

Effects of Extended Learning Opportunities on Student Outcomes

Results from a Two-Year Study

Prepared by **Research for Action** • April 2016



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Introduction

Study on Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

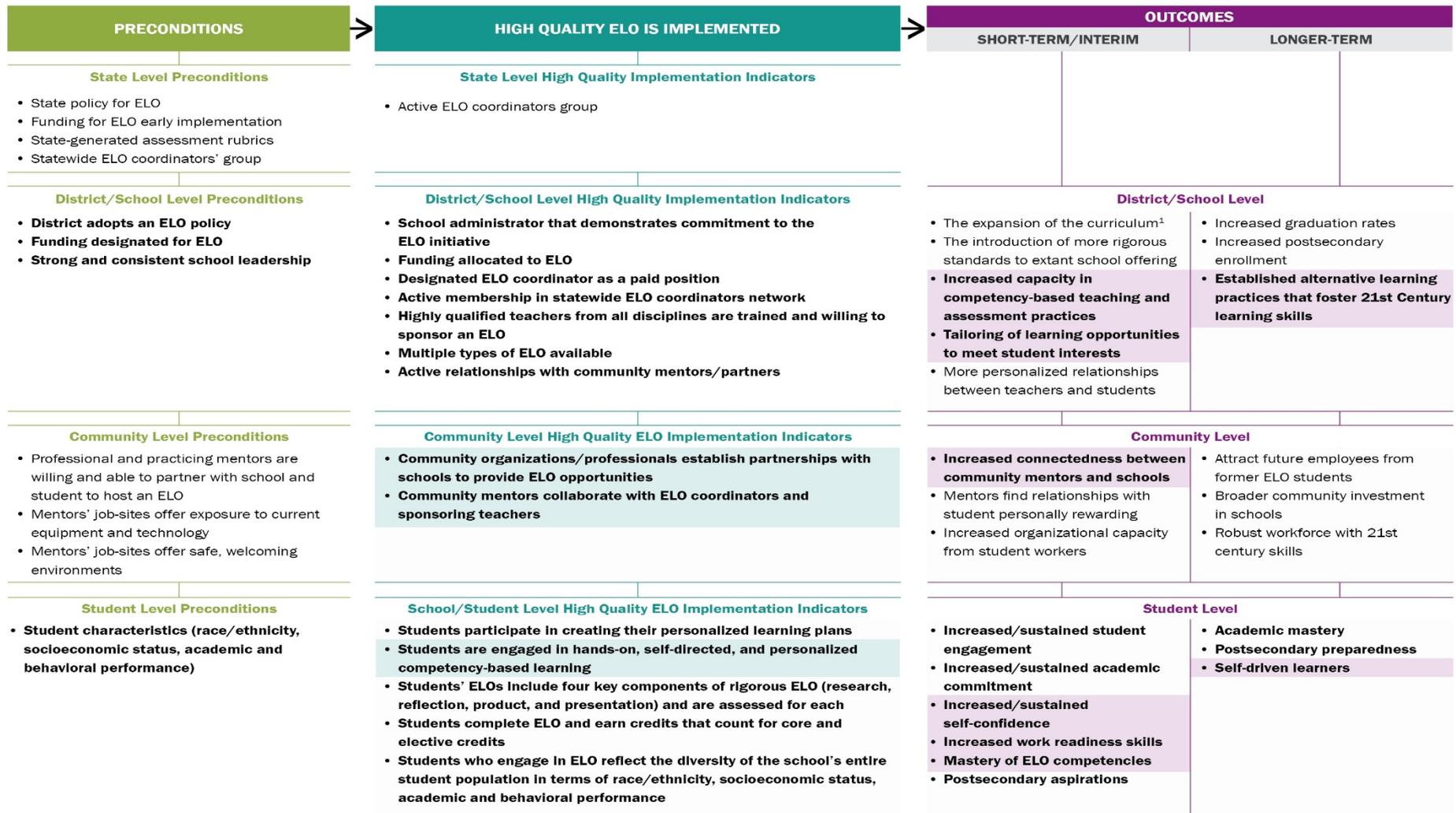
With funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF), Research for Action (RFA) conducted a two-year study on ELOs in New Hampshire.

