Learning Time in America:
Trends to Reform the American School Calendar

A Snapshot of Federal, State and Local Action

SPRING 2015 UPDATE

In the nearly two years since the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) published the 2013 *Learning Time in America* update, the number of expanded-time schools across the country has continued to increase at a rapid clip. Moreover, an ever-growing number of practitioners and policymakers have come to understand how the conventional American school calendar too often poses an enormous impediment to educating the next generation. The core idea presented in Prisoners of Time, the 1994 report of the National Commission on Time and Learning, now rings truer than ever: In schools, learning should be the constant, and time must vary to serve the individual needs of students in achieving high standards. From this perspective, it has become clear that meeting the learning needs of many of our students—especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds—requires considerably more time than is available in the traditional calendar of 180 6.5-hour days.

In 2014 alone, at least 35 districts (across more than ten states) announced that they are implementing or considering implementing a longer day and/or year in at least some schools.[1] This spread of expanded-time schools has, in large part, been fostered by policies that create or encourage the establishment of new charter schools and/or by policies that allow new school-level autonomies within traditional district schools. Being granted flexibility in governance has enabled educators to reconfigure schedules, staffing, and budgeting, often in ways that can allow for substantially more learning hours for all their students. Further, over the last several years, a handful of influential federal programs, together with numerous state leaders, have promoted expanding time as a key strategy in turning around chronically under-performing schools and have supported the implementation of this strategy with additional resources.

The National Center on Time & Learning, which is dedicated to redesigning and expanding school time to improve opportunities and outcomes for high-poverty students, has again teamed up with the Education Commission of the States, whose mission it is to foster the exchange of ideas on education issues among the states, to produce this snapshot of public school time in America, the third since the original in 2011. By focusing on some of the key actions that have taken place at the federal, state, and local levels since 2013, we seek to advance the national conversation about how the nation's schools can harness the power of time to realize a vision of high-quality education for all.

We conclude this brief with an updated version of a number of public policy recommendations that we issued in the original report. These revised recommendations take into account the rapidly shifting policy context and provide policymakers with a roadmap guiding how they can best support efforts to effectively provide students with the learning time they need to be prepared for future success.

NATIONAL CENTER ON TIME & LEARNING

Education Commission of the States

The State of the States

Education Funding and Legislation

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, most states spent less on K – 12 education in the 2014 – 2015 school year than they did in 2007 – 2008 (pre-recession). Over the last couple of budget cycles, the Center notes, spending for public education has begun to recover from its 2008 low, with 34 states increasing spending per pupil.[2] The National Association of State Budget Officers highlights that, for FY 2015, K – 12 education spending has been adjusted upward more than any other area of state budgets, including higher education and Medicaid.[3]

Alongside the additional dollars they are now allocating for education, some state legislatures have signaled their intensifying interest in improving low-performing schools by introducing policies aimed at stimulating substantial reform through the reorganization of traditional school governance structures. At times, states encourage reform by choice, with schools and/or districts proposing on their own how they will take advantage of autonomies to revitalize the education they provide. In other instances, the transformation is mandated—"turnaround," is the term of art—and the state exerts more control over individual schools or districts. In both approaches, learning time has played a central role in how educators and/or policymakers develop strategies to improve schools. (See "Innovation" section, below.)

NCTL and ECS have reviewed legislative activity in all 50 states and identified hundreds of filed bills that sought either to establish rules around learning time or, more frequently, to carve out ways for schools and/or districts to expand school time. Of these bills, over 40 have become law in the last two legislative sessions. The table on p. 3 divides these new laws into six basic categories and lists the states with relevant legislation, as well as examples of passed laws to illustrate the range of policies enacted.

Legislation introduced in the 2015 legislative session reveal legislators' continued interest in flexibility,

TABLE 1
Enacted Legislation Related to School Time
January 2013 - September 2014

CATEGORY	STATES	SELECTED EXAMPLES
1. New or increased funding for some form of expanded time	CT, FL, IA, MA, ME, MI, MN (2), NY, PA, TX[4]	• NY and MA - Provide funding for competitive grants to convert district schools by adding 300 operational hours (Expanded Learning Time Initiatives) • FL - $75MM to the 300 lowest-performing elementary schools for an additional hour of literacy instruction
2. New or increased flexibility for subset of schools and/or districts (e.g., Innovation districts, charters, etc.)	AL, AR, IN, VA	• AL - Innovation Zone to grant waivers to districts including allowing districts to replace traditional course credit system based on "seat time" with one based on mastery • IN - Creates innovation district within the city of Indianapolis • AR - Allows for waivers for "schools of innovation" by applying to state Dept. of Education • VA - Grant for low-income districts to convert to a year-round calendar
3. Identifies ELT as option (or mandate) for schools designated for reform/turnaround	CT, DE, FL, MS, NM, SC, VA, WA	• NM- Expands eligibility for "K-3 PLUS" program to all low-performing schools (K-3 PLUS expands the school day for primary grades) • WA - Designates districts with 10 lowest-performing schools to initiate turnaround, where increased time is identified as one of the "turnaround principles"
4. Calendar flexibility (e.g., relaxing minimums, 4-day school week) for any school/district	CA, IA, KY, MO, RI, WA	• CA - Allows for 4-day school districts, only if schools maintain annual minimum hours • RI - Permits districts to operate with 1,080 hours, rather than 180 days • MO - Requires schools with significant number of weather-related school cancellations to apply for a waiver from state to have fewer than minimum days (174)
5. Setting minimums (days, hours/year, etc.)	AL, AZ, CO, ID, IL, MS, OH, SD, WV	• MS - Increases minimum "number of hours of actual teaching" from 5.0 to 5.5 hours per day • OH - Increases minimum annual instructional hours to 1,001 • WV - Codifies the 180-day calendar as minimum
6. Commissions examining school time	CT, TX, WA	• TX - Sets up 13-member Expanded Learning Opportunities commission • WA - Establishes commission to examine remedies for"summer learning loss" and to implement network of expanded learning; also establishes a second commision to track how districts use school time

which then impacts learning time. A few highlights include bills introduced in Alabama, South Carolina, and West Virginia that would supplement or replace the states' minimum instructional days per year requirements with hourly equivalents. This type of change could give districts more flexibility in determining their school calendars. Additionally, New Mexico and Oklahoma are considering lengthening instructional time, the latter through a longer school year. While bills in Kentucky and Maryland would add a statewide start date at the beginning of the school year, a bill in Florida would push back the current school start date by one week. Texas legislators are considering legislation that would mandate a statewide school finish date, a much rarer mandate than statewide start dates.

Prioritizing and Funding Expanded Time

A number of current initiatives and programs place the strategy of expanding school time at the center of efforts to increase student achievement. One of the most significant demonstrations of this commitment is New York's Extended Learning Time Initiative, a $24 million program that enables the lengthening of the school schedule by at least 300 hours annually in selected districts. (This state ELT initiative is modeled, in large part, after the one in Massachusetts, which saw its first cohort of schools convert to a longer day in 2006.) In June, 2014, the New York state education department announced the awarding of ELT grants to nine districts.[5] During the last two years, similar programs have been proposed in New Jersey, Illinois, and Iowa, although these states have not yet provided funding to launch their initiatives.[6]

Currently, the largest state-level project to add learning time in schools is taking place in Florida. Two years ago, the Florida legislature appropriated funding ($15 million) to provide the 100 lowest-scoring elementary schools in the state with an additional daily hour of literacy instruction to all students. Given the positive impact of this initiative—a vast majority of the 100 schools saw gains in their standardized test scores—along with the strong support of school principals, in 2014, the state legislature allocated $75 million and extended the initiative to Florida's 300 lowest-performing elementary schools.[7] (See box on p. 5 for more details.)

Arizona has adopted a unique approach to expanding the school year, through a law passed in 1997. Specifically, the law calls for the allocation of 5 percent more base funding to any district that expands its school year from the minimum requirement of 180 days to 200 days. Only a small number of districts, including Balsz in Phoenix, have taken advantage of this law, to date. Part of the reason may be that the funding bump of 5 percent is considerably less than the increased amount of time teachers have to be in school (11 percent).[8] To help remedy this discrepancy, Rep. Paul Boyer (R-Phoenix) filed a bill in the 2013 session to increase the state allotment to 8 percent and to open up the calendar expansion to any school (instead of limiting it to full districts).[9] As of this writing, the bill has not been passed.

Also notable is the formation of commissions in Texas and Washington, both called the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Council, to explore the broad system of supports and programming that take place outside the regular school day. Specifically, the commissions have been charged with reporting to their respective legislatures about ways to coordinate programs within and around schools. In addition to exploring how to improve and expand summer and after-school opportunities, each does have a mandate to consider the implementation of school calendar or schedule modifications to reduce learning loss. Texas released its commission report in November 2014, and Washington released a preliminary report, with a full report due later in 2015.

The Push for More Learning Time in Florida

Florida's strategy to add an hour to the school schedule for literacy instruction in the lowest-performing elementary schools is not a wholly new innovation for the state. A decade ago, the school district of Volusia County began to allocate additional Title I funds to select schools in the district to enable the expansion of the schedule for all students. Known as the Plus One program, the experiment began at one school, and continued to grow, with eventually 12 elementary schools (out of a district with 45) participating. Within a couple of years, Plus One caught the attention of the state legislature, which, in 2008, opted to fund a pilot of four schools located in other Florida districts, beyond Volusia. While that pilot lasted just a year, the concept re-emerged in the FY 2013 budget as a $15MM line item to fund 100 schools with a daily extra hour of literacy instruction. This line item has now expanded to $75MM to fund up to 300 schools.

The primary force behind this effort to expand learning time in Florida elementary schools is Senator David Simmons (R – Maitland), who has been in the state senate since 2010 and served as chair of the Education Committee from 2011 – 2013. As Simmons explained on the PBS Newshour, he became convinced of the need to expand time in schools serving high-poverty students when he heard from teachers that, if they only had more time, they could help their students to become proficient. Even as a member of the Florida House of Representatives in 2008, Simmons was a believer. In a letter to then-Governor Charlie Crist, Simmons wrote "Often the simplest and best solutions are staring us in the face. We miss them in our search for more difficult and complex solutions. Common sense tells us that disadvantaged children in low-performing schools just need more time to catch up."

A review of the program's first year by the Florida legislature showed strong initial results, as 73 of the 100 schools saw improved FCAT scores, and 17 of these schools experiencing increases of more than 10 percentage points.

