Review of Expanded Learning Opportunities

February 2013

In the following report, Hanover Research expands its previous brief on extended learning time. An expanded discussion of extended school day/year models, summer school initiatives, pre-kindergarten programs, and out-of-school time programs is provided, in order to inform discussions about strategies to improve student achievement and educational outcomes.

HANOVER RESEARCH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the following report, Hanover Research expands its previous brief on extended learning time models. An expanded discussion of extended school day/year models, summer school initiatives, pre-kindergarten programs, and out-of-school time programs is provided. The analysis of each extended learning time model type includes a literature review, a discussion of best practices, and case profiles.

The number one recommendation made by the "Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future" National Task Force on Public Education is "more and better use of learning time."[1] Many education leaders consider the recent focus on school time reform long overdue. As early as 1983, a report on education entitled "A Nation at Risk" offered five principal recommendations to improve the state of education in the United States:[2]

- Implement rigorous standards;
- Hold high expectations/strengthen accountability;
- Improve the teaching profession;
- Strengthen leadership and increase fiscal support; and
- **Increase learning time by extending the school day and/or year.**

According to Massachusetts 2020, a nonprofit foundation advocating for expanded educational opportunities in the state, the extension of the school day/year is the *only one* of these five recommendations that has failed to attract systemic action and funding.[3] In recent years, however, greater momentum has developed around the call for increased learning time. In 2007, former U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings asserted that the expansion of learning time would be the **next major frontier in U.S. education reform**.[4] Shortly after, at a 2009 congressional hearing, current U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan added, "Our students today are competing against children in India and China. Those students are going to school 25 to 30 percent longer than we are. Our students, I think, are at a competitive disadvantage."[5]

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[1] Brown, C. et al. August 2005. "Getting Smarter, Becoming Fairer: A Progressive Education Agenda for a Stronger Nation," p. 15. Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future National Task Force on Public Education. The Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future. http://www.americanprogress.org/kf/taskforcereportfinal.pdf
[2] "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." April 1983. The National Commission on Excellence in Education. http://datacenter.spps.org/uploads/SOTW_A_Nation_at_Risk_1983.pdf
[3] Farbman, D., & Kaplan, C. Fall 2005. "Time for a Change: The Promise of Extended-Time Schools for Promoting Student Achievement," p. 5. Massachusetts 2020. http://www.mass2020.org/files/file/Time-for-a-change(1).pdf
[4] Rocha, E. August 2007. "Choosing More Time for Students: The What, Why, and How of Expanded Learning." Center for American Progress. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/08/pdf/expanded_learning.pdf
[5] "Time in School: How Does the U.S. Compete?" The Center for Public Education. http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Organizing-a-school/Time-in-school-How-does-the-US-compare

The basic justification for time reform is that more school time results in more learning. Research supports the fact that schools who enact time reform see increased success, but with a caveat. Elena Silva states in a 2007 Education Sector report that "**improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school**."[6] In other words, schools can only successfully enact extended learning strategies if they are *already* effectively and efficiently using the time available.

Much of the research on the effectiveness of extended-day or extended-year programs has been fairly inconclusive. In particular, it has been difficult for researchers to isolate the impacts of extended schooling because other mediating variables, such as student poverty, are often exhibited in the schools that implement such programs. Though causation is difficult to prove, however, a correlation is clear. Reports on the link between extended learning schedules and student success generally conclude that the **additional hours**, provided that they are comprised of high-quality learning opportunities, **are positively related to student achievement**.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Impact of Extended Learning Schedules** – Framing the debate on quantity vs. quality of school time, studies on the link between extended learning schedules and student success generally conclude that the additional hours, provided that they are comprised of *high-quality learning opportunities*, are positively related to student achievement. Extended learning time can be especially beneficial to lower-income student population. Summer learning loss has been shown to disproportionately affect low-income students in particular.

- **Extended School Day/Year** – Extended school-time initiatives can prove extremely costly. In order to justify additional resources and funding, districts should first take measures to ensure that existing school time is being used efficiently. Nevertheless, additional instructional time can allow schools to offer valuable programming to students, and lengthening the school year may also reduce summer learning loss.

- **Summer School Models** – Research has shown that summer learning loss disproportionately affects low-income students and students learning English. These effects can be mitigated—and in some cases reversed—by modified school calendars or summer school programs. Often, schools with modified school calendars will offer intersession programs during school breaks to provide continuous education to students that require additional attention. Well-designed summer and intercession programs have been shown to improve learning and performance. Successful programs tend to emphasize application and enjoyment as much as learning, often incorporating more hands-on activities and events into the curriculum; align their objectives with the regular school curriculum; and attempt to

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[6] Silva, E. 2007. "On the Clock: Rethinking the Way Schools Use Time." Education Sector. http://www.educationsector.org/sites/default/files/publications/OntheClock.pdf

keep class sizes small. Intersession programs can provide similar opportunities for schools with modified school calendars.

- **Early Childhood Education** – There is strong evidence suggesting the benefits of a high-quality preschool education for children's future academic success, social development, and school readiness. However, many studies of prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten indicate the potential for a "fade-out" of the benefits of early childhood interventions. A growing body of research indicates the potential for a strategic, multi-year Prekindergarten to Third Grade (PK-3) approach in helping maintain and build upon benefits gained through early childhood interventions.

- **Out-of-School Time** – Urban demographics contribute to a significant demand for after-school programming for children. A large body of research exists on the topic of best practices for after-school program development and implementation. In particular, key features of high-quality programs include a strategic framework linked to specific targeted outcomes, sustained participation, variation in programming, and strong relationships with families and community partners. Less research exists on the efficacy of Saturday school programs, but successful programs appear to adhere to generally similar practices.

- **Affordability** – Affordability is often a significant concern for schools and districts considering extended learning activities and programs. This concern can be mitigated by pursuing fundraising opportunities and exercising discretion about which initiatives receive investment—planning programs designed to mutually support each other and align with principal objectives.
  - Maximizing the quality and effective use of current schedules, as well as any extended time, through the implementation of effective assessment, data analysis, and professional development ensures that resources are being used optimally.
  - Building relationships with families, local community groups, civic organizations, and businesses requires few additional financial resources but can pay dividends in educational support, volunteers, and even financial investment in district programming.
  - Development efforts—such as applying for local, state, or national funding; partnering with educational non-profits; or hosting local fundraising drives—can provide additional funds for new or existing programs while raising awareness of districts' extended learning time initiatives.[7]

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[7] Ibid., p. 8.

SECTION I: EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY/YEAR

LITERATURE REVIEW

Widespread discussion about, and attempts at implementing, extended school day/year policies are motivated principally by an interest in improving student achievement. Much current discussion suggests that the traditional 180-day school year is not aligned with contemporary modes of life and living, since the model emerged in a 19th century, largely agrarian society.[8] Stakeholders advocating for extended school day/year initiatives suggest a variety of adjustments intended to address the needs of current students and the perceived failures of the traditional structure.

One such failure many extended school day/year structures attempt to redress is the loss of learning that some research suggests is occasioned by a lengthy summer break. The loss of knowledge and interruption of study can be significant – one study found that students lose an average of 2.6 months' worth of math skills over summer vacation, requiring extensive review at the start of each new school year.[9] Extended year programs can solve this problem by continuing to engage students over the summer months, truncating the summer vacation and ensuring consistent student focus.

Research indicates that effective extended school year models increase the total number of days spent in school, as opposed to simply reorganizing the traditional, 180-day calendar.

