

Making the Connection:  
Next Generation  
Learning & Expanded  
Learning Opportunities

We would like to acknowledge the work and contributions of our researcher and writer, Jenell Holstead, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and the following Wisconsin Innovation Lab Network (ILN)/Expanded Learned Opportunities (ELO) Committee Members:

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The Innovation Lab Network (ILN), formed by the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), is a unique initiative that focuses on transforming educational systems so that all children graduate ready for college, career, and life. In fact, the focus of the ILN is on fostering a system of education that engages and motivates all students and includes six critical attributes of Next Generation Learning (NxGL):

1. World Class Knowledge and Skills
2. Performance-Based Learning
3. Personalized Learning
4. Comprehensive Systems of Support
5. Anytime, Anywhere Learning
6. Student Agency

These attributes were identified by a deepened understanding of the process of learning, a greater knowledge of socio-cultural factors in learning, and the recognition that the world has changed since the current system of education was designed (CCSSO, 2010). A description of each of these attributes is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Descriptions of the 6 Critical Attributes of NxGL**

Critical Attributes of NxGL	Description
World Class Knowledge and Skills	Achievement goals sufficiently encompass the content knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for success in a globally-oriented world.
Performance-Based Learning	Students are at the center of the learning process by enabling the demonstration of mastery based on high, clear, and commonly-shared expectations.
Personalized Learning	A data-driven framework is used to set goals, assess progress, and ensure students receive the academic and developmental supports they need.
Comprehensive Systems of Support	Social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development is addressed along a continuum of services to ensure the success of all students.
Anytime, Anywhere Learning	Constructive learning experiences in all aspects of a child's life are provided, through both the geographic and the Internet-connected community.
Student Agency	Students are deeply engaged in directing and owning their individual learning and shaping the nature of the education experience among their peers.

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are examples of initiatives that promote constructive learning outside of the regular school day, and as such, are uniquely aligned with the NxGL attribute of *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*. In fact, ELOs help reshape when, where, and how students learn and can include before/after school programming, Saturday or weekend school, summer learning, and extended day or

yearlong programs in schools or community settings (NYSAN, 2012). Due to the increasingly popularity of such programs, ELOs have the potential to impact a wide range of students. For example, after school programming alone impacts the lives of nearly 8.4 million children between kindergarten and 12<sup>th</sup> grade

***ELOs are uniquely aligned with the NxGL attribute of Anytime, Anywhere Learning, and have the capacity to help schools meet the needs of all students and improve student achievement.***

(Afterschool Alliance, 2012). Moreover, ELOs have the potential to provide additional academic enrichment activities and support to students. In fact, ELOs have been found to improve academic achievement (Alexander, Olson, & Entwisle, 2007; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007), social and emotional development (Durlak & Weissberg,

2007), and student engagement (Huang, Kyung, Marshall, & Perez, 2005). In addition, ELOs have been found to help reduce crime (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006) and prevent pregnancy (Afterschool Alliance, 2012). Therefore, ELOs are uniquely aligned with the NxGL attribute of *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*, and have the capacity to help schools meet the needs of all students and improve student achievement.

In the spring of 2010, the ILN formed a network of states to identify and analyze effective NxGL practices and illuminate innovation in the field. Wisconsin was selected as one of six original states in the ILN. Through funds from the Mott Foundation received in spring 2012, a Wisconsin ILN/ELO committee was formed to research ELO programs and identify specific practices across the state that had been successful in implementing the following research-based practices which are consistent with the attributes of NxGL:

#### **1. Connection of ELOs to the school day**

Consistent with the NxGL attribute of Anytime, Anywhere Learning, effective ELO programs directly and purposefully connect academic program components to the school day (Policy Studies Associates, 1995), ensuring constructive learning opportunities exist in different aspects of a child's life. In fact, studies indicate that the highest quality ELO programs provide highly engaging activities that incorporate academic content and curriculum utilized during the regular school day (Borman, Goetz, & Dowling, 2008; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002). Many high-quality programs also heighten connections to the school day curriculum by configuring activities with district and/or state learning standards. In this way, programs may offer different, although complementary, activities to reinforce critical skills and knowledge areas.