School Time in the Courts

Legislatures are not the only branch of government involved in the matter of learning time. The judiciary, too, has recognized that, for at-risk students, adding time to the standard school day can be a means to overcome the differential between the opportunities afforded children from poorer neighborhoods compared to those of their more affluent peers. In fact, for decades, state courts have been grappling with the fundamental challenge of how to address inequities that seem endemic in American public education. Typically, these cases revolve around school finance and the question of whether the particular state should provide proportionally more dollars to districts serving large portions of children in poverty in order to correct these imbalances. In New York and New Jersey, for example, each state supreme court has ruled that the respective state needed to adjust its funding formula to meet its constitutional obligation to provide an adequate education for all students. In both cases, judges mention learning time as a source of inequity, as well.[10]

More recently, two court cases in other states have also highlighted the significant role that time in school can play in policymakers' efforts to restore equity. In the first of these, Texas Taxpayers and Student Fairness Coalition et al vs. Williams, the Travis County District Court found that the Texas state school finance system is underfunded and, therefore, violates the state constitution because it "cannot provide a constitutionally adequate education for all Texans." Moreover, in his opinion, Judge John K. Dietz identified summer school, after-school, and extended-day programs as strategies to help advance economically disadvantaged students who have fallen behind their economically advantaged peers. Further, Dietz's ruling requires that the Texas legislature redesign the school financing system by July 1, 2015. If the ruling holds—the state is expected to appeal the decision to the Texas Supreme Court—it will be interesting to see how policymakers direct dollars to support more learning time for disadvantaged students, in particular.

The second recent case highlights the significance of school time in efforts to achieve educational equity, even more directly. In May, 2014, students from seven California schools filed a class action lawsuit against the state claiming that they receive less learning time than their peers at most other California schools. The plaintiffs argue that this loss of learning time deprives them of their right under the California constitution to receive an equal education. Specifically, in their filing, the students explain that while they have the same number of hours on paper as their peers at more affluent schools, they are deprived of learning time due to the following factors: teacher absences, delayed course scheduling at the beginning of the academic year, overburdened counselors, frequent lockdowns, lack of mental health support, and assigning students to administrative tasks or free periods rather than academic classes.[11] The plaintiffs in this case, known as *Cruz vs. California*, are seeking relief in the form of policies that require existing school time to be used in a more meaningful way, though the students are not, as of this writing, explicitly seeking an expansion of the school calendar, *per se*.

Promoting Innovation in Districts and Schools

Across the vast and complex system of U.S. public education, individual education leaders, including superintendents, principals, and teachers, often face many hurdles in their attempts to implement ideas on how to make the substantial changes they believe are necessary to close achievement gaps and raise the performance of all students. Meanwhile, schools that start from scratch (e.g, charter schools) typically are more easily able to create schedules and designs that meet the needs of their students (including more learning time), as they do not face the same barriers as traditional district schools do. The barriers they can avoid include staff contracts, district and state policies, and even family and community resistance to change.

States are beginning to respond to this dynamic by creating "innovation zones"—individual schools or whole districts in which leaders are granted greater flexibility to implement comprehensive and sweeping reforms, including the power to set their own schedules, hire their own staff, and develop their own methods to strengthen instruction.

Typically, the authority granting these flexibilities is the state. Some states have installed initiatives that operate at the district level (i.e., a whole district gets special dispensation from state rules), while other states, instead, grant particular schools some independence from both state and district requirements. Further, sometimes the autonomy is granted to schools or districts that meet certain conditions (i.e where schools demonstrate their readiness to take on substantial reforms like expanding time), and these schools or districts then earn "innovation status," or an equivalent standing. At other times, states designate low-performing districts for fundamental governance restructuring, often known as "turnaround." Districts, too, have acted in similar ways with individual schools in their control, in some cases, granting certain autonomies to schools that request them and, in other cases, designating low-performing schools for turnaround.[12]

In fact, the story of the whole-school reform movement in education is complicated, and the categorization of types of structural autonomy or turnaround can be somewhat fluid and overlapping. Still, as a matter of policy, the many types do fall into two basic groups: (a) schools or districts that request special status from the granting authority and are selected by virtue of merit (usually through a competitive process) and (b) schools or districts that have the special status imposed upon them as an assertive response to improve their past performance (i.e., because these schools have been chronically underperforming). As the examples below showcase, in both categories, educators and/or policymakers often prioritize a strategy of building substantially more time into the school day (or year)—or, at least, adopt a more individualized structure for learning time—in order to accomplish their primary objective of boosting student outcomes.

School Reform By Choice ("Innovation")

Some states have adopted the policy apporach of setting up a mechanism that allows local educators to request certain flexibilities from standard practices or policies. In these cases, as noted earlier, the typical mechanism is one where school or district

leaders submit applications to the state to earn a more autonomous status and, within their application, propose how they will reconfigure staffing, budgeting, scheduling, and other structural elements (e.g., course credits) to provide an improved educational model.

It should be noted that the rising interest in the notion that schools should operate independently from their home district (or districts from the state), in large part, relates back to the charter school movement, which itself has experienced marked growth in the last decade. (In 2004-05, about 3,000 charter schools—serving under 1 million students—dotted the U.S. landscape. Ten years later the number has risen to about 6,400 charter schools with enrollment of roughly 2.5 million, or about 6 percent of the total school population.[13]) That over 6,000 public charter schools hold this independent status not only have encouraged the raising of "charter caps" in many states, but also have given state policymakers ready justification that self-governed schools can operate effectively.[14] Indeed, considerable research has shown that the performance of students in charter schools often exceeds that of students in traditional district schools. Not incidentally, an expanded schedule is cited as a key reason for the achievement differential.[15]

As of this publication, nine states have passed laws that allow for such flexibilities—often known as "innovation schools" or "innovation zones"—without specifically mandating any particular school or district into the program. The list includes Colorado, which was the first state to implement such a law, followed by West Virginia, Washington, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Kentucky, and more recently, Alabama, and Arkansas in 2013, and Indiana (specifically for Indianapolis) in 2014. In most places, the use of autonomy to stimulate school reform does not come with additional funds from the state. (Massachusetts and West Virginia do give out small seed grants of up to $50,000 to schools and West Virginia distributes larger grants to whole districts.) Instead, districts or schools are expected to use budget and staffing flexibilities to reconfigure their own education delivery model in a way that can, essentially, squeeze more value out of the existing dollars.

Among the "innovation" states, Colorado stands out as generating a meaningful profusion of expanded-time schools. According to a Colorado Department of Education review on the nearly 50 Innovation Schools in 2013, 92 percent of these schools requested a waiver from the state around regulations related to their particular building schedule. As the report authors write, "Many schools found it necessary to extend their school day and year in order to effectively implement the innovations outlined in their plan."[16]

Also promising is the Innovation Network Schools in Indianapolis because the law allows the district to contract with external education providers to take over failing schools. The first provider, Phalen Leadership Academies, a nonprofit charter operator, has been approved to open the Francis Scott Key Elementary School and its model features a longer school day and year. Also notable is Tacoma, Washington, which has 11 of its state's 33 innovation schools and has been named an Innovation Zone by the state superintendent. Among the reforms Tacoma promotes is substantial schedule modification. One of the Tacoma innovation schools, Lincoln High School, for example, features a new schedule that runs nearly nine hours (four days per week) and includes a seventh period, where students have the opportunity to select from a number of independent study projects and courses.

In other states, innovations in school time tend to revolve around virtual learning or a system whereby learning time takes an approach oriented more toward the individual student. Such is especially the case with high schools, which constitute the bulk of approved schools in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Washington.

Just as states have granted greater flexibility to schools within the context of innovation-type legislation, a growing number of districts have adopted an approach that allows certain schools to depart from district policies related to budgeting, staffing and scheduling. This approach can be traced back to the creation of Pilot Schools in Boston—essentially in-district charter schools—and has, by 2014, become a common practice in large districts across the country. Baltimore, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Chicago, to name a few, have set up special offices or initiatives, within their central administrations, whose mission it is to facilitate the creation (or conversion) of district schools that operate quasi-independently from the district. (In some cases, this operation involves approving new charter schools that also require state approval.) Freed from the fixed rules of their home district, many of these schools have set schedules that are deliberately longer than the conventional school day and/or year.

Of the 19 Boston Pilot schools in 2014-2015, five have a day that is significantly longer than surrounding district schools. In Chicago, the district has, over the last few years, approved the creation of 95 charter schools, and three of the largest operators (accounting for a total of 36 schools) each feature a day that is at least 7.5 hours, or a full 30 minutes more than the recently expanded Chicago school day. Similarly, in Philadelphia, the Renaissance School District has transferred the management of eight of its schools to Mastery Public Charter School Network, which has built more time into its educational model. And beyond the Renaissance district, Philadelphia has authorized 105 charter schools, many of which feature extended schedules.

School Reform By Mandate ("Turnaround")

When there is a specific state mandate to reform low-performing schools, states have adopted one of two basic approaches to creating or designating districts. The first strategy is to assign particular schools within an existing district into a new state- or independently-managed district. One prominent example is the Achievement School District (ASD) in Tennessee, which separated the schools performing at the lowest 5 percent from their home district—mostly Nashville or Memphis—and handed over operations of many of these 23 schools to charter management organizations, such as KIPP and Aspire. Both these operators, and others in ASD, adhere to a model with a significantly longer day. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has championed the Achievement School District as a potential national model.[17]

A similar effort has been underway in Michigan, where the state has assigned 15 low-performing schools from Detroit into the Education Achievement Authority (EAA). Unlike in Tennessee, however, these schools have not been turned over to charter operators, but, instead, are managed through the

EAA administration itself. Still, expanded time is front and center. With a longer day (24 minutes) and a much longer year (210 days total) than surrounding schools, EAA students have a total learning time of 1,600 hours per year, or about 400 more hours than students in other Detroit schools.[18]

A second strategy that states have undertaken to address the challenge of underperforming schools is to require whole existing districts to undertake a series of reforms. Using this approach, states impose certain mandates on the targeted district, while, usually, also providing it with some additional tools to achieve the prescribed implementation and achievement goals. In 2012, Connecticut adopted a plan of designating 30 low-performing districts, known as "Alliance Districts," to receive additional funding that would support a series of reforms, including the implementation of expanded time in a subset of their schools. Hawaii, meanwhile, named two Zones of School Innovation to support chronically underperforming districts.

Among this group of major reform initiatives aimed at turning around schools, where each initiative has its own distinctive flavor, perhaps the most dramatic is the Recovery School District (RSD) of Louisiana. Formed in 2003 as a mechanism to take over chronically underperforming schools—pre-dating the

The Lawrence Experiment with Whole-District Transformation

When the state took over responsibility for the Lawrence Public Schools—a district that had "years of dismal academic performance at most of its schools" according to the *Boston Globe*—the Commissioner of Education installed a hand-picked receiver, Jeff Riley, and empowered him with substantial authority to institute change. Rather than take a top-down approach Riley has engaged educators and their collective bargaining unit in the improvement process. He has created what he calls an "open architecture model," where school leaders and teachers are given increased school-based resources and autonomy and, in return, they have set clear goals for student achievement. The central office even cut 25 percent of its staff and pushed the cost savings down to the schools. As Riley told the *Boston Globe*, "The thing I'm most proud of is, fundamentally, we decided to do this *with* people and not *to* people."