While many schools provide summer school programs to curb this loss, other schools simply increase the number of normal academic days per year.[10]

Extended school day/year policies can also provide the time necessary to offer additional education programs to students throughout the school year; schools may use the extra time for "implementing transition programs or credit recovery classes, creating community partnerships in which students participate in internships or online or web-based classes, and offering after-school or supplemental education services (SES) for students."[11] Continuing to engage students outside the typical school hours also provides important adult supervision to help keep them out of trouble; the absence of adult supervision after school has been associated with accidents and injuries, lower social competence, lower grades, lower achievement test scores and participation in high-risk behaviors including delinquency, alcohol, drug, and tobacco use, and sexual activity.[12]

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[8] "Restructuring and Extending the School Day," p. 1. Center for Innovation and Improvement National High School
http://www.centerii.org/handbook/Resources/8_A_Restructuring_School_Day.pdf; Silva, E., Op. cit., p. 2.
[9] "Restructuring and Extending the School Day" (Ibid.), p. 2.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., p. 1.
[12] Brown, C. et al. "Getting Smarter, Becoming Fairer: A Progressive Education Agenda for a Stronger Nation," p. 17.
Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future National Task Force on Public Education. The Center for American

Research indicates that in order to be most effective, an extended schedule should increase the total number of days spent in school and not simply reorganize the traditional 180 days.[13] The "Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future" National Task Force on Public Education recommends lengthening the school year by 30 days to allow students in low-performing school districts to catch up.[14]

> Districts "must not focus on simply extending the time students are in school, but on increasing the time students engage in productive, academic learning."

In practice, school districts follow one of **two models** when implementing extended school year initiatives: they either extend the school year by shortening the summer, or they institute some form of year-round-schooling schedule that also adds days to the school year, sometimes called extended-year schooling. This model shrinks the summer vacation and distributes the remaining vacation days throughout the school year.

Some schools have elected to extend student instructional time by increasing the *length* of the normal school day rather than by adding additional days to the school year. In her 2007 report, "On the Clock: Rethinking the Way Schools Use Time," Elena Silva highlights the experience of Edison Schools, Inc., a for-profit school management company which serves mostly low-income students in approximately 100 districts:[15]

> When Edison began 15 years ago, its schools were designed with a longer school day (1-2 hours more a day) and a longer school year (two additional weeks at the start of school and two additional weeks into the summer). But according to John Chubb, the company's chief education officer, schools encountered increased student absenteeism during the additional weeks of school, which negated the effect of the longer year.... As a result, Edison determined the additional four weeks of school were not worth the cost and now relies on an extended-day schedule to provide added time for learning.

Researchers and policymakers acknowledge that the amount of time spent in school is not the *only* factor impacting student achievement. Silva, a former senior policy analyst at Education Sector, notes that the "**research reveals a complicated relationship between time and learning** and suggests that improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school."[16] Consequently, when considering extended school day/year schedules, districts "must not focus on simply extending the time students are in school, but on increasing the time students engage in productive, academic learning."[17]

Progress and the Institute for America's Future. August 2005.
http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/news/2005/08/23/1611/getting-smarter-becoming-fairer/
[13] "Restructuring and Extending the School Day," Op. cit., p. 1.
[14] Brown, C. et al., Op. cit., p. 20.
[15] Silva, E., Op. cit., pp. 6-7.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "Restructuring and Extending the School Day," Op. cit., p. 1.

BEST PRACTICES & CASE PROFILES

The National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL), a national non-profit organization dedicated to "expanding learning time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded education," has established eight "promising practices" for successfully implementing extended learning opportunities. These practices were derived from a large-scale 2011 NCTL study of how schools across the country "[use] additional time to close the achievement and opportunity gaps."[18] Practices include:[19]

- **Optimize Time for Student Learning**
    - Make every minute count
    - Focus learning time
    - Individualize instruction

- **Use Time to Help Students Thrive in School and Beyond**
    - Set high expectations
    - Deepen student engagement
    - Prepare for college and career

- **Dedicate Time to Improve Teacher Effectiveness**
    - Strengthen instruction
    - Analyze and respond to data

In the subsections that follow, we elaborate on each key practice, and highlight salient cases of individual schools and districts that have effectively extended learning time.

MAKE EVERY MINUTE COUNT

As educational achievement is not improved simply by the mere addition of time to the academic schedule, but rather by the enhancement of educational instruction and activity, the NCTL emphasizes that reconsidering the school calendar or daily schedule should be accompanied by an evaluation of *how the time is used*: "At successful expanded-time schools, leaders create a sense of urgency, messaging to all members of the school community the need to maximize time for learning and eliminate unproductive time in the schedule."[20]

NCTL suggests that planning lessons to maximize time on task and student engagement helps ensure efficient use of time in the classroom. The Center cites 15-minute lesson plans designed and implemented at **Aspire Port City Academy in Stockton, California**, which

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[18] "About Us." National Center on Time & Learning. http://www.timeandlearning.org/?q=node/30; "Promising Practices: Overview." National Center on Time & Learning. http://www.timeandlearning.org/?q=promising-practices-0

[19] "Promising Practices" (Ibid.). Bullet points quoted from source.

[20] "Promising Practices: Make Every Minute Count." National Center on Time & Learning. http://www.timeandlearning.org/?q=make-every-minute-count

"ensure that students are able to focus on the lesson and remain on-task for the entire class period." **North Star Academy in Newark, New** Jersey has achieved a similar result by intentionally designing their lesson plans to maximize engagement and student retention. Their detailed lesson plans are designed using a common structure and are reviewed by an instructional coach before being implemented in the classroom. The Academy notes that "A typical plan for a 60-minute … lesson can be as long as three or four pages, with considerable **detail on the questions teachers will ask, how they will probe for student understand, and how they will differentiate instruction** based on student needs."[21]

The minimization of non-instructional time is another key means to making every minute count. Strategies for minimizing transitions between classes, recess, lunch, and other activities vary significantly from one school to another, and NCTL does not advocate for particular policies specifically. Notably examples include **Robert Treat Academy in Newark, New Jersey**, which "places all grade level classrooms near one another in clusters," and Excel Academy Charter School in Boston, Massachusetts and Amistad Academy Middle School in New Haven, Connecticut, which require teachers to change classrooms throughout the day, rather than the students.[22]

Finally, NCTL has found that successful schools **emphasize attendance**: "High-performing, expanded-time schools monitor student attendance frequently, and adopt protocols for rewarding strong attendance and responding to high absenteeism and tardiness." Strategies include everything instituting home visits before the semester begins to get kids and families excited about attending; appointing a parent truancy officer respected by students and families; having teachers call families when students are not in class to check on them; having attendance meetings; and requiring summer school for students who are "chronically absent."[23]

FOCUS LEARNING TIME

Schools implementing an extended school day/year schedule may be attracted to the prospect of developing additional programs or initiatives to support academic achievement, but NCTL has found that "high-performing, expanded-time schools display a singularity of purpose and in intensity of focus that are striking."[24]

NCTL advises **using data to identify priorities and goals**, which can then be used to determine how time is used and what activities or initiatives are instituted. Teachers and administrators at Jacob Hiatt Magnet School in Worchester, Massachusetts, for example, "pored over student data and narrowed in on one underlying skill gap…that then became

