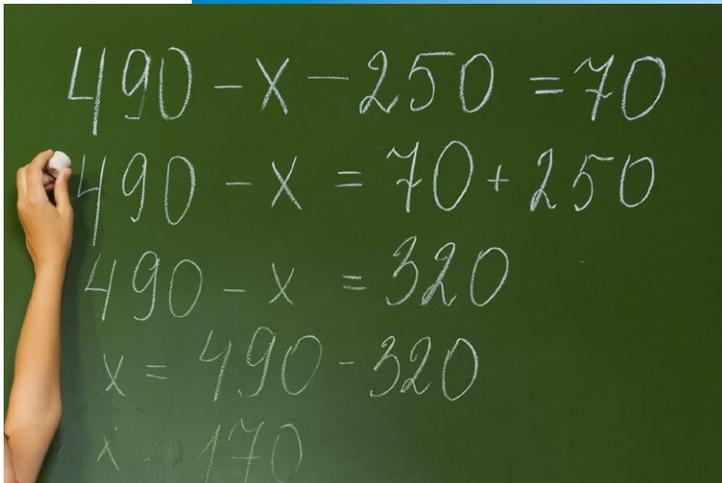


# Not Getting Our Money's Worth

An Outdated School Schedule is Costing New York \$2.3 Billion a Year  
More & Better Learning Time Can Change That



## ■ WHO WE ARE

READYNATION is the nation's preeminent business leader organization working to strengthen business through effective policies for children and youth. It operates under the umbrella of the non-profit Council For A Strong America. Our more than 1,100 members educate policymakers and the public about effective investments that will help businesses compete in today's global marketplace by helping children get on the right track to succeed in school and in life. Our members have contributed to victories for children at the federal level and in dozens of states.

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# Not Getting Our Money's Worth

## SUMMARY

As business leaders, we are concerned that our 19<sup>th</sup>-century school schedule is affecting our ability to compete. That schedule was designed when many more students had to get home to milk the cows, air-conditioning hadn't been invented and most mothers worked in the home—not outside it. Times have changed, but too often our school schedules and approaches to education have not.

Our outdated school calendar especially harms children during the summer. Research shows that during these months, almost all American children forget valuable knowledge and lose acquired skills. Without adequate enrichment opportunities and support for summer reading, it's not surprising that during the summer months **low-income children tend to lose the most: an average of two months of education each and every year.** As at-risk children move through school, the cumulative loss forms up to two-thirds of the achievement gap and contributes to low rankings on international test scores and declining performance on measures of college and career readiness.

In addition to harming children and negatively affecting the future workforce, this learning loss is wasting taxpayer dollars. **New York spends \$19,550 per student on average for 10 months of education each year. Because of summer learning loss, low-income students are only getting eight months worth of skills, resulting in an annual loss of \$3,910 per child. The wasted spending adds up to \$2.3 billion per year among all low-**



**Summer learning loss among low-income students costs New York taxpayers \$2.3 billion a year.**

**income children in New York and \$21 billion nationwide** without even factoring in summer learning loss among more advantaged children.

Increasing and improving time spent in school can help our state avoid the huge costs of letting our at-risk children fall behind. It is important that we are not just adding more time but also making it better, such as through an improved curriculum, more effective teaching, more enrichment activities and better accountability.

Rochester is on the cutting edge of addressing this challenge by becoming one of the few school districts nationwide that is expanding the length of the school day, often in partnership with community partners, and changing the way students are taught. Many of New York City's at-risk public schools are scheduled to follow suit. Meanwhile, charter schools in New York City and

Boston that have adopted more and better learning time are seeing results that are off the charts, and regular public schools in Massachusetts and Texas are also starting to produce strong results using this approach.

It will be important for schools implementing these changes to track carefully what is working and what isn't, because one size will not fit all. But the more and better learning time approach promises a more successful future for many of our children. **As business leaders, we strongly support New York's efforts to help more children become productive adults who can help strengthen our economy. We recommend policymakers maintain existing funding and encourage school districts and communities to explore implementation and ways to wisely ramp up efforts over time.**

