phasing in single grades or schools-within-schools as they raise funds for the whole school.
- Change takes time. Schools are likely to see improvements in attendance and decreases in negative behaviors before significant academic gains are realized.
- When they are joined with strong community partners who are willing to share accountability for student outcomes, school principals will share responsibility and resources.
- Community partners should be part of schools' data inquiry and data-sharing teams. Using simple but formalized communications protocols will help prompt data-sharing.
- If school-community partners don't build time into their standing schedules time for joint planning and professional development, it won't happen.
- Compared to curricula typically offered in some after-school programs, ELT schools need stronger, more defined curricula for the late learning hours that is well-aligned with what happens in the earlier part of the school day.
- When principals invest school funds in ELT, they can leverage external resources that help fill programmatic gaps.

### How Are School-Community Teams Developing?

An important distinction between TASC ELT schools and those with discrete after-school programs is that ELT teachers and community staff closely align and coordinate activities before and after 3 PM. This has required a culture shift in the way many schools and community organizations operate.

The community organization NIA operated an after-school program at PS 186 for a decade. In the summer of 2010, the partners began the year-long process of transitioning to a TASC-model longer school day. "We had to re-learn our roles as partners," said Mary Anne Cino, Chief Executive Officer of NIA. "We'd always supported each other, but there was an invisible line. You have to erase that line."

At the end of the second year of the pilot, school teams report having developed closer working relationships around everything from data-sharing to budgeting to jointly engaging families in workshops on topics such as conflict resolution.

#### Examples of partnership-building include:

- At JHS 185, teachers meet weekly with Child Center community educators to collaborate on lesson planning.
- Community educators at PS 59 in the Bronx for the first time have a curriculum guide that delineates the skills students must master at every level, drawn from several sources by the school's Educational Liaison.
- At PS 130 in Brooklyn, teachers are doing professional development with community educators to deepen their familiarity with the school's math approach; University Settlement community educators are sharing positive behavior management techniques with school staff.
- At Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School, AmeriCorps community educators work in classrooms besides teachers during the day, then help lead enrichments with kids during the late afternoon hours, providing continuity throughout the longer learning day. ■

# REINVENTING THE SCHOOL DAY:

## A 3RD GRADER'S EXPANDED DAY AT THURGOOD MARSHALL ACADEMY

### MONDAY & WEDNESDAY

PERIOD 1 | PERIOD 2 | PERIOD 3 | PERIOD 4 | PERIOD 5 | PERIOD 6 | PERIOD 7 | PERIOD 8 | PERIOD 9 | PERIOD 10 |

8:00-8:30 | 8:45- 9:30 | 9:35-10:20 | 10:23-11:10 | 11:15-12:05 | 12:10-1:00 | 1:05-1:50 | 1:55-2:40 | 2:50-3:27 | 3:30-4:15 | 4:25-5:00 | 5:00-5:30

#### COMMUNITY EDUCATORS JOIN TEACHERS

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Journal Writing</b> (Math for those below grade level)	<b>Math</b>	<b>Gym</b>	<b>Reading/ Writing</b>	<b>Lunch/ Recess</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Small Group Instruction:</b> Reading Help <b>Math Help</b> Advanced Math <b>Music</b> Museum Club	<b>Meal and Science</b>	<b>Homework</b>
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### TUESDAY & THURSDAY

8:00-8:30 | 8:45- 9:30 | 9:35-10:20 | 10:23-11:10 | 11:15-12:05 | 12:10-1:00 | 1:05-1:50 | 1:55-2:40 | 2:50-3:27 | 3:30-4:15 | 4:25-5:00 | 5:00-5:30

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Journal Writing</b> (Math for those below grade level)	<b>Choice:</b> Visual Arts <b>Character Building</b> Literacy through Arts	<b>Math</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>Lunch/ Recess</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Small Group Instruction:</b> Reading Help <b>Math Help</b> Advanced Math <b>Music</b> Museum Club	<b>Meal Choice:</b> Martial Arts • Photography African Dance • Step Team <b>Chorus</b>	<b>Homework</b>
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### FRIDAY

8:00-8:30 | 8:45- 9:30 | 9:35-10:20 | 10:23-11:10 | 11:15-12:05 | 12:10-1:00 | 1:05-1:50 | 1:55-2:40 | 2:50-3:27 | 3:30-4:15 | 4:25-5:00 | 5:00-5:30

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Journal Writing</b> (Math for those below grade level)	<b>Math</b>	<b>Choice:</b> Visual Arts <b>Character Building</b> Literacy through Arts	<b>Reading/ Writing</b>	<b>Lunch/ Recess</b>	<b>Integrated Social Studies</b>	<b>Group Social Studies Project</b>	<b>Small Group Instruction:</b> Reading Help <b>Math Help</b> Advanced Math <b>Music</b> Museum Club	<b>Meal and Science</b>	<b>Homework</b>
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## Opposite Page: [About This Schedule](#)

This schedule depicts the learning and activities that are part of a third grader's expanded day at Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School in Harlem. TMALS is a TASC ELT school that offers a longer learning day in partnership with Abyssinian Development Corporation. The schedule offers evidence that this year, the principal has prioritized stronger math instruction for third graders. Teachers start their work day at 8 AM. At 11:15 AM, community educators start working alongside teachers in some classrooms to help with small group instruction. A group of teachers lead activities including science inquiry after 3, however most late afternoon activities are led by community educators.

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\*There are no universally collected measures of positive student behavior, so TASC is using incidents of school suspension as a marker for students who are struggling with behavior. At the time of publication, suspension data and middle school course failure information were not available for the group of New York City students we are tracking. For this report, we did not use those markers in calculating the percentage of students who are on track to graduate.

TASC consulted with New Visions for Public Schools on the development of Grad Tracker.

## Your Comments

At publication time, TASC is mid-way through the third year of a 3-year pilot. As we plan for the next stage of implementing Expanded Learning Time, we seek comments and feedback on this report, our strategy and the tools we are using to measure success, including the Grad Tracker. Please direct your comments to the authors, Lucy N. Friedman and Saskia Traill.

## About TASC

The After-School Corporation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to giving all kids opportunities to grow through after-school and summer activities that support, educate and inspire them.

TASC's vision is that kids from all backgrounds will have access to the range of high quality activities beyond the school day that every family wants for their children: experiences that support their intellectual, creative and healthy development and help them to be their best, in and out of school.



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