

WHAT WORKS

Extended Learning Opportunities

Through ELOs, students participate in engaging and robust learning experiences that are not typically offered in the traditional classroom.



Kelsey Carroll receives instructions from Captain Shawn Glidden during a night of training at the Rollinsford Fire Department. Kelsey received high school credit for the hours she spent working at the fire station during her senior year.

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are a broad range of programs occurring outside of the traditional classroom that support learning by providing safe, positive activities for youth to explore their interests, develop their talents and, in some cases, earn school credits. Effective ELOs promote academic achievement, engage students in the community, and develop leadership skills, all with a byproduct of preventing risky behaviors.

Through ELOs, students participate in engaging and robust learning experiences that are not typically offered in the traditional classroom. Many organizations provide ELOs to youth including: schools, afterschool programs, youth development organizations, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

Regular participation in quality ELOs results in the following outcomes:

- ▶ Increased school attendance
- ▶ Lower dropout rates
- ▶ Improved attitudes toward school
- ▶ Stronger connections to adults and peers
- ▶ Improved ability to make healthy choices
- ▶ Increased opportunities to learn about and choose college and career options.

Source: Harvard Family Research Project and the National Conference of State Legislatures

CHARACTERISTICS OF ELOs

- Complement and enrich, rather than duplicate, school learning
- Collaborate with community partners to promote learning and community engagement
- Engage with students' schools and teachers
- Engage families
- Regularly evaluate program effectiveness

COMMON ELOs

- **Work-Based Mentoring:** A student is placed in a job and mentored by an employee who possesses workplace skills and knowledge that a student needs to master.



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- In consultation with the student's teachers and employer, the mentor instructs, challenges, and reviews the performance of the student.
- **Shadowing:** Short-term experience to introduce a student to a particular job through a one-on-one pairing of a student with an employee. The student follows or "shadows" the worker for a specified time to gain a better understanding of a particular career.
 - **Service Learning:** Structured experiences for one or more students at a work site or community agency. Students develop work skills and learn how to conduct themselves in work situations.
 - **Internship:** A one-on-one relationship providing "hands-on" learning in a student's area of



Kelsey Carroll receives instructions from Jaimie Miller during a night of training at the Rollinsford Fire Department. Kelsey received high school credit for the time she spent working at the fire station her senior year.

interest. A learning contract outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both parties. The student works regularly during or after school in exchange for the mentor's time in teaching, demonstrating, and coaching.

- **Cooperative Education:** A program that coordinates high school studies with a job in a field related to the student's academic or vocational interest. Participating businesses guide workplace activities and training in conjunction with classroom instruction. Students receive course credit for both their classroom and work experiences.
- **Youth Apprenticeship:** Combines classroom instruction with one to two years of on-the-job learning and results in a "certification of mastery" of specific technical skills.
- **Other:** Online courses, community service, performing groups, independent study, and private instruction.

SOURCES

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