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By David A. Farbman, David J. Goldberg, and Tiffany D. Miller January 2014

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Introduction and summary

With the widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards, public education in the United States is poised to take a major step forward in readying the next generation of Americans for success in higher education and the workforce. Implementation of the standards, as currently planned in 45 states and the District of Columbia, also means that the vast majority of students will soon be held to the highest set of English language arts and math literacy expectations in U.S. history.[1] Many education reforms have had the potential to help propel students toward future success, but adoption of the Common Core State Standards is poised to be the most significant education reform in decades, because it is the nation's first attempt to provide a comprehensive roadmap for educators to help them bring all children to college and career readiness. Therefore, it is fundamentally important that its implementation is thoughtful and precise. Educators and students will need to implement a variety of strategies to meet the sharp rise in expectations for teaching and learning. Redesigning schools with significantly more time for both student learning and teacher professional development and collaboration is one significant way to make certain that Common Core implementation is successful.

Gaining a realistic understanding of students' performance levels, meeting students where they currently are, and raising them to new heights are the tasks at hand and will require more intensive and time-consuming teaching and learning than schools commonly provide now. Disadvantaged students—often low-income students, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities—were frequently held to a lower set of standards in the past and will need the greatest focus. They are also the students who benefit the most from well-designed schools that use significantly more and better learning time for both students and teachers. Americans' willingness to break out of the box of the 180-day, 6.5 hours-per-day school schedule can help with the transition to the Common Core State Standards, especially when targeting schools serving high concentrations of disadvantaged students.

Fortunately, federal and state policies that support efforts to increase the amount of time students spend in school are resulting in new resources—and freeing up formerly restricted resources—to fund the creation of more expanded-time schools. For instance, two major federal programs, School Improvement Grants, or SIG, and Race to the Top, both include increased learning time as integral to school turnaround efforts. The Obama administration also created more flexibility for high-quality, expanded learning time schools in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, flexibility waivers initiative as part of both Title I and Supplemental Educational Services, or SES, reform and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which had previously been restricted to only out-of-school time programming. At the state level, laws in New York, Florida, Illinois, and Arizona have dedicated funding to increase school time. In addition, laws focused on turning around low-performing schools in Connecticut, Colorado, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Washington state, and several other states grant districts and schools new authority to redesign their daily and yearly schedules around expanded school time and to shift budgets to support the operational and staffing changes such an effort involves.

These policies, the flexibility and autonomy to repurpose existing funding streams, and new sources of revenue have spurred a rapidly growing movement for expanded learning time schools at a moment when they can play a leading role in the successful implementation of the Common Core. Hundreds of schools—both traditional district and public charter schools, most of which serve significant populations of low-income children—have proven that by expanding learning time, they can broaden and deepen academic content, integrate innovative instructional methods into classrooms, individualize student supports, and furnish teachers with dedicated sessions for collaboration and instructional improvement. As schools now adapt their teaching and learning to the Common Core framework, these expanded-time schools are well-positioned to enable their students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to achieve at even higher levels.

The Center for American Progress and the National Center on Time & Learning believe that expanded learning time provides both teachers and students with one of the critical tools that they need to meet the demands of the Common Core State Standards. Of course, the additional learning time must be well planned and intentional. High-performing expanded-time schools give teachers more time for ongoing professional development and collaboration, and offer students more

time to reach the higher expectations for English language arts and math. We strongly encourage states, districts, and schools to consider the benefits of expanding the school day or year to support teachers and students. As such, we offer the following recommendations:

- National, state, and local education policymakers, educators, and philanthropic leaders should recognize and include the important issue of learning time as they plan strategies for successful Common Core implementation.

- States and districts should pass legislation and enact policies that are school-redesign friendly, empowering schools to lengthen and redesign the school day and year for transition to the Common Core.

- States, districts, and schools should use existing federal and state resources to fund high-quality expanded learning time school models.

- Districts and schools should increase the amount of time teachers have for collaboration and professional development during the school day and year and beyond as the Common Core transition takes place.

- States and districts should target expanded learning time to schools serving high concentrations of disadvantaged students.

- Schools should be intentional with schedule redesign plans to make certain that more time in school is used effectively to avoid simply doing "more of the same."

- National teacher and education reform organization should collect and share best practices and innovative models of teachers union collective bargaining agreements that enable expanded time in school.

As states transition to the Common Core, it is imperative that the implementation of these new standards include policies and supports that increase the amount of time teachers have for collaboration and professional development and the amount of time students spend in school learning the new standards. Meeting the demands associated with the Common Core will be a challenge, but high-quality expanded learning time is one of the most far-reaching implementation strategies and can enable students to successfully meet these higher expectations.

Disrupting the status quo: Transition to the Common Core will require significant teacher training time

The switch to the Common Core will be a much-needed but abrupt change to both the content and the methods of classroom instruction, and with it, has major implications for teacher time. To be ready for the new standards, curricula, and teaching methods, educators at all levels will need extensive training and support. Teachers know this and still overwhelmingly support the Common Core. According to a survey conducted by Scholastic, a publisher of educational materials, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 73 percent of teachers are enthusiastic about the implementation of the new standards; that's even knowing the changes in store, as 74 percent believe that the new standards will "require changes to teaching practice."[2]

Educators understand that they will need significantly more time during the school day for initial and ongoing professional development; more time to master new teaching techniques; more time to learn the content of the new standards; more time to develop and adapt to new curricula; and more time for data analysis, collaboration, and coaching.

