

**PRESS RELEASE
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Education Leaders Highlight School-Community Partnerships on Bus Tour to Expanded Learning Sites in Auburn, Syracuse, and Binghamton

November 18 – Today, 17 leaders from education agencies and school districts toured three expanded learning opportunities created through school-community partnerships on a bus tour to sites in Auburn, Syracuse, and Binghamton. The tour was part of a series hosted by the New York State Learning Community on Expanding Learning through School-Community Partnerships, funded by the Ford Foundation. The learning community has spent the last year examining school-community partnership strategies, including community schools, expanded learning time, and school-based afterschool and summer programs to develop joint recommendations to the state to best support high-quality models across New York.

First, the learning community visited Auburn High School, one of five community schools in Auburn operated in collaboration with Partnership for Results. Afterschool is an integral part of Auburn High School and provides students with unique project-based learning opportunities, including a Mars Rover challenge and LEGO Robotics projects. The school also has a mobile dental clinic through a partnership with East Hill Family Medical. Dental screenings are provided to students at the school, including cleanings and x-rays. Camille Johnson, the Assistant Superintendent for School Services, highlighted the importance of strong partnerships and collaborations between the school and their community partners which have helped them reach out to the surrounding community.

“We are not only seeing the students and families in a particular school,” Johnson said, “but we can have folks from the community come into our building to receive the services that they need. An example of that would be the depression screenings we offer to our school students and surrounding community members. Anyone from the community can come into the school and receive them – they do not have to have a child in our school.”

The second stop on the tour was H.W. Smith Pre-K-8 School in Syracuse, an expanded learning time school that has been working with the National Center for Time and Learning, where participants were joined by Syracuse Chief of Police Frank L. Fowler and a representative from the office of Congressman John Katko. After interviewing students and staff, the group was able to tour the school and observe first grade arts, STEM, and literacy classes. Chief Fowler opened the tour speaking to the importance of expanded learning opportunities for youth.

“That’s the goal that we work toward each and every day— to reach our young people through innovational education programs and extended day programs where you’re

incorporating fresh new ideas in the school day and with the afterschool programs,” Chief Fowler said. “We can’t look at our young people anymore and take for granted that they have the resources that they need. As adults with additional resources coming into a young person’s life, we should be more than prepared to share those resources with them with hopes of enhancing and enriching their lives in some sort of way.”

The tour concluded at Binghamton High School with a visit to their school-based afterschool program operated as part of Broome County Promise Zone. Representatives from the offices of Congressman Richard Hanna and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo joined the tour and had the opportunity to observe students participating in a trivia game with undergraduate and graduate student interns and volunteers from Binghamton University. The school has formed a strong relationship with Binghamton University, which has benefited both the college students receiving credit hours, and the high school students who benefit from the added interaction. Roxie Oberg, Principal of Binghamton High School, spoke to the importance of strong collaboration between the school staff and community partners, and the addition of joint weekly meetings to ensure all services are coordinated for the students.

Along the bus route, participants discussed the findings of the learning community and heard from experts on high-quality partnerships. “I thought it was a great experience to see three different types of programs, including extended school services, afterschool programs, and community schools,” said Terry McSweeney of New York State United Teachers. “It’s a great opportunity to take pieces of those programs and services and introduce them to schools we work with directly.”

This tour included representatives from New York State School Boards’ Association, New York State United Teachers, Alliance for Quality Education, Children’s Aid Society, ExpandED Schools, AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network, Council for a Strong America, Connecticut After School Network, and the New York State Education Department. School district representatives from Albany, Hudson, and Watkins Glen also joined.

About ASW:NYSAN

AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network (ASW:NYSAN) works to strengthen the capacity and commitment of communities, programs, and professionals to increase access to high-quality programs and services beyond the traditional classroom.

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