## Our outdated school schedule isn't working for many students or our economy

As business leaders, we are concerned that two-thirds of students in our state are not proficient in core subjects on the Nation's Report Card—a figure that has shown only little improvement over the past decade.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-five percent of New York's students are not graduating from high school ready for college or careers, and scores are declining on the SAT and ACT.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in five years, nearly seven in 10 jobs in New York will require some form of postsecondary education, making it imperative that students leave high school prepared to succeed in college, trade school or a certificate program.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, instead of leading the world in education, other countries are moving past us: American students now rank 27<sup>th</sup> in mathematics, 16<sup>th</sup> in reading and 19<sup>th</sup> in science out of 34

developed countries on the most trusted international assessment of students' skills.<sup>4</sup> According to a study by *McKinsey & Company*, the annual impact on GDP of this achievement gap between the U.S. and better-performing nations is substantially larger than the Great Recession of 2008.<sup>5</sup>

There are many reasons why America's schools are falling behind, but use of learning time is certainly one of them. Time off in the summer alone amounts to an average drop in test scores equivalent to two months of lost math skills among middle-class children. For low-income children, whose families can't afford expensive enrichment programs and are often less likely to read during the summer, time off causes them to lose, on average, two months of education in both math and

Learning loss during the summer months accounts for up to two-thirds of the achievement gap between low-income children and their more advantaged peers.

reading.<sup>6</sup> By ninth grade, only one-fifth of low-income students in New York are proficient in math and reading compared to nearly half of higher-income students. Research shows that the difference in learning loss over the summer accounts for up to two-thirds of this academic achievement gap.<sup>7</sup>

This not only harms children: it also wastes taxpayer dollars. **New York State currently spends, on average, \$19,550 per public school student each year. Because of the skills they lose over the summer, low-income students are effectively only getting eight out of the 10 months of education that we pay for, wasting \$3,910 per child for the two months lost. That totals \$2.3 billion per year for all low-income children in New York. Across America, the total wasted spending is \$21 billion annually.** From Pre-Kindergarten through high school graduation, this is a loss of \$55,000 for the average low-income student in New York. **The wasted educational spending for higher-income children is not as large, but still substantial.<sup>8</sup>**



In five years, nearly 7 in 10 jobs in New York will require some postsecondary education.

## BUSINESSES NEED HEALTHY AND CREATIVE EMPLOYEES

Realizing that our students are falling far behind, our schools are spending more time on core subjects. As a result, over the past decade, many have cut the arts, physical education (PE), social studies and computer science classes.<sup>9</sup>

This is not just a problem for students, but also a problem for America's businesses, which need healthy and creative employees to be competitive. For example:

- Our current obesity crisis already costs employers \$73 billion a year in medical costs and lower productivity. Less PE for children in school certainly won't help, and a long summer is just as problematic—research shows that half of children's annual weight gain occurs during this one quarter of the year.<sup>10</sup>
- New York needs to fill a growing number of jobs that involve the arts. Arts, entertainment and recreation jobs, for example, are projected to grow by 18 percent between 2010 and 2020 in our state and statewide, independent artists, writers and performers generated \$2 billion in 2007. An additional \$15 billion in revenue was generated by advertising, public

relations and related services, where training in writing and the visual and media arts is crucial for many employees. Other fields, such as fashion and web design, and companies like Apple see design as central to their abilities to compete internationally.<sup>11</sup>

- Classes in art, music and creative writing also help children develop their creativity, and PE can help students develop crucial teamwork skills—qualities that are important for success in the workplace.<sup>12</sup>

## THE TOLL ON WORKING PARENTS

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and as recently as the 1970s, most moms were home to greet kids after school, but that is no longer the case. Within one generation, mothers' participation in the workforce has grown by 50 percent and the majority of families now have all available parents in the workforce.<sup>13</sup>

Because the work schedule doesn't match the school schedule, New York parents pay, on average, more than \$7,000 per child annually for afterschool and summer programs.<sup>14</sup> For New York families with a school-age child in center-based care, the average annual cost makes up 13 percent of the median family income and 45 percent of the median income of a single mother.<sup>15</sup> Affluent and middle-class families may be able to cover the cost of expensive music lessons, sports teams and summer camps, but low-income children are likely to end up on their own during this time.

“America’s businesses need healthy and creative employees to be competitive. More and better learning time will help schools fit enriching activities—like physical education and arts—back into the schedule.”



