

Recommendation:

Support strong partnerships between schools and community-based organizations. ▪ Develop model Memorandums of Understanding that include expectations of shared: governance, professional development, data, annual and weekly planning, and accountability ▪ Offer professional development for district and school leadership on developing strong, accountable community partnerships ▪ Include measures related to strong community partnerships in principal and superintendent evaluations.

Research:

Recognizing that expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) are critical to school reform means taking action to intentionally and explicitly support schools, districts and community organizations to develop purposeful and well-integrated partnerships that will result in meaningful educational enrichment. Collaborative planning is a hallmark of effective ELOs and it ensures that together, schools and community partners can bring their distinct strengths to the shared goal of student achievement.

For more information, see NYSAN's report: [The Role of Expanded Learning Opportunities in New York State School Reform.](#)

Many of the critical decisions that facilitate high quality ELOs and strong community partnerships are made at the school level. Principals and other school personnel and the staffs of their community partners have joint responsibility for implementing effective programs. Together they should cultivate and constantly nurture partnerships, find ways to integrate program planning and governance so that ELOs complement and supplement school-day learning, work toward common goals, set out realistic expectations, and develop and utilize systems for quality assurance.

Districts should develop an infrastructure that supports partnerships between schools and community organizations, encourages principals to develop authentic collaborations with partners through active engagement and integrated planning, and promotes quality. Mapping initiatives at the district level can help schools find partners with whom there is mission alignment, as well as better coordinate partnerships to eliminate service gaps and overlaps.

Targeted guidance from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) will help schools, districts and community partners utilize resources more strategically, sustain high-quality programs, and ensure partnerships have the necessary tools to hold themselves accountable for meaningful outcomes.

Examples:

1. *The Newburgh School District reached out to the Boys & Girls Club of Newburgh over the summer to strengthen the partnership and increase academic alignment between the Boys & Girls Club and the three schools where they provide ELO programs. So far, the partnership has led to increased knowledge within the Boys & Girls Club of current district strategies for supporting low-performing schools, access to the district's curriculum maps, and an invitation for Boys & Girls Club leadership and staff to participate in relevant professional development. The Boys & Girls Club is now actively working to integrate this information into their program activities at their partner schools and at their community center, which serves students from every school in Newburgh.*

2. *Partnership for After School Education (PASE) conducted a training for new principals/school leaders in order to help them become knowledgeable about quality afterschool programs, joint professional development with schools and community-based organizations and effective collaborations with CBOs. PASE is hoping to make this a reoccurring training moving forward.*