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[21] "Make Every Minute Count," p. 17. National Center on Time & Learning.
   http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Make_Every_Minute_Count.pdf
[22] Ibid., pp. 17-18.
[23] "Ibid., p. 18.
[24] "Prioritize Time According to Focused Learning Goals," p. 23. National Center on Time & Learning.
   http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Prioritize_Time_According_to_Focused_Learning_Goals.pdf

their school-wide instructional focus. Team members realized that this particular skill gap was impacting their students' academic performance in all areas."[25]
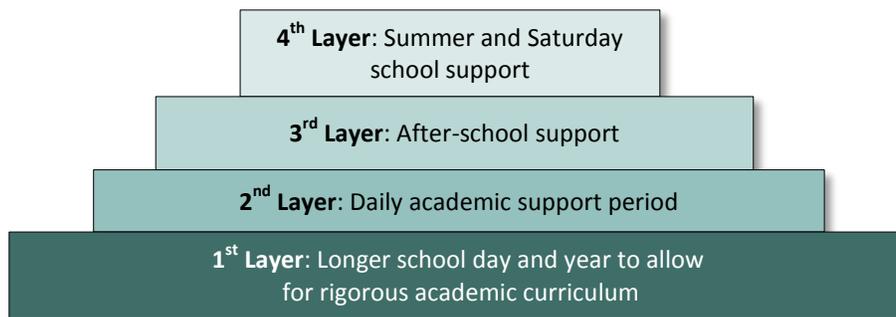
Goals need to not only be agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders, but also "clearly and repeatedly communicated across an entire school" so that all stakeholders will help keep the focus on the goals. NCTL found that many schools studied "**adopt[ed] a common vocabulary in their classrooms** to continually reinforce the school-wide goal."[26]

Finally, NCTL found that successful schools continued to collect and analyze data to **monitor progress towards goals**. At Mastery Charter Schools, for instance, teachers meet for "data days" immediately after their periodic benchmark assessments to discuss data and plan their curricula around assessment results.[27]

INDIVIDUALIZE INSTRUCTION

NCTL notes that successful schools also find ways to allocate resources to individual students as needed. The extra time afforded by extended school day/year schedules permits teachers and administrators to use data to assess and address educational needs during the school year on a class or individual basis: "An expanded schedule is the linchpin to this individualized approach, allowing schools to offer double, and sometimes triple, doses of instruction depending on student skill levels and knowledge gaps."[28] NCTL has found that successful schools use some form of **layered educational support** to structure resources to accommodate each student's academic needs; Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship between different resources for academic support that enable individualized instruction.

Figure 1.1: Layered Educational Support to Individualize Instruction

4th **Layer**: Summer and Saturday school support

3rd **Layer**: After-school support

2nd **Layer**: Daily academic support period

1st **Layer**: Longer school day and year to allow for rigorous academic curriculum

Source: NCTL[29]

The NCTL notes that in addition to ensuring efficient use of regular class time by maintaining a rigorous core curriculum (1st Layer), teachers at successful schools use additional time to

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[25] Ibid., p. 25.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] "Individualize Learning Time and Instruction Based on Student Needs," p. 31. National Center on Time & Learning, http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Individualize_Learning_Time_and_Instruction_Based_on_Student_Needs.pdf

[29] Ibid., p. 32.

either double instructional time in key disciplines, or for group work, which frees the teacher for "targeted intervention" or individualized attention. Additionally, some schools, such as Woodland Hills Academy in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, use the extra time in a general "academic support period" where students are given additional time and attention in specific subject areas as necessary. For students that need even more support, after-school, weekend, and summer/winter programs are offered; NCTL notes that one-third of the schools examined in their research offer weekend academic support, and another third offer some form of educational support over vacation.[30]

> "Research shows that one of the key factors that distinguishes high-performing high-poverty schools from low-performing ones is their high expectations for student behavior and academic achievement.

NCTL recommends that districts and schools **train teachers to leverage additional time for individualized instruction**. Some form of professional development support—either led by a facilitator or organized by the teachers and administrators themselves—for teachers in schools that are adopting extended time policies is fairly common advice in the literature on this topic.[31]

The NCTL also recommends that schools use data to select, group, and re-group students for support. For example, at Aspire Port City Academy, in Stockton, California, teachers assess their students on a weekly basis to determine which content—if any—needs to be revisited. The school then groups students based on the content they should revisit in the next lesson. Other schools use similar regular assessments to determine if any students should participate in an after-school support session.[32]

Schools should also ensure that support periods and initiatives are **integrated and aligned to core institutional goals**, to ensure that key subject areas or academic deficiencies are being properly addressed. NCTL emphasizes that "schools [should] make time for teachers to communicate about student needs, identify the strands and standards they need to review, and strategize about the most effective teaching strategies to employ." Edwards Middle School, in Georgia, gives its students periodic benchmark assessments tests throughout the year and schedules regular meetings for teachers to analyze the results and "strategies about how to address [student] weaknesses."[33]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] "Making Time for Teacher Collaboration." Mass2020. http://www.mass2020.org/teacher-time-75; "Time for a Change: The Promise of Extended-Time Schools for Promoting Student Achievement," p. 11. Massachusetts 2020. http://www.mass2020.org/files/file/Time-for-a-change%281%29.pdf; "Restructuring and Extending the School Day," p. 154. National High School Center. http://www.centerii.org/handbook/Resources/8_A_Restructuring_School_Day.pdf

[32] "Individualize Learning Time and Instruction Based on Student Needs," Op. cit., p. 32.

[33] Ibid., p. 33.

SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS

NCTL notes that "Research shows that one of the key factors that distinguishes high-performing high-poverty schools from low performing ones is their high expectations for student behavior and academic achievement." In addition to activities that create culture without requiring much time—"school mottos, consistently reinforced values, incentive systems, consistent messaging from leaders and teachers, etc."—the NCTL notes that a third of the schools included in its research hold summer orientation events for new and returning students, sometimes led by upperclassmen. Roxbury Prep in Boston, Massachusetts also holds regular community meetings to recognize students' academic achievements.[34]

The NCTL suggests that effective schools tend to "**identify and consistently reinforce a small set of core values that are easy to remember**; make efforts to **train and support staff in setting and reinforcing expectations**; and **communicate expectations to parents**." Communicating with parents is especially important, as parental reinforcement of educational goals helps "students actually internalize that message and believe it themselves." Rocketship Mateo Sheedy School, in San Jose, California, encourages parental involvement through community nights, and recognizes classrooms with high parent attendance. KIPP Houston schools go a step further and visit with parents of students in Pre-K, fifth grade, and ninth grade in order to communicate the school's expectations and agree to a "contract that details the responsibilities of the parent, teacher, and student."[35]

DEEPEN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

While the education community continues to emphasize the need to meet academic standards in core disciplines like English language arts and math, the extra time offered by extended schedules permit schools to retain their commitment to achievement in the core disciplines while still offering a broad and diverse curriculum. Doing so offers educators the opportunity to deepen student's commitment to their education by introducing subjects of particular interest or relevance.[36]

The NCTL recommends that schools respond to student interests when planning elective class offerings, starting with exposure and subsequently offering opportunities for specialization and mastery. Schools are also advised to create partnerships that bring in outside expertise, and leverage the skills and knowledge of teachers.[37]

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[34] "Use Time to Build a School Culture of High Expectations and Mutual Accountability," p. 39. National Center on Time & Learning.
http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Use_Time_to_Build_a_School_Culture_of_High_Expectations_and_Mutual_Accountability.pdf

[35] Ibid., p. 41.

