SHOW ME THE BUDGET

How to Finance Expanded Learning

How can schools ensure that all students get a balanced education and equitable access to learning opportunities that prepare them for lifelong success? By partnering with strong, youth-serving community organizations, public schools can efficiently pool public and private resources to give students more and better learning time.

Under Principal Bayan Cadotte, PS 186 in Brooklyn teamed with NIA Community Services Network to add three more learning hours to the school day for 500 children each year. In the partners’ first year as an ExpandED School, students improved their state test scores by seven percentage points in English and 10 points in math. And 97 percent of families gave the school high marks on its learning climate.

See how the partners worked with TASC to build a budget. As NIA Chief Executive Officer Mary Anne Cino said, “Each grant helps us to build a balanced, well-rounded school day.”

FUNDING SOURCES: 3 MORE LEARNING HOURS, 500 STUDENTS, $800,000

1. NYC Department of Youth and Community Development - Out-of-School Time Program: $280,000
New York and other cities and states offer local and state funds to support out-of-school time learning. New York City awards these funds to community organizations through grant competitions. As an example of how PS 186 uses these funds, students act as “Nutrition Detectives” to learn about healthy diet. They cook nutritious foods and build their critical thinking skills by analyzing menu choices from local restaurants.

2. 21st Century Community Learning Centers: $160,000
The federal 21st CCLC program, administered through states, supports enrichment activities that build academic, social, and emotional skills. At PS 186, students learn about STEM-focused careers and conduct experiments linked to science lessons through a curriculum called WonderWise.

3. School Funds - Title I and Title III, Part A: $160,000
Schools can contribute to expanded learning time by allocating flexible funds and shifting staff schedules. Ms. Cadotte changed an assistant principal’s hours to a later shift. She used federal Title I support for low income students, and Title III support for English Language Learners to compensate teachers for working longer hours with students who need extra time on literacy.
4. New York City Council: $100,000
The Council supports community organizations that enrich learning beyond the traditional school day through the TASC After 3 initiative. At PS 186, students created original artworks in the styles of Van Gogh and Picasso.

5. Private Investment: $79,250
Foundations and individuals made critical investments through TASC to leverage public funds. PS 186 used a portion of these dollars to increase students’ physical activity and team-building skills through Zumba, soccer and other forms of movement.

6. AmeriCorps: $25,000
Federal funds administered by New York State through a grant competition support TASC AmeriCorps members who assist PS 186 teachers with lessons in the morning, and lead students through community service projects throughout the expanded school day.

CHALLENGES

- The process of seeking out funds, writing proposals and reporting on each grant is time-consuming.
- Grants are tied to different, sometimes conflicting or duplicative rules and requirements. For example, in New York City, youth development programs are licensed under health and safety codes that differ from schools’ health and safety guidelines. This creates confusion for programs and schools that must comply with both. Also, school and youth development agencies require separate background checks for personnel and fingerprinting. Staff members are often fingerprinted twice to work with the same set of children.
- Staff members must manage duplicative monitoring, reporting, and evaluation grant requirements. Because granting agencies use different processes and systems, staff members do double work such as entering the same attendance data into different systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public agencies should collaborate to ease administrative burdens at the school level. Agencies that oversee multiple funding streams should standardize and ensure consistency among requests for proposals. They should allow flexible use of funds and encourage blended budgets. Agencies should streamline health and safety compliance rules and coordinate and connect data and reporting systems to reduce double entries.

2. Policymakers should dedicate funds for school-community partnerships that transform the learning day. Ultimately, schools that commit to collaborating with a community partner to significantly expanding learning time with activities that complement, but do not duplicate, the existing school curriculum could receive an increase in funds for each student without writing multiple grant proposals.

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