One of the key resources provided to, and making a critical difference in, Lawrence is more learning time. While the addition of 200 hours (at least) to the 19 K – 8 schools in the district is centrally mandated, each Lawrence school has the flexibility to use that extra time—and, indeed, the entire day and year—as the educators in the building see fit. Within this self-determined approach, certain patterns of time use have emerged. Most schools have installed an intensive academic support period dedicated to working with small groups of student to address their specific academic needs and have also expanded time spent in literacy and math classes. In addition, teachers have considerably more common planning time where they can review student data and plan quality lessons together. District-wide, Lawrence offers "Acceleration Academies," week-long intensive learning sessions for the most at-risk students, during winter and spring vacations. And with more learning time, most Lawrence students also now have the opportunity to participate in a range of enrichment activities during the school day, many of which are run by external partners. The arts, in particular, have flourished in schools across the district.

Only a little over two years into this monumental overhaul of district and school practice in Lawrence, the early signs are very encouraging. Math scores have risen considerably during this period—with gains of almost 20 points district-wide. Performance in ELA has seen an uptick as well. More impressive is that in a district that only three years ago was declared "chronically underperforming," there are now seven schools in the top levels of performance. For more on the Lawrence experience, see the case study from Empower Schools, a nonprofit engaged by the district to help support the turnaround.

Achievement School District in Tennessee—the RSD rose to greater importance following Hurricane Katrina, when the virtual destruction of the New Orleans public school system pushed the state to assign almost all schools within the city of New Orleans into the RSD. A primary strategy of the RSD was to quickly approve charter operators like KIPP and FirstLine Schools to take over certain schools, while, in the first few years, maintaining central control over others. Over time, however, all 58 RSD schools have been transferred to charter operators, and, as a result, starting in the 2014-2015 school year, all schools in New Orleans have become charters. With this unique development, New Orleans has become the first district in the nation to become all charter.[19] And, as is characteristic of the charter sector, many of these schools now have a school day and year that is meaningfully longer than the national norm.[20] Notably, the RSD can boast of some impressive gains in academic outcomes, with proficiency rates more than doubling from 2007 to 2013, and the graduation rate rising from just over 50 percent to almost 80 percent.

Districts, too, have put their own spin on efforts to designate a certain number of its struggling schools into innovation zones. In Syracuse, New York, for example, Superintendent Sharon Contreras has

Year-Round Schools

Research on "learning loss" over the summer is clear: On average, students, regardless of socioeconomic status, regress in their math knowledge and skills over the long summer break, and students from lower socioeconomic strata lose ground in reading, as well.[21] In reaction to this, some educators have sought to rearrange the standard school calendar to eliminate the long 10- to 12-week summer break and to replace it with breaks spread more evenly throughout the year. Typically, these so-called "year-round calendars" are structured with 4 cycles of 45 days (9 weeks) of instruction, followed by 15 days (3 weeks) of vacation/intersession. The result is still a calendar of 180 instructional days, but one that does not subject students to large gaps in school time and, consequentially, in learning. According to the Congressional Research Service, today approximately 4 percent of all schools in the country operate year-round.[22]

Recent news reports describe more districts, including in Virginia and in Michigan, converting to a year-round calendar. In fact, Michigan launched in 2014 a $2 million grant program to support the conversion of districts to a year-round structure and Virginia appropriated $1 million for the same purpose. As the principal of Horizon Elementary School in Michigan explains, "[In schools] we've been working on a model that was established 100 years ago. It's time for all of us in the United States to look at how and why we're educating kids, and look at alternatives."[23]

While available evaluations of the effects of year-round schooling are not methodologically rigorous, those programs that have been reviewed show some modest positive effect on student achievement and attendance. The Virginia legislature conducted its own study on the efficacy of year-round schools in its state and found strong impact on African-American students. The report is what led that legislature, the following year, to incentivize year-round schools through a grant program.

What remains to be seen is whether the newer attempts to put in place a year-round schedule also implement practices that bring their own educational benefits (e.g., data-driven instruction, continuous teacher collaboration, etc.) alongside the time innovation. As has become apparent with efforts to expand schedules, the precise value that additional (or reconfigured) time will bring to students connects closely with how that time is used, and how much educators are able to leverage additional learning opportunities to deliver high-quality education.

leveraged federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) dollars, together with Race to the Top funds, to establish the iZone—a group of seven elementary and middle schools that are intended to serve as educational laboratories for the rest of the district. True to the calling to be innovative, each school has its own particular model, but a constant is an additional 90 minutes per day of instruction and enrichment.

In the largest school district in the country, New York City, Mayor DiBlasio announced the formation of the Renewal Schools network, 94 low-performing schools that will be given additional resources and supports, including an additional hour of instruction each day and intensive professional development for teachers.[24] The city will invest an extra $150 million over the first two years in these schools.

One of the most ambitious district-level turnarounds currently underway is taking place in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where the state put the 33-school chronically-underperforming district into "receivership" in late 2011. Practically speaking, this means the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education transferred the Lawrence superintendency to an individual hired by the state, with the mandate to oversee a series of sweeping reforms. In addition to renegotiating personnel contracts and partnering with external school operators to create in-district turnaround schools, the district has converted all K – 8 schools to a schedule with at least 200 more hours per year. (See box on p. 9 for more detail.)

Shifting School Time to Accommodate the Sleep Cycle of Teenagers

In Fall 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement that resonated with parents of teenagers everywhere. Reviewing the research examining the brain and physical development associated with the onset of puberty, the AAP reported that "most adolescents begin to experience a sleep–wake 'phase delay' (later sleep onset and wake times), manifested as a shift of up to 2 hours relative to sleep– wake cycles in middle childhood." Or, put simply, there is a biological reason why so many teenagers find it difficult to wake up in the morning and why late night bedtimes become routine. The predictable result of this shifted sleep cycle is that the likelihood of high school students suffering chronic sleep deprivation—and its many symptoms like irritability, inability to concentrate, inhibited driving, and ill health—is high. Given this medical reality, the AAP offered some simple prescriptions to offset the inadequacy of sleep that often plagues teenagers, the most concrete of which was stated simply: "middle and high schools should aim for a starting time of no earlier than 8:30 AM."[25]

In fact, several districts have experimented with later high school start times and have found the shift beneficial on a number of metrics. One of the most thorough studies determined that the later start time in eight schools across three states—moving the start time until 8:30 or later— brought several benefits, including better grades, improved attendance, and much lower rates of car crashes involving drivers aged 16 – 18.[26]

This research, together with the AAP statement, have pushed many dozens of districts to consider reconfiguring their school schedules to accommodate a later start time for high schools. Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, moved its high school start time from 7:25 to 7:45, even as many parents expressed disappointment that the 20-minute difference was insufficient. (The board voted down a more dramatic proposal to start high school at 8:50.) Likewise, many other districts have moved in relatively small increments to push back start times, even as the volume of these efforts has increased. The advocacy group, Start School Later, Inc., has a state-by-state rundown of the many actions taking place across the country.[27]

Expanding Schedules District-Wide

Across the country, there are a handful of instances where district leaders have taken a broader-based approach, expanding the schedule for every school (or level of school) within their jurisdiction, without regard to any achievement status or school-level choice. Instead, these policymakers and educators have chosen to lengthen the day to spark improvements in instructional quality and educational outcomes.

One of the first districts to expand time for all schools was Elizabeth, New Jersey, which expanded hours for all schools in 2011 and, in 2014-2015, has a 7.5-hour school day for all grade K – 8 students and a day of nearly 8.5 hours for high school students. Originally intended as a way to build in a daily period of academic support, the longer day has also led many educators at the schools in this district to enhance professional development and instruction more broadly.[28]

In terms of the sheer number of schools and students affected, the largest-ever single expansion of school time occurred in Chicago, beginning in 2012. For students in grades K – 8, the school day increased to 7 hours (from a previous schedule of 5.75 hours) and the school year has increased from 170 to 180 days. The cumulative effect of these additions amounts to about an hour more instruction per day (17 percent more) for the more than 230,000 students in these grades. Meanwhile, the daily schedule for Chicago high schools, which already had close to a 7-hour day in 2011, has increased to 7.5 hours four days per week (with one weekly early-release day of 6.25 hours), and the school year for these 110,000 students also grew from 170 to 180 days.[29] This expansion came about through the efforts of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who had argued in his campaign that the relatively short Chicago school day and year was "unacceptable" and who had vowed to increase the school day and year for a simple reason: "The extra instruction time will help our teachers meet the academic goals we expect from our students."[30]

More recently, Evansville, Indiana, the third largest school district in that state, lengthened the elementary day by 30 minutes for the 2014-2015 school year, with students attending school almost 7 hours daily. According to Evansville Superintendent David Smith, one of the primary motivations for extending the district's schedule was to build-in more opportunity for teachers to meet during the day to plan and prepare their lessons. As Smith explained, "We know the overall gains for students are greater when teachers have the opportunity to collaborate, but we really didn't have a structure in place to provide that specifically."[31]

In Boston, Massachusetts, the Boston Teachers' Union in December 2014 struck an agreement with Mayor Martin Walsh to add 40 minutes to the school day for every district school serving grades K – 8 that did not already have an expanded schedule—a total of more than 50 schools that currently have a day of just about 6 hours. Notable about this plan is the phase-in nature of the effort, with 15 schools expanding time for the 2015 -2016 school year, and more to follow in the next three years. Boston's gradual approach will give individual educators adequate opportunity to plan how they will make best use of not only the additional minutes, but their entire school day and year, as teams of educators from each of the schools will be working with NCTL to implement an overall school redesign based on best practices.

The Evolving Federal Role

Over the last several years, the federal government has maintained a steady commitment to encouraging and assisting states, districts, and schools to implement expanded learning time as a core component of a whole-school improvement strategy. That both Congress and, especially, the Obama administration have prioritized expanding learning time has set in motion two interdependent forces, which together have accelerated the spread of expanded-time schools. First, holding up more time in school as a key lever for generating higher-quality education has raised its status within the policymaker and practitioner communities. Second, the dedication of significant funds to support expanded learning time has, of course, facilitated its implementation.

