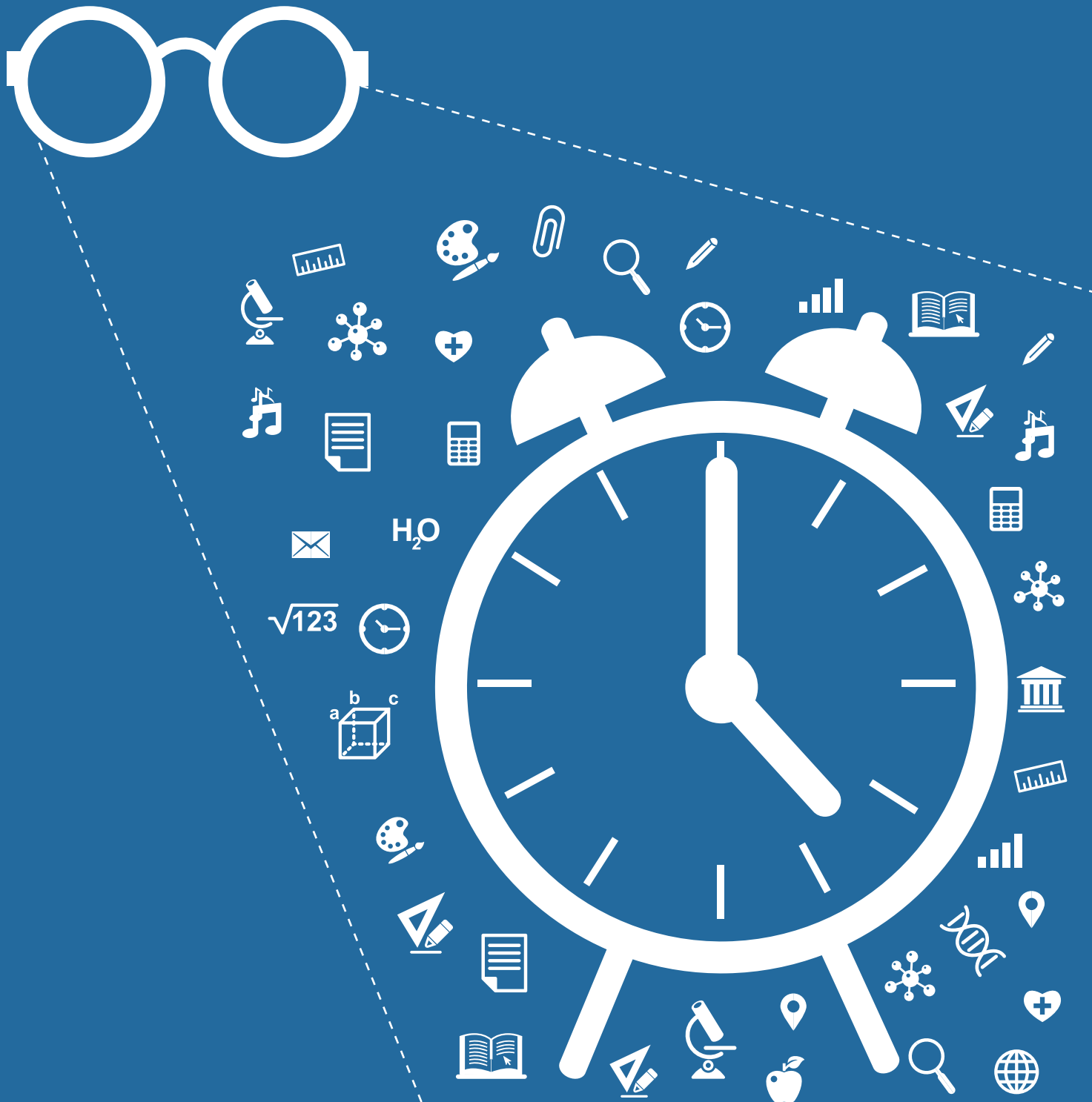


LEADING WITH A VISION:

How Different, Creative, and Effective Uses
of Time Support Initiatives to Provide New
and Better Student Learning Experiences

SEPTEMBER 2014



Schools and school systems throughout the country have been creating innovative models to transform the learning experience for young people, particularly those who have been poorly served by the education system. These models include increasing the use of technology in and out of class, providing work-based learning experiences, expanding opportunities for postsecondary learning, and many, many others.

While these innovations differ in important ways, they share at least one element in common: a commitment to rethinking the use of time. In putting these new models into place, their architects recognized that the traditional seven-hour day and nine-month structure of schools impeded their ability to develop stronger learning environments. In response, they restructured the clock and calendar to provide more and better learning time for students. Only by restructuring the use of time can these innovative educators achieve their goal of enhancing the learning environment for all young people.

As the architects of the innovations report, the current system is easy to manage administratively, permits schools to track students over time, and enables teachers to develop and organize a curriculum. Yet the system has a number of flaws that are becoming increasingly obvious. One immediate detriment is ignoring the well-established fact that students learn at different paces. Students who learn more quickly can get bored, while those who need more time struggle to keep pace. When learning is only

The new models expand learning time to provide students—especially those in concentrated poverty, who have been significantly underserved by the education system—with adequate opportunities to learn the content and skills necessary for success.

a variable while time remains constant, schools allow performance to vary; some students excel in the required amount of time, while others struggle to earn a D or a C.