Another way to achieve connection with the school day is frequent and ongoing communication between school and ELO staff, which supports the Comprehensive Systems of Support critical attribute of NxGL. Although this attribute encompasses more than just connections between the school day and ELO programs, ensuring communication exists between the school and ELO program is an important factor in moving toward a complete system of support. One of the most efficient ways to accomplish this is to staff ELO programs with regular school day teachers (Fashola, 1998). Teachers' information about school day instruction or individual student needs can help staff plan programming (Beckett et al., 2009). In addition, programs with good relationships and ongoing communication with school personnel, especially school principals, usually have higher quality academic activities (Zuman & Miller, 2005). As such, the strength of the connection between the school and the ELO program is a critical factor in determining the overall quality of the ELO program itself.

## 2. Use of data-driven academic services that respond to individual student needs

Research is quite clear that ELO program staff should assess the unique needs of individual students and tailor programming accordingly (National Reading Panel, 2000), consistent with the NxGL attribute of *Personalized Learning*. Because ELO program time may be significantly shorter than the regular school day, programming must be focused and targeted for each individual student (Beckett et al., 2009). To provide personalized learning opportunities for students, program staff must be aware of each child's strengths and weaknesses (Beckett et al., 2009). This can be done in part through informal observations and experience working with a particular child, but a key piece is also the use of assessment data collected by the school or ELO program. Such assessment data may include results from standardized tests, grades, behavioral data, attendance data, or teacher, parent, or student surveys. When such assessment data are obtained, programs are able to adjust and design new offerings to personalize the experience for the student and ensure activities are tailored to individual student needs (Beckett et al., 2009), resulting in improved academic performance (Slavin, 2006).

## 3. Use of individualized monitoring systems/portfolios to identify student needs and assess progress

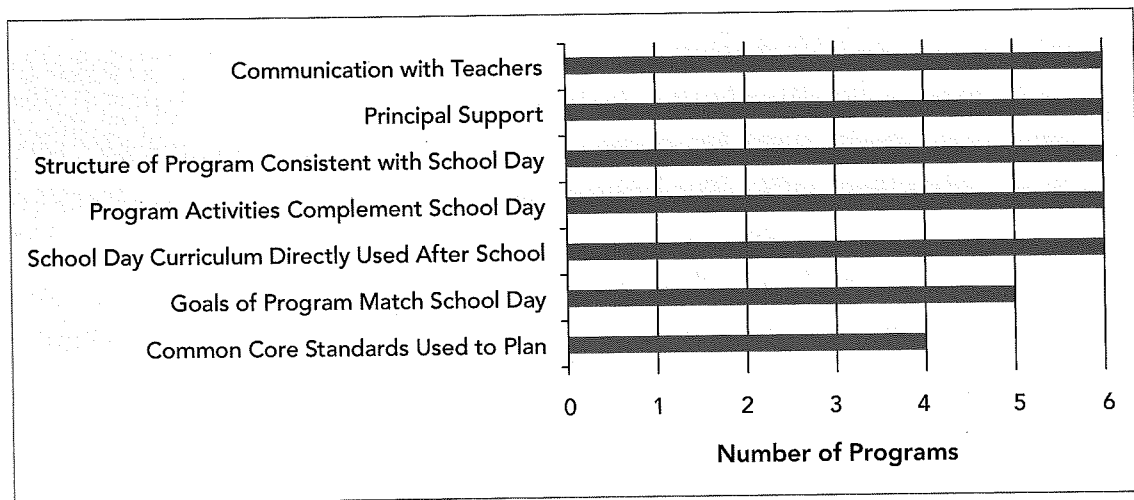
Although the use of individualized systems to monitor student progress has not yet been a heavy focus in ELO literature, much attention to monitoring student progress during the regular school day has. In fact, alternative ways to monitor student progress, such as portfolios, are an increasingly common trend in educational settings (Brinkley, Schwartz, & Suen, 2000). As opposed to evaluating students solely on "traditional" assessments at a single point in time (such as test scores or grades), portfolios evaluate student work over the course of time and tell a story regarding student progress. In fact, portfolios do not necessarily only include examples of student work, but may also include other relevant information such as classroom observations, relevant teacher or parent notes, behavioral information, academic scores across time, and student reflections. Therefore, portfolios focus on the meaningful collection of student performance, as well as require students to self-assess their work and set their own individual goals ensuring that students direct and own their individual learning process (Mueller, 2011), which is also consistent with the NxGL attribute of *Student Agency*. Such assessment methods focus on each unique student's progress, as opposed to comparison of peers, which is identified in the research as an effective practice in helping students meet learning objectives (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

