

Fast Facts

Is It Time to Change Indiana's School-Year Calendar?

What —

The latest CEEP policy brief, “Is it Time to Change Indiana’s School-Year Calendar?” by Kelly Prendergast, Terry Spradlin, and Vincent Palozzi compares Indiana’s instructional time requirements with those of other states and countries, as well as states’ policies on student dismissal for professional development activities. In addition, the brief explores research that looks at the effects of these factors on student achievement.

Why —

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has led to an increase in states’ efforts to improve student achievement. Some of these efforts include increasing the amount of time allocated for teacher professional development and extending the school calendar to maximize instructional time. However, research generally suggests that the links between these factors and student achievement are more complicated than simply increasing allocated time for either purpose.

How —

The 2006 Indiana General Assembly considered a bill (SB 194) to allow school corporations to use three full student instructional days for professional development and parent-teacher conferences, which would have reduced the amount of instructional time for students. This bill did not pass, and the current assembly is considering Senate Bill 213, which proposes to add five days to the school year starting in the fall for professional development and parent-teacher conferences as well as student instruction. The legislation would also require school corporations to have 200 instructional days by the 2010-2011 school year.

Recommendations for rethinking the use of time —

- Policymakers should oppose any proposal that would reduce the amount of instructional time public schools are required to provide to students.
- Educators and administrators should examine their use of time to ensure that the vast majority of allocated time is used for engaged academic learning.
- Increase the number of days in the school calendar and earmark the additional days for teacher professional development, or extend the length of the school day statewide and designate the additional time for regular and ongoing teacher planning, collaboration, and professional development.

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