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New Report Highlights Practices of High-Performing, Expanded-Time Schools

Expanding learning time emerging as critical reform strategy

(Washington, DC) Adding time to the school calendar – with a longer day, week, year, or some combination of the three – enables schools to adopt strategies that can significantly improve teaching, learning and student achievement, according to a new report from the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) discussed at an event with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan at the Center for American Progress.

Expanding learning time is a reform that is emerging as a key strategy to turn around struggling schools. From Houston to Chicago, and from district schools to charter school networks, more than 1,000 schools across the country are currently implementing expanded school schedules. The Obama Administration has made increasing learning time a priority through the U.S. Department of Education's School Improvement Grant (SIG) program.

"Schools, particularly high-poverty schools, simply need more time in the school calendar if they are going to effectively implement the practices that lead to student success," said **Jennifer Davis**, Co-Founder and President of the **National Center on Time & Learning**. "For everything from improving teachers' professional development to providing a rich, well-rounded curriculum, more time is the key element that makes it all possible."

NCTL's report, *Time Well Spent: Eight Powerful Practices of Successful, Expanded-Time Schools*, reshapes the field for expanded-time schools by outlining specific practices that can lead to dramatic increases in student achievement and preparation for success in college and the workforce. *Time Well Spent* offers an in-depth examination of 30 expanded-time schools serving high-poverty populations with impressive track records of student success, and demonstrates how these schools leverage their additional time in order to implement other critical reforms.

"This report explains why successful expanded-time schools are able to make remarkable gains in student achievement," said **Cynthia Brown**, Vice President for Education Policy at the **Center for American Progress**. "Finally we have a powerful guide clearly documenting how to effectively use more time. Sustained investment in this proven school improvement strategy is essential, and I applaud the Secretary's continued leadership on expanded learning time."

Time Well Spent finds that high-performing, expanded-time schools all used their additional time to implement one or more of eight powerful practices to improve teaching and learning. The report groups these eight strategies for success into the following three categories:

- ***Optimizing time for student learning.*** Schools in the study consider time a precious resource, and carefully allocate it towards focused learning goals and student needs. Strategies include targeting support to individual students in the specific areas where they need it most; prioritizing time where the need is greatest, including scheduling double blocks of time for certain academic subjects; and minimizing disruptions to the schedule from between-class transitions or locker breaks.
- ***Helping students thrive in school and beyond.*** Schools in the study use time to broaden educational opportunities for students. For example, schools provide a broad range of learning opportunities, from arts to languages to hands-on science; offer orientations, advisory programs and community meetings to build a school culture of high expectations; and prepare students for the college admissions process, particularly those students who are the first in their families to go to college.
- ***Dedicating time for teachers to improve their teaching.*** Schools in the study use time to improve teacher effectiveness. For example, teachers use data from student assessments in an ongoing way to improve instruction and identify students who need additional support; and they meet with instructional coaches or collaborate with colleagues on lesson planning.

The [National Center on Time & Learning](#) is dedicated to expanding learning time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded education, with a focus on children living in poverty. Through research, public policy, and technical assistance, we support national, state, and local initiatives that add significantly more school time for academic and enrichment opportunities to help all children meet the demands of the 21st century.

The [Center for American Progress](#) is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values. We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

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