The Wisconsin ILN/ELO committee identified a sample of six (please see Table 2) promising after school programs across the state that were implementing innovative strategies regarding the three promising practices identified above that were linked to attributes of NxGL. Although ELOs may include various models of delivery (before/after school, summer learning, weekend school, etc.), only after school programs were identified for the purposes of this report. After the programs were identified, interviews were conducted with the program directors/site coordinators to identify innovative programmatic elements that could be highlighted, in hopes that such information would benefit other ELO programs and ILN schools.

Figure 1 presents the number of programs that implemented various ways to connect the after school program to the regular school day. As shown, all programs reported strong teacher communication,

principal support, consistent structure between day and after school, and activities complementing the school day (such as homework help and academic enrichment opportunities), suggesting that these after school programs supported the NxGL attribute of *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*, as well as contributed to *Comprehensive Systems of Support*. Although Wisconsin schools do utilize the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during the regular school day, this was one of the lesser reported areas used after school as stated by program staff.

**Figure 1: Number of Programs that Implement Connections Between After School Programs and the Regular School Day**



In terms of data-driven academic services, all sites reported utilizing school day data (grades, standardized test scores, attendance, etc.) to plan programming. The extent to which such school data were shared with the programs varied, with some program staff having access to the schools' databases, and others being provided the information on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, all programs did utilize school day data in some way. All programs also reported collecting additional data specifically for the after school program, most commonly through the use of surveys (teacher, parent, and youth) or through pre/post tests administered during the after school program. Therefore, all programs utilized numerous data elements to drive academic services that responded to individual student needs, consistent with the NxGL critical attribute of Personalized Learning. However, only four of the six sites visited reported using individualized monitoring systems/portfolios to identify student needs and assess progress.

### Programs in Action

Each of the programs visited are highlighted in the sections that follow, as these programs were found to be implementing innovative practices regarding the three promising practices identified above that were linked to the critical attributes of NxGL. Demographic information regarding each of the six programs is provided in Table 2. Of importance, the majority of students at each program included in this report were eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL). Therefore, programs with some of the most innovative practices aligned with attributes of NxGL were serving a large majority of students in poverty.

**Table 2: Demographics of the Six Wisconsin Promising Programs in Action**

Program Name	Location	Grade Levels Served	Average Daily Attendance	Free/Reduced Lunch Status
Goodman Community Center	Madison, WI	k-12	60-80 Students	79%
Wisconsin Rapids School District: Mead Elementary	Wisconsin Rapids, WI	k-5	80-100 Students	77%
Menasha Joint School District	Menasha, WI	k-8	50-95 Students	67%
Milwaukee Public Schools: Mitchell Boys and Girls Club	Milwaukee, WI	k-8	135 Students	97%
Marshfield Clinic: Youth Net	Marshfield, WI	2-12	155 Students	70%
Madison Metropolitan School District: Hawthorne Community Learning Center	Madison, WI	k-5	95 Students	82%

Goodman Community Center: After School, Lussier LOFT, and TEENworks Programs

**Figure 2: Weekly Classroom Observation Form**

**LUSSIER**  
**LOFT**  
Classroom Observation

Name, school & grade - \_\_\_\_\_ Case Manager - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class & teacher - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lesson topic - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class size - \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher input – how is this person doing, what specific areas do they need help with.

Was the student prepared for class – materials, on time, homework complete?

Does the student:

- Take Notes
- Participate in discussion
- Ask questions
- Get easily distracted
- Get in trouble

What the student did well – Sat quietly, was on time, handed in homework

What the student needs to work on – taking notes, paying attention, asking questions

Learning Barriers – Seat, friends, eye site, teacher effectiveness, etc.

