

Research Brief

Saturday School

Question: In what ways are Saturdays utilized in schools?

Summary of Findings:

Secretary of Education, Duncan, proclaimed to a group of teachers in Colorado that if students were to be more competitive with those from other countries, in particular, China and India, they needed to be in school six days a week for at least 11 months a year (Associated Press, 2009). Although longer school days, weeks and years are not currently the norm, many schools throughout the United States operate different forms of programs on Saturdays. The most common tend to be for enrichment/academic support, course credit/absentee make-up and discipline.

Enrichment/Academic Support

When exploring available Saturday courses, a myriad of them are offered by churches, colleges and private vendors, while very few by public schools. Those provided by churches tended to focus on specific religious tenets. It appeared that colleges mostly provided enrichment in the arts and humanities or the sciences, while private vendors offered courses in a wide variety of foreign languages and their cultures.

School programs tended to lean more toward academic support. One school reported offering a family learning program whose purpose is to help children and adults from war-torn countries develop literacy in English (ICS Saturday School, 2007). At another school, Saturday School is offered to help students, particularly African-Americans and Hispanics, close the achievement gap in the core academic classes while also developing study strategies and test-taking skills (O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center, n.d.). At another school, all students are required to attend Saturday School twice a month to prepare for college and beyond through courses in robotics, film, dance, etc. (KIPP, n.d.).

Course Credit/Absentee Make-Up

Some schools offer opportunities for students to receive tutoring and extra assistance in courses they have failed, are in danger of failing and/or for making up a specific number of class hours lost due to absences (Alexandria Public Schools, n.d.; Blacksburg High School, n.d.; Brooklyn Center High School, n.d.; O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center, n.d.). Each program has their own specific guidelines and rules varying from making up excused to non-excused absences, to the maximum amount of time that can be recovered or made up, to how a student is admitted to the Saturday School program.

Discipline

The most common use of Saturday School is for disciplinary purposes. According to Cotton, “Approximately one half of all classroom time is taken up with activities other than instruction and disciplinary problems are responsible for a significant portion of this lost instructional time” (2000). The purpose of Saturday School in this venue appears to be for students to be punished for not adhering to or following school and/or classroom rules. The often cited violations that appear to earn a student entrance to this program seems to be for tardies, truancies, not being prepared for class, smoking, defiance, forging signatures, plagiarism, stealing, and/or talking back to someone in authority. On average, Saturday School is usually held for four hours. The rules and expectations also appear to be consistent:

- be on time, if a student is late, they will not be admitted and will be reassigned to additional Saturday School time and/or suspension
- no headsets or electronic devices
- no sleeping
- must have school work to do the entire time
- follow the school’s dress code
- no socializing (Alexandria Public Schools, n.d.; Beaufort County School District, 2008; Gunn High School, n.d.; Holly Springs High School, n.d.; South Pasadena High School, n.d.; Wayzata High School, n.d.).

One high school reported that after a student had served two times in Saturday School, that fewer than half returned for a third time (Brown, n.d.). Friday School is sometimes used as an alternative to Saturday School because the students are already at school and are more likely to serve their

time without having to track them down (Beaufort County School District, 2008).

According to Cotton (2000), a successful Saturday school program has the following characteristics:

- all staff are dedicated to well-disciplined classrooms and school, so that all students are more able to learn
- expectations are clear, explicit, well-known, enforceable and enforced
- rules and procedures have been developed by faculty and students
- administration is highly visible and supportive
- teachers have the freedom to take care of the classroom issues and the administration takes care of the more serious violations
- punishment should fit the crime and needs to be viewed as being corrective

Online Resources:

Enrichment/Academic Support

- Associated Press. (2009, April 8). Ed. secretary wants more school. Retrieved online from http://www.teachermagazine.org/tm/articles/2009/04/08/arneduncancmoreschool_ap.html
This article reports on a speech given by Education Secretary Duncan in Denver, where he calls for a longer school day and year.
- George B. Thomas, Sr. Learning Academy, Rockville, Maryland. (n.d.) Mission statement. Retrieved online from <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/gbtla/>
This is strictly a Saturday School that works in conjunction with the Montgomery County School District in Maryland. Its purpose is help students close the achievement gap.
- Georgia State University. (n.d.) Saturday School for scholars and leaders. Retrieved online from <http://education.gsu.edu/saturdayschool/>
This program is offered to students in K-8 in the vicinity of Atlanta in the areas of math, science and applied and fine arts.

