



Expanding Learning Time Through Supplemental Educational Services

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Center for American Progress

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Introduction

In 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was reauthorized and expanded into what is now the No Child Left Behind Act. Arguably the biggest changes that occurred during reauthorization were the expansion of the law's language on accountability, the requirement of disaggregating and publicly reporting student achievement data, and the inclusion of prescribed interventions for continually low-performing schools. To support specific school improvement interventions in these under performing schools, the law requires districts to set aside funds for programs such as tutoring. Five years into NCLB implementation, its results and the opinions about it are mixed.

Title I

Title I, NCLB's most important title, today provides \$12.7 billion to high-poverty schools and reaches approximately 16.5 million students in almost every school district in the country. Title I dollars are distributed to state educational agencies by formula, are passed on to school districts, and forwarded to schools to support educational opportunities and activities. Schools with poverty rates in excess of 75 percent receive priority in the allocation of district Title I funds. The majority of Title I money goes to elementary schools, with significantly smaller portions going to middle schools and even less to high schools.

As we begin reauthorization of this landmark legislation, significant attention is focused on annual accountability goals. Every year, as states find themselves one step closer to 2014—the final date whereby all students are expected to be proficient in math and reading—each

state's target for the proportion of students meeting proficiency standards becomes incrementally higher. Under the law, each school must meet "adequate yearly progress" benchmarks established by its state or be identified as falling short.

While states and districts are responsible for turning around low-performing schools, their ability to do so is often restricted. Designing and implementing effective school improvement interventions—and realizing significant student achievement gains—is limited by the under-funding of NCLB *and* constrained state budgets. If states and schools are to be held accountable for academic progress, then they need adequate funds and flexibility to implement high quality, school-wide reforms.

A promising strategy to improve student performance and close achievement gaps for high-poverty schools is the expansion of learning time. Given its potential, we recommend that expanded learning time be explicitly added into the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act.

This paper examines NCLB's accountability and school improvement provisions and proposes that expanded learning time be included as an allowable use of supplemental educational services funds to increase student learning and add a whole-school improvement strategy to a pot of money that is currently targeted to individual students.

The main proposal presented in this paper allows for the use of SES funds to support expanded learning time in schools with a student population that is at least 40 percent low-income by funding a one-year planning period followed by implementation until the school is able to meet its annual yearly progress benchmarks and support expanded learning through other financial means.

Supplemental Educational Services

Supplemental educational services—primarily the tutoring of individual or small groups of students—is one of two interventions spelled out in NCLB to assist individual students in schools identified as falling short for two or more years. These two interventions are financed through a 20% set aside of each school district's Title I funds.

Three additional changes will serve to more explicitly encourage the use of expanded learning time and improve the educational outcomes of all children: closing the Title I comparability loophole to establish greater equity in funding and thereby make more funds available to the highest poverty schools; more clearly defining “extended” or “expanded” learning in the language of NCLB; and adopting an expanded learning time demonstration with a high quality national evaluation.

An expanded learning strategy focuses on school-wide instruction, provides schools with the flexibility to use time in a way that will best meet the needs of students and their communities, and modernizes schools so that they are building 21st century skills and preparing all students for success.

Accountability

Accountability is a basic principal of the No Child Left Behind Act and annual academic growth for all students is a fundamental expectation of schooling. NCLB holds states, districts, and schools accountable for student achievement gains, although accountability for states is largely procedural in nature. Prior to NCLB, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, introduced the notion of a specific degree of year-to-year gain on state tests for students in Title I schools. NCLB expanded this requirement to all schools by requiring that states hold every school and district accountable for increasing proportions of their students scoring at a proficient level on state tests each year in exchange for federal funds. If schools and districts reach the annual state goal, they have made “adequate yearly progress.”

These performance requirements on state tests are meant to align with each state’s academic proficiency standards of what students should know and be able to do. NCLB requires that schools and districts not making AYP for two consecutive years or more be publicly identified as in “improvement” status. A five year review of schools not making AYP and in “improvement” status reveals interesting trends and characteristics.

Trends in AYP

The number of *all* schools and districts not making AYP has remained about the same over the last few years, as has the number of Title I schools and districts not making AYP. While largely holding steady, results for the 2005–2006 school year reveal a slight decline in the number of schools meeting their achievement targets and a

slight increase in the number of schools identified for improvement.

