

Issue in Brief: Increased Learning Time

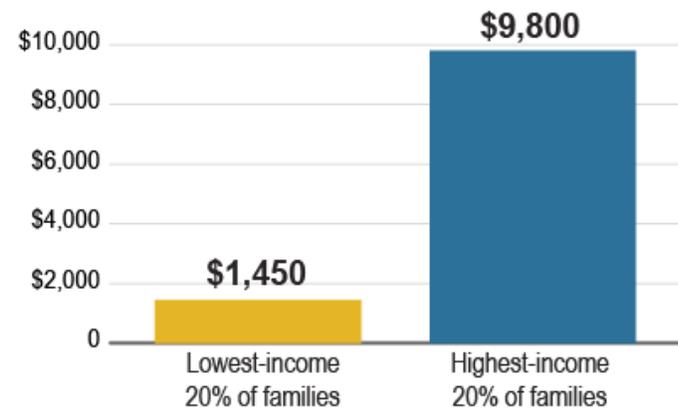
All young people deserve a variety of academic and enrichment opportunities such as personalized academic support, arts and music programs, and hands-on career relevant learning experiences. Unfortunately, communities in which low-income youth are raised often lack the resources to provide the wide range of supports that are available in more affluent communities. On average, the highest-income 20% of families spend close to seven times as much on enrichment activities for their kids than do the lowest-income 20%. Providing more academic support and enrichment opportunities through increased learning time is one way to help more students succeed academically and socially, strengthening the Commonwealth's workforce and economy.

There are multiple options for providing learning opportunities outside of the traditional school schedule. These options include longer school days, high quality after-school services, and summer learning programs. There are examples of these approaches effectively helping kids in Massachusetts and around the country. However, simply providing more time is not enough to get results. Some programs have been implemented in ways that have fallen short of the desired impact.

This fact sheet summarizes the Roadmap to Expanding Opportunity paper *Beyond the Bell: Options for Increased Learning Time*. The paper from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center examines the conditions for effectively using increased learning time to enhance academic and enrichment opportunities for youth, particularly those from low-income communities and English-learning students.

Higher-income families spend more on out-of-school enrichment

Annual enrichment spending (in 2014 dollars)



Source: Duncan and Murnane 2011

The Evidence: Quality Services Provide Social & Academic Benefits

Well-designed and implemented services that increase learning time have numerous benefits for youth. Academic benefits include improved grades, attendance, and test scores. Non-academic benefits include increased social skills, more relationships with caring adult mentors, improved behavior, and increased self-esteem.

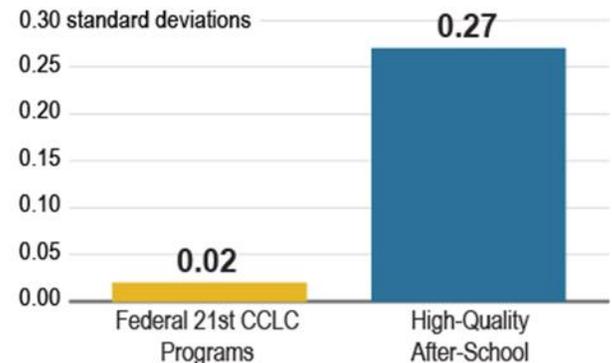
There is no single approach to increasing learning opportunities. Communities can employ various options and adapt them to best fit local conditions. Districts across the state including Cambridge, Fall River, Greenfield, Malden, Revere, and Worcester have engaged with stakeholders, including teachers unions, to create extended school days. Districts have taken creative approaches to staffing longer school days. This has included providing stipends or having staff start and end their day later. Others have engaged with partner organizations, such as businesses, universities, and direct service non-profits to implement their extended day. After-school programs, on the other hand, can deliver more time without placing additional responsibilities on teachers. Finally, communities can focus on school vacation times, interrupting the trend of students losing a month worth of academic skills over summer vacation, losses which are more severe for low-income students.

Only programs that have been implemented with quality have delivered the desired results. Increased learning time should be combined with other effective practices. These include adequate supervision, well trained and compensated staff, intentional, engaging enrichment elements, intentional planning, and partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations. High-quality after-school programs for example, were shown to have roughly 12 times the impact of lower quality options across two national studies. Lower quality programs are hampered by burnout among staff, lack of coordination with the regular school day, and student disengagement.

To provide a baseline for understanding the financing of increased learning time options, this research provides cost estimates of what it takes to provide the high-quality case studies with proven results. The actual costs of increased learning time will vary based on local conditions and the particular approach used. There are also various sources of federal, private, and philanthropic dollars that can support these efforts. Given the significant costs, policies to promote increased learning time should be carefully targeted to students with academic needs and those from communities with relatively limited capacity to provide broader learning opportunities.

High-quality after-school programs get better results

Annual math increases.
Middle and elementary school students.



Source: James-Burdumy 2005, Vandell 2007

Increased Learning Time Case Studies & Costs

Case Study	Elements	Outcomes	Per-Student Cost
EXTENDED DAY Orchard Gardens Pilot K-8 Boston Public Schools	Extended school day, 1-3 hours daily throughout the year. Academic supports, hands on apprenticeships with community partners, family outreach. Multiple partner organizations, new principal and teacher talent, increased teacher development & collaboration	Rapid increase in MCAS scores. Proficiency rates in ELA grew by 70%, Math by 126%. Closed half the gap with state average in MCAS math, one quarter in ELA.	\$1,653/student <i>(with inflation adjustment)</i>
AFTER-SCHOOL Los Angeles Better Educated Students for Tomorrow (LA's BEST)	5 day weekly after-school. Academic support, homework time, healthy snacks. Specialized programs with community partners and volunteers	Increased math scores on California state test. Improved attendance, study skills, and motivation. Reduced teen crime and dropout rates.	\$1,747/student <i>(with inflation and regional adjustment)</i> (K-6 th Grade, 3 hours/day)
SUMMER LEARNING Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL)	5 day weekly, full day summer program. 5-6 weeks of Math and ELA support, enrichment field trips, parent engagement.	Experimental study showing students achieved academic gains equal to 1 month in school, preventing summer learning loss. Parent support of academics at home increased.	\$1,440/student <i>(with inflation adjustment)</i> (K-8 th Grade, 5 weeks, 6 hours daily)

For the full report, "Beyond the Bell" and other research, visit the Roadmap to Expanding Opportunity website at:

ExpandingOpportunity.org