[36] "Promising Practices: Deepen Student Engagement." National Center on Time & Learning.
http://www.timeandlearning.org/promising-practices-0?q=deepen-student-engagement-0

[37] "Use Time to Provide a Well-Rounded Education," p. 48. National Center on Time & Learning.
http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Use_Time_to_Provide_a_Well-Rounded_Education.pdf

Amistad Academy in Connecticut **surveys students once each term to determine which elective subjects and classes to offer**. The school has found that this not only serves to broaden students' education, but also increases engagement because pupils are *actively involved* in pursuing their own interests. Amistad Academy's partnerships with local community-based organizations help staff enrichment/elective classes, including subjects such as karate and African drum.[38]

PREPARE FOR COLLEGE & CAREER

In conjunction with the creation of a culture of achievement, successful expanded-time schools proactively encourage and support expectations of college completion and career readiness. While readiness may be encouraged in a wide variety of ways, NCTL suggests **partnering with colleges, businesses, and community organizations** to provide exposure to academic and business environments and skills.[39]

The NCTL also suggests that schools proactively attempt to build a school culture focused on college completion. In addition to regular messaging, schools studied by NCTL, such as An Achievable Dream, also require SAT prep courses and offer internships and job shadowing opportunities. Students at Brooklyn Generation School take intensive courses twice a year focused on different career pathways: "The idea is that students are reading and writing, they're doing research, and they're working towards presentations [in a specific field]. The students meet professionals in their workplace, they have people come in and speak to them about their college and career paths."[40]

Finally, NCTL notes that a number of high-performing expanded-time schools have created **support initiatives for first-generation college students**. KIPP Houston, for example, requires seniors to take "a year-long college guidance course that helps them choose colleges, write essays, and prepare for college life."[41]

STRENGTHEN INSTRUCTION

In addition to providing support services for students, high-performing schools use some of the additional time afforded by extended schedules to give teachers more time for professional development and collaboration. The NCTL cites research demonstrating that "teacher quality is the most significant school-related factor influencing student achievement and that time schools invest in building teacher skills, when used well, can meaningfully improve student outcomes."[42]

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[38] Ibid.
[39] "Use Time to Prepare Students for College and Career," p. 56. National Center on Time & Learning.
   http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Use_Time_to_Prepare_Students_for_College_and_Career.pdf
[40] Ibid., pp. 56-57.
[41] Ibid., p. 57.
[42] "Use Time to Continuously Strengthen Instruction," p. 63. National Center for Time & Learning.
   http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Use_Time_to_Continuously_Strengthen_Instruction.pdf

More than one third of the schools examined by the NCTL in its 2011 study schedule 15 or more days of professional development and planning for their teaching staff. Other schools—like North Star Academy in Newark, New Jersey—limit the number of classes teachers are required to teach every day, providing time during the school day for in-depth lesson planning and collaboration. Another popular strategy—employed by 23 of the 30 schools examined by NCTL—involves scheduling a **weekly early-release day** to allow teachers time to receive professional development and collaborate with their colleagues. Many schools also schedule more extensive professional development during the summer.[43]

NCTL suggests that through initiatives like these, schools can "provide teachers with frequent feedback and coaching; focus on a small set of improvement goals during professional development and collaboration sessions; and create a culture that values feedback and continuous improvement." Although the high-performing schools frequently gave more time to professional development, NCTL emphasizes that *how the time is used* is of primary importance when considering student outcomes.[44]

ANALYZE & RESPOND TO DATA

Finally, the NCTL encourages schools to make efforts to use data regularly "to inform instruction and boost student achievement."[45] The Center encourages schools to:[46]

- Build school-wide commitment to data use;
- Provide teachers with tools that simplify real-time data analysis; and
- Create protocols that support teachers in planning around data time.

All of the schools the NCTL studied structure time "every quarter, week, and/or day to enable thorough data analysis; the expanded school schedule allows them to do so without taking away from their rich and rigorous curriculum."[47]

As the amount of time data collection and analysis requires, a number of schools have invested in tools that simplify the analysis, freeing teachers to spend more time planning and strategizing. The Aspire network of schools in California has created a portal that analyzes student performance metrics for teachers. Similar systems are in place at other schools studied by the NCTL. The schools also frequently planned time into weekly schedules specifically for teachers to assess, plan, and collaborate pedagogy around data.[48]

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[43] Ibid., p. 63.
[44] Ibid., pp. 63-64.
[45] "Promising Practices: Analyze & Respond to Data." National Center on Time & Learning.
    http://www.timeandlearning.org/promising-practices-0?q=analyze-and-respond-data-0
[46] "Use Time to Relentlessly Assess, Analyze, and Respond to Student Data," pp. 69-70. Bullet points quoted from source. National Center for Time & Learning.
    http://www.timeandlearning.org/files/TWS_Use_Time_to_Relentlessly_Asses%2C_Analyze%2C_and_Respond_to_Student_Data.pdf
[47] Ibid., p. 69.
[48] Ibid.

IMPLEMENTATION

Massachusetts 2020 has developed and published an extensive list of practical planning and implementation resources based on its experiences with extended learning opportunities in the state. Massachusetts 2020 is a "demonstrated leader in combining public policy, research and programming to expend and improve learning opportunities for children across the state." The organization has been a key advocate of extending instructional time in Massachusetts's public and charter schools.[49]

Massachusetts 2020's online *Guide for Extended Learning Time Planning and Redesign* is composed of six non-chronological phases. While the content of the entire guide is too extensive to include in its entirety here, the phases and associated steps are displayed in Figure 1.2. The **full guide** is available on the organization's website.

Figure 1.2: Guide for Extended Time Learning Planning and Redesign

Phase	Steps
Getting Started	Step 1: Assembling an Inclusive Planning and Redesign Team
	Step 2: Identifying an ELT Facilitator
	Step 3: Going Public – Communicate Early and Often
Redesigning Your Educational Program	Step 1: Assessing Student and School Needs
	Step 2: Building a Preliminary Plan
	Step 3: Gathering Feedback on the Preliminary Plan
	Step 4: Preparing a Final ELT Proposal
Building School and Community Support	Identifying Stakeholders Critical to ELT's Success
	Key Overarching Messages
	Proactive Communication to Stakeholders
	Working with the Local Press
	Organizing a Core Group of Allies to Increase Support for ELT and the Planning Process
	A Strategic Approach to Parent Meetings
Developing Labor Management Collaboration	Step 1: Establish Process to Jointly Consider ELT
	Step 2: Identify Key Issues Where District and Union Leadership Will Need to Reach Agreement
	Step 3: Getting to Yes – Finalizing an Agreement
Forging Partnerships	Step 1: Identifying Areas Where Partners Can Support the ELT Redesign
	Step 2: Identifying Possible Partners
	Step 3: Selecting Partners
	Step 4: Assessing and Managing Partnerships
Moving Toward Implementation	Step 1: Assembling an Implementation Team and Task List
	Step 2: Finalizing Schedules for Your ELT School
	Step 3: Finalizing Staff Arrangements
	Step 4: Finalizing the School Budget for Implementation
	Step 5: Finalizing the Curriculum for Your ELT School
	Step 6: Finalizing Plans for Professional Development and Collaborative Planning Time
	Step 7: Communicating Widely and Building Support for Implementation

Source: Massachusetts 2020

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[49] "Massachusetts 2020 History." Mass2020. http://www.mass2020.org/node/2

SECTION II: SUMMER SCHOOL MODELS

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has shown that **summer learning loss disproportionately affects low-income students** who cannot afford private summer camps or enrichment courses, **as well as students learning English**, for whom a break in practice can be especially detrimental. This trend was established by a 20-year-long longitudinal study begun in 1982, which focused on children in Baltimore City Public Schools. In the study, researchers Doris Entwisle and Karl Alexander demonstrated that achievement differences between students from differing economic backgrounds are magnified over the years, and that much of this gap originates during the summer vacation. Due to increased resources, higher-income students do not stop learning over the summer months, as many are typically able to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Lower-income students often do not have access to these opportunities.[50]

An meta-analysis of 39 relevant studies, led by researcher Harris Cooper, also demonstrates how the widening achievement gap is related to summer learning loss. The study, entitled "The Effects of Summer Vacation on Achievement Test Scores," likewise found that socioeconomic inequities are heightened by summer vacation.[51] Figure 2.1, on the following page, consolidates the data from the study, which is available in full through the National Summer Learning Association.