The number of schools “in improvement” shifts from year-to-year as schools cycle in and out of school improvement status—schools can go off of the improvement list if they make AYP for two consecutive years. As states continue to raise their student performance benchmarks—the percentage of students required to meet academic proficiency standards—there may well be growth in the number of schools identified for improvement.

Who’s Missing AYP?

Approximately 16 percent of all schools, 20 percent of all districts,¹ and 20 percent of all Title I schools² did not make AYP during the 2004-2005 school year. According to the Center on Education Policy, 14,121 schools did not meet their AYP benchmarks; 8,421 (60 percent) of which are Title I schools.³ Of all the schools not making AYP, 8,646 are in various stages of school improvement and 78 percent of these schools identified for improvement are Title I schools.

The schools more likely to be identified for improvement are largely minority and low-income schools.⁴ *The National Assessment of Title I Interim Report* concludes that a third of identified schools have high concentrations of minority and low-income students. The report also finds that 7.8 million students were attending identified schools during the 2004-2005 school year. Of the students attending schools identified for improvement, 26 percent were from low-income families, 32 percent were African American, 28 percent were Hispanic, 21 percent were Native American, and 9 percent were white.

CHART 1: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF IDENTIFIED SCHOOLS, BY STATE, 2004–05

	ALL SCHOOLS		TITLE I SCHOOLS		TITLE I SCHOOLS BY IMPROVEMENT STATUS		
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	YEAR 1 OR YEAR 2	CORRECTIVE ACTION	RESTRUCTURING
Total	11,530	13%	9,028	18%	6,916	1,047	1,065
Alabama	80	6%	80	9%	35	7	38
Alaska	179	36%	128	40%	112	8	8
Arizona	135	7%	135	13%	87	37	11
Arkansas	300	27%	195	24%	190	4	1
California	1,618	18%	1,618	29%	1,167	173	278
Colorado	87	7%	87	10%	57	27	3
Connecticut	134	12%	79	17%	71	0	8
Delaware	44	21%	16	15%	13	3	0
District of Columbia	96	47%	96	58%	82	14	0
Florida	964	29%	964	68%	964	0	0
Georgia	413	20%	249	26%	118	27	104
Hawaii	138	49%	88	62%	28	6	54
Idaho	71	10%	28	6%	28	0	0
Illinois	655	15%	655	27%	395	238	22
Indiana	77	4%	77	7%	49	18	10
Iowa	66	4%	13	2%	13	0	0
Kansas	21	1%	21	3%	17	3	1
Kentucky	134	10%	134	13%	128	6	0
Louisiana	570	37%	432	46%	389	27	16
Maine	51	7%	29	5%	29	0	0
Maryland	255	19%	113	24%	49	7	57
Massachusetts	391	20%	277	24%	233	20	24
Michigan	511	13%	126	18%	56	25	45
Minnesota	48	2%	43	4%	35	8	0
Mississippi	71	8%	71	10%	67	2	2
Missouri	130	6%	130	10%	122	8	0
Montana	69	8%	67	10%	30	4	33
Nebraska	46	4%	9	2%	8	1	0
Nevada	111	21%	46	20%	44	2	0
New Hampshire	61	13%	23	9%	22	1	0
New Jersey	520	22%	384	28%	287	97	0
New Mexico	182	23%	114	20%	50	35	29
New York	508	11%	508	19%	272	53	183
North Carolina	160	7%	160	14%	154	6	0
North Dakota	21	4%	21	5%	8	6	7
Ohio	487	13%	390	15%	300	31	59
Oklahoma	142	8%	113	9%	98	4	11
Oregon	214	17%	35	6%	31	2	2
Pennsylvania	629	20%	377	17%	301	76	0
Rhode Island	61	19%	32	21%	27	5	0
South Carolina	207	19%	207	39%	186	10	11
South Dakota	59	8%	57	16%	53	2	2
Tennessee	207	13%	108	13%	66	0	42
Texas*	198	3%	198	4%	196	2	0
Utah	16	2%	16	7%	14	2	0
Vermont	25	7%	17	8%	14	3	0
Virginia	111	6%	111	14%	103	8	0
Washington	156	7%	72	8%	57	15	0
West Virginia	37	5%	37	9%	36	0	1
Wisconsin	51	2%	35	3%	18	14	3
Wyoming	15	4%	7	4%	7	0	0

Note: This table shows data reported by 51 states from October 2004 to April 2005. Some states decided appeals prior to this data collection and others made appeal decisions later. For example, Texas later approved more than 100 appeals, resulting in a final count of identified schools. This chart includes the numbers that states reported for this data collection.