- ICS Saturday school, Atlanta, GA (2007). Saturday school. Retrieved online from <http://saturday-school.blogspot.com/>
This provides a description of a program that is offered to students and adults from war torn countries to help them gain requisite literacy in English.
- KIPP, Houston, TX. (n.d.). Saturday school. Retrieved online from http://www.kipphouston.org/kipp/Saturday_School1_EN.asp?SnID=2
A brief description of the school's mandatory Saturday School program is provided on this site.
- O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center, New Orleans, Louisiana. (n.d.) Retrieved online from <http://www.opwchargers.com/index.php?page=saturday-school-and-saturday-academy>
A very brief description of their mandatory exit exam prep class is provided on this site.
- University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA. (n.d.) Pre-college Saturday school. Retrieved online from <http://www.uarts.edu/k-12/precolss.html>
A description of a program offered for high school students at the University of Arts in Pennsylvania is provided in this piece.
- Wise Geek. (n.d.) What is Saturday school? Retrieved online from <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-saturday-school.htm>
Very brief descriptions of Saturday School for both scholastic development and disciplinary purposes are provided.

Course credit/Absentee make-up

- Alexandria Public Schools. (n.d.) Saturday school program. Retrieved online from <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/saturdayschool.pdf>
The guidelines for this voluntary disciplinary and academic assistance program for elementary and middle school students are provided.

- Blacksburg High School, Blacksburg, Virginia (n.d.) Saturday school/credit recovery. Retrieved online from <http://www.mcps.org/bhs/Sat-school.htm>
A concise description of this school's unique program for both discipline and the making up of class time missed is provided.
- Brooklyn Center High School, New York. (n.d.). Retrieved online from <http://www.brookcntr.k12.mn.us/bchs/saturdayschool>
A program for middle school students that are failing one or more core classes is described in this piece.
- Eastern Hills High School, Fort Worth, Texas. (2009). Saturday school. Retrieved online from <http://schools.fortworthisd.net/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=45398&PHPSESSID=1e5444fe8ad637e94350cb474b33eabf>
Guidelines for this school's program are listed here.
- O. Perry Walker College and Career Preparatory High School and Community Center, New Orleans, Louisiana. (n.d.) Retrieved online from <http://www.opwchargers.com/index.php?page=saturday-school-and-saturday-academy>
A brief description of their course credit recovery program is provided on this site.

Discipline

- Alexandria Public Schools. (n.d.) Saturday school program. Retrieved online from <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/saturdayschool.pdf>
The guidelines for this voluntary disciplinary and academic assistance program for elementary and middle school students are provided.
- Beaufort County School District, Beaufort, South Carolina. (2008). Friday School. Retrieved online from <http://web.beaufort.k12.sc.us/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=42554&PHPSESSID=728c82222259366de4889bd2f1e0c395>

A brief, yet detailed, description of this school district's Friday School program. This is in lieu of a Saturday School Program.

- Blacksburg High School, Blacksburg, Virginia (n.d.) Saturday school/credit recovery. Retrieved online from <http://www.mcps.org/bhs/Sat-school.htm>
A concise description of this school's unique program for both discipline and the making up of class time missed is provided.
- Brown, P. (n.d.) Saturday school program praised. Richmond County Daily Journal. Retrieved online from http://www.yourdailyjournal.com/pages/full_story?page_label=home&id=2277368-Saturday+School+program+praised&widget=push&article-Saturday%20School%20program%20praised%20=&instance=secondary_news_left_column&open=&
A brief report from the principal of a high school about their Saturday School program its results are given in this article.
- Cotton, K. (2000). Schoolwide and classroom discipline. NWREL. Retrieved online from <http://www.nwrel.org/archive/sirs/5/cu9.html>
A detailed review of research done on school-wide discipline practices in effective and ineffective schools is provided in this piece.
- Gunn High School, Palo Alto, CA. (n.d.). Saturday school information. Retrieved online from <http://gunn.pausd.org/~info/satschool/satschool.html>
A succinct description of this school's program is given.
- Holly Springs High School, Holly Springs, North Carolina. (n.d.) Saturday school. Retrieved online. This needs to be manually typed in <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=%22saturday+school+holly+springs+high+school%22&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>
This is a PowerPoint about the guidelines for this school's Saturday School program.

- South Pasadena High School. (n.d.) Saturday school rules. Retrieved online. This needs to be manually typed in and it will say Saturday School Rules
<http://www.google.com/search?q=%22Saturday+school%22&hl=en&client=safari&rls=en&start=50&sa=N>
This is a well-spelled out list of what a student could do to earn Saturday School, along with ramifications for not attending it.
- Wayzata High School, Minnesota. (n.d.) Saturday school detention. Retrieved online from
http://www.wayzata.k12.mn.us/whs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1066&Itemid=1960
This provides a description of the school's Saturday School program.
- Wise Geek. (n.d.) What is Saturday school? Retrieved online from
<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-saturday-school.htm>
Very brief descriptions of Saturday School for both scholastic development and disciplinary purposes are provided.

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