In addition, the time-bound system neither supports nor values the learning that students do outside of class. Students have no way of demonstrating their knowledge and skills except for what the classes ask for; the important learning they do at home or in after-school settings does not count. The new models expand learning time to provide students—especially those in concentrated poverty, who have been significantly underserved by the education system—with adequate opportunities to learn the content and skills necessary for success. At the same time, many of these models also expand the settings in which learning takes place to recognize that students can and do learn all the time, not just in classrooms.

Research and practice have shown that new approaches to learning time are effective in elementary, middle, or high schools. Particularly important is exploring how these strategies work within secondary schools, because these

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schools provide the last opportunity to prepare students for postsecondary education. The fact that approximately 20 percent of all students, and 30 percent of students of color, do not graduate with their peers is a sure signal that secondary schools need reform.

This report will profile some of these innovative secondary school models to show how they have restructured time to improve the learning experiences for students. Also discussed will be the policy barriers educators have encountered to implement these models, and recommendations to states and the federal government to help more schools take similar approaches.

GENERATION SCHOOLS NETWORK

GSN's vision for reform

The Generation Schools Network (GSN) was born of frustration. Its founder, Furman Brown, participated in the first class of Teach for America, teaching in South-Central Los Angeles. After putting his heart and soul into the work, he was frustrated that he was unable to reach many of his students, had no time to learn from successful veteran teachers, and saw many of his fellow teachers dissatisfied and leaving the profession. He decided to create a model that would be more effective for both students and teachers. Together with Jonathan Spear, a veteran of charter schools in New York City, he launched Brooklyn Generation School (BGS) in 2007. The idea was to use time, talent, and resources differently to provide engaging instruction that would prepare all students for the twenty-first century and provide teachers with opportunities for collaboration and professional growth. Eighty-nine percent of BGS students are African American and 8 percent are Hispanic; 81 percent qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. West Generation Academy opened in Denver, Colorado, in 2012. Like BGS, it was a replacement option



QUICK FACTS

BROOKLYN GENERATION SCHOOL (NEW YORK)

Demographics

- ENROLLMENT IS 295 STUDENTS; EXPECTED TO GROW TO 350–400 IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS.
- 81 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH.
- 89 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN, 8 PERCENT ARE LATINO, 1 PERCENT ARE WHITE, AND 2 PERCENT ARE OTHER.

Key Outcomes

- 19 PERCENT QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.
- THE SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE IN 2012–13 WAS 73 PERCENT.
- 90 PERCENT OF GRADUATES IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS WERE ACCEPTED TO COLLEGE.

in a turnaround campus. Eighty-seven percent of its students are Hispanic and 6 percent are African American; 99 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Using time differently to support implementation of the vision

Implementing Brown's vision required a transformation of the school calendar to provide students with additional time during the year. Also required was a restructuring of teachers' roles. Students attend school for 200 days a year, to provide additional time for more engaging learning experiences, while teachers teach for 180 days. To make that possible, the school year is structured differently from those of conventional schools. For most of the year,

GENERATION SCHOOLS NETWORK: ANNUAL SCHEDULE

- Vacation
- Foundation and Studio courses for students; Grade teams with students
- Intensives for students; Intensives teachers with students
- Professional development
All teachers receive at least twenty days of job-embedded professional development a year

STUDENTS: 200 school days

GRADE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
9	Full School Vacation											
10												
11												
12												

TEACHERS: 180 school days spread over a longer school year

ROLE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
9th Grade	Full School Vacation											
10th Grade												
11th Grade												
12th Grade												
Intensives												

- Teachers have vacation in July and August. They also have two separate four-week breaks throughout the school year, consisting of three weeks of vacation and one week of team planning and professional development.
- A side agreement with the United Federation of Teachers in New York and an innovation plan in Colorado allow for this schedule.

students participate in two types of core classes, which have been redesigned to provide additional time for engaging class work. “Foundation” courses are ninety minutes long and focus on humanities and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Students take two Foundation courses a day. “Studio” courses are seventy-five minutes long and include foreign languages, advanced sciences, music, art, and physical education, as well as special services for English learners or students with disabilities.

Twice each year, for one month, students take “Intensive” courses. These provide students with opportunities to read, write, and conduct research; connect with professionals from high-growth industries; and visit workplaces and college campuses. In grades six through nine, the Intensive courses are intended to enable students to explore career options. In grades ten through twelve, students focus on securing internships, applying to college, earning industry certifications, and applying for financial aid.

Teachers have twenty days a year of job-embedded professional development. Foundation and Studio teachers spend up to two hours a day in common planning time. During the Intensive courses, the Foundation and Studio teachers spend one week on professional development and have three weeks of vacation. This new learning structure enables schools to expand the calendar for students without requiring teachers to teach more than 180 days.

Conditions that support better uses of time

The districts of New York City and Denver provided flexibility for GSN to propose, and then open, schools with an innovative model that restructured the school day and expanded the school year. In New York, the district had a policy of closing schools that were persistently failing and reopening new small schools in their place.¹ In Brooklyn, the South Shore Educational Complex, a group of six schools, replaced one older low-performing school. Brown and Spear negotiated with the district to operate their school and worked with the teachers' union to secure a side agreement that allowed for a different day and year while still maintaining the vast majority of provisions in the teacher contract.