Tisha Edwards, interim CEO of the Baltimore Public School District, is well aware of the need to provide more professional development time to train her teachers while transitioning to the new standards. "All across the country, teachers are struggling with how to implement the Common Core. They're saying, 'we need more time,'" notes Edwards.[3]

Well-designed expanded learning time schools are already providing teachers with the structured professional development, planning, and collaboration time that will be necessary to train and prepare them for the implementation of the Common Core. (see Orchard Gardens Pilot School text box on page 7)

High-quality expanded learning time schools

High-quality expanded learning time schools, or ELT schools, can use many different schedules, but they have key features in common. Expanded learning time schools:

- Add significantly more learning time for students, ideally reaching 300 hours more per school year than the typical 1,170-hour annual school schedule (180, 6.5-hour school days)[4]
- Use the additional learning time for both core academics and a well-rounded education, which includes engaging enrichment opportunities
- Provide significant additional time for teachers to plan, collaborate, and participate in professional development
- Use data to regularly assess student performance and create special blocks of time with small teacher-student ratios to support individual students' needs and strengths

ELT schools can add in this additional time by lengthening the school day or school year, or any combination of the two. Furthermore, many ELT schools add to their scheduling flexibility and ability to pull teachers out of classrooms for planning, collaboration, and training time by partnering with local universities, community organizations, or businesses that can provide qualified staff to lead enrichment classes, apprenticeships, or hands-on science labs.

For more detail on what high-performing ELT schools look like, see "Time Well Spent: Eight Powerful Practices of Successful, Expanded-Time Schools," published by the National Center on Time & Learning.

Preparing teachers for the transition to the Common Core takes time

The instructional shifts ushered in by the Common Core, including an emphasis on close reading, student-centered information gathering, and more complex math skills and problem-solving techniques, will necessitate a retraining of the teaching corps—an enormous undertaking. The International Center for Leadership in Education, whose mission is to provide rigorous and relevant learning for all students, notes, "The implications of these changes [in educational expectations] are nothing short of a retooling of American education. The new demands on students translate into new demands on teachers."[5]

As the time for widespread implementation of the new standards nears, states are rapidly developing materials and resources for teachers and principals to begin the transition to the Common Core.[6] The penetration of these resources, however, needs to reach more deeply into schools. The Center on Education Policy, for example, surveyed states focusing on their professional development efforts

to integrate the Common Core and found that the majority of states, 28 out of 40 responding states, are using a combination of state-level training, regional service agencies, and "train-the-trainers" programs for principals.[7]

Expanded learning time schools can ensure that these state-level resources make it into the classroom. Their additional time devoted to professional development, planning, and collaboration allows them to carefully train for and implement the Common Core.[8] For instance, in a study of 30 high-achieving, high-poverty schools with longer school days and years, more than a third reported scheduling 15 or more professional development and planning days, whereas the local schools in surrounding districts rarely exceeded five or six professional development and planning days.[9] As described in the text box below, many expanded-time schools are already using weekly staff meetings, for example, to focus on the implementation of Common Core.

Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School uses extra teacher time to align classroom instruction

From its founding in 2003, the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School, or OGPS, in Boston, Massachusetts, suffered from low student achievement and high staff turnover. In 2010, OGPS—where more than 7 in 10 students are low income—was declared chronically underperforming by the district and as a result received a federal School Improvement Grant, or SIG. That same year, the superintendent of the Boston schools appointed a new principal to OGPS, and by leveraging the SIG funding to expand the school day, the school began a remarkable turnaround, featuring growth rates that are among the highest in the state.

One of the most significant changes the school undertook was the inclusion of weekly, highly structured teacher collaboration meetings. The 100-minute sessions—a time when teachers plan lessons and share best practices—have become the central driver of improved instruction, and the forum in which the school's educators shifted their classrooms to incorporate Common Core standards during the 2012-13 school year. OGPS teachers readily acknowledge that the transition to the new standards has been challenging, but through collaboration and planning, the challenge is being met. As Andrew Bott, the school's principal, points out, "[the transition] would not have been possible without the extra time for teachers."

Inside the classroom, more teaching time is also critical, enabling the multilayered student learning that the Common Core is designed to foster. The school's double-block math classes, for example, have allowed teachers to better engage students with the content in greater depth using techniques such as solving multistep problems and finding alternate means to solve the same math problem, all while reinforcing basic skills. This multilayered approach to learning math makes real what the standards refer to as a "balanced curriculum."

The extra time allotted for this new way of instruction has already shown results, including particularly strong gains in the upper grades. OGPS seventh-graders for the first two years of the expanded schedule—2010-11 and 2011-12—gained faster in math achievement than all but four schools serving the seventh grade in the state. With the transition to Common Core, this accelerating student achievement has continued into the eighth grade, with growth rates at OGPS in the top 5 percent in the state for eighth-graders in 2013.

Source: Roy Chan, "Transforming Schools through Expanded Learning Time: Orchard Gardens K–8 Pilot School, Update 2013" (Boston: National Center on Time & Learning, 2013).