School Improvement Grants (SIG)

Nearly 2,000 low-performing schools have received funds from the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program since it was revamped and expanded in 2010. Recipients of SIG funds have been able to choose amongst four models, though 95 percent of schools have chosen either the "Transformation" or "Turnaround" model, both of which include increased learning time (ILT) as a core element. Yet, even with this requirement, a considerable portion of SIG schools have not actually put ILT in place. According to a recent study from the U.S. Department of Education (USED), only about two thirds of SIG schools have implemented some form of increased learning time.[32] Even more significant, adoption of expanded time as a *school-wide* reform has been slow to take hold. Initial reports indicated that, more often than not, ILT was provided only to a subgroup of students for additional learning opportunities (essentially for remediation), but the standard schedule remained unchanged; the broader student body was not able to benefit from expanded learning opportunities. Instances of instituting a longer day and/or year to drive a whole-school redesign that provides more and better learning time for all students and teachers have been far less frequent than the remedial approach.[33]

As part of the federal appropriations bills for both fiscal years 2014 and 2015, Congress added new flexibility to the SIG program in several ways. For one, it directed USED to allow states to design their own school improvement model to submit to the Department for approval. Second, Congress increased the allowable grant length from three to five years, as part of which it has encouraged a pre-implementation planning year as well as a sustainability year at the end of the grant. USED is implementing these changes as part of new regulations that make many improvements and additions to the program. Within the provisions that flesh out the requirements of the so-called "state-determined model," USED has required that such models must be for whole-school reform, meaning that all students at the school have to be served by the changes, making expanded learning time school redesigns a good option for states.[34] Grants issued under these new rules are expected to be available for use in schools starting in the 2015-16 school year.

Flexibility Waivers

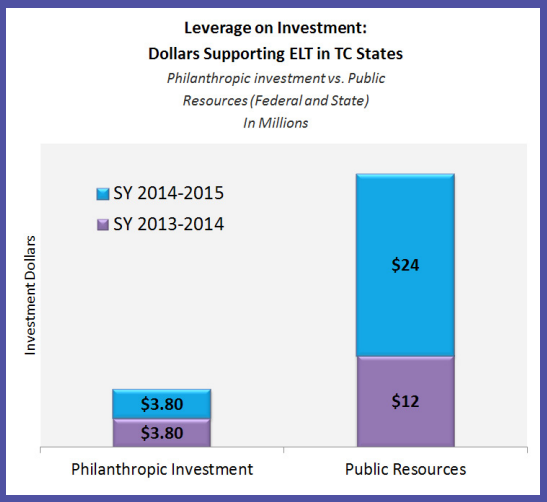
With the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) eight years overdue for reauthorization, Secretary Arne Duncan put in place the ESEA Flexibility Waivers in 2012 to provide new guidance to states, some of which provide new flexibility for districts and schools seeking to use federal funding to support expanded learning time. Two primary provisions enable this flexibility—namely, ending the requirement that districts with chronically underperforming schools set aside 20 percent of Title I funds for Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and, second, allowing districts to use 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) funds to support high-quality expanded learning time schools. This latter option was available only in states that specifically requested (and received) this allowable use.

Removing the SES set-aside requirement aims to give districts the flexibility to design whole-school reforms to help turn around struggling schools rather than force them to divert Title I funds to private tutoring services that have not proven to be a broadly effective use of educational dollars and serve only a subset of the full student body.[35] Even as USED waivers have encouraged the implementation of high-quality ELT schools as an alternative to the SES strategy, such option has not been widely adopted, and it is not yet clear how those previously SES-directed funds are being allocated.

The flexibility added to the 21st Century program, a $1.15 billion fund that provides grants to districts and community organizations for expanded learning opportunities before and after school and during the summer, has more directly resulted in more students experiencing expanded learning in schools. The majority of the funds has always gone to school districts for the purpose of operating school-based programs, but previously they were restricted to running those programs only in "non-school hours." With the new flexibility of the waivers, a school can use these same funds to increase learning opportunities for all students by redesigning and significantly expanding school hours. With more time for all, schools can provide more opportunities for academics and enrichment to ensure a well-rounded education, and dedicated, regular sessions for teachers to collaborate, plan, and receive professional development. This allowable use, in turn, means that educators

TIME Collaborative Update

Perhaps the most coordinated effort capitalizing on ESEA Flexibility Waivers and SIG funding to drive high-quality school redesign with expanded time is the TIME Collaborative (TC), a multi-year initiative to develop ELT schools in five states. In its first full year (2013 – 2014), 20 schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Colorado, and New York implemented a significantly longer day, adding roughly 300 more hours to the school year. In real terms, TC schools are providing students with 50 – 110 additional hours of individualized academic support per year beyond what they already receive in their typical core classes. Further, students in TC schools have more time for STEM, literacy instruction, and enrichment (on average, over 150 additional hours per year).



The impact of this additional time is already evident to teachers:

- Three quarters of teachers in TIME Collaborative schools believe that their students are more engaged in school, demonstrate greater ability to work collaboratively and are better able to meet the Common Core State Standards than these same students were before learning time was expanded.
- The percentage of teachers who now say that they have "adequate time to meet the instructional needs of all students" nearly doubled from the year before implementation (increasing from 34 percent to 62 percent).

In the current school year (2014 – 2015), a fifth state (Tennessee) has joined the TIME Collaborative, and the initiative has more than doubled in size, with 21 more schools joining, for a total of 41 schools serving nearly 22,000 students. TC schools are now operating in the following districts in each participating state:

- Connecticut: Meriden, Windham, New London, New Britain, East Hartford
- Colorado: Denver, Boulder Valley, Jefferson County
- Massachusetts: Boston, Fall River, Lawrence, Salem
- New York: Rochester, Syracuse
- Tennessee: Nashville, Knoxville

Through the generous startup support of The Ford Foundation, which has also committed resources to build capacity at the state and district levels, the National Center on Time & Learning has provided intensive technical assistance to each of the participating TC schools. Philanthropic investment—which also includes commitments from Broad, Carnegie, Kellogg, and several local funders—has, in turn, spurred a much larger investment of public dollars to dramatically improve the quality of education at these schools.

can reconfigure and expand schedules for all students and integrate community partners throughout the school day—providing the partners increased access to more students, and greater integration and support between the school and outside provider, an arrangement essential to program success. Without the 21st Century waiver flexibility, on the other hand, outside partners are largely restricted to programming during afterschool hours and have impact only on those students who sign up and show up. These limitations frequently mean that partners miss serving the highest-need students, a problem that is solved by allowing those partners to provide programs inside an expanded school day.

Massachusetts and Connecticut have emerged as leaders in applying CCLC grant funds toward an integrated model, one that entails bringing in providers of traditional afterschool and summer programs into the broader structure of a lengthened school day. This approach enables the schools to serve a much larger student population than they otherwise would. An analysis shows that each of these two states uses 21st Century funds that amount to barely more than $300 per student on average to fund ELT schools that add at least 300 hours to the school schedule as part of the TIME Collaborative, a project managed by NCTL. (See box on p. 14) (In addition, New York has funded a significant number of ELT schools with CCLC funds, but full cost data has not yet been reported on those schools.)[36]

As of the publication of this report, 26 states and Puerto Rico have the ELT flexibility waiver in place for their 21st Century program. Most of these approved states are moving forward slowly with integrating ELT into their grant structure, including opening up the CCLC program for schools seeking to implement an ELT model.

Personalized Learning Time

As policymakers and practitioners strive to address the glaring discrepancy between the time available for learning in the conventional American school schedule and the time many students need to achieve higher standards, other issues related to learning time have emerged that both complicate the challenge and elevate the potential impact of schedule expansion. It is becoming clear that the one-size-fits-all approach to school time in American public education may be untenable.

Competency-based Learning

Competency-based learning—where students advance to the next grade or level based on mastering content and skills in certain areas, rather than accrued "seat time"—has gained a great deal of traction over the last few years. Achieve, a non-partisan standards-based reform organization in Washington, lists 30 states as having some form of policy support for competency-based learning.[37] Actually, the widespread appeal of replacing a credit-based system with a proficiency-based one is not surprising, as it seems to align with the central purpose of public education: assuring that *every* child, regardless of where they start, gains the knowledge and skills to succeed in work and in life.

The practical implications of such a system can be thorny, however. Not only must districts and/or states develop and incorporate sound assessments to track individual student learning progress, but the very organization of school as we know it likely must change to support this new orientation. Among other things, a conventional, uniform school sched-

ule seems contrary to the core idea of competency-based education, which personalizes learning for each and every student. Undoubtedly, many students would require more time than the average to achieve mastery of a set of skills and knowledge, which, in turn, would mean that the traditional school schedule would fail to meet their learning needs. CompetencyWorks, an advocacy and research organization committed to spreading competency-based education, explains: "Competency education will only be successful if students are able to access adequate interventions and time for them to become proficient. [But] one of the most important and most difficult things for schools to do is create greater flexibility of time and place for learning." The group then suggests that paths toward flexibility could include learning opportunities within the community (e.g., internships, service learning, etc.) and/or online classes as ways to expand the time and avenues students have to develop proficiency.

New Hampshire was the first state in the country to allow credits for graduation from high school based on students' demonstrated mastery of content, rather than the amount of time they have spent in school. But implementation of a system-wide shift to competency-based learning has been gradual, in part because the state had not provided adequate assessments through which students could demonstrate their mastery. (The state is currently developing a bank of assessments.)[38] Researcher Julia Freeland reports that "New Hampshire's example demonstrates both the power and limitations of state-wide competency-based education policy, particularly in a setting with a strong tradition of local control. The lessons … suggest that adopting competency-based approaches is not a quick or easy process, and that it requires new infrastructure, new approaches to teaching and learning, and new tools to deliver content and assess work to allow each student to progress upon mastery." In particular, she notes that many schools, indeed, find it a complicated challenge to break from the time-oriented structures (school schedules, grade-level coursework, etc.) that have been in place for over 100 years.[39]

Blended Learning: Utilizing Technology to Expand Educational Options

Closely connected to such new understandings of how school time can be structured to address the learning needs of individual students are the ways in which schools are using technology (especially the internet and other tools that allow for virtual learning) to reconfigure how time is spent in (and out of) school. A fast-growing trend within education is commonly called "blended learning," or the method of integrating online learning with in-class instruction. The Clayton Christenson Institute elaborates:

> Blended learning … goes beyond one-to-one computers and high-tech gadgets…. [It] is a formal education program in which a student learns: (a) at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; (b) at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and (c) the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

The implications for learning time in school are, thus, significant, and policymakers have demonstrated a variety of approaches to enable schools to take advantage of the potential of blended learning. In 2014, nine states enacted legislation that referenced the use of blended learning in specific educational enhancements.[40] In Mississippi, for example, the legislature authorized the launch of a pilot program to improve literacy education in some of the state's lowest-performing schools, and calls out the use of "flexible scheduling and a blended learning environment with individualized and self-paced learning options." Vermont, meanwhile, has set up a "Flexible Pathways Initiative" to expand educational options for students to move between secondary school and higher education, and this program relies heavily on virtual learning environments.