Most schools with balanced calendars offer **intersession programs** during vacations to help students who require extra attention. These classes are designed to "front-load," rather than to offer students a chance to catch up. Since they are offered throughout the year – as opposed to the traditional summer school remedial courses – intersessions work to reduce the risk of student failures.[52]

The extent of recent research on the benefits of intersession classes is generally limited, though **studies have found that intersession activities do serve as a partial solution** for students who do not have access to educational activities during short breaks.[53] Such research typically indicates that intersession programming is beneficial, primarily because of the flexibility of offerings,[54] which generally include remedial, advanced, and enrichment

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[50] Alexander, K., & Entwistle, D. 2003. "The Beginning School Study, 1982-2002." Available at: Henry A. Murray Research Archive.
http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/mra/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?globalId=hdl:1902.1/01293

[51] Cooper, H. et. al. "The Effects of Summer Vacation on Achievement Test Scores: A Narrative and Meta-Analytics Review." *Review of Educational Research,* 1996, 66:3, 262. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1170523

[52] Waithman, M., and Shields, C. "School Leadership Centre Research Backgrounder: Balanced-Calendars," p. 6. University of British Columbia, September 28, 2004. http://dseb.bcsta.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7524/Balanced-Calendar_Backgrounder.pdf

[53] Oxnard School District. 1990. "Year-Round Education in the Oxnard School District and Related YRE References." Available through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

[54] White, W. 1995. "Initiating and Administering a Year-Round Program in Your Secondary School." Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the National Council on Year-Round Education. Available through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

programming.[55] Other researchers have found that academic intersession programs have an especially positive impact on Hispanic migrant students, because modified school calendars are more likely than traditional calendars to be compatible with the seasonal schedules of migrant workers.[56] Additionally, a 1999 study that examined teachers' and students' perceptions of the potential benefits of intersessions found that more than 70 percent of high school students in the research sample had participated in at least one intersession in order to "catch up or finish a course [they] had not successfully completed" during the regular school year.[57]

Figure 2.1: Pattern of Reading Achievement for Students from Different Income Groups
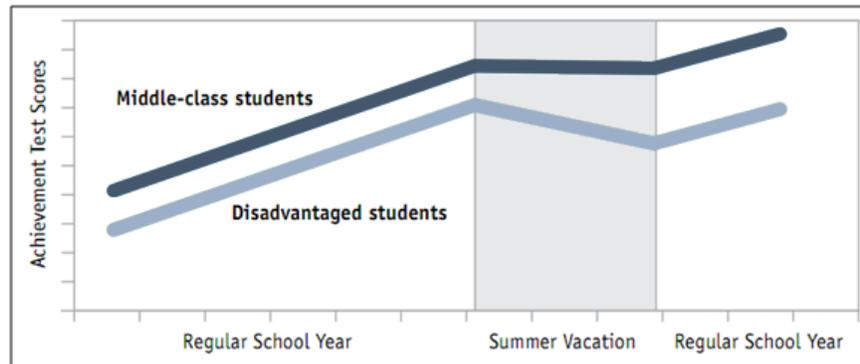
Source: National Summer Learning Association[58]

Presently, the **relationship between year-round education and student achievement is largely inconclusive** – a trend attributable to various factors, including poorly-designed studies and the local focus of such studies (prohibiting a generalization of trends). Nevertheless, researchers tend to agree that year-round schools are beneficial for lower-achieving, lower-income, and at-risk students.[59] One of the main goals of a modified school calendar is to address the gap in summer learning loss between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds: it has been widely shown that children from low-income or limited English backgrounds lose more reading skills over long summer breaks than their higher income peers.[60] In an analysis of standardized math test scores, it was found that "third grade students on free/reduced lunch and minority students in YRE programs

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[55] Weaver, T. 1992. "Year-Round Education," p. 68. ERIC Digest. http://www.ericdigests.org/1992-4/year.htm

[56] Ballinger, C. 1993. "Annual Report to the Association on the Status of Year-Round Education." Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the National Association for Year-Round Education. Available through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

[57] Freeman, D. and Hood, S. 1999. "Determining the Fate of a Year-Round High School: Definitive Feedback from Stakeholders." Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.; Hood, S. and Freeman, D. 2000. "Contrasting Experiences of White Students and Students of Color in a Year-Round High School." *The Journal of Negro Education*. Available through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

[58] "More Than a Hunch: Kids Lose Learning Skills Over the Summer Months." National Summer Learning Association. http://www.summerlearning.org/resource/collection/CB94AEC5-9C97-496F-B230-1BECDFC2DF8B/Research_Brief_04_-_Cooper.pdf

[59] Evans, R. "A Comparative Study of Student Achievement between Traditional Calendar Schools and Year-Round Schools in Indiana," p. 35. Purdue University, 2007. Retrieved via GoogleDocs.

[60] Schulte, B. 2009. "Putting the Brakes on 'Summer Slide.'" Harvard Education Letter, 25:4, July/August 2009. http://www.hepg.org/hel/printarticle/152

performed better than students in the same categories who were enrolled in traditional calendar programs."[61] According to a study conducted at the University of Minnesota, additional benefits may include decreased drop-out rates, increased postsecondary enrollment, fewer disciplinary referrals, higher rates of student attendance, and reduced teacher burnout.[62]

BEST PRACTICES

There is evidence that programs should **occupy as much of the summer period as possible**—programs should exhibit sufficient length to have a chance of affecting student learning. Researchers Brenda McLaughlin and Sarah Pitcock have noted that effective programs generally include *at least 80 hours* of programming during the summer, and Susan Black has suggested that "[stretching] summer school out longer 'reduces the gaps' between the regular school year and provides students with more continuity in learning."[63]

However, because kids and families expect summer to provide a break from typical educational activities, effective programs tend to emphasize enjoyment as well as learning. A 2009 Wallace Foundation study found that "successful summer learning programs supplement academic instruction with **enrichment activities that are relevant and engaging to children and youth**. Examples may include a debate on current events, use of technology, field trips, hip-hop dance, rap and spoken word, improvisational comedy, art, drama, and storytelling."[64] The study also postulated that these sorts of activities may be most effective for economically-disadvantaged students, as they often have less opportunity to pursue these sorts of activities either at home or during the school year.[65]

Similarly, successful summer programs have **emphasized the application of learning** through activities, field trips, projects, games, and experiments: "Interactive forms of instruction such as immersion and experiential learning help to keep students engaged in the material."[66] Academic course portions of summer programs should be small in terms of class size; researchers have also noted that the incorporation of teaching assistants and the provision of individualized instruction can also enhance impact.[67] Efforts should also be made to **align curricula and goals for summer learning** with the curricula and goals for

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[61]"Pros and Cons of Year-Round Education." Indiana University.
http://education.iupui.edu/CUME/pdf/yearroundschoolingarticle2011.pdf

[62] Palmer, E., & Bemis, A. "Year-Round Education." University of Minnesota.
http://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/publications/documents/Year-round.pdf

[63] Black, S. "What Did You Learn Last Summer?" pp. 38-40. *American School Board Journal*, February, 2005.
http://www.asbj.com/MainMenuCategory/Archive/2005/February

[64] Terzian, M., Moore, K., Hamilton, K. 2009. "Effective and Promising Summer Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and Youth," p. 17. The Wallace Foundation.
http://wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-and-extended-learning-time/summer-learning/Documents/Effective-and-Promising-Summer-Learning-Programs.pdf

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

learning in the academic years surrounding a given summer, and to hire "experienced, trained teachers to deliver the academic lessons."[68]

Researchers note that one of the most important practices in implementing or expanding a modified school calendar is to ensure proper and adequate communication with all stakeholders. Parents may be concerned that their children could be placed on different vacation schedules, for instance, if one child is in a year-round school and the other is not. Including interested parties in the decision-making process is essential, as without their support, effective implementation of balanced calendars is difficult to achieve.