Ongoing implementation of Common Core will require more time for teachers and students

The purpose of the Common Core is to ensure permanent changes for student learning and teaching. Yet perhaps the most complex part of the Common Core is its implementation. After the shift to the new standards has been made, teachers will have new and ongoing responsibilities both inside the classroom with their students and outside the classroom with their peers to ensure that their students have real opportunities to meet the higher standards. All of these responsibilities will require the investment of more time. Students, too, will be expected to master significantly higher-level material and learn in new and more in-depth ways that will also require more time than they typically have now.

Outside the classroom: More time for ongoing training, collaboration, and data analysis

The scope of the change in curricula and expectations brought on by Common Core means teachers must continually be engaged in honing their craft. 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.*[10]

For professional development activities to be productive, they have to be prioritized and given consistent and uninterrupted blocks of time that are protected and separate from regular classroom instructional activities.

One of the most often mentioned structures for effectively using professional learning time is sometimes referred to as a "professional learning community," or PLC. Frequently organized to include teachers within a subject or grade, a PLC can be used to strategically focus on selected aspects of teaching and learning that will allow teachers to improve their practice and increase student learning. Some of the time spent in PLC meetings, for example, may be reserved for reviewing data—usually from formative assessments and other student work—so that teachers can better understand where students are strong and where they need additional support. Teachers also use PLCs to develop curriculum or lesson plans, learning from each other and sharing best practices to ensure that the new learning standards are incorporated into lessons in ways that more fully engage students. Finally, these sessions are a time for teachers to receive feedback from—and provide it to—peers to further improve instructional techniques.

Given the broad array of teacher collaboration activities and the need for sustained work among groups of teachers to effectively change teaching practice and student learning, the way that time is structured and bounded is essential to the success of PLCs making sure that they take hold and become strong collaborative opportunities. Indeed, it is not surprising that researchers have found that PLC sessions have proven to be a cornerstone of effective teaching and, in underperforming schools, a catalyst for improvement.[11] A recent study from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, determined that in schools with strong PLCs, students performed better in math than those in schools without active PLCs.[12] In the context of Common Core implementation, PLCs are all the more important.

The PLC, however, is just one structure for instructional improvement and teacher collaboration. Teachers might meet in pairs, or with an instructional coach, to consider student work and how to retool their approaches to introducing texts or revising math lessons. The need is particularly acute in the early grades in math. New research from the Center for the Study of Curriculum and the Education Policy Center at Michigan State University identified the relatively poor training in mathematics for elementary and middle school teachers in the United States compared to international peers. Study authors called the situation "especially disconcerting," considering that teachers would now be expected to

teach to the more demanding Common Core standards.[13] Participating in collaborative activities, including PLCs, to address these issues will require a substantial amount of teachers' time. In a recent *Education Week* survey of teachers, 71 percent indicated that they would need more collaborative planning time to be adequately prepared to shift to the Common Core standards.[14] Yet the typical amount of time that teachers have in the school day and across the school year to prepare for classes and strengthen their instruction is not enough to get the job done. Scholastic found that teachers, on average, spend only about 15 minutes per day collaborating with colleagues.[15]

In schools with substantially longer days and/or years, however, much more time for collaboration and professional development tends to be built into the school day. The National Center on Time & Learning report "Time Well Spent," a descriptive analysis of 30 high-performing, high-poverty, expanded-time schools, reported that these schools included an average of 85 minutes during the school day for collaboration and individual planning.[16] Additionally, 23 of the 30 schools devote three additional hours per week when students are not in school to a combination of collaboration sessions and professional development.[17]

In Massachusetts, the Expanded Learning Time initiative schools—a group of high-poverty district schools that have converted to a school year of at least 300 additional hours more than the standard 1,170-hour school year—also have significantly more time for teacher collaboration and planning than their traditional district counterparts. Teachers in the Expanded Learning Time initiative schools report significantly higher rates of satisfaction with their collaborative planning time as compared to similar schools that had no expanded time.[18]

Teachers at one of the schools, Matthew J. Kuss Middle School in Fall River, have three 45-minute collaboration meetings each week—two meetings with their peers who teach the same students and one meeting with peers who teach the same content area. These sessions are used primarily for analyzing assessment data to identify individual student needs, to examine student work, and to implement common instructional strategies that support the schoolwide focus on improving writing across subjects.[19] It is no wonder that Kuss Middle School has progressed from a school deemed chronically underperforming and one ultimately taken over by the state in 2005, to a Level 1 school—Massachusetts's top performance category—by 2013 after implementing high-quality expanded learning time as its framework for delivering a range of effective reform practices.[20]

These examples of how high-performing expanded-time schools are using collaborative planning time to improve instruction are already helping schools prepare for the Common Core. In a survey of more than 700 teachers in four states that added 300 hours as part of a comprehensive redesign of their school schedules in 2013, 74 percent predicted that having more time would significantly improve the ability of teachers to successfully address the Common Core and students' ability to achieve the standards.[21]

Inside the classroom: More time for teaching and learning

The impact of the Common Core on classrooms—for both teachers and students—will be significant in many ways, not least of which is how time is used and the quantity of time needed to allow learning to flourish. How teachers introduce content, how students interact with that content, and the expectations for student mastery of that content will be, respectively, more varied, more interactive, and higher level than what takes place now in most public schools. Replacing lectures with interactive learning between teachers and students, especially learning to a richer and higher level, will require more classroom time, as teachers will have to personalize their attention to individual and small groups of students. As one teacher in Chicago said, "it 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."[22]

High-quality expanded-time schools are already using the opportunities inherent in longer classes to build in individualized instruction, critical thinking, and problem solving, showing how the instructional conditions required by the Common Core are already in place. These expanded-time schools also use their extra collaboration and data-analysis time to identify students for smaller groups based on their needs, interests, and abilities, and pair them with the teachers best able to address their weaknesses and expand on their strengths.