Source: Stephanie Stullich, Elizabeth Eisner, Joseph McCrary, and Collette Roney. *National Assessment of Title I Interim Report to Congress: Volume I: Implementation of Title I*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, 2006.

A disproportionate number of schools and districts not making AYP, identified for improvement, and/or in the later stages of improvement status are urban. CEP reports that 50 percent of all urban districts did not make AYP and 36 percent are in improvement status. At the school level, 54 percent of Title I schools not making AYP are located in urban districts.

School Improvement

No Child Left Behind requires that districts assist schools that fail to make AYP for two or more years by implementing interventions aimed at increasing student achievement. Various interventions exist for the schools “in need of improvement,” “corrective action,” or “restructuring”—the three stages of school improvement. Intervention strategies are determined by the number of years that the school has missed its AYP marks. Chart 1 outlines the types of school interventions required and/or allowed during each phase of school improvement.

Currently, after two consecutive years of missing AYP, a school is identified as “in need of improvement.” In year three, the first year of “in need of improvement” status, schools are required to offer parents

and students “school choice,” the option of transferring out of a school designated as “in need of improvement” to another one in the district that has met its AYP goals. In year four, schools are required to offer choice *and* supplemental educational services. SES services entail free tutoring and remediation for low-income students in under-performing schools.

Schools are identified for “corrective action” if they still have not made AYP by year five. During this time, choice and SES continue, but districts must also take an additional step and do one of the following: replace staff members, institute a new curriculum, decrease management authority, appoint outside help to advise the school, expand the school day or year, or reorganize the structure of the school.⁵

If a school has not made AYP after five years, districts must begin to plan for restructuring while continuing to offer choice and SES in year six. In year seven, if AYP still has not been met, districts must implement their restructuring plan, which must include one of the following: reopening the school as a charter school, replacing the principal and all or most of the staff, or turning over management of the school to a private entity or the state.⁶

CHART 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INTERVENTIONS

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STATUS		NEEDS IMPROVEMENT		CORRECTIVE ACTION	RESTRUCTURING (PLANNING)	RESTRUCTURING (IMPLEMENTATION)	
YEARS MISSING AYP GOALS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INTERVENTIONS			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice SES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice SES One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff New curriculum Modify school schedule Decreased school decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice SES Plan for restructuring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff School opens as a charter School managed by state or private company

Overall, about 10 percent of all the nation's schools are in some stage of improvement. NCLB requires states to implement these interventions for all Title I schools in each stage of improvement and permits states to apply them to non-Title I schools if they choose. Yet few states do so, implementing interventions solely in Title I schools. CEP reports that only a few states apply all of these interventions to non-Title I schools, about two dozen apply *some* of these interventions to non-Title I schools, and almost two dozen states apply *none* of the interventions to non-Title I schools.⁷

The quality of school improvement interventions has also been poor. The NCLB Commission reports that “In practice, however, such interventions often have been incremental, allowing underperforming schools to languish for many years, doing little to raise student achievement. States, districts and schools lack the research on proven effective strategies, or the capacity to implement these strategies, for turning around low-performing schools, and options for students in these schools have yet to be fully realized.”⁸

Supplemental educational services are an intervention with unfulfilled promise. Free tutoring for students in continually low-performing schools has the potential to significantly improve student achievement, yet SES is roiled with issues. Supporters and adversaries of NCLB alike find themselves asking similar questions: How much are states spending on SES? Are services high quality? What impact have these services had on student achievement? How closely aligned are services with school curricula and state education standards?

What We Know About SES

Funding for Services

School districts are required to set aside 20 percent of their Title I funds to support school choice and supplemental educational services for low-performing schools. These funds can be spent on choice-related transportation for any student in a low-performing school and/or free tutoring for low-income students, but not tutoring for non-poor students in low-performing schools. Districts, however, are only required to provide these services to the extent that the 20 percent set aside covers them.

There are several stipulations regarding the 20 percent set aside. Districts are not allowed to use the money for administrative costs. If a district does not incur any choice-related transportation costs, the entire 20 percent set aside must be used for supplemental educational services. “For each student receiving SES, a district must spend an amount equal to its Title I per-pupil allocation or the actual cost of provider services, whichever is less”⁹—a figure published on the U.S. Department of Education web site showing the statutory cap on per-child expenditures for supplemental educational services for every school district in the country.¹⁰ If the numbers of students using the choice and/or SES options expends less than the 20 percent set aside, remaining funds are returned to the district's regular Title I budget for distribution by its rules. Ultimately, the proportion and amount of funds spent on choice-related transportation and/or supplemental educational services varies by district.