In Denver, the state had a policy of encouraging education innovation. After a unanimous vote by the Denver School Board, West Generation Academy opened as part of a plan to replace the low-performing West High School and was later approved as an Innovation School, a state-approved school that is free from some regulations in order to implement innovative practices. Again, GSN worked to leave the majority of the provisions of the teacher contract in place and only waive a small number of provisions that allowed for the adjusted use of time.

Barriers to implementing different uses of time

Operating a school that runs on a different calendar from the rest of the district poses a number of challenges. The school must arrange transportation, food service,



QUICK FACTS

WEST GENERATION ACADEMY (DENVER, COLORADO)

Demographics

- ENROLLMENT WAS 360 STUDENTS IN GRADES 6–10 IN 2013–14; EXPECTED TO GROW TO 840 IN GRADES 6–12 IN 2015–16.
- 99 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH.
- 87 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE LATINO, 6 PERCENT ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN, 3 PERCENT ARE WHITE, AND 4 PERCENT ARE OTHER.
- 37 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS.
- 14 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION.

Key Outcomes

- STUDENTS GREW ON AVERAGE TWO YEARS IN MATHEMATICS AND ONE YEAR IN READING.
- THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FIVE OR MORE YEARS BEHIND WAS REDUCED BY 50 PERCENT OVER A ONE-YEAR PERIOD OF TIME.

professional development, and payroll services during times when the rest of the district is closed. The school must determine on its own whether to close because of snow on those days as well. School leaders have arranged with the district to keep the schools functioning when the rest of the district is closed.

But for the schools' leaders, these challenges are far outweighed by the benefits the structure provides to students. Approximately 80 percent of BGS students arrived on campus in the first three years more than two

years behind grade level, but 80 percent of the students graduated and went on to college. In its first year of operation, West Generation Academy in Denver cut in half the number of students who were five or more years behind grade level, based on quarterly assessments.²

EMINENCE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (KENTUCKY)

EIS’s vision for reform

Eminence Independent Schools (EIS) is a single-school district located in central Kentucky, serving approximately 650 pre-K–12 students. More than 65 percent of the students receive free and reduced-price lunch, and more than 30 percent are students of color. Four years ago, the school was identified by the state for intervention as a result of not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under federal law guidelines. EIS was also suffering from a significant decline in enrollment. While the school had been consistently able to maintain graduation rates in the 80 percent range, fewer than 40 percent of the students were graduating prepared for college and a career.^a

EIS’s vision for reform is to create a cooperative community where students and educators strive for excellence within a safe, structured, and supportive environment that values diversity and fosters responsible behavior. EIS’s mission is to teach students the academic and social skills that will empower them to realize their potential, compete globally, succeed in college and a career, and be lifelong learners. EIS implements this vision through “surprise and delight,” which are ongoing efforts to amaze and engage each student, staff, and stakeholder in an environment that fosters creativity. EIS has a customer-service mentality that assumes the responsibility to provide the flexibility and support to meet the needs of each student.



QUICK FACTS

EMINENCE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (KENTUCKY)

Demographics

- AS A RESULT OF THEIR PERFORMANCE, HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT HAS INCREASED FROM APPROXIMATELY 220 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO APPROXIMATELY 320 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS (THERE IS AN OPEN-ENROLLMENT POLICY AMONG NEIGHBORING DISTRICTS).
- ON AVERAGE, 55 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH.
- ON AVERAGE, 22 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR.

Key Outcomes

- EIS IS OUTPERFORMING OTHER DISTRICTS IN THE STATE IN TERMS OF THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO ARE PROFICIENT IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS.*

SUBJECT	2012		2013	
	Eminence	State Average	Eminence	State Average
ALGEBRA II	43%	40%	42%	36%
READING	48%	48%	57%	46%
ENGLISH II	67%	52%	81%	56%
WRITING	22%	32%	77%	48%

* African American and Latino students make up on average 22 percent of student enrollment. However, due to the small size of the school, neither subgroup has met the n-size requirement of 25 for accountability purposes. Therefore, performance data by subgroup is unavailable.

^a The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) defines college readiness as having met the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) benchmarks on the ACT, COMPASS, or KYOTE in reading, math, and English. KDE defines a career-ready student as a student who is prepared for a career and technical education (CTE) major and has reached the benchmarks on WorkKeys or ASVAB and KOSSA or an industry certification.

Using time differently to support implementation of that vision

The implementation of this vision benefited significantly by rethinking the use of time. EIS realized early on in the process that preparing students for college and a career required providing them with a diversity of experiences. Each of these experiences needed to be grounded in rigor and skill development; achieving this required changing how the school week was structured. As a result, EIS provides high school students with core classes, such as English, math, and science, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for seventy-five minutes. These classes are heterogeneously grouped, without regard for the students' current achievement level, in order to ensure that all students have access to the same level of rigor. Additional support is provided to struggling students through small groups or one-to-one mentoring. While the level of assistance may vary depending on the needs of individual students, the rigor of the curriculum remains the same. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, students are provided with opportunities for intervention, connections,^b and enrichment. These forty-three-minute periods include elective classes. This restructuring of time increased the number of electives EIS could offer to students from four to eighty by dedicating two days per week to self-selected offerings.^c This schedule, in addition to restructuring the school calendar into nine-week sessions followed by two-week breaks, provides the additional time needed to intervene with struggling students in small-group settings, including in special sections between sessions.

