



Moving Forward with High School Redesign program review 2016

Learn Anytime, Anywhere: Rethinking How Students Earn Credit Beyond School Hours

Authors: Emily Morgan, Elizabeth Olsson and
Saskia Traill

From [TASC After School Corporation](#)

It's time to incorporate into every student's standard high school education the chance to earn credit for learning experiences beyond traditional classrooms.

- Seen as a way to address drop out
- Providing students with credits when they pursue knowledge and interests beyond their schools' curricula.
- Based on real world learning applications and opportunities to develop advanced and interactive skills.
- Community partners can develop credit alternative opportunities that meet the needs of the most accelerated to those who are under-credited and at high risk to quit school.
- Require coordination between all partners to ensure all students meet core learning standards and requirements.
- Must enact policy changes that reduce bureaucratic barriers to nontraditional learning.
- Must ensure experiences are as rigorous as in-school learning or more.
- Research shows that drop-outs are bored, disengaged from adults, and find schoolwork irrelevant.
- Others fall behind in accumulating credits for many personal, social, and economic reasons.
- To help more students prepare for post secondary work and careers, educators and policymakers need to re-think the traditional system of credit accumulation.
- In this brief, TASC offers an overview of how some states and districts are re-inventing credit-bearing opportunities and expanding learning to happen anywhere, at any time.
- Not an expansion of credit recovery, arguing for more types of learning opportunities.

- These learning opportunities have been shown to increase students' acquisition and application of skills and knowledge, engagement in learning, self-confidence and attendance.
- Main focus of the paper is on New York City.

New York City

- A number of schools offer credit for learning that takes place beyond school hours.
- Principals — particularly those in small schools with a limited variety of electives were interested in partnering with community organizations.
- Leaders of museums, post secondary and community arts, technology and other youth-serving organizations eager to engage.
- Despite strong interest there are barriers to bringing these opportunities to scale.

Three barriers

1. Principals are often reluctant to award outside credits - unsure if their decisions would satisfy regulations.
2. Any outside course or learning opportunity must have oversight and signoff by a certified teacher. That teacher must be certified in the course content area and work with the partnering organization to co-design or approve the syllabus and curriculum, observe and monitor student progress, review assessments and award final grades. Involving teachers from multiple schools drives up these courses' cost and staffing burdens.
3. Schools and community institutions that could offer credit-bearing opportunities have no easy way to find one another.

Seven Recommendations

Stakeholders must work collaboratively to:

1. Further Revise Legislation to Promote Credit Flexibility and Proficiency-Based Assessment.
 - Award credit for learning experiences that occur in a range of educational settings.
2. Clarify Teacher-of-Record Requirements.
 - Allow models in which students from multiple schools take one approved course supervised by one approved teacher.

3. Build Incentives for Schools to Collaborate with Community Partners.
 - Encourage schools to partner with community organizations, or cultural institutions such as art museums, to offer credit-bearing courses.
 - Offer funds to stimulate course development and highlight examples of high-quality credit-bearing courses and opportunities.
4. Help Schools and Outside Credit-Offering Institutions Find One Another.
 - Create databases and operate help-line services to help principals — and community partners find each other to meet the needs and interests of high-risk and high-potential students.
5. Support Joint Planning and Professional Development.
 - Schools and community partners should work collaboratively to ensure all learning experiences are academically rigorous, engaging, and of high quality.
 - An opportunity for two-way learning that brings together educational and youth development expertise of teachers and community educators.
6. Encourage Coordination of Funding Streams to Support Credit Flexibility.
 - Multiple youth development funds can be used to support these opportunities.
 - Schools and community partners need to be able to blend and braid funds from different sources.
 - Youth summer employment funds — could be explicitly linked to learning objectives.
 - Schools should be encouraged, willing, and able to use their education funds to support standards-based learning experiences outside of school.
7. Incorporate Credit Flexibility into High School Turnaround Strategies.
 - Priority high schools undergoing turnaround should be encouraged to extend learning time by partnering with community organizations to provide additional opportunities for students to earn credits.

OTHER READING RESOURCES

[Action on High School Success](#)

The work initiated at J. A. Williams High School has spread to the other high schools in Northern Lights School Division leading to an increased and proactive focus on student success.

[Turnaround Schools and the Leadership They Require](#)

Commissioned by the Canadian Education Association. A two-year study of Ontario schools identified as in need of “turnaround” meaning that a significant improvement in school achievement was

required. The study examined the impact of leadership on school improvement.

[Turning Around Underperforming School Systems: Guidelines for District Leaders](#)

This paper is part the College of Alberta School Superintendents’ ongoing efforts to help district leaders in the province raise overall levels of student achievement in their systems and reduce gaps in the achievement of more and less advantaged and culturally diverse groups of students.

[Turnaround Schools: Leadership Lessons](#)

The study was guided by a belief that the school turnaround process unfolds in stages, within which successful leadership practices are enacted in forms uniquely suited to the turnaround context.

NOTES