District planning for increased operational costs is also critical. **Schools that operate year-round are generally more costly**, both in terms of transition costs and operational costs. Transition costs involve those associated with "administrative planning, staff development, communication, storage units, storage space, and air conditioning," while operational costs include the expenditures resulting from "expanded office and administrative staff, increased utilities, maintenance, and transportation costs."[69]Schools without long summer breaks may encounter the initial difficulty of scheduling necessary large-scale repairs or renovations.[70]

CASE PROFILES

The National Summer Learning Association sponsors the New Vision for Summer School (NVSS), an advocacy initiative and network of 24 school districts across the nation. Their comprehensive programmatic report cites the successes of several summer school programs in support of their initiative.

- **Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL)** is an organization that partners with districts and schools to expand learning time. BELL's five-week summer program for K-8th grade students tutors students in core reading, writing, and math skills in the morning and "reinforce[s] academic skills and strengthen[s] social skills through art, science and technology, and leadership development courses" in the afternoon. Fridays are dedicated to learning about college and different career paths, participating in service activities, and celebrating cultural heritage. Students that participate in BELL "consistently gain at least five months' of grade equivalent skills in reading and math."[71]

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[68] McCombs, J. Augustine, C., Schwartz, H., Bodilly, S., McInnis, B., Lichter, D., and Brown Cross, A. 2011. "Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs can Boost Children's Learning." RAND Corporation, p. xv. ; Terizian, M. et al., Op. cit.

[69]"Year-Round Education Program Guide." July 25, 2011. California Department of Education. http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/yr/guide.asp

[70] Paxton, D. September 17, 2008. "Re: Balanced School Year," p. 3. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. http://publicapps.ocdsb.ca/Documents/Board_Meetings/Meetings/2008/September_2008/Ed_Sept17_2008/12_Balanced_School_Year.pdf

[71] "A New Vision for Summer School," p. 6. National Summer Learning Association. 2010. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/policy/2010.newvision.pdf

- An independent study by the Urban Institute found that the students in the program improved their reading skills at a faster rate than the control group—learning approximately an extra month's worth of skill—and "found evidence of positive impacts on the degree to which parents encouraged their children to read."[72] BELL has begun partnering with school districts to replicate its model for high-need students. In their program at Springfield, Massachusetts, 800 students, many of whom were at risk of being held in the fifth or eighth grade gained "nine months' of grade equivalent skills in literacy and math...and 100 percent of [students] who were at the risk of being retained in grade were promoted to the next grade."[73]

- **Summer Advantage USA** is another summer program that boasts significant improvement in performance indicators for participants. Summer Advantage is a national non-profit that provides services to school districts to support five-week summer learning programs for K-8 students. Their curricular model is similar to BELL's—the morning and afternoon are dedicated to different types of subjects and Fridays are reserved for more immersive, applied activities. According to their assessment tools, participating students typically gain approximately three months of reading skills during the program.[74]

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[72] "Chaplan, D. and J. Capizzano. "A Random Assignment Study of Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL)." Urban Institute. August, 7, 2006. http://www.urban.org/publications/411350.html
[73] "A New Vision for Summer School," Op. cit.
[74] Ibid., p. 7.

SECTION III: PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the early childhood education and care (ECEC) literature, there is strong evidence suggesting the benefits of a high-quality preschool education for children's future academic success, social development, and school readiness.[75] In the United States, schooling is compulsory for all children, but the required age of attendance varies by state. Parents with children under this age often enroll them in early childhood education and care, which may include:[76]

> A wide range of part-day, full-school-day, and full-work-day programs, under educational, social welfare, and commercial auspices, funded and delivered in a variety of ways in both the public and the private sectors, designed sometimes with an emphasis on the "care" component of ECEC and at other times with stress on "education" or with equal attention to both.

The current state of ECEC in the United States is described by critics as a "fragmented" system with "wide-ranging quality" and "skewed access."[77] Researchers do note, however, that some progress has been made in recent years toward integrating the country's various ECEC models and services.

U.S. kindergartens represent "pre-school" programs in that they cover the year prior to entry into compulsory primary schooling and may be full- or half-day in duration. Preschools, also referred to as pre-kindergarten programs or nursery schools, cover a "range of programs offered under public and private education auspices or providing compensatory education under special legislation and are largely half-day or cover the normal school day (usually about 6 hours, e.g. 9:00 am - 3:00 pm)."[78] Additional ECEC options include center-based and family child care.

A number of studies have indicated that children who attend a high-quality early childhood education program are more ready for kindergarten and have better language and cognitive skills in early elementary grades than children who do not attend such programs.[79] A 2007 report using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K) found that participation in a prekindergarten program significantly boosts math and reading performance at school entry. While these cognitive gains continue to persist

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[75] American Educational Research Association. Fall 2005. "Early Childhood Education: Investing In Quality Makes Sense." *Research Points*. Available through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

[76] Kamerman, Sheila B., and Gatenio-Gabel, Shirley. "Early Childhood Education and Care in the United States: An Overview of the Current Policy Picture." *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 1:1, 2007, p. 23. http://www.equityforchildren.org/imagenes/userfiles/Early Childhood Education and Care in the United States.pdf

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., p. 24.

[79] American Educational Research Association, Op. cit.

among disadvantaged children, prekindergarten effects tend to fade as time progresses for other students (often called 'fade-out').[80]

PK-3 APPROACH

In response to issues such as fade-out, researchers Reynolds, Magnuson, and Ou cite "empirical evidence that programs to successfully address children's learning needs **must be comprehensive, span multiple years, and target key transition points**."[81] Prekindergarten to Third Grade (PK-3) programs attempt to incorporate these characteristics to help maintain and build upon benefits gained through early childhood interventions. These extended early childhood interventions may take the form of center-based education, family support services, instructional support, and community outreach. PK-3 proponent Bill Graves comments: "What differentiates a PK-3 approach is alignment. This continuity of supports, particularly curriculum, instruction, and assessment, for the first five years of school is what distinguishes PK-3 schools from other effective schools."[82]

FULL-DAY VS. HALF-DAY PREKINDERGARTEN

Literature comparing full day vs. half-day prekindergarten suggests three main conclusions: first, that full-day pre-kindergarten is more effective than half-day prekindergarten in terms of preparing children academically to begin school. Second, research indicates that the quality of instruction is as significant as the total amount of time spent in the classroo**m**; thus, children are probably better off in a high-quality half-day program than they are in a poorer-quality, full-day program. Finally, children of different social class backgrounds benefit differently from full- and half-day pre-kindergarten programs, with lower income students typically reaping greater academic rewards than their middle class peers.[83]

BEST PRACTICES & CASE PROFILES

Cynthia Rice, the Senior Policy Analyst at The Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) has published a report detailing five essential elements necessary for successful PK-3 program development:[84]

> - **Alignment**
>   - ✓ Curricula, standards and assessments within and across preschool through third grade;

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[80] Magnuson, K., Ruhm, C., & Waldfogel, J. "Does Prekindergarten Improve School Preparation and Performance?" *Economics of Education Review,* 26:1, February 2007. http://www.nber.org/papers/w10452

[81] Reynolds, A., Magnuson, K., & Ou, S. January 2006. "PK-3 Education: Programs and Practices that Work in Children"s First Decade." *The Foundation of Child Development Working Paper: Advancing PK-3.* No. 6. http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/ProgramsandPractices.pdf

[82] Graves, B. May 2006. "PK-3: What Is It and How Do We Know It Works?" *Foundation for Child Development Policy Brief: Advancing PK-3.* http://www.karenhillscott.com/downloads/publications/3-8_pk3.pdf

[83] See, e.g., Plucker, J. et al. 2004. "The Effects of Full-Day versus Half-Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data." http://www.iub.edu/~ceep/projects/PDF/FDK_report_final.pdf

[84] Rice, C. "Seizing the Opportunity: Building PK3 Systems in New Jersey's School Districts," pp. 2-3. Bullet points quoted from source. May 2008. http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/SeizingtheOpportunity.pdf

✓ Consistent instructional approaches and learning environments;

✓ Standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment focus not only on academic skills but social competence and self-discipline.

