

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

Alli Lidie  
Deputy Director  
AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network  
Ph: [703-967-2808](tel:703-967-2808) (cell)  
[aldie@nysan.org](mailto:aldie@nysan.org)



**Statewide Education Associations Assemble to Release Recommendations on Expanding Learning through School-Community Partnerships**

Albany, NY - February 2, 2016 – Today, leaders from statewide education associations and school districts joined forces to release recommendations to the state to support strong school-community partnerships for expanding learning in an event highlighting the importance of community schools, school-based afterschool and summer programs, expanded learning time, and collective impact for student success. The recommendations take the form of a white paper, *Expanding Learning through School-Community Partnerships in New York State: Findings and Recommendations of the Statewide Learning Community*, and are based on what the learning community heard from principals, superintendents, program directors, researchers, and other experts about the needs and opportunities in the field. Assemblymembers Didi Barrett and Pat Fahy, staff from state legislative offices, and representatives of state and local agencies joined as leaders from New York State United Teachers, Alliance for Quality Education, School Administrators Association of New York State, United Federation of Teachers, Rural Schools Association, and New York Association for Pupil Transportation shared the white paper's recommendations.

“The learning community brought together a diverse group of thinkers and doers on the topic of expanded learning and community schools,” said Larry Waite, Director of Educational Services for New York State United Teachers. “We put forth some solid recommendations to advance efforts on all levels of state government and the educational community. The beneficiaries of this are the students, educators, and members of the community.”

Following the recommendations, state experts from Children’s Aid Society, NYS Cradle to Career Alliance, ExpandED Schools, and AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network took the stage for a panel discussion of the models of school-community partnerships and their values. Moderated by Fred Frelow, Senior Program Officer, Youth Opportunity and Learning for the Ford Foundation, the panel highlighted the way the field has developed and fine-tuned these models over time. Saskia Traill, Vice President, Policy & Research for ExpandED Schools spoke to the development of their expanded learning time model based on “decades of research showing that the two things that really had the greatest impact for young people were when the Principal was really engaged in what happened in those afternoon hours from 3pm - 6pm and when students were regularly participating and getting the benefit of being in those enriching opportunities.” Lukas Weinstein, Director of Regional Initiatives for Children’s Aid Society’s National Center for Community Schools then elaborated on the outcomes they have seen in their models. “Clearly there are things like school culture, where we do show success with attendance and lower chronic absenteeism. On attendance, it’s not just the

student's attendance but also teacher attendance which has improved across the board. In most of our schools you see higher rates of student attendance and teacher attendance. If kids are happier, teachers are happier, and if kids are happier, families are happier."

Tom Phillips, Superintendent of Watkins Glen Central School District joined experienced practitioners from The Child Center of NY, Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, and the Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program to discuss what it takes to put true school-community partnerships for expanding learning into practice. Jenn O'Connor from Council for a Strong America asked the group what their partnerships looked like. "One of the things we're looking at," said Phillips, "is that we have four towns that are running individual recreation programs. How do we collectively rally those resources in a way that we can efficiently create a county-wide system verses the duplication of services, so we can increase the quality of programs and expand the population we serve? For us it's all about coordination, education, and collaboration."

Over the year and half of learning community meetings, the group found that the success of expanded learning models often depends largely on the schools or districts having the capacity to develop partnerships between the schools and the community organizations. "We as a learning community recommend supporting purposeful school and district coordination. With that, we recognize the role of a dedicated director in coordinating the partnership, or partnerships, is a crucial part of the success of this model," said Christine Schuch, Director of Policy for New York City Community Learning Schools for the United Federation of Teachers.

The learning community targeted the recommendations towards state policymakers and agencies, school districts, schools, and community-based partners to guide their efforts in supporting high-quality partnerships for expanded learning. "The learning community has been such a unique opportunity for leaders from many of the state's education associations to come together with practitioners and school leaders and really talk about what makes a difference for our young people – and how to better support the programs that do. The agreement from so many associations speaks strongly to the importance of expanding learning through school-community partnerships in New York State. I hope that the recommendations we have released today will help the state to better support the current programs and to significantly grow funding to meet the demand for new school-community partnerships," said Alli Lidie, Deputy Director for AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network.

The learning community was funded by the Ford Foundation.

The full white paper is available at [www.nysan.org/learning-community](http://www.nysan.org/learning-community).

### **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.*

###