Service Providers

Providers of SES must be state-approved and can include for-profit and non-profit institutions such as community-based or faith-based organizations,¹¹ education service agencies, businesses, institutions of higher education, and school districts. The list of state-approved providers must be publicly available to assist parents in choosing a service provider for their child. More than half of approved providers are for-profit entities. The second most common providers are private, non-profit entities.¹²

State education agencies approve providers based on criteria outlined by the U.S. Department of Education. Providers must demonstrate their record of effectiveness in raising student achievement, use high quality research-based strategies, provide services aligned with district curricula and state standards, be financially sound, and abide by federal, state, and local laws regarding health, safety, and civil rights.¹³ States may also add their own requirements for providers.

While the state agencies have a great deal of authority, districts rarely have a significant role in the selection of providers and schools rarely have much voice in the implementation of services. Districts “in need of improvement” are not allowed to provide services unless they receive a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. If districts in need of improvement can not find service providers for students with disabilities or English language learners, they are permitted to provide services to these students. Schools making AYP in districts in need of improvement are allowed to provide services.

Eligibility and Participation

Of the 1.4 million students eligible to receive SES, 233,000 opted to participate during the 2003–2004 school year.¹⁴ According to the Government Accountability Office, 60 percent of the schools required to offer supplemental educational services are elementary schools. Consequently, the majority of students participating in SES are elementary school students. The GAO also reports that in 40 percent of districts, more than half of participating students are African American and in 30 percent of districts, more than half of participating students are Hispanic.¹⁵

Implementation of SES

Numerous reports based on survey data and site visits by the U.S. Department of Education, Center on Education Policy, and U.S. Government Accountability Office paint a troubling picture about the implementation of the SES provision:

- **Participation is minimal.** Nationally, about 19 percent of eligible students actually received supplemental educational services during the 2004–2005 school year.¹⁶ While this is an increase from the 12 percent receiving services two years earlier, the increase likely correlates with the growing number of schools identified as in need of improvement and/or efforts to make SES more accessible to families. The GAO reports an estimated 20 percent, or approximately 200, of the districts required to offer SES did not have a single student receiving services during the 2004–2005 school year.¹⁷

- **Awareness and access to services vary.** Reports indicate that low participation in SES may or can be related to late parental notification or insufficient communication with families, lack of transportation, inconveniently located facilities, inability to find providers able to offer services to students with disabilities or English language learners, competition with after-school activities, and low-levels of provider engagement with school districts.
- **Distribution of providers is uneven.** Surveys conclude that large districts report an abundance of providers, while rural districts report few; some providers choose not to work with schools in remote locations.¹⁸ The GAO finds that 56 percent of SES recipients during the 2004–2005 school year were concentrated in a small number of larger districts with high student enrollment.¹⁹
- **Alignment of services with curriculum is inconsistent.** Many providers meet the state and federal requirement to align services with the curriculum by hiring teachers to tutor students or communicating with district teachers regarding services. Yet other providers do not actively work with schools to ensure that services are aligned with instruction. The GAO estimates that providers in 40 percent of districts are not in contact with teachers to align services with school curriculum.²⁰
- **Monitoring provider quality and effectiveness is challenging.** States are reporting that it is difficult to assess whether or not provider services are research-based or if instructional strategies are high quality.²¹ Districts also express concern over the qualifications of tutors if they have not been deemed “highly

qualified teachers” as the state defines pursuant to NCLB.²² While NCLB outlines requirements for providers, it neglects tutor qualifications.