➢ **School Organization**

✓ The availability of voluntary, full-day preschool for all 3- and 4- year olds

✓ The availability of full-day kindergarten that builds on children's preschool experiences;

✓ The availability of both ongoing professional development for principals and teachers and adequate planning time to ensure alignment;

✓ Principal support in fostering teamwork between PK3 teachers for strengthening alignment;

✓ Principals act as liaisons between elementary schools, families and community early childhood programs.

➢ **Qualified Teachers**

✓ All teachers have a minimum of a bachelor's degree with specialized training in early childhood education;

✓ All teachers are qualified to teach at every level of the PK3 continuum;

✓ Teachers have the ability to assess their students and use the assessment outcomes to inform instruction.

➢ **Classrooms as Learning Environments**

✓ Instruction is balanced between child-centered and teacher-directed approaches;

✓ Classroom staff includes a well-qualified teacher and an assistant teacher;

✓ Student-teacher ratios provide opportunities for each child to receive individual attention and develop strong relationships with adults.

➢ **Accountability to Parents and Community**

✓ Teachers and families partner to set educational goals for children;

✓ Schools are responsible for reporting students' progress to families, communities, and school district and the state.

The Foundation of Child Development has also released a brief summarizing the importance of having qualified teachers in the PK-3 classroom, and describing the sorts of practices which are most conducive to supporting educational achievement. The four "strategies" they describe "are complex and difficult to do well. They take good preparation, experience, and opportunities to work well with other teachers. All of them leave room for teachers to exercise judgment and creativity."[85] The strategies are:[86]

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[85] Shore, R. "PreK-3rd: Teacher Quality Matters," p. 9. Foundation for Child Development. July 2009. http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/PreK-3rd_Teacher_Quality_Matters.pdf

[86] Ibid., p. 9. Bullet points quoted from source.

- *Observe and respond to individual children's **development over time**;*
- *Provide **emotional support** to individual children;*
- ***Foster engagement** in learning activities and keep classrooms running smoothly; and*
- ***Support** higher order thinking and advanced language skills.*

The brief produced by the Foundation for Child Development also offers some advice to administrators to help support the development of quality instruction. Administrators should:[87]

- **Articulate a clear commitment** to high-quality instruction in every PreK-3rd classroom, geared to supporting individual children's development and learning.
- **Engage teachers** in rethinking what professionalism means in their field—focusing less on autonomy, and more on **collaborative** inquiry and shared standards of practice.
- Make organizational decisions—whether related to curricula, resource allocation, staffing, scheduling, programming, professional development, or any other matter—only after **considering** the question: "How will each option affect teachers' capacity to work together **to raise instructional quality**?"
- Conduct frequent, focused walkthroughs, using observational tools geared to supporting proven instructional practices, and **provide supportive feedback to teachers**.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 2010, the Foundation for Child Development commissioned and published a case study on PK-3 education in Montgomery County Public School District (MCPS) in Maryland, due to a significant improvement in academic achievement despite undergoing traditionally detrimental demographic shifts:[88]

> Since 1998, the district's population of English Language Learners increased 103 percent and the number of students receiving a free or reduced lunch went up 44 percent. During the same period MCPS improved the proportion of Third Graders reading proficiently or above to 88.9 percent, shrank its Third Grade reading achievement gap by 29 percentage points, and increased the number of students taking at least one Advanced Placement exam by 25 percentage points to 61.5 percent – almost 2.5 times that of the national average. In addition, nearly 77 percent of all graduating seniors enroll in college.

The case study drew five key lessons from MCPS' experience, each of which is discussed in detail in the case study:[89]

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[87] Ibid., p. 2. Bullet points quoted from source.
[88] Marietta, G. "Lessons for PreK-3rd from Montgomery County Public Schools," p. 1. Foundation for Child Development. December, 2010. http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/FINAL MC Case Study.pdf
[89] Ibid., p. 2. Bullet points quoted from source.

- *Establish a **clear and compelling district-wide goal** that maps back to early learning.*

- *Craft integrated district-wide early-learning strategies to meet the clear and compelling goal.*

- *Align early learning programs and services with the **integrated K-12 strategies**.*

- *Balance teacher support and accountability to ensure effective and consistent implementation.*

- *Innovate and **monitor for continuous improvement**.*

SECTION IV: OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

LITERATURE REVIEW

The "Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future" National Task Force on Public Education argues that a change in school schedule is necessary not only because of the increasing level of education required to succeed in an information economy, but also due to changes in family structures. The Task Force report explains that 32 percent of children now grow up in single-parent households, and that both parents work outside the home in over two-thirds of two-parent households with school-age children. Altogether, this creates **a population of 14 million children in the United States who are alone at home after school**. This means that parents are more interested than ever in adequate after-school care.[90]

The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) defines after-school—often also called out-of-school (OST)—programs as encompassing "an array of safe, structured programs that provide children and youth ages kindergarten through high school with a range of supervised activities intentionally designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day."[91] The authors of the HFRP publication conclude that OST programs clearly have "the *potential* to impact a range of positive learning and developmental outcomes."[92] These outcomes are presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Positive Outcomes Related to OST Programming

DIMENSION	OUTCOME
Academic Outcomes	• Better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations • Higher school attendance rates; less tardiness • Less disciplinary action • Lower dropout rates • Better performance in school, as measured by achievement test scores and grades • Greater on-time promotion • Improved homework completion • Engagement in learning
Social/Emotional Outcomes	• Decreased behavioral problems • Improved social and communication skills and/or relationships • Increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy • Lower levels of depression and anxiety • Development of initiative • Improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school

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[90] Brown et. al., Op. cit., p. 15

[91] Little, P., Wimer, C., & Weiss, H. "After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What it Takes to Achieve It." *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation,* No. 10, February 2008, p. 2. http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/after-school-programs-in-the-21st-century-their-potential-and-what-it-takes-to-achieve-it

[92] Ibid.