Student Behavior Overall – \_\_\_\_\_

Additional observations: \_\_\_\_\_

The Goodman Community Center offers three after school programs to students who are transported from two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school in the surrounding area at the community center. Although the after school programs occur at a non-school location, The Goodman Community Center implements a number of innovative practices that connect to the school day. First, program staff include eight school day teachers across the three programs, which provides a direct connection to the school day. As such, communication between the program and other school day teachers occurs naturally, and contributes to ensuring a Comprehensive System of Support is provided to all youth. Program staff also implement a number of other strategies to establish communication with teachers and understand what is happening during the regular school day. For example, a monthly newsletter is

***Because program staff are present in the classroom, they are able to see what students work on during the regular school day as well as forge relationships with teachers.***

provided to teachers at each school, program staff attend school functions, and communication with teachers occurs through numerous methods including email, phone calls, stopping by classrooms, and writing notes. Program staff are also invited to and regularly attend school meetings, including

Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings for students enrolled in the program. Most importantly, program staff complete weekly classroom observations. Program staff observe particular students enrolled in the program during the regular school day and make notes regarding student behavior and academic needs

(see Figure 2). Program staff also obtain teacher input during this time. Because program staff are present in the classroom, they are able to see what students work on during the regular school day as well as forge relationships with teachers.

Moreover, academic enrichment activities are developed using the CCSS (which is more easily achieved with school day teachers on staff), providing an additional connection to the school day. In fact, lesson plans that incorporate standards are maintained on file so that all program staff can easily find activities to implement that are aligned with the CCSS. Therefore, learning occurs outside of the regular school day, which is consistent with the NxGL attribute of *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*.

In addition to strong connections to the school day, program staff at The Goodman Community Center provide data-driven academic services to *Personalize Learning*. School day data (grades, standardized test scores, behavior, and attendance) are available to program staff and additional data elements are also collected including teacher and parent surveys, behavior data, and academic pre/post test scores. Such data are used to plan programming for individual students and help determine what program activities should occur after school. The use of individual monitoring systems/portfolios also identifies student needs and helps assess progress. Each portfolio includes photographs of the student, family information, student interest surveys, homework contracts, classroom observation forms, academic achievement logs, communications between program staff and parents/teachers, and examples of the students' work. To maintain portfolios, each program staff is assigned to specific students and portfolios are reviewed/updated monthly. These portfolios help new staff members become familiar with students, as well as monitor progress across multiple years for those attendees who continue in the program. In addition, each student in middle/high school programs completes a "Student Success Plan" which requires students to create relevant and measurable academic and social goals with the help of program staff. These goals drive what students do during the after school program, are regularly reviewed by students, and ensures that students are engaged in directing and owning their own individual learning, consistent with the NxGL attribute of *Student Agency*.

### Wisconsin Rapids School District: Mead Elementary Charter School ~ Club Mead

In Wisconsin Rapids, program activities are connected to work students do during the regular school day. Specifically, "Game Zone," a computer-based program that utilizes fun games to strengthen academic



concepts taught during the regular school day, is provided each day. This “disguised” learning allows students to play games that require the use of basic academic skills without students even knowing academic skills are being reinforced. Students also receive other enrichment activities that incorporate academic concepts including Cooking Club, Young Scientists, Drama Club, and Young Astronauts. These academic components of the after school program are consistent with the NxGL attribute of Anytime, Anywhere Learning.

A unique way that the program is connected to the regular school day is that the Club Mead program is included within the overarching mission of the charter school. The school’s mission is four-fold: differentiate student learning; engage youth in service-learning; set current and life-long goals for students; and help youth build assets needed to become healthy, caring, responsible adults. The Club Mead program is identified specifically as a way the school fosters the building of assets, and informational brochures about the school identifies the after school program as such (see Figure 3). Therefore, the goals of the after school program reinforce the mission of the school, and program activities are planned to enhance other areas of the school’s mission as well. For example, service learning projects occur after school. For one such project, students collected extra snacks that had not been used by the after school program. Students counted and categorized the extra snacks, and then charted the outcomes on posters displayed in the school. Afterwards, students donated the snacks to a local food pantry, reinforcing the service-learning mission component of the school.

