Building a Better School Day

How Massachusetts is Using Expanded Learning Time to Improve Achievement and Broaden Opportunities for Children

July 24, 2009
We are at a Critical Juncture in the Movement to Expand Learning Time

“We can no longer afford an academic calendar designed when America was a nation of farmers... That calendar may have once made sense, but today, it puts us at a competitive disadvantage.”
- President Barack Obama, March 9, 2009

- “Time” is now at the forefront of education reform dialogue

- Education leaders are highly focused on 4 core concerns - all 4 underscore the need for more learning time:
  - The persisting achievement gap
  - Trend toward the narrowing of the curriculum (arts, physical education, social studies and other important programs and subjects cut)
  - The need to enhance teacher quality
  - International competitiveness

“I think our school day is too short, our week is too short, our year is too short.”
- Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, January 2009 Senate Confirmation Hearing
Narrowing the Curriculum

• As schools work to meet the benchmarks established by NCLB, they have increased time for English language arts and math at the expense of other subjects.

• Time spent on science, social studies, art, music and PE has been cut by one-third since the start of NCLB.

• In today’s knowledge-based economy that values problem-solving, teamwork and communications, our students need more exposure, not less exposure, to these subjects.

Percentage of Time Spent in Various Subjects in Elementary Schools

![Diagram showing percentage of time spent in various subjects before and after NCLB.]

Source: Center on Education Policy, Feb. 2008
Teachers Identify Time as the Most Important Factor in Promoting Student Achievement

*Question*: What is the most important teaching condition for promoting student learning?

Note: The Massachusetts Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey: Creating Conditions Where Teachers Stay and Teachers Thrive was released on February 24, 2009 to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The MassTells is a survey of 40,028 teachers created by a coalition of stakeholder groups representing teachers, superintendents, community and business groups.
Inadequate Time to Complete Curriculum and Meet Students’ Needs

Fewer than four out of ten teachers feel they have adequate time to complete the curriculum and meet the needs of all their students.

Source: MassTells, 2009
Building a Better School Day:
The Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative

The Nation’s First State Policy Initiative To Redesign the School Schedule by Adding At Least 300 Hours For All Students In Participating Schools
MA Expanded Learning Time Initiative

What is it?

- A state policy initiative launched in 2005 with $500,000 in state funds to support school planning; currently **26 schools** and **13,500** students are participating ($17.5 million in state funding)

- **Partnership** between Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts 2020, with the support of Governor Patrick and the Legislature

- Schools, with district support, **volunteer** to redesign their schedules and add at least **300 more hours** for **ALL** students in the school; teacher agreements are **negotiated locally**

- Whole school **redesign** required for more effective use of time
MA Expanded Learning Time Initiative

What is it?

- Balanced approach to adding time aimed at improving academic outcomes and broadening opportunities for students through:
  - Core academics
  - Enrichment opportunities (often provided by community partners)
  - Teacher planning and professional development

- State funds $1,300 per pupil for implementing schools; school selection is competitive

- Schools are able to create partnerships with external organizations to provide some of the programming in the redesigned day

- Full-scale, multi-year evaluation to gauge impact and effectiveness
Massachusetts’ Expanded Learning Time Model

School-Level Design Principles

✓ **Significantly More School Time**: at least 300 more hours per year (e.g. 2 hrs/day).
✓ **All Students Participate**
✓ **Balanced Use of Expanded Time**: Redesign adds time for: (1) core academics; (2) enrichment; and (3) teacher planning and professional development.
✓ **Redesign Planning Process**: Small school redesign teams - including teachers, administrators, union representatives, school partners and parents – create data-driven redesign plans.
✓ **Partners to Expand Opportunities**: Schools encouraged to partner with community orgs, businesses, higher ed. institutions, art and cultural orgs, and health institutions to expand opportunities for students.

Policy-Level Design Principles

✓ **Voluntary School Participation**
✓ **Technical Assistance for Redesign and Implementation**
✓ **Public Financing**: Implementation funded with public money, ideally through a state policy framework, to ensure future sustainability and connections to the broader reform agenda.
✓ **Per Child Allocation**: Figure depends on local factors and the amount of added time (MA = $1,300/student.)
✓ **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**: Constant review of data to ensure continuous improvement and learning.
Expanded Learning Time Initiative: Results

After two years of implementation, what have we learned?

- Students have shown promising gains in achievement
  - Students across all Cohort 1 ELT schools achieved higher rates of proficiency compared to their historical performance in all three subject areas.
  - Students in middle grades (6th – 8th) performed especially well, with six of the seven ELT schools with middle grades scoring closer to state averages than in previous years in math and five of the seven in ELA.

- Parents and teachers highly satisfied
  - Parents see academic gains for their children
  - Teachers are able to enhance their teaching, and many believe that students are more engaged and demonstrating improved academic performance
ELT is Raising Achievement for Middle Grade Students

Students in ELT schools had higher performance gains than students statewide in those same grades

This graph tracks the changes in the gap between an ELT school’s performance for students in grades 6-8 and the state’s performance for these grades during the two years of ELT implementation. As measured by the state’s Composite Performance Index, six of the seven schools narrowed their gap with the state in math (green region), and five of the seven schools also narrowed the gap in English Language Arts (ELA). One school lagged slightly behind the state in math and ELA (red region).
How Teachers Perceive the Impact of Expanded Learning Time

Teachers at Expanded Learning Time schools believe they have sufficient time to complete the curriculum and meet the needs of all students compared to teachers in traditional schools across the state.

Percent of Teachers Agreeing

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Adequate time to complete the curriculum</th>
<th>Adequate time to meet the needs of all students</th>
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Source: MassTeLLS, 2009

(p<.001)

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More Than 150 Organizations Partner with ELT Schools to Broaden Opportunities for Students in Massachusetts
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- USED guidance encourages the use of ARRA funds for Expanded Learning Time Initiatives (April 24, 2009). ARRA sources of funding to launch ELT initiatives include:
  - School Improvement Grants
  - Local Innovation Fund
  - Race to the Top

- TIME Act introduced by Senator Kennedy, Representative Payne, and Representative Miller allows states to replicate the Massachusetts model
ELT Initiatives Support All Four Goals for ARRA Innovation

Expanded Learning Time helps to address the priority areas the Obama Administration has identified for ARRA:

- **Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments:** Additional school time can help students meet these higher standards and give schools the time necessary to implement the changes needed (e.g. add algebra to all 8th grade curriculums).

- **Establishing data systems and using data for improvement:** Once states and districts have quality data systems in place, administrators and teachers need more time to analyze and apply data to drive instructional changes.

- **Increasing teacher effectiveness:** Teachers identify “time” as the most important teaching condition for promoting students learning and believe the current school schedule is inadequate to complete the curriculum and meet their students’ needs.

- **Turning around the lowest-performing schools and improving results for all students:** The Expanded Learning Time redesign process helps to develop a new vision and schedule to promote school and student success—one focused on maximizing time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded, engaged educational experience.
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