Using a mixed-methods design, this study addresses two overarching research questions:

1. How does the quality of implementation at the school level influence student participation in ELOs?
2. What are the effects of ELO participation on short-term and longer-term student outcomes?

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework for NH ELOs



Note: Bold, No Shading = Constructs Measured in RFA's 2014-2016 Study
 Bold, Shading = Constructs that will be Added in Proposed Study

The Context and Quality of ELO Implementation across New Hampshire High Schools

Methodological Note

ELO Implementation Analysis

Survey of ELOs in New Hampshire

In the spring 2015, RFA administered a statewide survey to 87 high schools implementing ELOs across New Hampshire.

- A total of 45 individuals completed the survey, each representing a single high school, resulting in a response rate of 52% for completed surveys.
- For schools included in RFA's sub-sample (n=22), the response rate was 91%.

Survey responses were used to query the presence of quality implementation and to construct High Quality Implementation Indicators for our analysis.

Evidence of High Quality Implementation across New Hampshire Schools

ELO Implementation Analysis

Table 1. Indicators of High Quality ELO Implementation

HIGH QUALITY ELO IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS	
District/School Level	School/Student Level
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School administrator that demonstrates commitment to the ELO initiative2. Funding allocated to ELO3. Designated ELO coordinator as a paid position4. Active membership in statewide ELO Coordinators Group5. Teacher commitment6. Multiple types of ELO available7. Active relationships with community mentors/ partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students participate in creating their personalized learning plans2. Students' ELOs include four key components of rigorous ELO (research, reflection, product, and presentation) and are assessed for each3. Students complete ELO and earn credits that count for core and elective credits4. Students who engage in ELO reflect the diversity of the school's entire student population in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic and behavior performance

ELO Implementation Analysis

Table 2. Implementation of District/School-Level High Quality Indicators across New Hampshire High Schools

HIGH QUALITY DISTRICT/SCHOOL LEVEL ELO IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS	% OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED (N=45)
School administrator that demonstrates commitment to the ELO initiative (Percent of schools with administrators who are “moderately” or “to great extent” supportive of ELOs)	73%
Funding allocated to ELO (Percent of schools with at least one source of funding for ELO program)	60%
Designated ELO coordinator as a paid position – (Percent of schools with designated ELO coordinator position) – (Percent of respondents compensated specifically for ELO-related work)	– 60% – 53%
Active membership in ELON (Percent of respondents that attend ELON meetings or communicate with ELO coordinators at other schools about ELOs)	36%
Highly qualified teachers from all disciplines are trained and willing to sponsor an ELO (Percent of schools with teachers who support ELOs “moderately” or “to great extent”)	53%
Multiple types of ELOs available (Percent of schools with three or more types of ELO available)	82%
Active relationships with community partners (Percent of schools that complete 50% or more of their ELOs with a community partner)	60%

ELO Implementation Analysis

Table 3. Implementation of Student-Level High Quality Indicators across New Hampshire High Schools

HIGH -QUALITY SCHOOL/STUDENT-LEVEL ELO IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS	% OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED (N=45)
Students participate in creating their personalized learning plans (Percent of schools that offer personalized learning plans)	60%
ELOs include four components of rigorous ELO (research, reflection, product, and presentation), and students are assessed for each (Percent of schools that “always” or “often” assess all four components of ELOs)	44%
Students earn ELO credits that count for core and elective credits (Percent of schools that permit students to earn core and elective credits through ELOs)	62%
ELO participants reflect the diversity of the school’s entire student population in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic performance, and behavior (Percent of respondents that feel all student groups benefit “moderately” or “very” from ELO participation)	60%

Key Findings: ELO Implementation Analysis

- Overall, the majority of schools surveyed are implementing high quality ELO programs.
- School/District-Level:
 - The two indicators most commonly reported by schools were administrator commitment to ELOs and offering multiple types of ELOs.
- School/Student-Level:
 - The indicator most commonly reported by schools was the availability for students to earn core and elective credit through ELOs.
 - Less than half of surveyed schools reported that they “always or often” assess students’ learning outcomes using each of the four components of rigorous ELOs.