The connection between blended learning and competency-based education thus becomes clear: Technology is the vehicle that can help to adjust the time actually spent learning to best match the needs of the individual learner. In turn, the successful integration of technology into the learning schema depends on making sure that schools can (a) use time flexibly and (b) have sufficient time built into the day to address the needs of those students who may be lagging.

A new report from the Evergreen Education Group on the policy and practice of "digital learning" across the country cites examples of states that have passed, or are considering, legislation that follows the path of competency-based learning—replacing demonstration of mastery above seat-time requirements, specifically as related to online courses. Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio and Utah, for instance, have each passed laws that build in the kind of time flexibilities that are necessary for learning through a digital, or blended, learning format. According to the report authors, nationwide, there were 740,000 enrollments in online courses (grades 1 - 12) in 2013 – 2014, but they stress that many more students still lack access to this type of innovative learning, noting that policy (as well as funding) often stands in the way.[41]

Student Attendance

As a growing number of policymakers and educators call for students to be provided more learning time through an expanded school schedule, the matter of adequate learning time also takes shape in a more fundamental way when it comes to student absences. Each day that a student misses school—whether because of sickness, suspension, truancy, or some other reason—is a day lost to learning. For students who are chronically absent, this pattern is, of course, highly detrimental. Studies have shown that those missing at least 10 days of the school year are much less likely to be proficient.[42]

The collective impact of these individual absences on the system as a whole is considerable. For example, an analysis by the Georgia Department of Education found that just a 3 percent improvement in attendance across the state—five additional days for each individual student, on average—would have enabled over 10,000 more students to pass the state reading test and over 30,000 more to pass the state mathematics assessment. The biggest impact was for students who missed between five and 10 days of school.[43] Another study suggested that chronic absenteeism is actually one of the main causes of the achievement gap.[44]

Chronic absenteeism is not something that can be legislated away, of course. Yet, there is a role for state and federal policymakers around the collection of absenteeism data, especially tracking students who fall into the category of being chronically absent (at least 10 days in a school year). Additionally, states can fund so-called "early warning systems" to help identify those children who may be prone to miss school. Armed with this information, each school and district must then commit to addressing the problem through both a systematized approach and case-by-case sensitivity. Attendance Works, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving attendance in public schools, lays out a five-point plan that encourages practitioners to: (a) recognize good and improved attendance; (b) engage students and parents; (c) monitor attendance data and practice; (d) provide personalized early outreach; and (e) develop a programmatic response to overcome barriers to attendance. In no small way, tackling the often complex problem of their absenteeism effectively expands learning time for individual students who, currently, miss too much time in class.

The Connections Between Higher Standards and Time

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of standards in both mathematics and literacy that have been adopted by many states, represent a monumental shift in the content of and expectations for learning for millions of students across the country. For most, the introduction of CCSS will mean a much higher bar for what constitutes proficiency.[45] Of course, such a dramatic change brings with it many challenges, not the least of which is the time needed to enable all students to reach these more demanding expectations for learning and the support and time teachers need, as well.

More Time Needed in Two Ways

The first and most obvious way that CCSS will mean more time is needed for learning relates to students. As reported by NCTL and the Center for American Progress in early 2014, the ways in which the standards raise expectations—for example, more focus on non-fiction texts in literacy and a "balanced" approach of fluency, deep conceptual understanding, and applied problem-solving in math—mean that classrooms of traditional length will likely be inadequate. In English class, students will need more opportunity for close reading, for analytical writing, and for sharing ideas orally. In mathematics courses, meanwhile, as NCTL and CAP reported:

> Having students stretch beyond their current scope of expertise will often entail a trial-and-error approach to solving equations and developing multiple ways to arrive at an answer. Allowing students to both try and fail and requiring them to find more than one route to success will mean providing them with more time to explore and learn on their own

> than is the norm in today's classrooms. Students will then be asked to explain their reasoning, a process that consumes more time, even as it fosters still deeper learning.

For students who already lag behind their peers, the need for more learning time will be even greater just to catch up on the skills and knowledge they will need to be competent learners.[46]

The second challenge revolves around the need to reorient teaching. One teacher in Chicago describes: "[CCSS] requires everyone to change the way they think about teaching and learning. It requires the teacher to be more of a facilitator in the classroom as opposed to being at the front [teaching] one lesson the same way to all the students. The standards can't be reached that way."[47]

Of course, teachers will not be able to make this shift in their instructional methods and expectations instantaneously, but rather, will need considerable time both before implementation and in ongoing ways. They will need large chunks of time reserved for teacher professional development, collaboration and preparation necessary for essentially reconfiguring instruction. Gene Carter, executive director of the nonprofit Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, or ASCD, one of the leading voices in preparing teachers to integrate the standards, notes:

> This professional development cannot be a single meeting that introduces teachers to the standards and explains how they differ from previous state standards, nor can it be one or two workshops that walk teachers through curriculum resources that will help them align their classroom practice with the common core. Instead, the professional development must be sustained, job-embedded, and involve feedback and follow-up observations.[48]

Meanwhile, the typical amount of time that teachers have in the school day and across the school year to prepare for classes and to strengthen their instruction is quite limited. A study by Scholastic found that teachers, on average, spend only about 15 minutes per day collaborating with colleagues.[49] This paucity of time probably explains why an *Education Week* survey of teachers revealed that 71 percent indicated that they would need more collaborative planning time to be adequately prepared to shift to the Common Core standards.[50]

Strengthening Instruction: A Fresh Approach to Professional Development

With the intensive professional development needed for CCSS adoption, the matter of how teachers spend their time has been elevated. As practitioners already know, the quantity and quality of learning time *for teachers* in school buildings are key for its potential impact on student learning. Now policymakers are beginning to appreciate this dynamic, as well.

The National Staff Development Council, in its 2009 study, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*, states plainly: "Efforts to improve student achievement can succeed only by building the capacity of teachers to improve their instructional practice…. One of the key structural supports for teachers engaging in professional learning is the allocation of time in the work day and week to participate in such activities."[51] In fact, research shows that the strongest teaching forces are those that have well-developed collaborative practices. Research also verifies that teachers are more likely to develop those practices when they have a dedicated, regular time to meet.[52]

Despite the fact that the value of reserved time for teacher collaboration is well-established, the practice is inconsistently codified through policy. Typically, states do not get involved with setting requirements for teacher work time, leaving these matters to local contract negotiations. A review of the contracts of 120 major districts in the National Center for Teacher Quality database indicates that about half (65) address the issue of teacher collaboration in some manner, although many of these districts are non-specific about collaborative time requirements.[53] This failure to prioritize collaboration and to protect time for it within the workday might be why surveys suggest that even as teachers strongly favor collaboration, they find limited opportunities to do so during the regular school day.[54]

Teacher evaluations, and the consequences of those evaluations, stand as the one area concerning teacher development where state legislatures have become increasingly involved. Not surprisingly, policymakers almost always consider these evaluations as a key component of the education accountability structure. ECS reports that during the last two

legislative sessions alone (2013 – 2014), over 60 laws in more than half of states dealing in some aspect of teacher evaluation, ranging from requiring the inclusion of certain student outcomes data in teacher ratings to the conditions under which a teacher can be fired.[55]

Yet, teacher evaluations also hold the potential to be a tool for effective professional development. In *Time for Teachers*, published in 2014, NCTL profiled a number of expanded-time schools where practitioners harness their longer school day and/or year to create additional learning opportunities for teachers to build in a robust process of peer observation and coaching, where they get feedback on their instructional methods and content. At these schools, principals and teachers have incorporated the formal teacher evaluations that are required by law into a much broader system of professional learning that rests upon ongoing, consistent feedback from both coaches and peers. Indeed, research on charter schools by Harvard economist Roland Fryer identified frequency of feedback to teachers as one of the key indicators of the most successful schools.[56]

Even as district administrators develop an accountability framework for teacher observation and feedback in order to ensure the highest-quality instruction, they also have myriad ways at their disposal to do as leaders of high-performing schools and districts do: Frame these evaluations as just one facet of a multilevel and nuanced professional development system. Such a framing begins with shifting the locus of learning for teachers from one-off workshops to a school-centered, coherent, differentiated program of study tailored to each teacher's needs and interests. Putting in place coaching protocols that emphasize a healthy give-and-take between teacher and coach, for example, would go a long way toward spurring such a shift. Districts also can direct funding to support this kind of effort in a number of ways, such as using Title II dollars to pay for substitutes or specialists while some classroom teachers are observing their peers teach.

In Conclusion

As a nation, we have long sought equal educational opportunity for all. As we wrote in the 2013 update of *Learning Time in America*, fulfilling our promise to provide a high-quality education for every student has become ever more challenging in the current era of tightening public spending and, yet, more essential than ever as we raise academic standards and strive to stake out a strong future in an increasingly competitive global economy. In response, many states, districts, and individual schools throughout the country are tapping the resource of time to help meet this vital national commitment. Forging innovative approaches to instruction and pioneering methods of organizing the school day and year, education leaders are building in more learning time to raise student proficiency and broaden and deepen curricula. They have come to believe that only by expanding school time will our nation achieve its goal of developing in every young American the skills and knowledge they need today to meet the world of opportunity that awaits them tomorrow.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for policymakers and education leaders on the topic of expanding school time are rooted in four overarching principles:

- **Focus on the needs of high-poverty students –** While all students can benefit from additional learning time, high-poverty students benefit the most. Data shows that families with resources are devoting increasing amounts of time and money to broaden their children's educational and enrichment opportunities. High-poverty students, however, often do not have access to the same kind of out-of-school family and community learning resources—a reality that exacerbates and widens both opportunity and achievement gaps. To begin to address these disparities, it is necessary to offer more and better in-school learning time, such that high-needs students gain access to additional educational opportunities and the individualized supports that flourish in a well-designed, high-quality, expanded learning time school..
- **Expanded Learning Time should be a part of a broader reform and accountability framework–** Expanded learning time (ELT) enables other important reforms (e.g. teacher collaboration, data-driven instruction, individualized learning approaches) to take root. Moreover, rather than being positioned as a standalone structural change, **ELT** is most successful when federal, state and district leaders embed expanded time within a more comprehensive reform strategy.
- **Highlight what works –** Across the country, district and school leaders need more examples of successful expanded learning time schools. Understanding how current expanded-time schools have leveraged the power of time—and done so in cost-effective ways—can help guide educators whose aim is to transform their own schools. Recognized best practices include: (a) adding substantial time for all students; (b) adding time for academics, individualized learning, enrichment, and teacher collaboration and professional development; (c) integrating data systems that enable educators to individualize instruction; and (d) substantial planning time that engages the school community tin the redesign process.
- **Incentivize innovation –** The movement to expand school time has been driven by both the implementation of innovative policies and the continuing commitment of education leaders. Offering regulatory flexibility and financial incentives to encourage and support long-lasting innovation, at the policy and practice levels, will help fuel the movement to expand learning time to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's students.