Restructuring time also allowed EIS to provide students with access to dual enrollment opportunities to take college-level courses and be physically present on those

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campuses. EIS has a partnership with Bellarmine University that provides students with the opportunity to earn up to twenty-five credits within two years (thirteen credits in year one and twelve credits in year two). Students are also able to earn credits at Jefferson Community and Technical College. A student who takes full advantage of the dual enrollment opportunities provided at EIS could earn up to forty-nine hours of college credits before high school graduation. While such students may be spending less time in class than students in the traditional program, they are spending more time engaged in learning as a result of the demands of the courses.^d Dual enrollment is available to all students and facilitated by EIS, which provides transportation, guidance on the selection of courses, and support for students while enrolled.

Digital learning strategies are also being implemented in EIS to support more efficient and effective use of time. Students can take self-paced courses online, providing the

^b "Connections" are opportunities to strengthen and develop student, teacher, school, and family relationships.

^c Forty percent of these electives are offered online, and 60 percent are available on campus. Students also have the option to take virtual courses during the evening and on weekends.

^d It is worth noting that in the two years that EIS has provided dual enrollment opportunities only one student has failed one college-level course.

The decision to create a six-year program allows EIS to provide the support students often need to succeed during their first year of postsecondary courses, while also providing the opportunity for students to earn an associate's degree.

flexibility to advance upon demonstration of competency in a subject area. This opens up time to receive additional support for other subjects as needed. Further, this structure provides students with open blocks of time to complete portfolio-related activities and service learning, all of which are required and provided to advance EIS's mission to prepare global citizens. The open blocks of time also allow students to explore different professions. Students participate in some form of career preparation activity such as an internship or job shadowing. Prior to the restructuring, only 39 percent of EIS graduates were college and career ready based on a Kentucky rubric. Two years later, 100 percent of graduating seniors^e are ready for both college and a career.

EIS has also increased the number of years a student can remain in high school, after completing graduation requirements, from four to six. While EIS has been able to maintain a graduation rate exceeding 80 percent over the last several years, the majority of students were not enrolling in postsecondary schools, and those who were did not persist beyond their first year. The 2014–15 school year will be the first year that EIS students are provided with the opportunity to graduate in six years with a high school diploma and an associate's degree, earning up to forty-nine credits toward a bachelor's degree before graduation. EIS's decision to lengthen the number of years

was made in part to ensure the successful transition to postsecondary success.

EIS realized that there were a number of strategies to more effectively using time in order to support this transition. First, many high schools front-load rigorous courses during a student's freshman year while allowing the senior year to be less rigorous. Avoiding front-loading, EIS maintains the rigor throughout the four years through its dual enrollment program; students experience their senior year as rigorous as their freshman year. Providing college credit was one way to provide students with an incentive to continue to engage in and persevere through the rigor.

In addition, EIS realized that preparing students to succeed in postsecondary years could be accomplished by providing support to students who are enrolled at Eminence while also working toward an associate's degree. EIS believes that students need time to become comfortable with being on a college campus and therefore benefit from having ongoing support from EIS during this process. Seeing the benefits of this support as a result of the dual enrollment program, the decision to create a six-year program allows EIS to provide the support students often need to succeed during their first year of postsecondary courses, while also providing the opportunity for students to earn an associate's degree.

^e In Kentucky, the college- and career-readiness rate is calculated by awarding one point for every college- and career-ready student and .5 bonus points for any college- and career-ready senior. Therefore, a school can achieve over 100 percent. As stated in footnote a, the KDE defines college readiness as having met the CPE benchmarks on the ACT, COMPASS, or KYOTE in reading, math, and English. KDE defines a career-ready student as a student who is preparatory in a CTE major and has reached the benchmarks on WorkKeys or ASVAB and KOSSA or an industry certification.

Conditions that support better uses of time

There were a number of district and state policies in place that allowed EIS to use time differently to support its vision for reform. The approval of online courses and dual enrollment opportunities allowed students to advance at their own pace through many required courses as well as proceed to more advanced offerings. The flexibility of scheduling and selection that is commonplace for postsecondary education now became available to high school students. The state policy on seat time was essential to supporting these types of courses. Kentucky regulations allow school districts to issue standards-based, performance-based credits regardless of the number of instructional hours.³

The state also has “Innovation Zones,” of which EIS is one, which allow local education agencies (LEAs) to waive seat time requirements.⁴ Similar to many charter schools in the country, schools within these zones are exempt from certain regulations and policies yet are held to the same standards in terms of the outcomes expected of all schools. Leaders at the Kentucky Department of Education have also clearly communicated to districts that they seek to create an environment where barriers

that prevent innovation are removed, and students can progress and acquire credits at their own pace. EIS was provided the time needed to implement its vision and was able to demonstrate success by the end of its second year. Requirements regarding seat time also supported its dual enrollment partnership with Bellarmine.

In addition, Kentucky state law allows the K–12 system to serve students until they are twenty-one. This policy will allow EIS to use K–12 education funding toward the six-year dual degree option. Credits earned at the postsecondary level can be used to meet high school graduation requirements, with EIS paying \$100 per credit hour and the cost of books and transportation.