In addition to being connected to the school’s mission, staff and AmeriCorps members utilized by the after school program are assigned to specific classrooms during the school day to work individually with youth, help facilitate activities, as well as plan activities, games, and projects that are both fun and educational for the students. Program staff also help administer standardized tests, allowing program staff to better understand assessment results. Because resources of the school day and after school program are woven together, this practice helps contribute to a *Comprehensive System of Support*. In fact, this collaboration is beneficial not only for teachers in the school, but to the program as well in that this collaborative structure allows program staff to see first-hand the work that is being done during the regular school day. Program staff also obtain information about behavioral expectations and individual student needs that they would not have otherwise, helping ensure *Personalized Learning* can occur after school. In fact, because teachers benefit from having extra assistance during the day, teachers are very willing to share resources with the after school program.

### Menasha Joint School District: After School Matters

After school programming in Menasha, Wisconsin, is provided at each elementary and middle school in the district. Although no school day teachers work for the program directly, program staff include

**Figure 3: Example of Informational Brochure**



19 certified teachers (newly graduated or retired), 9 paraprofessionals, and college students seeking education degrees. One way that the Menasha Joint School District connects after school programming to the regular school day is through individualized tutoring services called "Learning Labs." During this component of programming, the majority of students attend homework help and a few specifically targeted students attend Learning Lab, ensuring *Personalized Learning* occurs. At Learning Lab, the staff to student ratio is very low with one program staff to every two to three students. Each week the students who attend Learning Lab are rotated, so that all students receive individualized attention throughout the year. Activities that are completed in Learning Lab include homework, but also include tailored academic tutoring based on information obtained from teacher referral forms.

In addition, enrichment activities that follow homework help/Learning Labs utilize the school day curriculum, another connection to the school day. Program staff pull school day curriculum maps from

***Connections between the after school program and the school day contribute to a Comprehensive System of Support.***

the district's website and easily access what students are working on during the regular school day, as well as review the CCSS (which are available to program staff in hard copy at each site). Program staff are required to develop lesson

plans each week that are turned into each site coordinator that list specific learning targets. Therefore, because all activities are geared toward the district's curriculum and the CCSS, this program clearly demonstrates *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*.

In addition, connections between the after school program and the school day contribute to a *Comprehensive System of Support*. First, school day teachers provide in-service training to program staff members regarding relevant topics. For example, when the math curriculum was changed at the district, a math teacher presented the new curriculum to after school program staff. In another instance, when program staff requested information regarding autism spectrum disorders, a special education teacher presented on this topic during a professional development training. Such trainings allow resources and knowledge between the school and the after school program to be shared. Secondly, the after school program contributes to a *Comprehensive System of Support* by utilizing the school's agenda books. During the school day, students are required to write down assignments and other announcements in their agenda book, and teachers may also write notes therein. The after school program also utilizes the agenda books by reviewing the information each night and writing-in additional information regarding the program that might be beneficial to parents/teachers. Therefore, this component helps ensure that communication between program staff, teachers, and parents occurs.

In terms of data-driven academic services, because all site coordinators are district employees, each is provided access to the school's database system. As such, all school data (including grades, test scores, missing assignment reports, behavioral, and attendance data) are accessible to program staff. Staff review such data at least quarterly and share information with other relevant program staff who regularly work with children to *Personalize Learning*. In addition, teacher, parent, and student surveys are collected to obtain additional information about ways the program could be enhanced. All data elements are utilized to determine which students would benefit from the individualized tutoring (Learning Labs), how to group students, and what program activities outside of homework help/

Learning Labs should be offered. In this way, data are used to ensure learning that occurs outside of the regular school day is unique to individual student needs.

### Milwaukee Public Schools: Mitchell 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center

At the Alexander Mitchell Integrated Arts School, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee is contracted to provide after school programming. Even though a community-based organization provides the after school programming, there are numerous ways that the program is connected to the regular day school. First, two school day teachers and three paraprofessionals are employed by the after school program. As such, continuity exists between the day school and after school program related to academic programming, curriculum, and the focus on the CCSS, ensuring that *Anytime, Anywhere Learning* occurs. This relationship is strengthened through a designated school liaison position which is held by one of the day school teachers. This liaison seeks and incorporates feedback from the day school teachers regarding after school programming and individual student needs. In addition, the liaison conducts bi-monthly site observations of academic enrichment activities for the Boys and Girls Club staff and provides feedback regarding activity effectiveness. Such observations are also used to determine professional development needs of program staff.