Key Findings: ELO Implementation Analysis

Importance of ELO Coordinators

- High quality ELO implementation indicators were reported by a **greater percentage of schools with a designated ELO coordinator** than schools without a designated ELO coordinator.
- This finding is consistent with survey responses where forty-four percent of schools (N=45) reported that the absence of a paid, designated person to coordinate/ oversee ELOs was a barrier to high quality implementation.

Predictors of ELO Participation

Predictors of ELO Participation

We analyzed how student participation in ELOs is influenced by:

- High quality district/school-level ELO implementation indicators; and
- Student characteristics.

Analyses were run for two different measures of ELO participation:

1. Whether or not a student had taken a school-facilitated ELO in 2014-2015; and
2. The total number of school-facilitated ELOs taken by a student in 2014-2015.

The Impact of High Quality Implementation on ELO Participation

Key Findings: Predictors of ELO Participation

- Students who attend schools with an ELO coordinator who is **actively involved in the statewide ELON** are **significantly more likely to participate in school-facilitated ELOs** than students who attend schools without an ELO coordinator who is involved in the statewide network.
- Students who attend schools that have established **active community partner relationships** are **significantly more likely to participate in school-facilitated ELOs**, and on average take more school-facilitated ELOs than students who attend schools without established community relationships.

The Impact of Student-Level Factors on ELO Participation

Key Findings: Predictors of ELO Participation

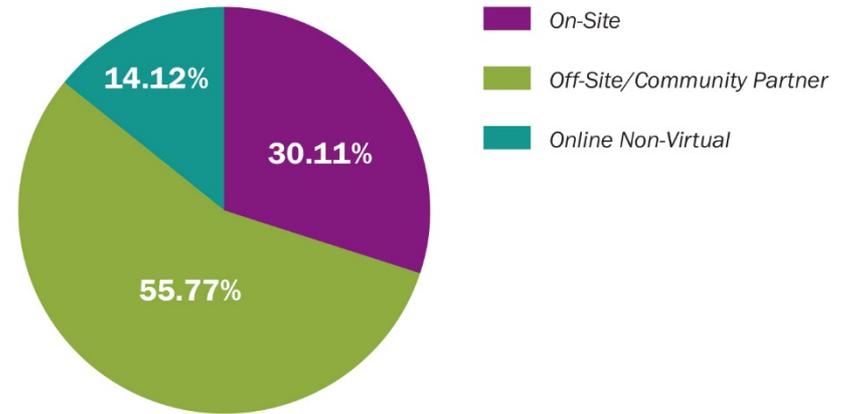
- Students' **prior academic experience** (eighth grade performance on NECAP) and **previous exposure to ELOs** were positively related to ELO participation.
- Students with **special learning needs** (limited English proficiency or special education) were also significantly more likely to participate in school-facilitated ELOs.
- In addition, female students and students in higher grades were significantly more likely to participate in school-facilitated ELOS.

ELO Implementation, and ELO Participants in 2014-2015

Key Findings: High Quality ELO Implementation

- Off-site ELOs with a community partner were the most common format of school-facilitated ELOs across sampled schools in 2014-2015.
- Many more ELOS were completed for elective credit than for core credit.

Figure 1. Total School-Facilitated ELOs Completed across Sub-Sample of Schools in 2014-15 by Format Type (n=22)



	CREDIT TYPE	
	Core	Elective
Total School-Facilitated ELOs	420	1,174
Percent School-Facilitated	26.35%	73.65%

Key Findings: ELO Participants

- Students who engage in school-facilitated **ELOs reflect the diversity of the school's entire student population** in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic and behavior performance.
 - In addition, school-facilitated ELOS serve relatively higher proportions of disadvantaged students than virtual ELOs.
- Students with at least one early warning indicator were underrepresented among ELO participants of both types.