For Federal Policymakers

In Congress, expanding school time for high-poverty students should be a top priority in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Federal legislators should look to successful implementation of high-quality ELT, like the TIME Collaborative, high-performing charter schools, and individual schools that have leveraged federal funding to generate significant reform (e.g., Orchard Gardens in Boston and Tumbleweed Elementary in California, two schools that were able to convert to expanded-time schedules with the help of federal SIG grants). Continued commitment to high-quality implementation should be considered an essential part of ensuring that federal funding is used effectively. Specifically, we recommend that ESEA include the following:

- *Maintain the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program as a standalone grant program, but incorporate flexibility for ELT directly into the statute* to remove any uncertainty for states, districts, and schools already relying on the funds for ELT under an existing waiver. Such codification would also extend the program, allowing communities in any state to have the same flexibility to choose ELT along with afterschool, before-school, and summer programs.
- *Maintain the School Improvement Grant program with continued support for increased learning time as a central element of school improvement models*, including maintaining the changes instituted through appropriations bills that added flexibility for a state-determined, secretary-approved whole school reform model, longer grant terms, and

support for planning years;

- *Explicitly authorize and encourage the funding of high-quality expanded learning time in Title I*, in order to promote the of use stable and reliable formula funds in addition to competitive grants;
- *Establish high-quality expanded learning time as an explicit part of Title II* to support more time for teachers within their school schedule for collaboration, planning, and professional development;
- *Direct the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to provide funding and support to improve planning and implementation of high-quality, school-wide increased learning time at SIG schools*, focusing on practical, direct technical assistance provided at the local level; and
- *Close the "comparability loophole" in Title I funding in order to correct the current unbalanced system* that often directs *less* funding than the district average to schools with the highest concentrations of poor children;[57] eliminating the loophole would provide those schools serving large proportions of disadvantaged students the additional resources they need to boost their educational program with high-impact practices, including expanded time, a reform that can increase teacher performance and job satisfaction to help attract and retain the highest-quality teachers.

In addition to the ESEA provisions, the U.S. Department of Education should:

- Provide proactive guidance that sets basic parameters for what successful high-quality expanded learning time schools look like, including when funded as part of SIG, 21st Century, or through flexible use of other federal funds under a state's ESEA Flexibility Waiver;[58]
- Support high-quality technical assistance to states, districts, and schools that are implementing increased learning time, especially during their planning phases;
- Encourage states to use their ESEA Flexibility Waivers to support the implementation of more high-quality expanded learning time schools;
- Highlight the practices of high-performing expanded-time schools on web sites and USED conferences, newsletters, and related publications and venue;
- Collect data on school schedules and instructional time through the Common Core of Data and other data collection instruments; and
- Support a study that clarifies the amount of academic time students in high-performing countries of the world receive, from early childhood education through secondary school.

For State Policymakers

As this *Learning Time in America* update has made clear, states have enormous capacity to stimulate the creation of new ELT schools, as well as some ability to foster the effective use of expanded time. Of course, state policymakers also have the authority to regulate learning time of all schools.

States should look to laws and practices, like those in place in Massachusetts, that have enabled over 130 charter and district schools to expand time and to generate strong educational outcomes. Over time, Massachusetts has: invested significant resources in a comprehensive reform agenda; put in place a strong accountability system for charter schools; incentivized, through a specific grant program, district schools to expand schedules by 300 hours annually; directed federal funding to support ELT; and taken over one chronically underperforming district and several schools that all increased time as a core driver of their turnaround.

To further the goal of spreading the benefits of expanded time, states should:

- *Highlight expanded learning time as an essential intervention* for the state's low-performing, high-poverty schools and integrate the strategy within the state's accountability structure, school improvement strategy, and school funding system;
- *Take advantage of the revised SIG structure that allows a state-determined whole-school model*, in addition to the federally-defined models, by creating a state-determined

model based on successful high-performing expanded-time schools that includes a planning year for participating schools;

- In states considering changes to their school-funding formula, *take into account the higher costs of educating at-risk children* and, in particular, the need for more learning time to close achievement gaps;[59]
- *Create competitive grant programs that incentivize the expansion of school time* by a substantial amount, similar to those currently operating in New York and Massachusetts, which require a planning year, adding 300 hours that includes academics and enrichment, and more time for teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development;
- *Grant districts greater flexibility to innovate with expanded-time models* that are both educationally valuable and cost-effective, and as more states create "innovation districts or zones," the state should provide planning support so that schools use their autonomies to maximum effect;
- *Bolster the capacity of the SEA to monitor and support the efforts of LEAs and schools to convert to expanded-time models*, including furnishing quality technical assistance from experienced practitioners and trainers, and documenting and disseminating lessons learned from high-performing expanded-time schools in the state;
- *Collect operational and instructional time data from districts* as a means to monitor and study the ways in which school time is used at the individual school level;
- *Consider establishing a statewide task force to explore "time reform" policy options* that the state might adopt in order to bring high-quality expanded learning time to more students;
- As part of the development of teacher evaluation systems, *ensure that districts create systems and ensure time for frequent and constructive feedback to teachers*, along with clear action steps for improvement, rather than designing only evaluation ratings.
- As competency-based education systems are developed and implemented (thus allowing students to progress based on competency, not seat time), *implement strategies that ensure students who are lagging academically will be given support and resources to progress* (including more time to master content) and that the overall achievement gaps within schools are not exacerbated;
- *Support school-embedded professional devel-*

opment, with a particular emphasis on helping teachers themselves to become experts in standards implementation, as part of the training for Common Core adoption.

For District Policymakers

District leaders, working in partnership with schools, should:

- *Collaborate with the local collective bargaining unit to allow for the creation of expanded-time schools* (either across the whole district or as a subgroup of schools), and establish routes that empower teachers to redesign their schools and that support educators' professional learning needs;
- *Explore possible cost-effective models of building more time into schools*—including staggering teacher schedules, using technology as a tool to support learning, and building partnerships with institutions that can bring resources to schools (e.g., higher education institutions, cultural agencies, community-based organizations, and businesses);
- *Take advantage of flexible federal resources that can be used to support expanded learning time*, including applying for 21st Century CLC/ELT funds in states that have this waiver;
- For districts with SIG-eligible schools, *develop turnaround/transformation plans around the inclusion of increased learning time* for *all* students and the implementation of the essential practices that research indicates are necessary for school-wide success, and work with state education officials to apply for a new state-determined SIG model based on high-quality ELT;
- *Explore ways of combining federal, state and philanthropic funds* to support sustainable models to create expanded-time schools; and
- *Document and disseminate in-district school success stories*, to help practitioners at peer schools overcome the all-too-common hurdle of thinking that redesigning a school on an expanded schedule is impractical and to guide more educators along the exciting ELT path.

Appendix A

Number of Instructional Days/Hours in the School Year

Updated by Julie Rowland, *Education Commission of the States*

October 2014

Introduction:

While state requirements vary on the number of instructional days and/or hours in the school year, the majority of states require 180 days of student instruction. Most also specify the minimum length of time that constitutes an instructional day. Some states set instructional time in terms of days, some specify hours, and some provide specifications for both and may require districts to meet either or both. Two states, Ohio and Wisconsin, recently changed the unit of measurement for an instructional year from days to hours.

Because staff development and parent conference days are handled differently across the states and often are included in the overall "school calendar" requirements, we have attempted to separate those from the minimum instructional time. However, in some cases, statute is unclear. Please send any corrections (with supporting state policy) to Julie Rowland at jrowland@ecs.org.

The following table lists the minimum number of instructional days/hours in a school year and the start dates prescribed by law, where specified. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia allow local districts or regions to determine when the school year begins.

State Policies Related to the School Year

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Alabama [ALA. Code § 16-13-231(a)(1) and (b)(1)(c)] Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02	180 Days Or the hourly equivalent	N/A	6 hours (Excludes lunch and recess)	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than Monday 2 weeks before Labor Day, (unless 8/31 is a Monday, then on 8/17) *Finish* no later than Friday immediately before Memorial Day

[1]The minimum number of instructional days refers to the actual number of days that pupils have contact with a teacher. Teacher in-service and professional development days are specified when available.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Alaska [ALASKA STAT. § 14.03.030, 14.03.040] Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02	180 days (Includes up to 10 inservice days)	Grades K-3 ~ 740 hours Grades 4-12 ~ 900 hours[2]	Grades 1-3 ~ 4 hours Grades 4-12 ~ 5 hours (Excludes intermissions)	District option
Arizona [ARIZ. REV. STAT. § 15-341.01; § 15-901(A)(1),(5)]]	180 days[3]	Kindergarten ~ 356 hours Grades 1-3 ~ 712 hours Grades 4-6 ~ 890 hours Grades 7-8 ~ 1,000 hours Grades 9-12 ~ students must enroll in at least 4 subjects that meet at lease 720 hours	N/A	District option
Arkansas [ARK. CODE ANN. § 6-16-102; 6-10-106]	178 days (Includes a minimum of 10 days [60 hrs] professional development/ inservice)[4]	N/A	6 hours/day or 30 hours/week	*Start* On or after the Monday of the week in which 8/19 falls; no earlier than 8/14 and no later than 8/26[5]
California [CAL. EDUC. CODE § 46200] 41420 (a), 46201.2(b), 46112, 46113, 46114, 46117, 46141, 46201(b)	180/175 days[6]	Kindergarten ~ 600 hours Grades 1-3 ~ 840 hours (50,400 minutes) Grades 4-8 ~ 900 hours (54,000 minutes) Grades 9-12 ~ 1,080 hours (64,800 minutes)	Kindergarten ~ 3 hours Grades 1-3 ~ 3.83 hours (230 minutes) Grades 4-12 ~ 4 hours (240 minutes)	District option

[2]For all grades, hours only apply if board submits an acceptable plan under which students will receive the educational equivalent of 180 days.

[3]Or equivalent number of minutes of instruction per year.

[4]2009 Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation, accessed at: http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/Public_School_Accountability/Standards_Assurance/ADE_Rules_Governing_Standards_for_Accreditation_July_2009.pdf

[5]School year may begin on 8/18 only if it falls on a Monday; otherwise, the school year may begin no earlier than 8/19.