With significantly more learning time, personalized curricula, and individualized instruction, high-quality expanded learning time schools are having their most significant impact on disadvantaged students, too many of whom start school several years behind their more affluent peers and are never given a real opportunity to catch up.[23] The advantage inherent to expanded learning time will be particularly important when the Common Core is implemented and there is a likely significant drop in proficiency rates across the board. (see "The impact of the Common Core on proficiency rates" text box on page 22)

Reaching the higher expectations for literacy and math will take more time

In a guide written for school leaders, the policy group Achieve, considering the Common Core's English language arts standards, concluded: "Teachers will likely need more instructional time in order to teach more rigorous, higher-level content in more depth and to integrate literacy skills into their lessons."[24] A key reason why Achieve reached this conclusion is that the realignment of instruction involves the introduction—especially in earlier grades—of more challenging texts, along with more informational (non-fiction) readings. Unlike most states' current standards that stress merely identification of key ideas, under the Common Core standards, students will be expected to consistently demonstrate their comprehension of text by citing evidence and offering analysis.[25]

Developing students' ability to scrutinize text will, among other things, entail the implementation of a teaching technique known as "close reading," a time-consuming process that the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC—one of the two consortia that are developing assessments aligned to the Common Core—describes as follows:

> *… engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention on the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences; the order in which sentences unfold; and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole.*[26]

In addition to deeper reading, Common Core literacy standards demand more of students in the area of writing, adding a layer of critical thinking to students' writing tasks. As one instructional expert from Illinois explains, currently in most states, "students are usually asked to write about pretty much the knowledge in their head. … 'Tell us about some experience you have had or your favorite place.' [In Common Core tasks], they actually have to summarize from something they

"We're hearing from teachers all across the country that they need more time in class to have students achieve to the new expectations."

have read and pull it all together." Indeed, the previous, somewhat artificial separation of reading and writing instruction will disappear. Students will no longer be handed information from their teachers, but will need to investigate and read sources on their own and be expected to do their own analysis and draw their own conclusions in both their written and oral presentation of knowledge. This is a method that cannot be rushed.[27]

In mathematics, Common Core will bring a shift in focus from briefly and superficially covering many topics to studying fewer topics in much greater depth. The result is, as described by an Educational Testing Service review: "students will still learn the computational skills at the heart of past instruction, but they will be required to demonstrate deeper levels of mastery of the underlying mathematics and to solve application problems."[28] This approach leads to what is called "a balanced curriculum" that equally emphasizes the development of fluency, deep conceptual understanding, and applied problem solving. Curriculum designers began by using the current norms of practice and allotting 60 minutes per day for math, but practitioners are finding that this amount of time is simply not sufficient. As Nell McAnelly, Common Core's project director for the development of Eureka Math, part of the New York State Department of Education's EngageNY project, and the co-director of the Gordon A. Cain Center for STEM Literacy at Louisiana State University, explains:

> *Our curriculum is designed for classes where students and teachers are already well-versed in the underlying mathematics that informs each lesson. But when it is used in classrooms that have not been introduced to the Common Core State Standards, the hill is much steeper to climb. We're hearing from teachers all across the country that they need more time in class to have students achieve to the new expectations.*

Some topics, such as fractions, will be introduced to students at much earlier ages, and as they grow older, they will be expected to draw upon their accumulated knowledge to solve increasingly complex problems.[29] 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 but fosters still deeper learning.

Math classes as well as English language arts will emphasize intra-student communication and collaboration, so that students are better prepared for what they will encounter in a higher education setting and in the workforce. One expert explains, "What we're learning from higher education institutions is that the abilities to collaborate, to present one's thinking, and to substantiate one's reasoning are fundamental skills that they don't see."[30] Having regular opportunities for student collaboration necessitates many group projects and the continuous integration of a technique known as "turn and talk," where students discuss the topic at hand with each other and seek to gain insights from their peers. This method is significantly more time intensive but develops crucial 21st-century skills that cannot be replicated in the quicker but far more passive teacher-lecture method.

Nancy Gannon, executive director of the Office for Academic Quality for the New York City Department of Education, when discussing implementation of the new Common Core-aligned curriculum in the classroom, agrees. "The biggest problem we're having is there's not enough time in the day."[31]

"The biggest problem we're having is there's not enough time in the day."

Rochester Public Schools sets two goals: Common Core implementation and expanding learning time

In 2012, Rochester, New York's public schools, with new district leadership and an urgent need to improve their schools, embarked on an ambitious dual agenda—implementing the Common Core State Standards and expanding learning time in a targeted group of schools. The Rochester City School District, or RCSD—which has 32,000 students, 88 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunch—has become the first district in New York to participate in the TIME Collaborative, an initiative of the National Center on Time & Learning with initial funding from the Ford Foundation, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.[32] The TIME Collaborative is focused on helping traditional district schools add substantial time to the school day and year, while redesigning their educational program to improve student achievement and offer students an engaging, well-rounded education.

