

Fast Facts

The Daily Schedule: A Look at the Relationship between Time and Academic Achievement

What —

The CEEP policy brief, *School Time Issues: A Look at the Relationship Between Time and Academic Achievement*, by Kylie R. Stanley, Terry E. Spradlin, and Jonathan A. Plucker, discusses nontraditional school time structures that have emerged nationwide, including block schedules and trimesters. Additionally, this brief considers the benefits of later school start times for adolescents and longer school days for all students.

Why —

The No Child Left Behind Act emphasizes the importance of elementary and secondary education in preparing students for the global economy and community. However, many U.S. public schools are facing increasing challenges in preparing all students for life after graduation while operating within 19th and 20th century school day and school year formats. In an effort to deliver academic instruction in the most effective and efficient manner possible and meet accountability requirements, many school systems have experimented with alternative school-day structures.

How —

Time adjustments alone will not likely produce desired achievement results; there must be a more purposeful system of reform driving the changes in school schedules and calendars. The research reveals that perhaps it is not simply school time that must be adjusted in the 21st century, but rather our attitudes and expectations about education in general. When coupled with high expectations, rigorous and relevant curricula, and effective professional development, more time on task can contribute to higher student achievement.

Recommendations —

- Changes to school time structures should only be implemented if they are accompanied by community support. Change that comes from the community, rather than change that is imposed on the community, has a far greater chance for success.
- Administrators and teachers must work in tandem to ensure the allocation of time during the school day is dedicated to engaged academic learning. Simply adding more time to the school day or year will not be effective if the curriculum is not changed to become more rigorous and relevant and if effective teacher professional development is absent in the school.
- Finally, as educators and policymakers continue to implement alternative uses of time during the school day and year, evaluation of these models is imperative to determine the most efficient and effective use of time to support academic achievement.

To read this Education Policy Brief, go to:
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