[6]Through 2014-15, districts are allowed to shorten instructional year by 5 days without fiscal penalty.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Colorado [COLO. REV. STAT. § 22-32-109(1)(n)]	160 days	Half-day K ~ 435 hours Full-day K ~ 870 hours Grades 1-5 ~ 968 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 1,056 hours (Excludes parent-teacher conferences and staff inservice programs)	N/A	District option
Connecticut [CONN. GEN. STAT. § 10-16]	180 days	Half-day K ~ 450 hours Full-day K ~ 900 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 900 hours	N/A[7]	District option
Delaware [DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 14, § 1049(a)(1)]	N/A	Grades K-11 ~ 1,060 hours Grade 12 ~ 1,032 hours	3.5 hours (Excludes lunch)	District option
District of Columbia [D.C. Mun. REGS. Subt. 5-A, § A2100.3 Subt. 5-E 305]	180 days	N/A	Grades 1-12 ~ 6 hours (Includes lunch and recess)	District option (single district)
Florida [FLA. STAT. ch. 1003.02(1)(g); 1001.42; 1011.61]	180 days	Grades K-3 ~ 720 hours Grades 4-12 ~ 900 hours[8]	N/A	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than 14 days before Labor Day

[7] Districts may count up to 7 hours/day towards the total required for the year.

[8] For schools on double-session or approved experimental calendar: Grades K-3 ~ 630 hours; Grades 4-12 ~ 810 hours.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Georgia [GA. CODE ANN. § 20-2-168(c);GA. COMP. R. & REGS. r. 160-5-1-.02(2)]	180 days	Grades K-3 ~ 810 hours Grades 4-5 ~ 900 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 990 hours	Grades K-3 ~ 4.5 hours Grades 4-5 ~ 5 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 5.5 hours	District option
Hawaii [HAW. REV. STAT. § 302A-251]	180 days (Does not apply to charter and multi-track schools) (Excludes professional development)	Grades K-6 ~ 915 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 990 hours (for 2014-16 school years) Grades K-12 ~ 1,080 hours (for 2016-18 school years)[9] (All of the above do not apply to charter or multi-track schools)	N/A	District option (single district)
Idaho [IDAHO CODE § 33-512(1)]	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 450 hours Grades 1-3 ~ 810 hours Grades 4-8 ~ 900 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 990 hours[10] (Includes 22 hours for staff development)	N/A	District option
Illinois [105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/10-19, 5/18-8.05 (F)]	180 days (Includes not more than 4 professional development days)	N/A	Half-day K ~ 2 hours Full-day K-1 ~ 4 hours Grades 2-12 ~ 5 hours	District option

[9]2014 Legislative Report of the Department of Education of the State of Hawaii http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/State%20Reports/302A-251_report.pdf

[10]Instructional time for grade 12 may be reduced by up to 11 hours.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Indiana [IND. CODE § 20-30-2-2, 3]	180 days	N/A	Grades 1-6 ~ 5 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 6 hours	District option
Iowa [IOWA CODE § 256.7(19), 279.10]	180 days	1,080 hours	Grades 1-12 ~ 6 hours/day or 30 hours/week (Includes parent-teacher conferences)	*Start* No earlier than day of the week in which 9/1 falls. If 9/1 falls on Sunday, school may begin the week immediately preceding 9/1
Kansas [KAN. STAT. ANN. § 72-1106(a), (b), 72-1111(h)(3)]	Grades K-11 ~ 186 days Grades 12 ~ 900 hours	Kindergarten ~ 465 hours Grades 1-11 ~ 1,116 hours Grades 12 ~ 1,086 hours	5 hours/day	District option
Kentucky [KY. REV. STAT. ANN. § 158.070; 702 Ky. Admin. Rgs. 7:140]]	170 days (185-day calendar that includes 170 instructional plus 4 days for professional development)	1062 hours	N/A	District option
Louisiana [LA. REV. STAT. ANN. § 17:154; LA. ADMIN. CODE tit. 28 pt., CXV § 333,1103]	177 days[11] (Includes 2 days for staff development)	1,062 hours	6 hours (360 minutes) (Excludes recess)	District option
Maine [ME. REV. STAT. § ANN. tit. 20-A, § 4801]	175 days (Plus no more than 5 days for in-service education, parent-teacher conferences, similar activities)	N/A	N/A	District option[12]

[11]Early dismissal of seniors allowed up to 10 instructional days.

[12]Districts must work within regional units to coordinate with their career and technical center units to ensure that, among other requirements, there are not more than five dissimilar instructional days within each regional calendar.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Maryland [MD. CODE ANN., EDUC. § 7-103; Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.03.02.12A]	180 days	1,080 hours Grades 8-12 ~ 1,170 hours	N/A	District option
Massachusetts [MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 69, § 1G; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 603, § 27.03, 27.04]	180 days	Kindergarten ~ 425 hours Grades 1-5 ~ 900 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 990 hours	N/A	District option
Michigan [MICH. COMP. LAWS §§ 388.1701(3)(a);380.1284b]	175 days[13]	K-12 ~ 1,098 hours	N/A	*Start* No earlier than Labor Day
Minnesota [MINN. STAT. §§ 120A.40, 41]	Grades 1-11 ~ 165 days[14]	Kindergarten ~ 425 hours All-day kindergarten ~ 850 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 935 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 1,020 hours	N/A	*Start* No earlier than Labor Day (although there are exceptions to the requirement)
Mississippi [MISS CODE ANN. §§ 37-13-61, 63, 67]	180 days	N/A	5.5 hours	District option
Missouri [MO. REV. STAT. § 160.041, 171.031]	5-day week ~ 174 days 4-day week ~ 142 days	1044 hours	5-day week ~ 3 hours 4-day week ~ 4 hours	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than 10 days prior to first Monday in September
Montana [MONT. CODE ANN. § 20-1-31, 302; MONT. ADMIN. R. 10.65.101]	N/A	Half-day K ~ 360 hours Grades K-3 ~ 720 hours Grades 4-12 ~ 1,080 hours[15] (Includes an additional 3 days for instructional and professional development)	N/A	District option

[13]Unless a collective bargaining agreement that includes a different and complete school calendar was in effect as of 7/1/2013

[14]Unless a four-day week schedule has been approved by the commissioner.

[15]For graduating seniors, 1050 aggregate hours is sufficient

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/ Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Nebraska [NEB. REV. STAT. § 79-211, 212]	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 400 hours Grades 1-8 ~ 1,032 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 1,080 hours	N/A	District option
Nevada [NEV. REV. STAT. 385.080, 388.090 Nev. Admin. Code ch.387.120,.131]	180 days (May include up to 5 days for professional development with approval of Superintendent of Public Instruction)	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 2 hours Grades 1-2 ~ 4 hours Grades 3-6 ~ 5 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 5.5 hours (All include recess and time between lessons, exclude lunch)	District option
New Hampshire [N.H. REV. STAT. ANN. § 189:1, 24; N.H. CODE ADMIN. R. ANN. EDUC. 306.18(a)(1-3), (b), & (c)]	180 days	Kindergarten ~ 450 hours Grades 1-5 ~ 945 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 990 hours[16]	Grades 1-5 ~ 5.75 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 6 hours	District option
New Jersey [N.J. STAT. ANN. § 18A:7F-9, 18A:36-1, -2; N.J. Admin. Code tit. 6A:32-8.3]	180 days	N/A	Full-day K ~ 2.5 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 4hours	District option
New Mexico [N.M. STAT. ANN. §§ 22-8-9(A)(1), 22-2-8.1]	N/A	Half-day K ~450 hours Full-day K ~ 990 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 990 hours[17] Grades 7-12 ~ 1,080 hours	Half-day K ~ 2.5 hours Full-day K ~ 5.5 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 5.5 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 6 hours	District option
New York [N.Y. EDUC. LAW § 3204(9), 3604(7)]	180 days	N/A	Half-day K ~ 2.5 hours Full-day K ~ 5 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 5 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 5.5 hours[18]	District option

[16]High school seniors' school year may be reduced by up to 5 days or 30 hours.

[17]Thirty-three hours of the full-day kindergarten program and twenty-two hours of grades 1 through 5 may be used for home visits by the teacher or for parent-teacher conferences. Twelve hours of grades 7-12 may be used to consult with parents or for parent-teacher conferences.

[18]Rules of the Regents and Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 175.5 (unofficial).

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
North Carolina [N.C. GEN. STAT. § 115C-84.2(a)(1),(d)]	185 days	1,025 hours	N/A	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than Monday closest to 8/19 with approval, otherwise Monday closest to 8/26 *Finish* no later than Friday closest to June 11
North Dakota [N.D. CENT CODE § 15.1-06-04, 05]	175 days (182-day calendar, with 175 days required for instruction; 2 days must be used for professional development and up to 2 days must be used for parent-teacher conferences)	Any reconfigured school year mut include at least: Grades K-8 ~ 951.5 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 1,038 hours	Grades K-6 ~ 5.5 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 6 hours	District option
Ohio [OHIO REV. CODE § 3313.48,481]	N/A (Changed from minimum days to minimum hours in 2014)	Half-day K ~ 455 hours Full-day K ~ 910 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 910 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 1,001 hours (K-6 includes two 15-minute recesses) (All grades: include up to two days professional development and up to two days for parent conferences and reporting)	N/A	District option
Oklahoma [OKLA. STAT. tit. 70, § 1-109, 111]	180 days	1,080 hours (Includes up to 30 hours used for professional meetings and 6 hours per semester for parent-teacher conferences)	6 hours	District option
Oregon [OR. ADMIN. R. 581-022-1620]	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 405 hours Grades 1-3 ~ 810 hours Grades 4-8 ~ 900 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 990 hours[19] (May be reduced by up to 30 hours for staff development, pupil transportation schedules, or other local program scheduling arrangements)	N/A[20]	District option, but no fewer than 265 consecutive calendar days between first and last instructional day

[19]If approved by the local school board, instructional time for seniors may be reduced by up to 30 hours.