The need for more learning time became apparent as a district team developed a large number of Common Core-aligned "curriculum modules," which would be sequential and call upon teachers to implement new instructional methods. In the

course of developing these modules, the team calculated how long each module should take to teach and then plotted out how they would take place across the entire school year, referring to these time and content designations as "instructional diets." (These diets required, among other things, that all schools serving grades K–8 provide at least 80 minutes of mathematics instruction each day, an increase of 20 minutes from the prior norm.) District leaders soon understood that installing Common Core-aligned curricula in the schools meant that there may not be sufficient time to enable all students to achieve mastery of the new standards and for teachers to adequately prepare for instruction.

Rochester's five TIME Collaborative schools will be provided more time because, as Anita Murphy, the deputy superintendent for administration, states, "When children come to school already starting behind, it takes time to catch up and only then can we expect them to get ahead."[33] The TIME Collaborative schools realize that vision by building in daily academic support periods to provide students individualized instruction in both ELA and math—two days of each per week. These dedicated periods—usually one hour each for math and literacy—allow teachers to be methodical in how they target their interventions, responding to the specific learning needs of each student. In turn, having standalone support periods then allows teachers to maintain the integrity of the curriculum within core academic classes—120 minutes for ELA and 80 minutes for math each day—ensuring that more advanced students and struggling students all have the opportunity to learn in the larger group setting.[34] Finally, teachers in the Rochester expanded-time schools have 80 minutes every day for collaboration, when they can share lesson plans, analyze outcomes data, and consider together how to address student learning needs.

Recognizing the complexity of educating a school full of at-risk students, T'Hani Pantoja, principal of one of the K–8 schools that added 300 hours, notes:

> *I don't know how we'd do what we are without more time. We urgently need the longer school day so that we can learn new curriculum emphasizing the Common Core Standards and provide additional opportunities to address students' individual learning needs during our intervention block. The longer school day has also provided critical time for our teachers to collaborate around student data and to work strategically to align practices and lessons with the expectations of the Common Core Standards.*[35]

Expanded learning time schools are leading the way

Expanded learning time schools are delivering the instructional time that teachers and students need for this new, deeper, and more varied learning. A survey of teachers in the 19 Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time initiative schools revealed that 85 percent believe that they have sufficient opportunities with their students to reach learning goals.[36] Specifically, these ELT teachers report the following advantages of having more time to teach:

- Covering more material and examining topics in greater depth
- Completing, reinforcing, and extending lessons
- Connecting concepts occurring in different classes
- Setting context and repeating content, if necessary
- Answering students' questions
- Discussing and reflecting on lessons[37]

High-quality expanded-time schools are already using opportunities inherent in longer classes to build in individualized instruction, critical thinking, and problem solving, showing how the instructional conditions required by the Common Core are already in place. These schools also use their extra collaboration and data-analysis time to identify students for additional support and more intensive individualized instruction.

In addition to having longer classes, which allow teachers to incorporate many of the more time-intensive teaching methods that the Common Core will require, many expanded-time schools also further personalize curricula by creating targeted classes based on students' needs and interests. At Edwards Middle School in Boston, student data are used to create what are termed "Academic Leagues," where small groups of students are paired with the teachers best suited to meet their specific needs. Teachers closely monitor students' progress through frequent assessments and provide individualized attention to students in areas where they need the most help. As students show academic progress,

their Academic League placement is adjusted accordingly.[38] This same system has now been implemented at other Boston schools that have the benefit of a longer day. School leaders note that these extra classes would be missing from the program without an expanded school day.

Closing the achievement and enrichment gaps for at-risk students

For students most at risk of struggling academically—often students from low-income families, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities—having more time in productive learning environments is essential. In particular, analysis from the Center for American Progress found that expanded learning time was a particularly successful strategy for effectively serving English language learners and low-income students.[39]

The enrichment gap—the gap between low- and high-income students regarding access to high-quality enrichment activities—can also be narrowed through enrollment in expanded-time schools. With more time in school, students have access to academic enrichment, hands-on projects, music lessons, art, community service, and sports. For example, a recent report from the National Center on Time & Learning, "Advancing Arts Education through an Expanded School Day: Lessons From Five Schools," highlighted lessons from schools that did not have to make the choice between using time for tested academic subjects or the arts.[40] These schools lengthened the school day and held firm that art classes were a core component of their comprehensive educational program. To close the access to enrichment gap, some schools choose to partner with community organizations to provide students with an array of options for meaningful activities. Indeed, the role of community partners in ELT schools can be integral to their success.[41]

High-quality expanded-time schools can also be a powerful antidote to persistent achievement gaps between students. Charter schools in Boston offer a compelling example. As a group, these schools, whose combined student body is 74 percent low income, 90 percent students of color, and roughly 10 percent special education, have been recognized by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, or CREDO, as among the most successful in the country at advancing student learning. "The advantage in learning in Boston charter schools equates to more than twelve months of additional learning in reading and thirteen months more progress in math *per school year*," CREDO analysts wrote. [42]