In addition, the program provides data-driven academic services to *Personalize Learning*. Specifically, the after school program has access to all day school data, utilizes teacher, parent, and student surveys, the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), and principal, staff, parent, and child Impact Assessment surveys. These data elements are used to draft a Program Plan which is created/revised three times a year. This Program Plan is presented to the school principal, director, and assistant director of the Boys and Girls Club; the teacher liaison; and the Milwaukee Public School District each time it is created/revised to discuss future after school programming. As a result of this ongoing review, activities provided to youth are continuously revised to meet the needs of the students and school. For example, because reading was identified as an area of weakness for many students, programming was developed to include activities focused on literacy. Expanded homework help, Yearbook Club, and Young Composers are examples of successful activities designed to address this need. The success of this after school program is rooted in programmatic decisions that are data driven to set program and individual student goals, assess progress, and ensure that students receive the academic and developmental supports needed to succeed.

### Marshfield Clinic: Youth Net Program

The Youth Net Program, operated by the Marshfield Clinic (one of the largest private, multispecialty medical group practices in the United States), serves students from six different elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools each day in a former elementary school building. The majority of students who attend the after school program are referred by teachers from the school system due to poor school performance, family conflict, or behavioral issues, using a referral form that is completed by teachers. The staff-to-student ratio is very low, with three to four students assigned to a particular staff member who works with the youth each day.

This program provides data-driven academic services to *Personalize Learning* and ensures a *Comprehensive System of Support* is provided. After students are referred to the program, parents and students undergo an extensive intake process, similar to that of a medical model, in which After School Prevention Specialists sit down with parents and students in person and complete a five-page enrollment interview. Questions include basic demographic information, academic information (retention, truancy, grades, relationships with teachers and peers at school, etc.), family circumstances (names of family members, current living situation, drug/alcohol concerns, legal issues, stress, etc.), and relevant health information (medications, diagnoses, primary care physician, allergies, etc.). Furthermore, parents and students are asked to identify specific goals regarding academic success, personal/social development, and healthy active learning, which are used (in combination with information obtained from teachers) to set individual goals for each child.

In addition to the initial data collected when students are enrolled in the program, teacher surveys (administered quarterly), parent surveys (administered twice per year), and student surveys (administered annually) are also collected to obtain additional information regarding student progress. Parents also authorize the Youth Net program to obtain information from the student's school and communicate with teachers, as well as authorize the program to obtain information from the Marshfield Clinic regarding medical history and health records. In this way, a *Comprehensive System of Support* is provided as communication can easily occur between the school, the primary care physician, and the after school program.

**Figure 4: Sample Personal Learning Plan**

Individual monitoring systems to identify student needs and assess progress are also used. Specifically, case files are developed and include teacher referral forms, initial enrollment interview responses, teacher surveys, parent surveys, student surveys, and information obtained from the student's school and primary health provider. Therefore, students are not assessed by singular test

scores alone, but are instead assessed by overall performance. These case files serve as portfolios for each individual student and ensure that program staff Personalized Learning time to meet the unique needs of each child. In addition, program staff complete "Personal Learning Plans" (see Figure 4) for each student enrolled in the program. Notes are made on the Personal Learning Plans regarding

<b>Personal Learning Plan</b>		Academic Success Personal & Social Health & Wellness		
Week of _____ Student Name _____ Teacher _____ School _____ Academic Success: _____  Personal & Social: _____  Health Active Living: _____	<b>Notes For the Day:</b> Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday			

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daily progress toward goals and serve as documentation as to what was completed during the after school program; a new Personal Learning Plan is completed each week. Teachers also help revise the goals for each individual student every two weeks, and students also help craft their own goals. This ensures that students help direct and own their educational experience — consistent with the NxGL attribute of Student Agency.