[20]Oregon sets maximum, rather than minimum, hours/day: K-3 ~ 6 hours, Grades 4-8 ~ 6.5, Grades 9-12 ~ 7 hours.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Pennsylvania [22 PA. CODE § 11.1, 3; 22 PA. CODE § 51.61]	180 days	Kindergarten ~ 450 hours Grades 1-8 ~ 900 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 990 hours	Kindergarten ~ 2.5 hours Grades 1-8 ~ 5 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 5.5 hours	District option
Rhode Island [R.I. GEN. LAWS § 16-2-2]	180 days	1,080 hours (May total less than 180 days using longer school day as long as minimum hours are met)	Kindergarten ~ 2.75 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 5.5 hours (Excludes recess and lunch)[21]	District option
South Carolina [S.C. CODE ANN. § 59-1-425]	180 days (Plus 3 days for mandatory professional development, up to 2 for prof. dev. and up to 5 for planning, parent conf.,etc. to total 190 days)	N/A	6 hours (Elementary includes lunch; secondary excludes lunch)	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than third Monday in August
South Dakota [S.D CODIFIED LAWS §§ 13-26-1,2 9; S.D. ADMIN R. 24.43.09:05]	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 437.5 hours Grades 1-5 ~ 875 hours Grades 6-12 ~ 962.5 hours[22]	N/A	*Start* No earlier than the first Tuesday following the first Monday in September[23]
Tennessee [TENN. CODE ANN. § 49-6-3004]	180 days (Plus 5 days for inservice and one day for parent-teacher conferences)	N/A	6.5 hours	District option, but: *Start* no earlier than August 1

[21]If Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary & Secondary Education – Regulations Governing the School Calendar and School Day, accessed at: www.ride.ri.gov/BoardofEducation/BoardofRegulations.aspx

[22]School boards may release graduating seniors prior to the end of the school year.

[23]Schools may start before this date if referred to voters of the district by petition.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/ Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Texas [TEX. EDUC. CODE ANN. § 25.081, 0811, .082 §§ 29.0822]	180 days	N/A	7 hours (Includes recess and break hours)	*Start* No earlier than the fourth Monday in August (unless a waiver is granted)
Utah [UTAH ADMIN. CODE R277-419-1,4, 5]	180 days or 990 hours	Kindergarten ~ 450 hours Grade 1 ~ 810 hours Grades 2-12 ~ 990 hours	Kindergarten ~ 2 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 4 hours	District option
Vermont [VT. STAT. ANN. tit. 16, § 1071]	175 Days	N/A	Kindergarten ~ 2 hours/ day or 10 hours/week Grades 1-2 ~ 4 hours/ day or 20 hours/week (includes recess, excludes lunch) Grades 3-8 ~ 5.5 hours/ day (includes recess, excludes lunch) or 27.5 hours/week Grades 9-12 ~ 5.5 hours/ day (excludes recess and lunch) or 27.5 hours/ week[24]	Determined regionally
Wyoming [WYO. STAT. ANN. § 21-4-301; WYO. RULES CHAP. 22, SEC. 5]	175 Days	Kindergarten ~ 450 hours Elementary ~ 900 hours Middle/Jr. High ~ 1,050 hours Secondary ~ 1,100	N/A	District option
Virginia [VA. CODE ANN. §§ 22.1-79.1, 98; VA. ADMIN. CODE 20-131-150]	180 days	Kindergarten ~ 540 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 990 hours	Kindergarten ~ 3 hours Grades 1-12 ~ 5.5 hours (excludes recess and lunch)	District option, but: *Start* after Labor Day (unless waiver granted)

[24]Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices 2312.

State [citation]	Minimum Amount of Instructional Time/ Year[1] (by grade, if applicable)		Minimum time for any day to count as instructional day	School Start/Finish
	In Days	In Hours		
Washington [WASH. REV. CODE §§ 28A.150.220]	180 days	Kindergarten ~ 1,000 hours[25] Grades 1-9 ~ 1,000 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 1,080 hours[26]	N/A	District option
West Virginia [W. VA. CODE § 18-5-45(b)]	180 days	N/A	Kindergarten-4 ~ 5.25 hours Grades 5-8 ~ 5.5 hours Grades 9-12 ~ 5.75 hours[27]	District option
Wisconsin [WIS. STAT. § 121.02(1)(f)] [WIS.STAT. § 118.045]	N/A (Changed from minimum days to minimum hours in 2014)	Kindergarten ~ 437 hours Grades 1-6 ~ 1,050 hours Grades 7-12 ~ 1,137 hours (includes recess and passing time but not lunch)	N/A	*Start* No earlier than 9/1
TERRITORIES **Virgin Islands** [17 V.I. CODE § 61]	N/A	1,080 hours	N/A	*Start* No later than second Tuesday after second Monday in August Finish No later than 1st Friday in June

[25]To be statewide by 2017-18 school year. Currently transitioning from 450 hours to statewide full-day kindergarten.

[26]Starting in 2015-15 school year. Currently: Kindergarten ~ 450 hours; Grades 1-12 ~ 1000 hours.

Other ECS Resources on Instructional Time

For information on what cannot count toward official instructional time, please see the ECS StateNote titled What Cannot Count Toward Official Instructional Time?, or follow this link.

Notes

[1]Analysis of news articles January 2014 – November 2014.

[2]Michael Leachman and Chris Mai, "Most States Funding Schools Less Than Before the Recession," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, May 2014, available: http://www.cbpp.org/files/9-12-13sfp.pdf. Only 13 states are spending more, but all of those (save one) are spending less than 10 percent more, compared with 14 that are spending at least 10 percent less. These cuts are seen reflected in employment numbers: over 300,000 positions have been cut from public education at the local level since 2008, with only a slight rise since the bottom in 2012.

[3]National Association of State Budget Officers, *Fiscal Survey of the States*, 2014, (Washington: Author, 2014), p. 13, Table 11.

[4]Colorado also passed a major school financing measure in May 2013 that would have provided millions of new state dollars to support expanded learning time, but the provisions were not enacted after the measure was rejected by Colorado voters in November 2013.

[5]Samantha Stainburn, "N.Y. Awards Grants for Extended Learning Time to Nine Districts," *Education Week*, 14 June 2014.

[6]Stainburn, "Gov. Christie Pitches $5 Million Fund to Pilot Longer School Day and Year," Education Week 7 March 2014; Amanda Oglesby, "Longer School Days, School Year Abandoned in Reform Discussion," *Asbury Park Press*, 5 August 2014; Illinois State Board of Education, *Fiscal Year 2015 Proposed Budget*, February 2014; and Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Extended Learning Time Pilot Project Model, 17 December 2013. For New Jersey, see: http://www.app.com/story/news/education/homeandschool/2014/08/05/longer-school-days-school-year-abandoned-in-reform-discussion/13629593/

[7]Catherine Gewertz, "Fla. Pushes Longer Day, More Reading in Some Schools," *Education Week*, 22 January 2014.

[8]Del Stover, "School Board Success Story: Arizona," *American School Board Journal*, March 2013.

[9]Melissa Leu, "Arizona bill bolsters longer school year," *The Arizona Republic*, 7 February 2013.

[10]For a history of the New York school financing case, see Michael A. Rebell, "*CFE vs. State of New York*: Past, Present and Future," *NY State Bar Association Government, Law and Policy Journal*, Summer 2011, 13:1, pp. 24-30. For information on the New Jersey case, see "The History of *Abbot v. Burke*" from the Education Law Center, at: http://www.edlawcenter.org/cases/abbott-v-burke/abbott-history.html.

[11]Indeed, a recent study of high schools in California confirmed the claims that, compared to peers in middle-income high schools, students in high-poverty schools are subjected to more teacher absences and classroom interruptions, thus cutting into class time. Holly Yettick, "Poverty-related Challenges Sap Instructional Time in High Schools" *Education Week*, 7 April 2014.

[12]Katie Ash, "School Districts Embrace Second Generation of 'Innovation Zones'," *Education Week*, 18 February 2014.

[13]U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1999–2000 through 2011–12. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2013*. Also see "Number of U.S. Charter Schools Up 7 Percent, Report Shows," *U.S. News and World Report*, 3 November 2014.

[14]Currently, 42 states and the District of Columbia authorize (or allow the authorization of) charter schools. The eight states that do not have charter school laws are Alabama, Kentucky, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia.

[15]The most recent study to highlight the charter school effect is *Urban Charter School Study Report on 41 Regions 2015* (Stanford, CA: Center for Research in Education Outcomes at Stanford University, 2015). Also see, Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer, Jr, "Getting Beneath the Veil of Effective Schools: Evidence from New York City," NBER Working Paper, No. 17632, December 2011; and Caroline Hoxby and Sonali Murarka, "New York City Charter Schools: How Well are They Teaching Their Students?," *Education Next*, Summer 2008: pp. 54-61.

[16]Jessica Fuller, *Colorado Innovation Schools Act*, A report submitted to Gov. John Hickenlooper, House of Representatives Education Committee and Senate Education Committee, March 2013.

[17]Lauren Camera, "Duncan Looks to Tennessee's Turnaround School District as Model for Country," *Education Week*, 11 September 2014.

[18]For more on the Michigan EAA see, Nelson Smith, *Redefining the School District in Michigan* (Fordham Institute, 2014).

[19]Lyndsey Layton, "In New Orleans, major school district closes traditional public schools for good," *Washington Post*, 28 May 2014.

[20]For a helpful summary of the Recovery School District, see Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, "New Orleans goes all in on charter schools. Is it showing the way?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 March 2014.

[21]Harris M. Cooper, et al, "The Effects of Summer Vacation on Student Achievement Test Scores: A Meta-analytic and Narrative Review," *Review of Educational Research,* 66:2 (1996), pp. 227-268.

[22]Rebecca R. Skinner, "Year-Round Schools: In Brief " Congressional Research Service, Report R43588, June 2014. In truth, many schools that operate year-round not necessarily for the benefit of learning, but for space considerations. The student body is divided into four groups, with only three of the four at school at any one time, thus lessening the need to expand the physical structure of the school. In these cases, for any one group of students, the school calendar still features a long break of several weeks duration at some point in the year.

[23]Madeline Will, "Popularity Grows Anew for Year-Round Schooling," *Education Week*, 8 October 2014.

[24]Elizabeth Harris, "De Blasio Unveils New Plans for Troubled Schools in New York," *New York Times*, 3 November 2014.

[25]"Policy Statement: School Start Times for Adolescents," *Pediatrics*, 134:3, September 2014.

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[49]*Primary Sources: America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession* (New York: Scholastic, 2012), p. 132. Also of note, available data from international studies strongly suggests that the ratio of teaching hours to non-teaching time in school is much higher in the United States than in other high-performing countries like Finland and Korea, meaning that American teachers have less opportunity to work with each other to improve. [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators* (Paris: Author, 2011), Table D 4.1. Also see, Linda Darling Hammond, et al, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*, (Dallas, TX: National Staff Development Council, 2009).]

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[58]USED can also consult the NCTL publication, *Time Well Spent: Eight Powerful Practices of Successful Expanded-Time Schools* (2011) for more information on models of high-quality implementation of expanded time.

[59]States might even consider mandates for districts (or schools) meeting certain demographic or achievement thresholds to link funding specifically to providing more learning time for all students.

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National Center on Time & Learning

The National Center on Time & Learning is dedicated to expanding learning time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded education. Through research, public policy, and technical assistance, we support national, state, and local initiatives that add significantly more school time to help children meet the demands of the 21st century.

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