A separate study, conducted by the American Institutes for Research, sheds more light on how those gains were achieved. Highlighting the significantly longer school schedule at the Boston charter schools, the authors suggest that more time has major implications for how schools are able to build in sufficient opportunities for core instruction, academic support periods, and teacher development and collaboration, all of which are key for improving student outcomes.[43] In fact, on average, Boston charter students attend the equivalent of an extra 62 traditional-schedule days per year more than their peers in traditional district schools.[44]

From an equity perspective, one of the strengths of Common Core is that each and every student will now be held to the same high expectations for learning and proficiency. One elementary teacher was candid about the change, explaining that before Common Core, she was inclined to push only her advanced students to practice critical thinking, but now, "we have everyone thinking at a higher level. It demands everyone do it, from our lowest to the highest (students)."[45]

Students will be held to the same standards, but they will not be starting from the same place. The gaps between students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students from advantaged families are real and stark. To underscore the point: Fourth-grade scores on the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, often referred to as "the nation's report card," showed gaps between the proportion of low-income children who reached the level of proficient relative to their peers. The proficiency rates for fourth-grade students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch trailed students not eligible by 31 percentage points in reading and 34 percentage points in math. In eighth grade, low-income students lagged by 28 percentage points in reading and 29 percentage points in math.

As the Common Core becomes the standard to which all students are held, gaps between at-risk and non-at-risk students, of course, will still be present. The danger is that without targeted attention and resources, the Common Core's higher and more rigorous standards at every grade level will be unattainable for students who start out behind their peers, only serving to accelerate the achievement gap. A report from the Regional Equity Assistance Centers, an organization funded by the Department of Education, argues:

"…if the Common Core are implemented without adequate supports for all students, and for those serving them, the inequities long inherent in American education will persist and deepen, with greater numbers of our most vulnerable students pushed into failure."

Important as it is to provide a more rigorous education, greater rigor alone does nothing to address the underlying causes of our long standing achievement gaps. In fact, because the new standards demand more of students and teachers alike, if the Common Core are implemented without adequate supports for all students, and for those serving them, the inequities long inherent in American education will persist and deepen, with greater numbers of our most vulnerable students pushed into failure.[46]

The impact of the Common Core on proficiency rates

There is little doubt that achieving within the Common Core framework will be an enormous challenge for students. Sue Gendron, senior fellow at the International Center for Leadership in Education, puts the matter concretely: "The standards are, in many cases, one to two years higher than what is currently expected at grade levels."[47]

Evidence of the Common Core's higher expectations and the gap between low-income and more affluent students can be found in the early adopting states. New York, for example, experienced an abrupt change in proficiency rates when it introduced its new assessments in 2013, with a drop from 55 percent to 31 percent in reading and 65 percent to 31 percent in math. The percentages deemed proficient were even lower for economically disadvantaged students, with only about one in five low-income students able to meet the higher standard in math or English language arts, compared to almost half of non-poor students meeting the higher standards.[48] Kentucky experienced similar fall-off with proficiency rates dropping by one-third in both reading and math when the Common Core-aligned tests were introduced in the spring of 2012, with especially sharp declines in elementary grades.[49] Where the proportion of students deemed proficient in 2011 ranged from 65 percent to 75 percent, depending on the subject and grade, the proficiency rates in 2012 were 45 percent to 47 percent in reading and around 40 percent in math. As was the case in New York, economically disadvantaged students fared even worse with only about one in three scoring proficient, depending on the subject and grade, compared to about 60 percent of non-poor students scoring proficient—a gap of roughly 30 percentage points.[50]

New York and Kentucky represent the leading edge, but it is clear that they will not be alone. Almost all states already have some experience administering tests that are more rigorous than their current state proficiency assessments because they take

part in the NAEP assessment. Proficiency on the NAEP test is considered to be similar to the level of difficulty of Common Core-aligned assessments. Tables 1 and 2 detail the differential between state proficiency rates and proficiency on NAEP in 2013, giving a very clear indication that almost all states will experience some version of the same proficiency shock that Kentucky and New York have experienced.

Massachusetts, however, provides an example of how to buck this trend. As reflected in Tables 1 and 2, its current state standards are exceptionally high, widely considered to be the most rigorous in the nation. The state is also home to 132 schools that use expanded-time schedules. Being measured on state standards that are fairly close to NAEP—our best proxy so far for the Common Core standards—the state's district and charter expanded-time schools are delivering far higher student achievement and growth rates than their peers with traditional schedules. Specifically, in 2013, students who attend a majority low-income expanded-time school in Massachusetts were twice as likely to be in a school that was deemed "high-growth" in math and even more than twice as likely to be in a school that was "high-growth" in English language arts than if they were attending a traditional majority low-income school in the state.[51]

More time in school is a vital means to build in the supports that narrow achievement gaps. A meta-analysis of the effects of expanded time on student outcomes concluded that adding time was, more often than not, associated with improved student outcomes. The analysis noted even stronger effects for schools serving large populations of at-risk students.[52] As some scholars have argued, schools have the potential to "equalize" achievement among students from different socioeconomic classes, provided they have enough time with disadvantaged students to do so.[53]

Conclusion and recommendations: Turning to a proven solution of more time for more learning

This country is embarking on the most substantial overhaul of education standards in its history. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core standards in both math and English language arts, with an additional state, Minnesota, adopting only the English standards, and most are expected to implement the standards on schedule by the 2014-15 school year. The Common Core will require significant changes to the way teachers teach and will demand more of our students to prepare them for college and careers. The need for practical, proven solutions to smoothly and successfully implement the Common Core is immediate, and it is particularly acute in schools serving high concentrations of disadvantaged students.

