



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY: SASKIA TRAILL, PRESIDENT & CEO, EXPANDED SCHOOLS**  
**NY STATE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET HEARING TESTIMONY**  
**ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
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My name is Saskia Trill and I am the President & CEO of ExpandedED Schools. Thank you to Speaker Heastie, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and the rest of the members of the New York State Legislature for the opportunity to submit testimony for this 2023 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Elementary and Secondary Education.

I would like to take this opportunity to implore the legislature to maintain the \$21.95M allocation for school-wide extended learning grants present in the *Aid to Localities* portion of Governor Hochul's FY 24 Executive Budget. Since 2013, this allocation has done incredibly important work in New York City (NYC) that is no doubt replicated throughout the other districts across the state that participate in the program.

The eight State Expanded Learning Time program (ELT) grantee schools in NYC and their partners use these innovative funds to develop new models of teaching and learning that benefit students and their families. Through this grant every student receives a minimum of 25% more learning time with more than half the students receiving 35% more time. The extra time is used to reinforce lessons, provide personalized academic support and offer engaging enrichments.

First, all participating schools aim to support student academic achievement. From school year (SY) 2015-2016 to SY 2018-2019, ELA proficiency rates have increased by 12.1 percentage points compared to only 10.1 percentage points among middle school students citywide while math proficiency rates have increased by 12.9 percentage points in this same four-year timeframe, compared to only 8.7 percentage points among middle school students citywide.

Additionally, despite serving an extremely high concentration of vulnerable students across the board – [91% of students in NYC's 8 ELT schools identify as Black or Latinx/Hispanic and 88% are students experiencing poverty](#)<sup>1</sup> – the NYC schools in the ELT portfolio saw equal Math and ELA proficiency levels when compared to Black and Latinx students in middle schools citywide during the 2021-2022 SY testing cycle. When we consider:

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<sup>1</sup> Dumornay, Nathalie M., Lauren A.M. Lebois, Kerry J. Ressler, and Nathaniel G. Harnett. "Racial Disparities in Adversity during Childhood and the False Appearance of Race-Related Differences in Brain Structure." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 180, no. 2 (2023): 127–38.



1. [The education debt](#)<sup>2</sup> accrued with Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) pre-pandemic due to generations of poor policy and intentional divestment
2. The compounding, exacerbating [effects of the COVID-19](#)<sup>3</sup> pandemic on poor BIPOC communities

Then the idea that NYC State ELT schools were able to keep up with citywide ELA and Math averages for Black and Latinx students when they almost exclusively serve the most vulnerable communities is a testament to the work that happens in those buildings and through the programs built with New York State Extended Learning Grant Funding

Secondly, in addition to a focus on academics, our schools use their extended learning time to build social-emotional learning (SEL) supports. Among our schools that administer SEL assessments (The DESSA-mini), youth display statistically significant gains in social-emotional learning. Further, students at these sites are significantly more likely to be rated as social-emotionally 'strong' on the standardized assessment of SEL than students nationwide.

At the end of 2018-19, 31% (up from 16% at the start of the year) of students were rated as social-emotionally 'strong' on a standardized assessment of SEL compared to 16% nationwide. Additionally, at the start of that year, 20% of students in State ELT schools were rated as in need of SEL intervention (compared to 16% nationwide). By the end of the year, this proportion had decreased to only 7%.

These outcomes occurred even though only 3 schools in the NYC ELT portfolio had a full-time social worker (SW) serving the school community during the 2018-2019 school year. Although that number increased by SY 2021-22 with most schools in the portfolio now having a full time SW, city level investments in SW staffing in schools were funded with federal stimulus funding and, therefore, it is unclear if current staffing levels will be sustainable.

Lastly, afterschool & extended learning programs in general are [a great tool when it comes to students' social and emotional development](#)<sup>4</sup>. Programs offer students a safe, structured space for self-expression and where they can foster meaningful relationships with staff and have access to a mentorship corps. These spaces are a critical complement to the [investments in SEL](#) that have been incorporated in New

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<sup>2</sup> Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools." *Educational Researcher* 35, no. 7 (2006): 3–12.

<sup>3</sup> Khan, Fazil. "1 In Every 200 NYC Children Have Lost a Parent or Caregiver to COVID. That's Almost Twice the National Rate." *The City*, April 20, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Hurd, Noelle, and Nancy Deutsch. "SEL-Focused after-School Programs." *The Future of Children* 27, no. 1 (2017): 95–115.



York City schools<sup>5</sup> since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whether it is SEL screeners, social workers, teacher trainings or other interventions, afterschool programming provides a robust opportunity for accelerated advancement from a social emotional perspective. Thereby, maximizing the effectiveness of those in-school interventions by redistributing the responsibility of healing-centered engagement to more actors.

I look forward to working with Governor Hochul, Speaker Heastie, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, the rest of the New York State legislature, and the New York State Education Department to help build an equitable education system that fully meets the socio-emotional and educational needs of all students.

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<sup>5</sup> Moloney, Silé. "Mayor & Schools Chancellor Announce 'Academic Recovery Plan' for NYC Public Schools for 2021/22." *Norwood News*, July 21, 2021.