

## Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) – A Key School Improvement Strategy

[http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/documents/extendedlearningtimefile\\_NYSAN\\_ELO.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/documents/extendedlearningtimefile_NYSAN_ELO.pdf)

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ELOs reshape when, where and how learning occurs. They comprise an array of approaches that complement in-school learning with positive, enriching out-of-school experiences. Summer learning, afterschool programming, extended day models, and ELO programs support academic growth by engaging students with high-interest content and innovative learning methods. ELOs also share an explicit focus on social and emotional development and learning, as they offer informal environments that blend skill acquisition, relationship building and fun. ELOs are enriching educational experiences that combine exposure to new ideas, places and relationships, hands-on opportunities to apply knowledge and encouragement for students to fully engage their minds and bodies in learning. Importantly, for schools and for students, the most successful ELOs are those that bring schools together with strong high-quality community partners.

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ELOs earn their place as crucial elements in the State's toolkit for school improvement and comprehensive education reform because they so effectively contribute to New York's core mission of readying all students for success in college and career. Research demonstrates that:

**1. ELOs impact student outcomes across multiple areas.** Research has documented the academic benefits of afterschool and summer programs. ELOs improved school attendance and homework completion, as well as higher graduation and promotion rates. ELOs also enhance social-emotional development and learning.

**2. ELOs level the playing field for disadvantaged students.** ELOs bring to schools that serve low-income students the types of enrichment that more affluent students have access to regularly - art, music and drama; hands-on science; organized sports; and opportunities for service and career exploration. ELOs also provide disadvantaged students with opportunities to develop relationships with supportive, caring adults who can act as role models and provide mentoring and guidance about college and career choices. ELOs provide low-income students with opportunities that make relevant the connections between academic accomplishments, post-secondary education and career options.<sup>12</sup>

*The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a public-private partnership dedicated to promoting young people's safety, learning, and healthy development by increasing the quality and availability of programs available outside the traditional classroom. The positions taken and statements set forth in this document do not necessarily represent the views of all NYSAN members. For a copy of this and other NYSAN publications, visit [www.nysan.org](http://www.nysan.org).*