- **Districts’ financial capacity to serve students varies.** Because of differences in the proportion of schools identified for improvement, certain districts have a greater financial capacity and can serve a larger number of eligible students than others. Urban districts report that they are only able to serve 18 percent of eligible students with their Title I set aside, while suburban districts are able to provide services to 22 percent of eligible students and rural districts are able to provide services to 45 percent of those eligible.²³
- **Cost of services is uneven among providers.** Districts have little information on how much services *should* cost and are unable to address the great variances in provider fees due to their limited authority. State education agencies, on the other hand, can set a range for the acceptable cost of services, if they so choose.²⁴ A study conducted by the Chicago Public Schools concludes that the cost of SES can range from \$6 to \$27 per hour.²⁵ Case studies conducted for the U.S. Department of Education also reveal significant differences in the cost of provider services, from \$5 to \$60 per hour.²⁶

Although district-offered services are often less expensive, many officials grumble that outside providers have an advantage over them because districts “in need of improvement” are unable to provide tutoring services (exceptions are described on page 7). This may result in a greater portion of a district’s SES funds to pay for more expensive services offered by outside providers. Today, few-

er urban and suburban districts are able to provide services than before, a likely result of an increase in the number of districts “in need of improvement.”²⁷

- **Little evidence exists on the impact of services.** While the GAO finds that 91 percent of SES participants are academically low-performing,²⁸ states are reporting that it is challenging for them to assess the effectiveness of provider services on student achievement.²⁹ CEP finds that about one-third of the states reported that either “SES has no benefit to the state or that the state had no data to determine whether the services were beneficial.”³⁰ So the states do not really know what the SES outcomes are; CEP also found that “Two-thirds of the states said they are either somewhat or minimally able to monitor quality and effectiveness.”³¹
- **Little data exists on how much districts spend on SES.** According to the GAO, districts spent an estimated 42 percent of their Title I set aside on supplemental educational services during the 2004–2005 school year.³² Further analysis by the GAO reveals that 40 percent of districts spent 20 percent or less of their Title I set aside, while almost 20 percent of districts spent 80 percent or more of their set aside to provide services to students.³³ The GAO also estimates that districts spent five percent of their *total* Title I funds on supplemental educational services.³⁴
- **Providers are not required to offer services to students with disabilities or English language learners.** While many providers do in fact offer services for students with special needs, there is no federal or state requirement to make sure that *all* providers do so.

The GAO estimates that one-third of districts were unable to find enough providers to meet the needs of English language learners and one-fourth of districts were unable to find sufficient services to meet the needs of students with disabilities. They also conclude that some providers offering services to these students did so only on a limited basis and reported having difficulty meeting student needs.³⁵

- **Coordinating the delivery of services is difficult.** According to the GAO “about 70 percent of states reported that the level of coordination between providers, districts, and schools implementing SES was a moderate to very great challenge.”³⁶ Both districts and providers report challenges in contracting for services and coordinating delivery of services. Providers report experiencing onerous contract requirements, limited outreach or marketing to students and their families, and restricted use of school facilities as locations for the delivery of services. Districts reported concerns over negotiating contracts and the lack of authority to set parameters regarding the cost and design of services.
- **Monitoring implementation is challenging.** States are responsible for monitoring provider and district implementation of supplemental educational services. Until recently, this monitoring had largely been limited. Inadequate staffing to administer and manage all aspects of supplemental educational services was found by the GAO to be of major concern to both districts and states.³⁷ *The National Assessment of Title I Interim Report* finds that as of the beginning of 2005, “15 states had not established any monitoring process, 25 states had not

yet established any standards for evaluating provider effectiveness, and none had finalized their evaluation standards.”³⁸

The report also finds that states use district surveys and/or provider reports on student-level progress as the means to monitor provider effectiveness.

- **Evaluation of providers is difficult.** States assume the responsibility of evaluating providers and renewing their applications to continue providing services. Three of the most common concerns regarding evaluation include measuring progress in student achievement, ability and time to analyze SES data, and creation of data systems capable of tracking SES information.³⁹

Still, SES and other interventions have the *promise* for school wide impact despite the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation shortcomings and the efficacy and spending issues raised above. Many organizations have made recommendations to strengthen NCLB intervention provisions when it is reauthorized. We believe the reauthorization process offers a prime opportunity to enhance school improvement interventions, particularly within the expenditure category for supplemental educational services.

Creating Strong Interventions

Powerful interventions for schools not making AYP need to focus on whole-school improvement. Without comprehensive strategies, attempts to increase student academic achievement—especially for disadvantaged or underserved children—will continue to be piecemeal and incremental at best. Strategies to boost student achievement and school success should be research-based, focused on improving instruction

rather than procedures, properly funded, implemented with local and state support, accompanied by technical assistance, and constantly monitored for effectiveness and then redesigned if outcomes fall short.