### Madison Metropolitan School District: Hawthorne Community Learning Center ~ Afterschool Academic Center for Excellence (AACE) Program

Each day at the AACE program, students receive one hour of academic assistance, which is an example of a direct connection to the school day. During this time, students identified as needing extra academic support receive *Personalized Learning* time in the form of one-on-one or small group tutoring from one of six certified school day teachers. Although only 6 school day teachers are present on any given day, 12 teachers in total are directly involved with the program, as teachers are assigned specific days of the week to work for the program or are rotated throughout the year. In this way, teachers do not become overburdened with time commitments after school, and the program benefits from having more school day teachers involved.

For students who do not receive one-on-one or small group tutoring from teachers, connections to the school day are provided through other academic activities, including independent reading, literacy, writing, and math-based activities implemented by program staff, many of whom are college students majoring in education or recent college graduates. However, these program staff do not plan the academic activities. Instead, the certified teachers write very specific lesson plans that the other program staff carry out during this time. In fact, after the academic hour is completed, the school day teachers are provided paid planning time to ensure that lesson plans for the remaining staff are developed. Because teachers implement the tutoring and are writing lesson plans for the remaining staff, knowledge of school curriculum and the CCSS are infused into the academic hour of programming, ensuring that *Anytime, Anywhere Learning* opportunities are provided.

In addition, other connections to the school day exist including elements of the school culture and structure. First, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a behavioral framework utilized by the regular school day which is also incorporated after school. Although the implementation of PBIS during the regular school day is becoming a common occurrence, most after school programs do not utilize this framework. Therefore, at the AACE program, there is consistency with which the program provides academic and behavioral support aligned to the school day. Specifically, program staff are trained in PBIS techniques and utilize similar terminology, expectations, and reward programs after school. Secondly, the structure of the after school program mirrors that of the school day. During the school day, students are placed in multiage classrooms (k-1, 2-3, and 4-5), and this is also the way students are grouped after school. This flexibility of grouping illustrates *Personalized Learning*. Third, because the program has access to the entire school building and teachers allow the program to utilize their resources therein, students in grades k-1 are placed in the k-1 classrooms after school, ensuring materials are developmentally appropriate. This is also the case for the older students.

Lastly, the program utilizes individual monitoring systems/portfolios to document student progress. Such portfolios include examples of students writing, assignments, and projects completed during the after school program. Therefore, assessment does not consist of test scores alone, but also includes *Performance-Based Learning* elements. Program staff gather relevant samples of student work and provide them to the site coordinator who maintains the portfolios. At the end of the school year, students and parents have the opportunity to review the portfolio and reflect on the student's work for the year. The purpose of maintaining the portfolios is twofold: to ensure that student progress outside of academic test scores is monitored; and to allow students, parents, and staff the opportunity to reflect on student progress after school.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

***Programs highlighted in this report provide evidence that ELO programs implement three promising practices that are aligned with the attributes of NxGL: connections to the regular school day; use of data-driven academic services; and use of alternative ways to monitor progress/portfolios.***

The need and benefit to ELO participation for students is clearly documented. ELOs help ensure that students are not just taught during the "traditional" school day, which is consistent with the NxGL

attribute of *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*.

Moreover, programs highlighted in this report provide evidence that ELO programs implement three promising practices that are aligned with the attributes of NxGL: connections to the regular school day; use of data-driven academic services; and use of alternative ways to monitor progress/portfolios. Therefore, the following recommendations are provided:

- *ELOs should be recognized as a key way to achieve the attributes of NxGL (particularly Anytime, Anywhere Learning) and program staff of ELOs should be educated on attributes of NxGL.*

The critical attributes of NxGL and the goals of many ELO programs are very similar – to ensure that all students graduate ready for college, career, and life. Therefore, ELO programs should be recognized as a key component to ensuring *Anytime, Anywhere Learning* occurs. Additionally, many ELO programs incorporate other attributes of NxGL, including contributing to a *Comprehensive System of Support* and providing *Personalized Learning*. By educating ELO program staff about NxGL, programs may be better able to incorporate these attributes, as well as others. For example, with some education, ELO programs may be better able to incorporate the integration of *World Class Knowledge and Skills*, as well as the attribute of *Student Agency*, as many programs highlighted in this report could have incorporated these attributes in a more purposeful way. In addition, understanding NxGL will also likely help staff advocate to key stakeholders for ELO programming, as ELO programs certainly maintain the idea that learning can occur outside of the regular school day.

