

ELOs & ELTs: A Closer Look



It is easy to understand the confusion around the terms **Extended Learning Time (ELT)** and **Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO)**. Though these terms are sometimes used interchangeably in conversations about education reform, each term has a specific meaning.

Background

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) is an inclusive term that refers to multiple ways of providing learning experiences for youth beyond the traditional school day. It generally refers to high-quality afterschool programs, but also includes before school or breakfast programs, weekend programs, and summer learning programs. It also includes extended school day or year programs, also known as Extended Learning Time (ELT).

Extended Learning Time (ELT) programs extend the official school day or year, so there are more hours in the official school day and/or more days in the official school year. Unlike other ELOs, ELTs programs are mandatory for all students in the school.

Afterschool Programs

Afterschool programs have always been safe, fun, and productive places for young people to spend their out of school time. Most recently, there is growing awareness of the positive impact that quality afterschool programs have on student performance during the school day.

What does a quality afterschool program look like?

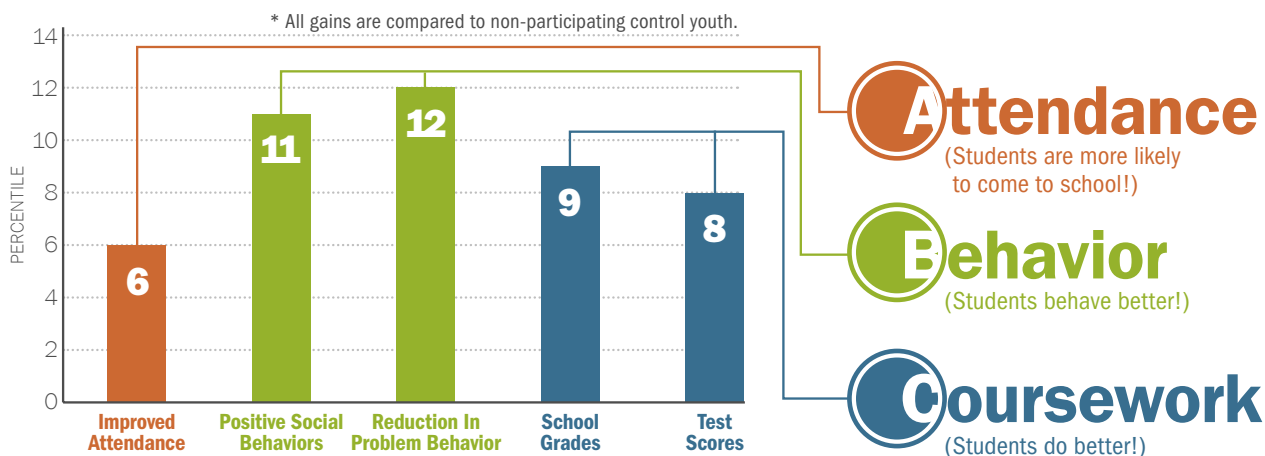
- Research shows that quality afterschool programs:
- intentionally plan activities in support of specific objectives promote active forms of learning, such as project-based learning
 - create opportunities for skill-building, including personal and social skills
 - foster positive and supportive relationships between youth and staff
 - provide space for youth voice and opportunities for youth choice
 - are integrated with family, school, and community efforts.^{1 2}

How do quality afterschool programs positively impact youth?

Research shows that high quality afterschool programs can lead to increased Attendance, Behavior and improved Coursework. Students participating in a high quality afterschool programs went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests. These ABCs are critical factors to student engagement and achievement.³

Research shows that high quality afterschool programs can lead to increased **Attendance**, **Behavior** and improved **Coursework**. This means that students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests. These ABCs are critical factors to student engagement and achievement.

High quality afterschool programs are proven to accelerate student achievement:¹



Extended Learning Time (ELT)

The ELT model promises to positively impact student performance, but because ELT programs are still uncommon, research on the impact of these programs is limited.

Research on impact:

- So far, the results of the research are mixed. There is a general consensus among researchers that the outcomes of ELT programs depend on how the extra time is used. For example, adding time to the school day or year will have very different outcomes depending on the quality of instruction and on student engagement in learning.⁴
- Massachusetts launched an ELT initiative between 2006 and 2010 in which some elementary and middle schools added 300 hours to the school year. A scientifically rigorous study found that the ELT program did not affect student performance in most grade levels and test subjects, but the study did find a positive effect of the ELT program on 5th grade science test scores.⁵
- ELT initiatives tend to be very expensive compared to other education reform efforts.^{6 7}

Considerations:

- ELT programs typically extend the school day by 60-90 minutes. Many youth still will need supervised constructive activities after school

before parents return home from work.

- If an ELT program does not successfully engage youth, there is a possibility that the extended time in school could reduce their motivation and increase disinterest in school and possibly drop-outs.
- ELT programs will limit the amount of time that youth will have to pursue extracurricular activities not provided at the school or to work a part-time job.

For more information about high quality afterschool programs, please visit our website: <http://www.njsacc.org>.

End Notes:

- 1 Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P., Pachan, Molly (2010). "A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents."
- 2 Vandell, Deborah, (2004) "Study of Promising After-School Programs: Descriptive Report of the Promising Programs"
- 3 Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P., Pachan, Molly (2010).
- 4 Patall, Erika A. (2010) "Extending the School Day or School Year: A Systematic Review of Research"
- 5 Abt Associates Inc., (2012) "Evaluation of the Massachusetts ELT Initiative"
- 6 Chalkboard Project, (2008) "A Review of Research on Extended Learning Time in K-12 Schools"
- 7 Patall, (2010)

Infographics used with permission from:
Expanded Learning & Afterschool Project

A Base to Build On

Many states and communities provide funding for high quality afterschool programs. At the federal level, the 21st Century Community Learning Center is a unique federal funding stream that has been successfully bringing together communities to accelerate student achievement through afterschool and summer learning programs for more than a decade. Unique for the emphasis it places on having communities at the table, this funding stream allows for local design and variation in providing engaging, proven, cost-effective afterschool and summer learning programming.

More than **1.6 million** young people served²



10,466
school-based and
community-based centers
across the country³



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL PROJECT AT WWW.EXPANDINGLEARNING.ORG.

¹ Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P., Pachan, Molly (2010). *A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents*. <http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/A-meta-analysis-of-after-school-programs-that-seek-to-promote-personal-and-social-skills-in-children-and-adolescents.pdf>.

^{2,3} Afterschool Alliance. Retrieved March 19, 2012 from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policy21stccclc.cfm>.