By providing more time for teacher collaboration and more time for students to grasp difficult content, high-quality expanded learning time schools are already succeeding in the early stages of implementing the Common Core. These schools are using the extra time to prepare teachers for the transition to the new standards and curricula and are devoting their additional class time to richer instruction and deeper, more personalized learning—exactly the kind of learning that the standards are designed to deliver.

The potential wide-ranging effects of expanded time on schools—from increasing time on task for individual students, to enabling a much broader and deeper set of learning activities in classrooms, to facilitating the development of effective professional learning communities among teachers—make it clear why a well-designed ELT school is so well-positioned to successfully implement the Common Core. As states, local school districts, and schools confront Common Core implementation and consider options for moving forward, we strongly encourage them to consider the benefits of expanding the school day or year to support teachers and students. As such, we offer the following recommendations:

- **National, state, and local education policymakers, educators, and philanthropic leaders should recognize and include the important issue of learning time as they plan strategies for successful Common Core implementation.** The implementation of the Common Core aligned curriculum and teacher professional development will be greatly enhanced if more time is available for both teachers and students to master the more complex content.

- **States and districts should pass legislation and enact policies that are school-redesign friendly, empowering schools to lengthen and redesign the school day and year for transition to the Common Core.** Increasing the amount of time students spend in school on learning activities and the amount of time teachers have for professional development and collaboration is critical as the new standards take hold. Giving school principals the flexibility to set their own schedule not only encourages school-level decision-making but can also encourage innovative approaches to Common Core implementation.

- **States, districts, and schools should use existing federal and state resources to fund high-quality expanded learning time school models.** In a time of tight budgets, increasing funding to support expanded learning time is possible, but using existing funding will enable more schools to benefit from the reform. School Improvement Grants have already required increased learning time and now through the Department of Education's ESEA flexibility-waiver authority, funding set aside for a small number of students to receive tutoring through the Supplemental Educational Services, or SES, program can be used for whole-school expanded learning time, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers waiver also allows in-school expanded learning time as an option with those program funds. Used effectively for well-designed, high-quality expanded learning time schools, this amounts to an unprecedented opportunity to leverage different federal and state funding sources to expand the learning day.

- **Districts and schools should increase the amount of time teachers have for collaboration and professional development during the school day and year and beyond as the Common Core transition takes place.** As noted in this report, 71 percent of teachers indicated that they would need more collaborative planning time to be adequately prepared to implement the Common Core. It is clear that teachers need more time for professional development and collaboration, especially during this critical Common Core transition period. In addition, federal

and state professional development funding should be flexible enough to allow expanded-time schools to use funds for embedded professional development and collaboration time during the school day.

- **States and districts should target expanded learning time to schools serving high concentrations of disadvantaged students.** Disadvantaged students—often low income, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities—will need even more support to reach the Common Core's higher expectations for proficiency. Well-designed schools that use significantly more and better time for students and teachers will have a greater capacity to provide the additional support required. Consequently, officials should target extra time to schools and districts with high concentrations of these students as a priority.

- **Schools should be intentional with schedule redesign plans to make certain that more time in school is used effectively to avoid simply doing "more of the same."** Research has documented the best practices of high-performing expanded-time schools. These schools focus on adding a significant amount of time, individualized student academic supports, structured teacher collaboration time, and having only a few schoolwide instructional priorities. The concept of expanded learning requires the complete redesign of a school's educational program in a way that combines academics with enrichment for a well-rounded student experience and at the same time supports teachers by giving them more time for planning, coaching, and professional development. Simply tacking on more time at the end of the day, rather than taking a comprehensive approach to implementation, will yield few, if any, of the benefits that expanded learning time can deliver to students and teachers as they transition to the Common Core.

- **National teacher and education reform organizations should collect and share best practices and innovative models of teachers union collective bargaining agreements that enable expanded time in school.** A Center for American Progress report on union and district partnerships to expand learning time found that the most common and successful approaches to adapting collective bargaining agreements included the following: side letter agreements; a third-party organization to help with negotiating the terms; and either compensating teachers for additional hours or staggering teacher schedules at little additional cost.[54]

For more recommendations on effective expanded learning time policies and implementation, see the National Center on Time & Learning's report, "Learning Time in America: Trends to Reform the American School Calendar, Spring 2013 Update," pages 11–13.

The United States is making great strides toward holding all students, regardless of background, to the same high standards. With this significant change, however, also comes substantial challenges—the challenges teachers face learning the new standards and changing instructional practices, and the challenges students will encounter in mastering the content and skills delineated in Common Core.

While there are many tools and supports to help teachers and students during this transition, one of the most basic—having sufficient time for teaching and learning—is often overlooked. For most students and teachers, especially those in schools with high proportions of poor children, the standard calendar is simply not enough to meet the goals set out in the Common Core. In contrast, expanded-time schools are designed to meet these challenges and have made great progress transitioning to the Common Core.