DIMENSION	OUTCOME
Prevention Outcomes	• Avoidance of drug and alcohol use • Decreased delinquency and violent behavior • Increased knowledge of safe sex • Avoidance of sexual activity • Reduction in juvenile crime
Health and Wellness Outcomes	• Better food choices • Increased physical activity • Increased knowledge of nutrition and health practices • Reduction in BMI • Improved blood pressure • Improved body image

Source: Little, Wimer, and Weiss, 2008[93]

BEST PRACTICES

Of course, not all OST programs are successfully achieving these results. The following list highlights best practices that appear repeatedly throughout OST literature as contributing to high-quality programs:

- **Develop a Program Framework** - A 2003 After-School Summit hosted by the U.S. Department of Education concluded that, in order to be successful, OST programs must establish appropriate goals, identify relevant program elements, set desired outcomes, and create plans for evaluation.[94] Little, Wimer, and Weiss (2008) note that many research studies have revealed that programs "explicitly focused and targeted to specific outcomes" are more successful in promoting participant success.[95]

- **Promote Sustained Participation** - Researchers at the Harvard Family Research Project note that a number of studies have concluded that students "experience greater gains across a wide variety of outcomes if they participate with greater frequency (more days per week) in a more sustained manner (over a number of years)."[96]

- **Offer Variation in Programming** - The After-School Corporation (TASC), a New York City nonprofit organization that funds OST programs, conducted an evaluation in which researchers identified 10 "high-performing after-school programs." Researchers noted that among the programs included in the review, all 10 featured a wide range of activities including dance, music, drama, and field trips. Such a holistic learning strategy was designed to "spark [participants'] interests and expand

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[93] Ibid.

[94] "Moving Towards Success: Framework for After-School Programs," p. 1. May 2005. C.S. Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice.
http://www.pasesetter.org/reframe/documents/mott_movingtowardsuccess.pdf

[95] Little et. al, Op. cit., p. 2.; Little, P. "Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities," p. 12. Harvard Family Research Project. January 2009.
http://www.hfrp.org/content/download/3303/96863/file/OST-SupportingStudentOutcomes.pdf

[96] Ibid., p. 6.

their vision."[97] OST programs that feature enrichment activities such as art or field trips may be stepping in to fill a gap, as schools increasingly cut back on these activities in the face of "the high-stakes outcomes-based test and assessment atmosphere."[98]

- **Involve Families in OST Programming** - Family engagement has been established as a central component of OST program quality. Engaging family through OST programs can also facilitate better relationships between parents and their children's schools. Many high quality OST programs offer activities for parents, including GED preparation, ESL tutoring, computer classes, and other forms of adult education. These programs also make an effort to maintain close contact with families, keeping them informed of their children's participation in the program's activities.[99]

- **Develop Strong Partnerships** – A 2007 study on OST program quality concluded that partnerships are essential to holistic and successful OST programs:[100]

> When all parties with responsibilities for and interests in the welfare of youth, especially disadvantaged youth, unite to engage them in high-quality after-school experiences, they are **more likely to succeed in promoting positive development for the largest number of youth at risk**. Working alone, after-school programs, community-based organizations, and schools can offer only relatively narrow sets of choices, so youth and their families may look to less positive settings for youth to spend some or all of their after-school time.

CASE PROFILES

The Wallace Foundation provides brief profiles of a variety successful and funded after-school programs across the country. The **A+ After School Program in Wautoma, Wisconsin**, for example, provides elementary-, middle-, and high school students with afterschool homework help and sponsors "recreation and enrichment activities." While the program is open to all students, it particularly focuses on those that are at risk of failing classes. A+ serves approximately 225 students a day, on average, and runs for approximately 2.5 hours a day every weekday. The program's 2008-2009 budget was $354,250, which includes some

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[97] Birmingham, J., Pechman, E., Russell, C. & Mielke, M. November 2005. "Shared Features of High-Performing After-School Programs: A Follow-Up to the TASC Evaluation," p. 6. Prepared for The After-School Corporation and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. http://www.sedl.org/pubs/fam107/fam107.pdf

[98] Hall, G, "Connecting Schools and After-Schools within Citywide Initiatives." *Afterschool Issues*, 2:3, May 2002, p. 2. http://www.niost.org/pdf/cross_cities_brief7.pdf

[99] "A Profile of the Evaluation of Transition to Success Pilot Project." May 13, 2004. Out-of-School Time Evaluation Database, Harvard Family Research Project. http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/transition-to-success-pilot-project

[100] Elizabeth R. Reisner, et. al. "Charting the Benefits of High-Quality After-School Program Experiences," pp. 1-2. Policy Studies Associates, University of California-Irvine, and University of Wisconsin-Madison. March 2007. http://www.greatscienceforgirls.org/files/Charting_the_benefits_of_high_quality_afterschool_program_experiences.pdf

full-time staff and 50-part time staff and volunteers and is mostly funded by the local school district.[101]

The Garage, an after-school, weekend, and summer activities program for students in Burnsville, Minnesota, is also a useful exemplar of this type of program recognized by the Wallace Foundation. The Garage "bills itself as a community resource, music venue, and safe place where young people can excel." **Teenagers support adult staff in efforts to provide diverse and compelling programming**. The program is open from 2:30 to 8 p.m. three nights a week, and from 6 to 11:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Regular participants pay a minimal fee of $3 to $10 (except for summer camps, which cost between $25 and $50), but occasional drop-ins can attend for free. On average, about 150 teens attend on week nights. The program's 2009 budget totaled $325,000, which was raised through donations from civic organizations, local businesses, the city government, and the State of Minnesota. After demonstrating the success of the program, leaders were able to qualify for additional grant and public funding.[102]

SATURDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Saturday School programs address many of the same concerns and offer many of the same benefits as after-school programs: they give schools opportunities to provide supplementary and complementary educational programs, provide students an alternative source of activity, and serve as a salutary disciplinary activity for at-risk students. In fact, the lack of a substantive secondary literature on practices and policies *specifically* related Saturday school programs suggests that they are often considered as part of a larger programmatic initiative and accompany other extended learning programs such as those already discussed.

Such is the case with the Saturday School program initiated in Baltimore city schools in 2011. The system implemented their 10-week program in order to raise declining math scores on the Maryland School Assessments; city officials noted that the initiative was "just one tool to help the system bounce back.[103] Saturday School programs are also part of KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools' general approach to extending learning time.[104]

The **George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy** is an example of a standalone Saturday School program in Montgomery County, Maryland. It has been operating since 1986. The program offers tutoring services in core subjects—such as reading/language arts, mathematics, and test-taking skills—and in advanced subjects for high-achieving students in

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[101] "A+ After School Program." The Wallace Foundation. January 2009. http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/case-studies/Pages/after-school-program.aspx

[102] "The Garage." The Wallace Foundation. January 2009. http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/case-studies/Pages/the-garage.aspx

[103] Green, E. "City schools launching Saturday School initiative." *The Baltimore Sun*. November, 22, 2011. http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-11-22/news/bs-md-ci-saturday-school-20111122_1_sonja-santelises-city-students-city-schools

[104] "USA Today – 'Our view: Charter school debate overlooks lessons learned.'" *USA Today*. June 22, 2011. http://www.kipp.org/news/usa-today-our-view-charter-school-debate-overlooks-lessons-learned

1st to 12th grade from local district schools.[105] The Saturday School works with volunteers—including "about 400 volunteer tutors, including parents and high school or college students from Bowie State University and Montgomery County Community College," in addition to paid certified teachers, in an attempt to keep the teacher-student ratio small. This ratio contributes to the program's strong performance: "In spring 2010, almost 62 percent of first- and second-graders who participated in Saturday School reached their grade-level performance goals … And more than 27 percent of students in third through eighth grade also saw improvements to their report card in English and math in 2010."[106]

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[105] "Our Programs." George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy Saturday School. http://saturdayschool.org/programs/; Tomassoni, T. "Saturday School in Montgomery helps students achieve more." *Washington Post*. November 14, 2011. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/saturday-school-in-montgomery-helps-students-achieve-more/2011/10/23/gIQA33sHLN_story.html

[106] Tomassoni, T., Op. cit.

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