Barriers to implementing different uses of time

Some barriers still remain to fully implementing this vision for reform and using time differently. Project-based learning is an important component to the work being done in EIS and often requires cross-curricular instruction and activities. For example, in order to demonstrate geometry skills, fourth-grade students are tested in part by building a birdhouse and applying geometric concepts to that project. At the high school level, current state laws regarding professional teacher certification can limit the catalog of courses a teacher can instruct. This poses challenges for cross-curricular projects, as well the structure of targeted student intervention. For example, a teacher currently certified to teach special education math is unable to be the lead teacher for a math intervention course with students who do not have a disability, regardless of that teacher’s ability to close achievement gaps. However, the state education agency is currently in the process of revising the licensing requirements in an effort to create greater flexibility while also maintaining high standards for subject-area certification.



PORTERVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (CALIFORNIA)

PUSD's vision for reform

Porterville Unified School District (PUSD), with 86 percent of its 14,000 students low-income and/or students of color, covers a rural town adjacent to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The nearest city is Bakersfield, fifty miles away. The drive from Bakersfield to Porterville is a constant reminder that this is very much an agrarian area, and opportunities beyond the community are not always easy to see. Regardless, PUSD seeks to ensure that all students are both connected to where they live and also fully prepared for life outside the area.

PUSD's mission is to provide students a dynamic, engaging, and effective educational experience that prepares them to be productive citizens in a global society. The district expects all students to be able to demonstrate deeper learning competencies, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and effective communication and collaboration. In addition, students are expected to graduate with cultural awareness, technical skills, and skills in leadership, self-management, and organization that are obtained through real-world applications and community involvement.

Using time differently to support implementation of the vision

Implementing this vision, particularly in a small, rural, low-income community where more than 85 percent of the students are from low-income families, is no small feat. In order to do so, three of the district's five comprehensive high schools, including Harmony Magnet Academy and Granite Hills High School,^f took the initiative to use time differently to provide the diversity of opportunities needed to meet PUSD's goals.



QUICK FACTS

HARMONY MAGNET ACADEMY (PORTERVILLE, CALIFORNIA)

Demographics

- ENROLLMENT IS 487 STUDENTS.
- ON AVERAGE, ALMOST 60 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH (FRPL).
- ON AVERAGE, MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR.

Key Outcomes

- GRADUATION RATES CONTINUE TO INCREASE AT HARMONY:

2012	2013
• OVERALL: 94%	• OVERALL: 98%
• FRPL: 95%	• FRPL: 99%

- CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TESTS (CST) MATH RESULTS

• 2010 – 33%	• 2012 – 44%
• 2011 – 47%	• 2013 – 46%

- CALIFORNIA STANDARDS TESTS (CST) ELA RESULTS

• 2010 – 75%	• 2012 – 74%
• 2011 – 72%	• 2013 – 79%

Harmony Magnet Academy (HMA)

In the words of Jeff Brown, the principal of HMA, “[I]t is difficult to get at rigor in a short amount of time.” California has adopted the Common Core State Standards, which Brown describes as being in part about students getting to the answer of a complex problem in many different ways and developing a set of transferable skills. More and different uses of time are needed to create the educational opportunities to meet these increased demands. HMA

^f While not featured in this report, the third high school, Strathmore High School, recently implemented the same block scheduling as Harmony.

took advantage of an option available within the district to move from a six-period, 180-day schedule to a seven-period, 175-day schedule, increasing the daily schedule by ten minutes per day. HMA also utilizes the district option to convert to a block schedule. This allows doubling class time for selected classes, providing greater time for students to participate in project-based learning and the time needed to master the rigor of the courses.

HMA was purposeful in the selection of which courses would benefit from the additional time; therefore, not all courses are set in blocks. Jeff Brown says that although more time is allocated to certain courses, students feel that they have less time to waste. This is in part due to the project-based learning that happens during much of the blocks as well as more time available for extended performance tasks. Further, according to Brown, teachers have more time and greater opportunity to ensure that each student is engaged in their learning, making it harder for students to be “wallflowers” and not participate. Led by HMA alumni, additional time is provided on Saturdays for students who need extra support. To increase the educational material students encounter, HMA also utilizes online programs for remediation, enrichment, and the taking of certain electives. Increasing the instructional time outside of the school day through the use of online educational material allows HMA to free up more time within its class schedule to diversify the course work and provide the support needed due to the rigor of the work.

Granite Hills High School (GHHS)

GHHS also took advantage of the opportunity to provide block scheduling. The first period of every day is one hour, with more time provided in core subjects such as math and English by alternating single classes and blocked classes with each other throughout the day. Teachers usually teach two related mini-lessons within this block of time. The additional time is not intended for teachers to provide the same lesson they would have provided without block



QUICK FACTS

GRANITE HILLS HIGH SCHOOL (PORTERVILLE, CALIFORNIA)

Demographics

- ENROLLMENT IS APPROXIMATELY 1,100 STUDENTS.
- ON AVERAGE, MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH (FRPL).
- ON AVERAGE, 82 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE LATINO.

Key Outcomes

- GRADUATION RATES CONTINUE TO INCREASE AT GRANITE HILLS:

2011	2012	2013
• OVERALL: 84%	• OVERALL: 88%	• OVERALL: 91%
• LATINO: 82%	• LATINO: 89%	• LATINO: 92%
• FRPL: 82%	• FRPL: 88%	• FRPL: 91%

scheduling; it is meant to allow for more advanced and extended activities. Because they have more time with the same students, they use the time to delve more deeply into the curriculum and cover more material in a less superficial way.

