

**Expanded Learning Time in Charter Schools to Support Student
Achievement, Enrichment, and Holistic Development
Webinar
May 18, 2011**

This webinar covered key research about expanded learning time, presentations from two charter school leaders about how they have integrated programs outside traditional school hours, and information about funding opportunities.

Carol McElvain, an American Institutes for Research Senior Consultant, said that a federal initiative begun in 1997 to expand child care for school-age children has grown into a focused effort called the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program with annual funding of about \$1.1 billion. Research associated with the effort has identified key elements of successful programs:

- A clear focus on social processes and social and emotional needs of youth
- Structured, organized and integrated activities that engage students
- Well-trained staff that has time for planning
- Strong partnerships with community organizations

“A strong leader isn’t enough,” McElvain said. “You need to have all those pieces in place.” She also urged that expanded learning time be tied strongly to school improvement plans.

Funding opportunities for charter schools exist through the 21st Century program and are managed by state departments of education, McElvain said, responding to a question from a webinar participant from Florida. McElvain provided the [website](#) for the state office managing the program and noted that a competition for funding was open.

Erik Peterson, Policy Director of the [After School Alliance](#) of Washington, D.C., participated in the webinar and noted that the organization maintains a section of its website devoted to [finding funding](#). Peterson said about 100 federal funding streams have been identified that can be tapped to support expanded learning programs.

Jessica Nauiokas, Principal and Founder of Mott Haven Academy Charter School in New York City, said her K-3 school, which is on its way to becoming a K-8, serves mainly impoverished students who are involved with the child welfare system. The school uses its extended day – 7:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. – to blend in additional services and programs.

Nauiokas described a complex arrangement where multiple sources of funding are tapped to provide a diverse offering of enrichment programs that are integrated into regular curriculum using a mix of full-time and part-time instructors. She encouraged partnerships with outside organizations but urged caution.

“Mission alignment and fit are number one when you choose who you are going to partner with,” she said. She said the school also works closely with families of students.

Mama Chris Wiggins, Founder and CEO of Imhotep Institute Charter High School of Philadelphia, Pa., said the inner city school serves a blighted, high poverty area and has a regular operating schedule of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the idea being that the schedule better fits the

natural rhythm of a high school age student's daily cycle. But she said the school has programs going Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The priority is to find out what interests students and connect them to the programs and partners in the community that will best help them understand what they need to know to succeed. That often means finding opportunities for students to work with mentors at area universities and businesses, Wiggins said.

Families of students are part of the education plan, too, which means assistance is offered with such issues as financial planning or legal issues, such as defining guardianship for completing government aid applications.