**Sandra A. Parker**  
President and CEO  
Rochester Business Alliance

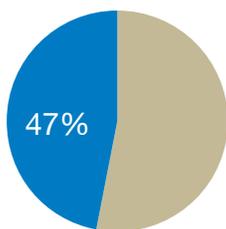
Out-of-sync schedules also result in early pick-up times or unplanned absences when afterschool or summer arrangements fall through. These disruptions still tend to fall disproportionately on mothers and hurt their ability to compete in the workforce. **This may help to explain why single women without children in corporate America earn almost as much as men, but mothers in two-parent families earn less, and single mothers earn far less.**<sup>16</sup>

Making school schedules more amenable to the work schedule would also take a burden off employers, who pay for 2.8 million unplanned absences among employees annually, many of which are a result of school days off and afterschool or summer arrangements falling through.<sup>17</sup>

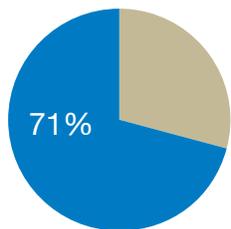
## THE COST OF RISKY BEHAVIORS TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Parents fear what can happen when teenagers are left unsupervised during the summer or afterschool hours. But businesses and law enforcement also

## Mothers' Participation in the Workforce



**Then**  
(1975)



**Now**  
(2010)

know that the afterschool hours are a prime time for juvenile shoplifting and violent crime.<sup>18</sup> Extending the school hours should reduce appreciably, though not eliminate, the time available for juveniles to participate in risky behaviors on school days.<sup>19</sup>

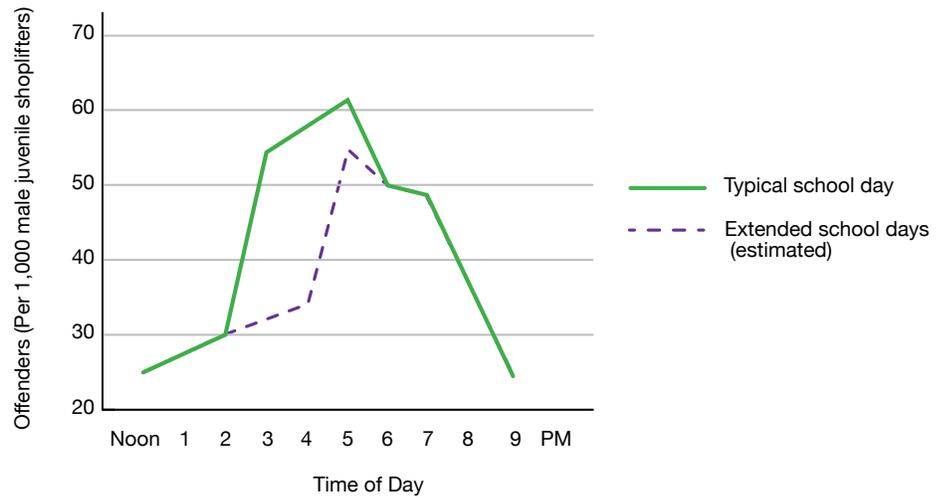
## THE GROWING MOVEMENT

A growing number of public schools in the U.S. have started experimenting with adding more and better learning time to the school calendar.

In 2006, Massachusetts became the first state to invest in competitive grants for expanded learning time across multiple districts. The state now has 22 schools that are receiving state grant dollars to add 300 hours to the school year.<sup>20</sup> **Among schools that have expanded learning time for four or more years, twice as many students reached the proficient or advanced level on state tests in math and science in 2010 compared to 2006.** Students in schools that expanded learning time also improved by eight percentage points in English.<sup>21</sup> Massachusetts is currently one of the only U.S. states competitive with the top-performing countries.<sup>22</sup>