- *ELO program staff should consider ways to connect to the regular school day behaviorally and academically, particularly through the use of PBIS and the CCSS.*

It is of the upmost importance that ELO programs demonstrate connections to the regular school

day in order to maximize potential academic and social benefits of participation. Therefore, it is recommended that program staff review the innovative practices outlined in this report to determine if any possible connections can be established. In particular, ELO programs might consider maintaining consistent behavioral expectations with the regular school day and implement the PBIS framework if it is used by the school. In addition, although regular school day teachers implement lesson plans aligned with the CCSS, this does not appear to be an area that has been fully developed by ELO programs. As such, program staff should receive necessary training and incorporate the CCSS into all academic aspects of programming. Therefore, ELO program staff should participate in any school trainings regarding PBIS and the CCSS to further support and establish work and alignment in these areas.

- *ELO program staff should ensure data-driven academic services are provided and consider using alternative monitoring systems, such as portfolios, to identify student needs and assess progress.*

As previously discussed, ELO program staff should be aware of individual student strengths and weaknesses and make programmatic adjustments accordingly to *Personalize Learning* and ensure a *Comprehensive System of Support* is provided. Although data are often required for compliance purposes, program staff should also regularly review data to determine how to group students, what program activities to offer, and to make other programmatic decisions. In addition, programs should consider utilizing alternative monitoring systems to identify needs and assess progress. Of the six promising programs included in this project, only four utilized an alternative way to monitor student progress outside of more traditional assessments. Utilizing portfolios can guarantee that a story is told about each unique student and helps ensure that students and staff reflect on the work/experience that a student has completed. ELO programs should also brainstorm innovative ways to utilize electronic methods of maintaining portfolios that can be shared easily across staff, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, as well as be kept across multiple years of program attendance. Although some programs included in this report utilized portfolios, none of the programs utilized innovative methods to document student progress outside of paper-based files.

- *Systems to share data between schools and ELO programs must be in place at the state, district, and school levels.*

Although all sites included in this report had access to school day data, the ease of accessibility of such data varied widely across sites, with some ELO program staff provided full access to data systems and others being provided data on a case-by-case basis. ELO programs must be seen at the state and district levels as programs that need access to student data in order to provide *Comprehensive Systems of Support* and

*Personalized Learning*. As such, states and districts should support data-sharing efforts between schools and ELO programs. Policies and procedures should be put in place to

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ensure ease of data-sharing, and might also include language in Memorandums of Understanding or Parental Release of Information forms. Moreover, ways to share data effectively should be brainstormed at the school-level and should include electronic transfers of data, as opposed to

day in order to maximize potential academic and social benefits of participation. Therefore, it is recommended that program staff review the innovative practices outlined in this report to determine if any possible connections can be established. In particular, ELO programs might consider maintaining consistent behavioral expectations with the regular school day and implement the PBIS framework if it is used by the school. In addition, although regular school day teachers implement lesson plans aligned with the CCSS, this does not appear to be an area that has been fully developed by ELO programs. As such, program staff should receive necessary training and incorporate the CCSS into all academic aspects of programming. Therefore, ELO program staff should participate in any school trainings regarding PBIS and the CCSS to further support and establish work and alignment in these areas.

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providing data in paper format. When data are shared electronically, school staff and ELO program staff save valuable time and energy.

The successful implementation of a high-quality ELO program is a complex endeavor and an ongoing process. It is clear that none of the practices outlined in this brief in and of themselves offer the “magic bullet” for implementing a high-quality program aligned to the attributes of NxGL. However, school and principal support are clearly evident across programs that were implementing quality practices consistent with the NxGL attributes. Therefore, schools and principals must understand that ELO programs contribute to *Anytime, Anywhere Learning*. Likewise, ELO programs should strive to offer activities and provide environments consistent with the attributes of NxGL so that such programs are more likely to help students develop socially and progress academically.

#### **For Additional Information:**

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS):

<http://www.pbis.org>

Common Core State Standards:

<http://www.corestandards.org>

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