The Impact of ELOs on Student Outcomes

Impact of ELOs on Student Outcomes

Table 4. Outcomes from Conceptual Framework and Variables Used for Measurement

OUTCOME CATEGORY FROM ELO CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	MEASURED AS
Interim Outcomes	
Student engagement/ behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average daily attendance (ADA) • Likelihood of one or more out of school suspensions (OSS)
Academic commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total credit accumulation • Likelihood of “on-track” to graduate credit accumulation
Postsecondary aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of taking PSAT • Likelihood of taking SAT
Longer-term Outcomes	
Academic mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of graduating high school in 2014-2015
Postsecondary preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite SAT score (i.e. combined score for verbal, math, and writing sections) • College enrollment status

We calculated ADA as the total days a student attended school divided by the total days a student was enrolled in a school.

Impact of ELOs on Student Outcomes

Two main sets of analyses were conducted for each of the six interim outcomes and three longer-term outcomes:

1. Analyses of the influence of participation in a school-facilitated ELO on each interim and longer-term outcome; and
2. Analyses of the influence of participation in a virtual ELO on each interim and longer-term student outcome

In addition, for each of the main analyses we also conducted two separate sub-group analyses of at-risk students

- Economically disadvantaged students; and
- Academically low performing students.

Key Findings: Impact of ELOs on Student Outcomes

FOR ALL STUDENTS, ELOS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON:

- Academic commitment. Students participating in at least one school-facilitated ELO were more likely than non-ELO takers to accumulate credits and be on track to graduate.
- Postsecondary aspirations. Students taking school-facilitated ELOs were more likely to take the PSAT, and both school-facilitated and virtual ELO participants were more likely to take the SAT compared to non-ELO taking students.

FOR 12TH GRADE STUDENTS ONLY, ELOS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON:

- Postsecondary preparedness. Twelfth-grade students who participated in school-facilitated ELOs scored higher on the SAT and were more likely to enroll in college than non-ELO takers.

Key Findings: Impact of ELOs on Student Outcomes

FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND ACADEMIC LOW PERFORMING STUDENTS, ELOS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON:

- Academic commitment. Economically disadvantaged students participating in school-facilitated ELOs were more likely than their peers to be on-track to graduate high school, and academically low-performing students participating in school-facilitated ELOs accumulated more credits than their non-ELO taking peers.
- Postsecondary aspirations. Economically disadvantaged students participating in school-facilitated and virtual ELOs were more likely to take the SAT compared to their non-ELO taking peers.

FOR 12TH-GRADE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND ACADEMIC LOW-PERFORMING STUDENTS, ELOS HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON:

- Postsecondary preparedness. Economically disadvantaged and academically low-performing students who participated in ELOs scored higher on the SAT than their non-ELO taking peers, and low-performing students who participated in a virtual ELO were more likely to be enrolled in college six months after graduation.

Conclusion

Key Findings

- New Hampshire has succeeded in implementing ELOs broadly.
- Student **participation levels in school-facilitated ELOs reflect the full diversity of students** enrolled in New Hampshire high schools, including traditionally underserved students.
- The presence of **designated ELO Coordinators** is critically important to high quality implementation.

Key Findings

- **School-facilitated ELOs have positive effects** across a range of outcomes, including measures of students' academic commitment, postsecondary aspirations, and postsecondary preparedness.
- Positive effects of school-facilitated ELO participation were also observed **for students who were economically disadvantaged and academically low performing.**
- Participation in school-facilitated ELOs was consistently associated with **a greater number of positive student outcomes** than was virtual ELO participation.

Further Research

Further Research

- **Extending out our study** on ELOs in New Hampshire using additional years of data
- Further examination of **the role of ELO Coordinators**
- The role of **state support** in scale up and sustainability
- The **effect of ELO quality** on student participation and student outcomes
- The role of **community partners** in ELO quality and effectiveness



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