One such strategy is to use the expansion of learning time as a part of a strong school-wide improvement plan. Many charter and traditional public schools across the country are extending learning time effectively for educationally disadvantaged students and are documenting that extending time pays off when it is used well. A 2005 survey conducted by the Center on Education Reform finds that 57 percent of charter schools extend the school day or school year, or both.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Council of the Great City Schools has found that many of the highest-performing urban school districts in the nation “have a clear strategy for their lowest-performing schools and students—such as developing extended-time programs, more intensive interventions, and tutoring.”⁴¹

High-performing schools that are successfully expanding time lengthen the school day, week, and/or school year for all students; restructure the school day to provide increased instructional attention to core content subjects such as math, reading and language arts, and science; and offer enrichment activities and programming that engage students and build skills needed in the 21st century workplace. The expansion of time also provides teachers and principals with more time to analyze data to improve instruction and student achievement, plan and work collaboratively, and engage in high quality professional development.

Effective expanded learning time school couple their additional time with other improvement strategies; without a comprehensive strategy to increase student

achievement, more time in school is just more of the same. Schools and districts across the country, in urban and rural areas alike, are demonstrating that this extra time can help schools close academic achievement gaps, align educational goals with workforce needs, and develop an educated and engaged citizenry with the necessary skills for today's global society.⁴²

The Case for Expanded Learning Time

Nowhere is the need for more learning time greater than in schools serving large proportions of low-income students—the students most likely to begin school behind their peers and lacking adequate instructional and related supports that would enable them to catch up. Such schools are the ones most likely to be identified as “in need of improvement” under No Child Left Behind. But high-poverty schools do not need to be low-performing.

As standards and expectations for students are raised and the pressure to close our nation's academic achievement gaps increases, the notion that many students in the nation's public schools will need more time during the school day and year to reach academic proficiency goals is becoming clearer. Research indicates that increased time, used well, leads to better academic outcomes.

Strong research on time and learning has emerged over the last few decades. John Carroll described the correlation between time and learning, in 1963, in an equation: the degree of learning is equal to the time spent divided by the time needed to learn.⁴³ His basic conclusion was that the closer the time spent is to the time needed, the higher the degree of learning that occurs.⁴⁴ Carroll's work led to subsequent re-

search and the development of additional concepts or models of academic learning time that incorporate quantity and quality of learning time, level of student engagement, and measures of success.

Specific research on “time on task” or instructional time, and engagement and enrichment has played a significant role in the transformation of time and learning theories and helps make the case for expanded learning time. Time on task research concludes that instructional time is a predictor of academic outcomes and that more time on task results in academic gains, particularly for the lowest quartile of students.⁴⁵ Research on enrichment, often originating from or associated with the after-school movement, concludes that non-core academic activities increase student engagement and academic outcomes.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study “found that student achievement was most highly associated with instruction that engaged students and was aligned with students' abilities and preparedness.”⁴⁶ While there are some conflicting results regarding after-school programs and their impact on student achievement, high quality programs with strong implementation provide sound data on student engagement and the promise of enriching opportunities on student academic gains.

Additional evidence highlighting the benefits of expanded learning time comes from the schools and districts implementing such strategies. Many high-performing, high-poverty schools have expanded time and attribute their success in part to extra learning time.

- The Knowledge is Power Program schools exemplify the impact of expanded time on student achievement. Serving

students in high-poverty communities, many of the students in KIPP charter schools enter in fifth grade academically behind by two or more years. With 62 percent more time, these students make phenomenal gains and not only catch up, but excel academically. For example, KIPP Key Academy in Washington, D.C. is the highest achieving public middle school in the city.

- The Achievable Dream Academy in Newport News, VA, a year-round, extended time school serving economically disadvantaged students, has impressive assessment results, has consistently made AYP, and has contributed to closing the achievement gap in its district.⁴⁷ Many other public schools are experimenting with expanded learning time and are demonstrating gains as well.

Expanding Learning Time in NCLB Through Supplemental Educational Services

Because No Child Left Behind seeks to improve the educational outcomes of all children—especially those who are most underserved—it only makes sense for the law to more explicitly encourage the use of expanded learning time as a means to increase student achievement. In fact, many of NCLB’s school improvement programs already allow and cite various activities that together define and create the necessary foundation and structure for expanded learning time initiatives. The reauthorization of NCLB provides the opportunity to develop more comprehensive, school-wide interventions to support learning and build on the law’s accountability measures. In the discussion below we outline a new

strategy to assist underperforming schools through the use of expanded learning time.