The national *TIME (Time for Innovation Matters in Education) Collaborative*

## Extending the school day two hours should cut the length of unsupervised time when juvenile male shoplifting is high

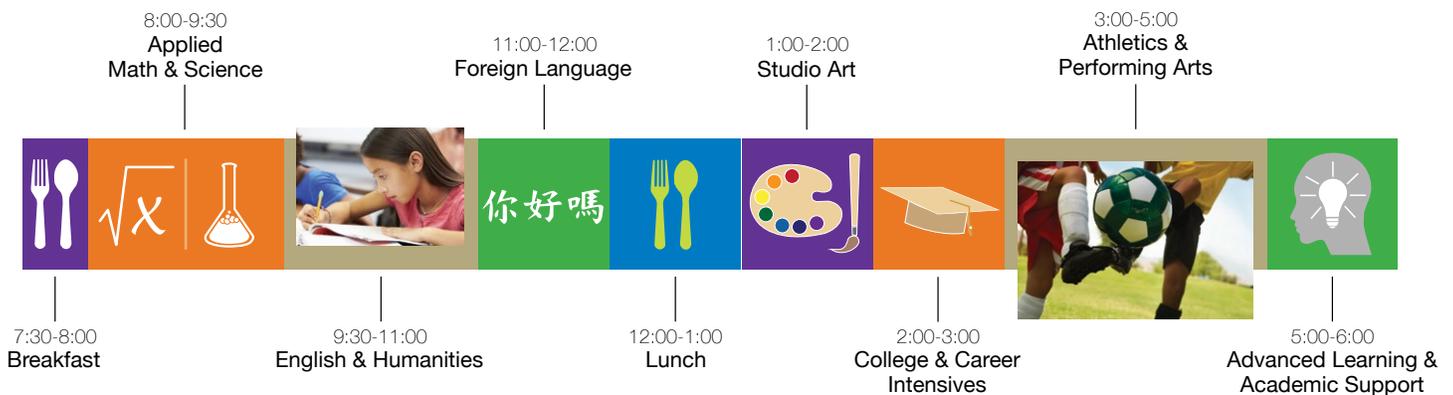


Source for typical school day data: U.S. Department of Justice

has helped to propel more and better learning time in other states. Led by the *National Center on Time & Learning* and funded in part by the *Ford Foundation*, the initiative is helping to expand quality learning time in 16 districts in five states through a mix of private, federal, state and local funding.<sup>23</sup> As a participant, **the Rochester City School District is leading the effort in New York**, adding 300 hours to the schedule in five schools in 2013-14 and another five schools in 2014-15.<sup>24</sup> Collaboration between the district and community stakeholders has made the

changes possible. By involving teachers, administrators, school-based planning teams, community-based organizations, parents and businesses in a year-long planning process, Rochester's schools were able to design a schedule that worked for everyone.<sup>25</sup> For example, a staggered work schedule helped gain teachers' buy-in, and afterschool programs agreed to move programs on-site and provide enrichment opportunities during the school day. While the efforts are new, a survey already shows that the city's teachers are

## What an Expanded School Day Can Look Like



Source: Ford Foundation/ Kristen Myers/ Expand ED Schools by TASC

responding positively to the impact of the longer day for themselves and for students, and test scores rose among most of the participating schools in 2013-14. More and better learning time is also enabling the district to expand art, music, and PE classes for students and to include other enriching activities with participation from existing community-based organizations.<sup>26</sup>

Last year, New York State invested \$24 million to fund expanded learning time schools across the state and, as of fall 2015, New York City will also add an hour to the day at 94 low-performing schools.<sup>27</sup>

As schools in New York explore more and better learning time, they will want to consider not just extending the length of the day but also the number of days children are in school in order to capture the savings available.

Importantly, research shows that schools in the U.S. that have expanded learning time spend more time on both core subjects and enriching activities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, schools that have expanded time allocate more time to math, science, social studies, PE and music than public schools with a traditional schedule.<sup>28</sup>

## SCHOOLS ARE SHOWING THAT MORE AND BETTER LEARNING TIME CAN WORK

While an active debate over charters in general will continue, the most effective charter schools—where more and better learning time is the standard—have shown they can help low-income children succeed in school.<sup>30</sup> And, studies of regular public schools show that you don't need to be a charter to achieve results using more and better learning time.

The *Promise Academy Charter Schools* within the *Harlem Children's Zone* in New York City may be the best example of combining extended time with better education. Economists at Harvard and Princeton found that low-income children

who won a lottery to attend the schools starting in middle school, when compared to similar children who wanted to attend but lost the lotteries (thus removing bias), were **31 percent more likely to pass the New York State Regents exams and 49 percent more likely to enroll in college.** As for risky behaviors, teenage girls who participated were **71 percent less likely to become pregnant and none of the teenage boys who participated were incarcerated** by the end of high school compared to 4 percent of the control group boys.<sup>31</sup>

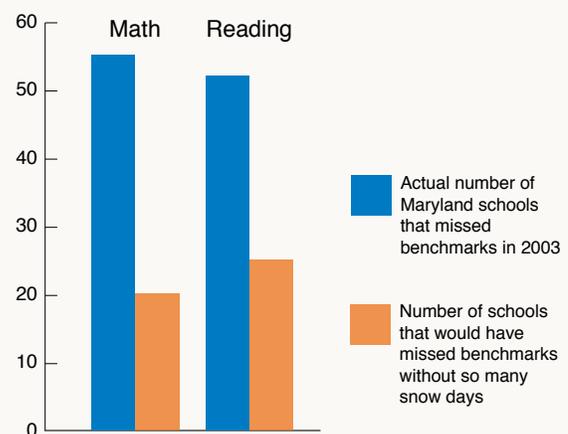
Studies of other high-quality charter schools in New York and Boston that have added approximately two weeks to the school year and 90 minutes to the school day support these findings:

- **Students who won lotteries to attend a New York City charter school for all four years of high school were 28 percent more likely to graduate** than students who didn't win the lotteries.<sup>32</sup>

## Time Matters

One study tried to determine the importance of time in school by looking at differences in snow days in Maryland and Colorado. Researchers compared how students in these states did on state tests during years when there were frequent cancellations due to snow and years when there were very few. Since testing occurs before the cancelled days can be made up at the end of the year, this natural experiment demonstrated the effect of fewer days of education on students' performance. The analysis found that having too many snow days affected students' test scores dramatically: for example, in a year with many snow days, 35 more elementary schools in Maryland failed to meet reading and math test benchmarks than would have had they not lost so many days.<sup>29</sup>

### More Days in School Improves Student Performance



Source: Marcotte & Hansen, 2010

# More and Better Learning Time Works

While an active debate over charters in general will continue, some charters are successfully implementing more and better learning time and regular public schools are also finding success with this approach.

## New York's Promise Academies

- 31%** more Regents Exams passed
- 49%** more likely to enroll in college
- 71%** less likely to become pregnant (girls)
- 0%** of teenage boys incarcerated

## 49 New York Charter Schools

- 28%** more likely to graduate from high school

## 16 Boston Charter Schools

- 100** points higher SAT scores
- 64%** more likely to attend a 4-year college

## 8 Massachusetts' Expanded Learning Time Public Schools

- 2x** as many students scoring proficient or advanced in math
- 2x** as many students scoring proficient or advanced in science
- 19%** more students scoring proficient or advanced in English

## 9 Houston Public Schools

- 40%** more likely to attend a 4-year institution if attending college
- Similar gains** on math and reading test scores as the New York Promise Academies

- By the end of high school, **students who won lotteries to attend a Boston charter school scored 100 points higher on the SAT**, and were **64 percent more likely to attend a four-year college** than students who didn't win the lotteries.<sup>33</sup>

More time in school is key to these results. But all of these schools also make learning better—using data to inform teaching, providing individualized support to students and offering more enrichment activities. They also closely track student progress, create expectations for students to succeed and avoid misbehavior, and hold teachers and administrators accountable for their results.<sup>34</sup>

Research shows that these elements of high-quality charters can be transferred to a public school environment. In addition to the Massachusetts results discussed above, a study of more than 7,000 students in Texas found that when these strategies were implemented in nine low-performing public schools, they achieved results in reading and math that were similar to the impacts of attending New York's *Promise Academy Charter Schools*.<sup>35</sup>

## TEACHERS VALUE MORE AND BETTER LEARNING TIME, TOO

Having more time with teachers is obviously good for students; recent research shows that teachers impact student performance more than class size, the curriculum and other factors.<sup>36</sup> But extra time in school also benefits teachers:

- The majority of teachers report not having enough time to cover the curriculum.<sup>37</sup> However, in *Massachusetts' Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Initiative* schools, 85 percent of teachers felt they had sufficient time to cover the curriculum, compared to only 39 percent of teachers in the state's traditional public schools.<sup>38</sup>
- Most teachers also report not having enough time to collaborate with their peers or improve their teaching. One study found that U.S. teachers spend 80 percent of their time in an average week on instruction and only 20 percent

on other activities like planning, collaborating with peers or professional development, while teachers in expanded learning time schools spend 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively.<sup>39</sup>

- It is possible to pay teachers adequately for the additional time they spend with students without breaking the budget. For example, *Massachusetts's ELT Initiative* schools receive 10 percent more funding per student and teachers are paid fairly for the expanded schedule, with the contracts negotiated at the local level. Others schools have created staggered schedules so that teachers are able to work the same number of hours.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As business leaders, we consider more and better learning time an investment that will make better use of taxpayer dollars now and help boost New York's economy in the future. If we want both more productive employees now and more productive young people in the future so America can compete, it's time policymakers invest in more and better learning time for more children and finally bring our school schedules into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will especially help at-risk children avoid falling behind and keep our state from wasting \$2.3 billion a year.

While we need to keep studying and refining our approaches to more and better learning time to determine what works best with different students, this approach is in the direction we should be going to build a stronger America for everyone. We recommend that policymakers not only maintain existing funding but also encourage communities to explore implementation and continue to support the funding necessary to wisely ramp up these efforts over time.

## ENDNOTES

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