

Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day

High quality additional learning time can bridge the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students. An IES Practice Guide, *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*, identified key areas for implementation of research-based practices: alignment with the regular school day, student attendance, instructional strategies, and program evaluation. With the exception of alignment with the school day, these recommendations are applicable also to schools operating a longer school day or year.

Maximize Attendance

Maximize student participation and attendance.



Monitor attendance regularly

Collaborate with parents and community-based organizations to address reasons for absenteeism



Provide services including transportation, snacks, and rewards

Structure Time

Structure instructional time to engage, enrich, and support students, as part of a longer school day.



Use data to allocate additional instructional time

Address individual differences and students' motivation to learn



Allocate time for teachers' collaborative planning and learning

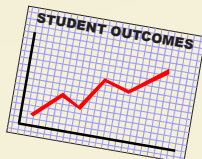
Evaluate Program

Evaluate implementation and outcomes to improve program quality.



Collect and analyze data

Use findings for program improvement



Organize Instruction

Provide engaging instruction tailored to students' needs, as part of out-of-school programs.

Make learning active and engaging



Use one-on-one tutoring or small group instruction

Use assessment data to inform instruction



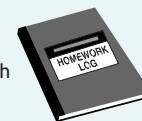
Align Instruction

Align out-of-school academic activities with instruction provided during the regular school day.

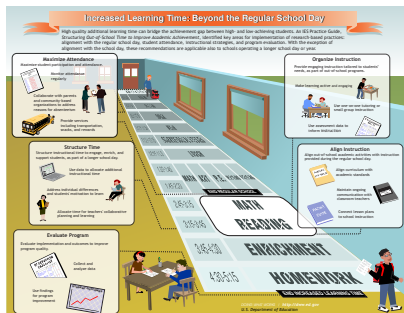


Align curriculum with academic standards

Maintain ongoing communication with classroom teachers



Connect lesson plans to school instruction



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This diagram depicts a hypothetical school day schedule. The student standing at the beginning of the day represents a baseline in terms of academic achievement, motivation to learn, and other skills contributing to the whole child. The student walking out the door at the end of the school day represents the expected gains in all these domains.

The diagram illustrates five research-based practices based on the recommendations of the IES Practice Guide, *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement*. All five practices can jointly contribute to the success of out-of-school programs conducted after school and during weekends and the summer recess. Three practices apply to the effective operation of schools that add more time to their regular school day: Maximize Attendance, Structure Time, and Evaluate Program. Mixed models, such as longer school days in addition to after-school, weekend, and/or summer programs into their approach, will benefit from implementing all recommended practices.

Align out-of-school academic activities with instruction provided during the regular school day.

Out-of-school academic programs that align their content with the regular school day can effectively support student learning. Alignment entails close collaboration with the school and district to ensure that the program's academic content follows the same standards, goals, and sequence as what is taught during the regular school day. Additionally, it is important that teachers from the regular school day and out-of-school programs communicate frequently about students'

strengths and weaknesses so students are provided instruction that helps them further develop their academic skills.

Maximize student participation and attendance.

Students who are chronically absent from school or who do not attend the program regularly are less likely to benefit from educational programming offered by the increased learning time. Regular attendance monitoring and special services, including transportation, escorting students to class, and attendance rewards, are some of the ways in which out-of-school programs and expanded-learning-time schools can help.

Provide engaging instruction tailored to students' needs, as part of out-of-school programs.

Structure instructional time to engage, enrich, and support students, as part of a longer school day.

Instructional planning is demonstrated for out-of-school programs within the practice Organize Instruction and for expanded-learning-time schools as part of the practice Structure Time. Both practices encourage

teachers and program instructors to tailor their instruction to individual and small-group needs and to vary their instructional strategies to motivate and engage students. Professional development and ongoing use of data can support the identification and implementation of those instructional strategies. Finally, both practices suggest adding "disguised learning" in the form of enrichment activities. For example, biology and environmental science concepts can be taught as part of field trips, art projects, and community service learning projects (e.g., gardening, protecting natural habitats).

Evaluate implementation and outcomes to improve program quality.

Periodic evaluation can benefit all models of increased learning time. It can inform program development based on formative assessments. It can also help determine the extent to which the interventions used achieve the desired student outcomes.

Good communications and ongoing collaboration with the district office, community-based and other non-profit organizations, and families are important to the implementation and sustainability of any increased-learning-time model. Consider these partnerships for each of these research-based practices.