Supplemental Educational Services: *Expand the allowable use of SES funds to support the expansion of learning time*

As NCLB is reauthorized, many expect that the accountability system, including measures of adequate yearly progress, will be reexamined and new state options authorized. The Center for American Progress and its partner in the promotion of expanded learning time, Massachusetts 2020,⁴⁸ recommend the expansion of the supplemental educational services provision to include expanded learning time as an allowable use of funds.

Under the reauthorized law’s new AYP scheme, when a Title I school is designated as “in need of improvement” and is required to offer school choice it should also be allowed to use funds designated for supplemental educational services to expand learning time. Under our proposal, we recommend that SES funds be used to support expanded learning time in schools with a student population that is at least 40 percent low-income in two ways: 1) for a one-year expanded learning time planning period, and then 2) for implementation of the expanded learning time plan.

Expanded learning time initiatives supported with SES funds should require participating schools to add no less than the equivalent of two hours per day to the school schedule that is standard for the district, use highly qualified teachers for the expanded academic programming, and engage only those non-school partners for enriched learning activities that have dem-

onstrated success in improving academic or other important schooling outcomes like increasing attendance and graduation rates.

Planning and Implementation

We are recommending as an initial step that a portion of schools' SES funds be used to support a one-year planning period for expanded learning time. To use extra time effectively, schools together with district staff need to engage in a thoughtful and deliberate planning process that considers many components of a comprehensive school improvement plan. Significant activities that should occur during the planning phase include:

- Partnering with an intermediary organization, such as Massachusetts 2020, that can provide guidance and technical assistance.
- Gaining long-term commitments for support from partners, communities, leaders, and school and district personnel.
- Outlining a process for plan development and creation of a budget.
- Outlining a communications and public outreach plan.
- Describing how the schools' expanded learning time redesign fits into the district-wide improvement plan.
- Seeking review and input of the plan.
- Ensuring the meaningful involvement of parents and gaining local community support.
- Consulting with and gaining support from teachers, principals, administrators, personnel staff, superintendent,

union representatives, and elected and other leaders.

- Identifying other federal, state, local, and private resources that can be used to help support implementation.

Planning should also address the deep technical aspects of this school-wide reform, such as: negotiating with teachers' unions regarding the use of teacher time and compensation; resolving transportation-related issues; determining the details of school schedules; aligning academic content with state standards; planning for meals and snacks; developing systems to track student and teacher performance; and establishing program evaluations to measure the impact of expanded learning programs on student achievement.

We are also recommending that parents in low-performing schools have a formal voice in decisions about how to use SES funds. During the planning year, the proposal to use SES set aside funds to implement expanded learning time would be presented for a vote of the school's parents via a survey. If 65 percent of responding parents approve of using the funds in this way, planning activities would move forward. Indeed, parents should be consulted throughout the planning year as well as when the expanded learning program is implemented.

We further recommend that SES set aside funds support the expansion of learning time through all phases of school improvement or until a school is no longer in improvement status. At this point a school could continue with an expanded time schedule by reallocating its general Title I funds, using redistributed funds from other NCLB titles if its district agrees, or by securing additional state, local, or private funds.

Additionally, a school in improvement status that adopts an expanded learning time approach would still offer all its students the opportunity to choose other higher-performing schools with free transportation as NCLB now provides. Since NCLB is likely to continue offering parents of students in all schools identified for improvement the right to choose adequately performing schools, it would be unfair to deny parents this right when a school decides to expand learning time.

The Benefits

Using SES funds to support the expansion of learning time offers the potential for more lasting educational improvement and maximizes the effectiveness of federal dollars. It does this by:

1. Focusing these funds on school-wide instruction, not just individual help for low-performing, low-income students.
2. Providing schools with more flexibility to use time in a way that best meets the needs of their students and surrounding community.
3. Modernizing schools and building 21st century skills to better prepare students for success.

In practice, a growing number of districts already target federal funds to low-performing schools so they can expand learning time through after-school and summer programs in order to boost student achievement.⁴⁹ Other districts and local and state elected leaders are also thinking critically about expanding learning time as a strategy to improve student achievement, but lack the funds or political support necessary for planning and implementation. Including expanded learning time as an allowable use

of SES funds can provide both the flexibility and financial incentives to schools and leaders to begin using expanded learning time to institute comprehensive school reform.

Beyond the Use of SES to Expand Learning Time

Allowing schools in improvement status under NCLB to use funds they receive under the supplemental educational services Title I set aside to expand learning time presents a critical opportunity to enhance the law's intended outcome of getting all students to achieve at proficient or higher academic levels. But it is only a beginning.