Some classes are offered daily and others alternate depending on the day. GHHS combines block scheduling with shorter time for other classes, allowing for more courses to be offered. Since not every class is scheduled in a block and takes less time, GHHS can offer more classes during the day if needed. For example, the school found that many students were not meeting expectations in math, and built math into every day’s schedule. The school did the same to meet the needs of English learners by providing daily two-period blocks of English. To develop organization skills and what the school calls the “study habits of college bound students,” a number of mini-units, rather than

full courses that require more time, are provided at the beginning of the school year. Similar to HMA, GHHS also utilizes technology to make the use of time more efficient, both inside and outside of the school day. For example, in addition to online courses, students use technology to upload assignments and can receive the feedback needed to make necessary improvements outside classroom time in order for that time to be spent focusing on instruction and applied learning opportunities.

Using time in PUSD to support Linked Learning

In addition to using time differently to provide more opportunities for rigor, support, and enrichment, both HMA and GHHS are using time differently to implement Linked Learning. A statewide approach being implemented in PUSD, Linked Learning integrates rigorous academics with career-based learning, real-world workplace experiences, and wraparound support and services. Students are provided with opportunities to see the relevancy of their education, tap into areas of interest, and explore career possibilities. Rather than placing students on a narrow academic track, PUSD makes every effort to ensure that all participating students can expand their options and develop a variety of transferable skills that will prepare them for college and a career. Flexibility around the use of time is used to provide students with internships that often require them to complete a project or portfolio as a result of their experience. For example, students participating in one of the media pathways produce their own website to deliver to their business partner. For PUSD, more and flexible uses of time create greater and more diverse learning opportunities for students that are rigorous, relevant, and engaging.

At GHHS, for example, two pathways are available:⁹ Law and Justice and Digital Design. Each pathway has an advisory board that meets monthly and includes community

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business members, pathway teachers, and students. Between three and ten business partners for each pathway attend the meetings. For the Law and Justice pathway, members include the Porterville police chief, police captain, fire captain, and the assistant district attorney. The Digital Design pathway committee has included the human resource director from a local hospital and a coordinator from a local radio station. Because of its remote location, PUSD has difficulty finding technology business partners; nevertheless, they are committed to expanding available pathways and the necessary partnerships. Current internships vary in length, from one-day experiences to summer internships to semester-long internships. Students receive credit toward their Pathway Portfolio for this work, with the additional goal of making community connections that will serve them in the future. PUSD has a district goal of having 90 percent of all students participate. At GHHW, currently 25 percent of students have an internship opportunity, and the school is continually working to meet that higher goal. Flexibility in scheduling has facilitated these work-based opportunities for students outside of the traditional school day and campus.

Conditions that support better uses of time

PUSD provides the two schools with significant flexibility around use of time, and the teachers' union is generally supportive of this flexibility. The opportunity to schedule in blocks, and the freedom to choose which courses

⁹ PUSD provides ten open-choice pathways and three site-based pathways. All Linked Learning pathways begin as site-based pathways, available only to students who are residentially zoned to go to that high school. Once the site-based pathway becomes fully certified as a Linked Learning pathway, it then becomes an open-choice pathway. This means that the pathway is then available to all students within the district and PUSD will provide transportation if needed.

If more time is going to be provided, it needs to be managed in a way that captures students' attention and keeps them engaged.

to block-schedule, allows high schools within PUSD to adjust schedules to meet the needs of their students. The second greatest enabler is the use of technology to “free up” time for students. At HMA and GHHS, technology allows students to make up for time lost because of work or other obligations and receive additional support. At HMA, students can take core courses online. These courses are provided by an outside source; however, HMA teachers both review the content and instruct these highly interactive courses. The online courses are taken outside of class time, which allows for more in-class time to be used on rigorous core courses and applied learning opportunities.

Technology is also used to make up for “lost time.” To combat summer learning loss, many students (with the goal of all students) are provided iPads, allowing them independent access to instructional materials ranging from remedial support to AP course material to material that supports English learners to maintain school-year gains. This kind of access is particularly critical for the 10 to 15 percent of students in the district who come from migrant families. These students often miss numerous weeks of school in May, August, and September due to crop harvests, as well as during the months of November and December, when many families return to Mexico to save money on living expenses. Online learning is an opportunity to maximize the amount of instruction that students can receive outside of school so they do not fall further behind and can remain engaged, and it can ease the transition when they return to school.

Barriers to implementing different uses of time

There are a number of challenges that HMA and GHHS are working through as they use time differently. While technology can increase the amount of time that students are engaged in instruction outside of school, many students do not have access to the internet at home.^h Another challenge is that teachers are being asked to design lessons in a different and unfamiliar way. Lessons that integrate projects across subjects are best supported by longer periods of time. This requires teachers to plan lessons and design activities in different and more rigorous ways that connect students to the work and engage them for a longer period of time. Teachers are being asked to provide the educational opportunities necessary to develop these skills, which is sometimes different than the way they have taught in the past or learned to teach. Maintaining the attention of twenty-first-century learners, who often have short attention spans and a need for immediate gratification, can be particularly challenging. If more time is going to be provided, it needs to be managed in a way that captures students' attention and keeps them engaged. Doing this on a daily basis can be a challenge for teachers; still, PUSD sees it as worthwhile and is committed to providing teachers with the support needed to implement their vision for student success.

^h There are several ways to address this challenge. For example, for students who do not have internet access at home, teachers can be creative with “flipped” models by selecting devices that are synched before leaving school or sending students home with flash drives.