TABLE 1

Overall rates of proficiency on state assessments vs. proficiency on NAEP

Grade 4, math and reading (2013)

	Reading			Math		
	Percent meeting state proficiency standard	Percent at or above NAEP proficient level	Difference	Percent meeting state proficiency standard	Percent at or above NAEP proficient level	Difference
Alabama*	88	31	57	86	30	56
Alaska	75	27	48	75	37	38
Arizona	77	28	49	64	40	24
Arkansas*	85	32	53	82	39	43
California	65	27	38	72	33	39
Colorado	68	41	27	72	50	22
Connecticut	78	43	35	84	45	39
Delaware	74	38	36	73	41	32
Florida	60	39	21	61	41	20
Georgia	93	34	59	84	39	45
Hawaii*	73	30	43	65	46	19
Idaho	90	33	57	87	40	47
Illinois	59	34	25	60	39	21
Indiana	84	38	46	75	52	23
Iowa	75	38	37	78	48	30
Kansas*	87	38	49	87	48	39
Kentucky	49	36	13	44	41	3
Louisiana	77	23	54	71	26	45
Maine*	69	37	32	66	47	19
Maryland	88	45	43	89	47	42
Massachusetts	53	47	6	52	58	-6
Michigan	68	31	37	46	37	9
Minnesota	54	41	13	71	59	12
Mississippi	59	21	38	69	26	43
Missouri	54	35	19	51	39	12
Montana	82	35	47	67	45	22
Nebraska	79	37	42	73	45	28
Nevada	71	27	44	74	34	40
New Hampshire	78	45	33	77	59	18
New Jersey*	59	42	17	77	49	28
New Mexico*	47	21	26	45	31	14
New York	30	37	-7	36	40	-4
North Carolina	44	35	9	48	45	2
North Dakota	69	34	35	80	48	32
Ohio	88	37	51	78	48	30
Oklahoma*	63	30	33	73	36	37
Oregon	73	33	40	64	40	24
Pennsylvania*	72	40	32	83	44	39
Rhode Island	69	38	31	65	42	23
South Carolina	79	28	51	80	35	45
South Dakota	75	32	43	73	40	33
Tennessee	48	34	14	49	40	9
Texas	72	28	44	68	41	27
Utah	78	37	41	79	44	35
Vermont*	70	42	28	68	52	16
Virginia	70	43	27	74	47	27
Washington	73	40	33	63	48	15
West Virginia	45	27	18	47	35	12
Wisconsin*	80	35	45	79	47	32
Wyoming	78	37	41	81	48	33
National		**35**	**35**		**42**	**27**

* State test data reported from 2012

TABLE 2

Overall rates of proficiency on state assessments vs. proficiency on NAEP

Grade 8, math and reading (2013)

	Reading			Math		
	Percent meeting state proficiency standard	Percent at or above NAEP proficient level	Difference	Percent meeting state proficiency standard	Percent at or above NAEP proficient level	Difference
Alabama*	80	25	55	79	20	59
Alaska	82	31	51	66	33	33
Arizona	72	28	44	58	31	27
Arkansas*	80	30	50	69	28	41
California**	57	29	28	50	28	22
Colorado	67	40	27	51	42	9
Connecticut	86	45	41	86	37	49
Delaware	74	33	41	71	33	38
Florida	56	33	23	51	31	20
Georgia	97	32	65	83	29	54
Hawaii*	73	28	45	61	32	29
Idaho	93	38	55	80	36	44
Illinois	60	36	24	59	36	23
Indiana	70	35	35	81	38	43
Iowa	65	37	28	73	36	37
Kansas*	85	36	49	77	40	37
Kentucky	52	38	14	45	30	15
Louisiana	69	24	45	66	21	45
Maine*	76	38	38	61	40	21
Maryland	81	42	39	67	37	30
Massachusetts	78	48	30	55	55	0
Michigan	66	33	33	35	30	5
Minnesota	54	41	13	57	47	10
Mississippi	55	20	35	73	21	52
Missouri	55	36	19	41	33	8
Montana	83	40	43	63	40	23
Nebraska	78	37	41	66	36	30
Nevada	50	30	20	39	28	11
New Hampshire	82	44	38	68	47	21
New Jersey*	82	46	36	72	49	23
New Mexico*	54	22	32	40	23	17
New York	34	35	-1	27	32	-5
North Carolina	41	33	8	34	36	-2
North Dakota	74	34	40	72	41	31
Ohio	86	39	47	77	40	37
Oklahoma*	79	29	50	68	25	43
Oregon	67	37	30	63	34	29
Pennsylvania*	80	42	38	76	42	34
Rhode Island	77	36	41	58	36	22
South Carolina	67	29	38	70	31	39
South Dakota	73	36	37	74	38	36
Tennessee	47	33	14	48	28	20
Texas	91	31	60	89	38	51
Utah	90	39	51	74	36	38
Vermont*	80	45	35	64	47	17
Virginia	71	36	35	61	38	23
Washington	66	42	24	53	42	11
West Virginia	48	25	23	42	24	18
Wisconsin*	83	36	47	79	40	39
Wyoming	76	38	38	68	38	30
National		**36**	**36**		**36**	**28**

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation for their sponsorship of this publication as well as their ongoing support of our education programs. The thoughts and opinions presented in this report are those of the Center for American Progress and the National Center on Time & Learning alone, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the foundation.

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