There is a troubling consequence of success: a school that emerges from improvement status, perhaps through use of its SES money to expand learning time effectively, loses those funds. Yet they are likely to continue enrolling large numbers of low-income students with extra educational needs. To continue their new expanded learning time approach to school success they will likely need new funds to substitute the SES funds that they lose. Increased state and local public school funding as well as private support is one important source. However, we believe there are additional changes to NCLB Title I and other titles that could drive NCLB funds to schools with the highest poverty levels as well as clarify their use.

Close the Title I Comparability Loophole: *Establish greater equity in funding to support equity in learning*⁵⁰

Title I funds are, and have always been, intended to support the educational needs of children in high-poverty schools. Envisioning Title I funds as “additional” or “extra” dollars for these schools presumes an equitable distribution of local and state

funds across the schools. However, districts have long engaged in the inequitable allocation of funds, often leaving high-poverty schools with less funding per child than low-poverty schools.

To press for a more equitable distribution of district funds, the federal government developed the “supplement-not-supplant” and “comparability” provisions within Title I. The first provision, supplement-not-supplant, stipulates that federal money cannot be used to cover the cost of things that would normally be covered by local or state funds. The comparability provision requires the equitable distribution of district funds before receiving and allocating “additional” federal dollars.

Despite efforts to create a more equitable way of distributing funds to schools to meet the specific needs of students, districts have ways of getting around the intent of Title I. Some districts under-fund high-poverty schools and use federal Title I dollars to make up the difference so that, at a glance, it appears that low- and high-poverty schools are equally funded. Districts also typically use average teacher salaries, as opposed to actual teacher salaries, in their school funding determinations. A loophole in the Title I comparability requirement allows this. Because more experienced, higher paid teachers tend to teach in lower-poverty schools, averaging teacher salaries and including this average in funding formulas provides greater funding to schools with fewer students living in poverty.

Closing the comparability loophole would provide more money to high-poverty schools and allow for more effective use of

Title I funds *as intended*—for comprehensive school-wide reform such as the expansion of learning time.

Schoolwide Programs: *More clearly define “extended” or “expanded” learning in the language of NCLB*

In its main statement about how Title I funds are to be used on a school-wide basis to support school improvement (Section 1114), NCLB allows states to consolidate local, state, and federal Title I funds in order to “upgrade the entire educational program of a school” in a low-income area serving economically disadvantaged children. It specifies that these funds must be used to support comprehensive strategies of school improvement and must include: strengthening core academics, increasing the amount and quality of learning time, providing an enriched and accelerated curriculum, and including strategies to address the needs of all children in the school.⁵¹

These pillars directly address the components of successful extended learning initiatives but remain silent on how much time should be added to the school day, week, or year; and the need to take other characteristics common to effective schools into account when developing comprehensive improvement strategies.

While beyond the scope of this paper, we recommend that Congress clearly define expanded learning time for this section of NCLB. Outlining state and local educational agency roles and responsibilities could promote more use of expanded learning time as a successful school improvement strategy.

Demonstration Program: *Adopt an expanded learning time demonstration with a high-quality national evaluation*

Together with Massachusetts 2020 we have developed a legislative proposal to establish competitive five-year grants for 10 states to develop state expanded learning time initiatives. This demonstration is largely modeled after the work of Massachusetts 2020 that resulted in Massachusetts becoming the first state in the nation to widely accept and implement expanded learning time. Under our proposal, state initiatives would identify and fund schools willing to expand learning time by at least 360 hours per school year and redesign the school's program to engage students and improve their academic outcomes.

States will encourage schools to partner with community-based organizations and institutions of higher education to provide enhanced educational opportunities to the students who otherwise would not have them, and to provide technical assistance to districts and schools to help with planning, redesign, and implementation that

are supported under the proposal's guidelines. A national evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the initiative and its impact on student achievement and to document lessons learned associated with implementation are also parts of this expanded learning time proposal.

Conclusion

The No Child Left Behind Act, built upon the worthy principles of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, seeks to create greater educational equity and opportunity for all students in the nation's public schools. As our leaders consider the numerous recommendations and proposals in front of them, we recommend that expanded learning time be explicitly addressed in the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act. Expanding the allowable use of SES funds to support expanded learning time is an important step to enhance NCLB's school improvement interventions, maximize the choices available to students and parents, and provide greater opportunity to boost student academic achievement.

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