T. C. WILLIAMS SATELLITE CAMPUS (ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA)

TCWSC's vision for reform

T. C. Williams Satellite Campus (TCWSC) is part of T. C. Williams (TCW) High School, the sole high school in Alexandria, Virginia. Of the 2,500 students served by TCW, more than 60 percent are from low-income families and almost 80 percent are students of color. The vision for Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is to set an international standard for educational excellence where all students achieve their potential and actively contribute to the local and global communities. ACPS provides the environment, resources, and commitment to ensure that each and every student succeeds academically, emotionally, physically, and socially.

In the spring of 2010, TCW was identified as a school in need of improvement and receives school improvement

grant (SIG) funding from the U.S. Department of Education to implement schoolwide reform.ⁱ This reform includes a number of programs to address the needs of disadvantaged students, including TCWSC.^j TCW has a number of overage and under-credited students, pregnant and parenting teens, students with caretaking obligations, homeless youth,^k and students whose families depend on them working. TCW established TCWSC to address the many challenges facing these young people; the campus serves approximately 100 students. At TCWSC, students receive specialized services and support while maintaining access to all of the courses and electives on the main campus, including access to the college and career center and the teen health center. The goal of TCWSC is to help students wrap school around their lives, rather than wrapping their lives around school.

Using time differently to support disadvantaged students

TCWSC is intentional about combining support and rigor. Although many of TCWSC's students are overage and under-credited, they are still held to the same high expectations as other students at TCW. Students attending TCWSC are expected to satisfy the same seat time requirements as other students; however, the instructional time is configured to address their specific needs. TCWSC requires its students to spend a minimum of twenty hours per week, compared to the more than thirty-two hours required for other students, at the satellite campus, and provides flexibility regarding the use of this time. For example, students can select different hours to be on campus, including Saturdays. While on campus students can work one to one with instructors as well as in small groups. In addition, there are number of students who participate in Advanced Placement courses or dual enrollment at a community college, and some are able to



ⁱ Although Title I-eligible, TWC was not a Title I-receiving school at the time of identification.

^j One of TCW's other programs is an international school within the school to serve immigrant students.

^k TCW enrolls close to 200 homeless youth.

accelerate their learning and graduate early. While only four TCWSC students are enrolled in AP courses, one of TWSC's goals is to significantly increase that number, in part by improving the process for identifying students who would be successful in an AP course.

Students conduct a significant amount of independent work and, similar to the college experience, are responsible for self-pacing. This approach to instruction is supported through the use of technology. Each student is provided with a laptop and free wireless access (only 25 percent of students would have access to a laptop at home otherwise). For core courses, teachers blend online content with in-class content and activities. Although much of the work is independent, there is a strong focus on building relationships with students that is facilitated by the small class sizes and ongoing online communication.

Conditions that support better uses of time

TCWSC is provided with great autonomy to implement this program, particularly because it is a program within a school and not operating as a separate school. TCW includes the student outcomes from TCWSC in its reporting requirements, so both the school and the program within the school are accountable for student success. TCWSC did need to receive board approval to change students' schedules and to write specific contracts for teachers who are responsible for providing blended learning and following the revised schedules. The rigor of the online content is under the purview of state law. Virginia has strict legislation regarding online course content and the providers that can be used. There are twenty approved providers, and each is approved down to the course level. TCWSC uses four vendors that provide content which, as required by the state, is at least 95 percent aligned with the college- and career-ready state



standards. In addition, TCW has had a one-to-one laptop program for the previous eleven years and includes funding for the technology within its school budget each year to support blended learning.

Barriers to implementing different uses of time

TCWSC is still in its early stages and faces a number of challenges. For example, activities requiring student collaboration can be difficult because of the degree of flexibility provided. TCWSC is working on balancing independent learning with the development of collaboration skills. TCWSC is also working continually to ensure that the program does not become part of the process of pushing out students. This program is not intended to get students out of the regular classroom; it is intended to provide a structure that meets their needs and keeps them in school until they graduate. Students are referred to TCWSC, which has a cap of 100 students. Once the student is referred, there is a process for determining whether the structure of the program will meet the needs of the student. Each selected student must meet the online learner profile,¹ in an effort to predict which students will do well with the increased flexibility of a challenging blended learning environment.

¹ TCW's "Profile of a Successful Online Student" can be found at <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/technology/olp/profile.php> (accessed August 11, 2014).

All of these schools and districts recognized that a critical aspect of this work included revising the clock and calendar. Simply put, the traditional school day and year inhibited learning for too many students, and had to be changed.

Another challenge, which is not unique to programs serving students who are significantly behind their peers or who are at risk for other reasons, is program evaluation. In order to evaluate the success of the program, TCWSC looks at attendance, course performance, credits earned, and graduation rates. Because many of the students take courses they previously failed or performed poorly in, TCWSC can look at whether there was improvement in particular courses for individual students. The challenge can be rigorously assessing the success of the program while also recognizing the particular needs of the student population TCWSC is serving. Success at TCWSC may take longer to demonstrate, largely because TCWSC is holding its students to the same standards expected of every student in order to ensure that all students graduate prepared for college and a career.

Because this approach is in the early stages of implementation, insufficient data is available to definitively ascertain its impact. However, TCWSC is creating the conditions that make success likely in the near future.

