



**Background on the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Initiative and the
National Center on Time & Learning:
*School Redesign: Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success***

In the fall of 2006, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to implement a statewide initiative to dramatically expand the school calendar in traditional public schools. Ten schools in five districts across Massachusetts implemented a new school day adding approximately two extra hours to the school day for all students. Over the past two years, the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Initiative has grown markedly. In school year 2007-2008, 26 schools in 12 districts across the Commonwealth serving 13,500 students are participating in the initiative and there are 30 additional schools in the ELT planning process. These schools will compete for state funds in the amount of \$1,300 per child to implement an expanded schedule within the next two years. All ELT schools are required to add 300 hours to the school schedule (roughly 25% more time). Schools can choose to expand the school day, the school year, or both.

The Importance of Expanding Learning Time

America now expects more than ever from its schools and its students and the demands of a global information-based economy require a broad array of skills. But, despite these profound changes, the time allotted to teachers and students to reach these higher expectations has remained exactly the same. In fact, the near-universal school calendar of 180 six-hour days has gone unchanged since it was designed to meet the farm and factory needs of the early 20th century.

The result: although students and teachers increasingly face high stakes testing and demanding standards of accountability, many schools have:

- Narrowed instruction to focus primarily on math and English/language arts;
- Reduced time for other academic subjects such as science, social studies and foreign languages;
- Drastically cut, and even eliminated, physical education, arts and other enrichment classes that are vital to engaging children in learning and broadening their skills.

A Redesigned and More Engaging School Day

With the expanded day in Massachusetts, schools have redesigned their school schedules to include:

- Additional time for core academic subjects, such as mathematics, science and English/language arts;
- Expanded learning blocks that give teachers time to teach through hands-on, interactive projects that help students apply their skills to real life situations;
- More opportunities for teachers to collaborate during the school day so they can plan lessons together, develop a higher quality curriculum, and use data more effectively to improve learning;
- Integrated, engaging enrichment activities such as robotics, forensics, music, ceramics, drama, video production, and athletics—all of which develop children's cognitive and social skills;
- Activities to develop 21st century skills such as researching, writing, oral presentations, team projects, problem solving, and using technology;



- Individual and small group tutoring, especially for special education students and English language learners.

Promising Results in Expanded Learning Time Schools

The Expanded Learning Time Initiative is having a positive and promising impact on parents, teachers and student performance.

- Across all three subject areas, students in ELT schools achieved higher rates of proficiency on the MCAS as compared to students in these schools in previous years.
- Students in middle grades (6th-8th) performed especially well, with six of the seven ELT schools with middle grades narrowing the achievement gap with the state in math and five of the seven in ELA.
- Several middle school grades in a number of schools posted particularly impressive gains, narrowing the achievement gap by at least 50% in just two years.
- More than 75% of parents who have children in ELT schools felt that their children are getting a much better education with their new school day.
- 70% of teachers indicated that ELT has had a positive impact on their students.

Massachusetts 2020 & the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Partnership

The implementation of the Expanded Learning Time Initiative is the result of a unique public-private partnership between Massachusetts 2020, the educational non-profit that envisioned ELT, the Governor's office, the Legislature and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the state agency responsible for overseeing it.

The Department sets demanding criteria for participation and selects qualifying schools based on the strength and viability of their redesign proposals. The Department also administers the grant programs and oversees an independent evaluation of the Initiative. Massachusetts 2020 provides technical assistance support to schools and districts from the planning stage to the implementation of an expanded school day, as well as advocacy and research in support of the Initiative.

National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL)

The success of the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative has captured the attention of a national audience, and on October 2, 2007, the Massachusetts 2020 leadership, in partnership with the President of the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, launched the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL). The National Center on Time & Learning is dedicated to expanding learning time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded education for all children.

With financial support from a variety of national education foundations including The Eli and Edythe Broad Education Foundation, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the National Center on Time & Learning supports national, state, and local initiatives to add more school time to provide academic and enrichment opportunities for students. State and local leaders across the country are seeing time as a key strategy for helping students attain greater success in school. Alabama, Delaware and Oklahoma are exploring adding more school time, and several urban communities in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana have already implemented longer school days. New York allows new state education funding to be spent on expanding time. NCTL is currently working to support the efforts of several of these states. NCTL is also undertaking several research projects to increase the scope of knowledge in the field.



In partnership with the Center for American Progress, the National Center on Time & Learning also has a robust federal policy agenda. Working with the leaders of the U.S. House and Senate Education Committees, Congressman Miller and Senator Kennedy, NCTL gained a commitment to expand the Massachusetts ELT model through a federal demonstration program. The *Expanded Learning Time Demonstration Act* (H.R. 3642) was introduced in the House of Representatives in 2007 and the *Time for Innovation Matters in Education* (TIME) Act was introduced in the Senate in 2008. Both proposals would provide federal funding to support state expanded learning time initiatives.

For more information about Massachusetts 2020 and the Massachusetts ELT Initiative, please visit: www.mass2020.org.

For more information about the National Center on Time & Learning, please visit: www.timeandlearning.org.

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