CONCLUSION

Generation Schools, Eminence, Porterville, and T. C. Williams all set out to restructure the educational environment to increase student engagement, enrich learning, and improve readiness for college and a career. All of these schools and districts recognized that a critical aspect of this work included revising the clock and calendar. Simply put, the traditional school day and year inhibited learning for too many students, and had to be changed.

Many other schools and systems have come to a similar conclusion. By taking advantage of the flexibility some districts and states provide, these schools and systems have given thousands of students both more and better learning time. In many cases, however, state and district policies remain restrictive, and policy barriers prevent schools and school systems from expanding the time available for learning and enhancing the learning that takes place. Policymakers would do well to examine these examples to see that another way is possible.

The following section outlines some recommendations for changing federal and state policies to enable schools and systems to provide more and better learning time.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of time is largely governed by policies at the state and local levels. Based on the previous examples, the Alliance for Excellent Education recommends that states and districts provide schools with the flexibility that is required to implement more and better learning time. For example, seat time waivers or competency education laws can support greater flexibility for students to progress at their own pace. Schools should also be provided with greater autonomy over scheduling. This includes the flexibility to schedule classes in blocks, to provide credits to students for work outside of the school, and to partner with postsecondary schools to provide high school students with opportunities to take college-level courses on a college campus.

However, there are also opportunities for federal policy to facilitate and support innovation, reform, and the implementation of more and better learning time in schools and districts. **The following are examples of ways in which federal policy can support a more effective use of time.**

- Many schools and districts find that the use of technology helps them to utilize time more effectively. Therefore, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should expand access to high-speed broadband by increasing funding for the E-Rate program, which provides internet access to schools and libraries. The FCC should consider ways that E-Rate dollars can support student access to the internet outside of the school building to facilitate anytime, anywhere learning. Specifically, the Alliance recommends that the FCC facilitate the formation of learning consortia and partnerships that extend

beyond schools and libraries and include nonprofit community organizations to assist them in delivering educational opportunities to students.

- In addition, federal and state funding should support states and districts in planning, analyzing, and implementing digital learning strategies that can offer specialized and advanced courses to all students. One legislative vehicle to consider is the Transforming Education through Technology Act, introduced by California Representative George Miller, ranking member of the House Education and Workforce Committee. This legislation would require states and school districts to develop plans and policies that put current technology in the hands of students and teachers to support learning and achievement for all students. Among other objectives, the bill seeks to support technologies that would allow students and teachers to receive real-time feedback, exchange information and connect instantly with peers beyond school walls, and make the use of time more efficient. Importantly, the legislation would support professional learning for educators to promote the effective use of technology.
- Schools identified as “priority” schools under the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility policy^m are required to implement a comprehensive set of turnaround principles, including redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration. As ED develops its policy for the renewal of ESEA flexibility requests, it should maintain this requirement and provide guidance to states on ways in which more and better learning time can be implemented at the secondary school

^m Under ED’s flexibility policy, states are required to identify as “priority” schools a number of schools that is equal to at least 5 percent of the state’s Title I schools. The schools identified as priority schools are the state’s lowest-performing schools. U.S. Department of Education, “ESEA Flexibility,” <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html> (accessed August 4, 2014).

level. For example, ED should encourage states and districts to use time effectively to increase access to rigorous course work, including opportunities to earn postsecondary credit while in high school such as through Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and exams and dual enrollment. The previously described schools demonstrate that if adding time to the high school day poses a particular challenge, redesigning the day instead can also serve to provide greater access to rigor.

- The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is also an opportunity to improve teacher preparation in the areas of improving the effective use of technology in the classroom, creating greater opportunities for cross-curricular activities for students, and composing strategies for block-schedule lesson planning. A number of the previously described schools are asking teachers to teach in new ways. Transforming the use of time also transforms the way teachers need to teach. Teacher candidates need to be prepared to implement these types of lessons. It is also important to note that state certification and licensing requirements should support and facilitate cross-curricular instruction, specifically at the secondary school level. Teachers should be supported in acquiring licenses that allow them to teach across grade levels and subject areas to support greater flexibility in scheduling and instruction. This provides schools with greater flexibility around use of time and the scheduling of courses.

- States and districts should implement strategies for personalization as described in ED's Race to the Top–District competition. These include implementing personalized sequences of instructional content and skill development, providing educators with actionable data that allows educators to respond to individual academic needs and interests, and ensuring that educators receive high-quality professional development regarding instructional strategies for personalization. Personalizing instruction increases the types of instructional opportunities teachers need to provide students. Supporting teachers to develop efficient and effective ways to use time to personalize instruction and meet the needs of all students is critical to ensuring individual student progression and success.

Acknowledgments

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The **Alliance for Excellent Education** is a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. www.all4ed.org

Support for this paper was provided in part by the **Ford Foundation**. Opinions expressed are those of the Alliance and do not necessarily represent the views of the Ford Foundation.

ENDNOTES

¹ See S. Bloom and R. Unterman, *Sustained Progress: New Findings About the Effectiveness and Operation of Small Public High Schools of Choice in New York City* (New York, NY: MDRC, 2013), http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/sustained_progress_FR_0.pdf, (accessed August 14, 2014).

² See <http://generationschools.org/results.html> (accessed August 4, 2014).

³ Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, “50-State Scan of Course Credit Policies,” http://commons.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CUP_Policy_MayUpdate.pdf (accessed August 12, 2014).

⁴ Ibid.



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