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INTRODUCTION
The Promise of a New School Day

We're learning more than we usually do from teachers. And it keeps me out of trouble.
—MARKUS WATSON, 8TH GRADER

Last year we would hurry to get something done, and this year we can take our time and do it right. We have a lot more time for reading, math, and science, and you get more time at recess and gym.
—ANDREW GIBSON, 6TH GRADER

I used to sit with her and go problem by problem on her math homework. Not anymore—I ask her if she needs help, and she says, "No, no. I got it."
—DAWN OLIVER, PARENT

All experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.
—U.S. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

TIME TO LEARN IS ABOUT a new, expanded school schedule that we call the "new school day": a proven, practical, achievable reform that is already transforming American public schools for the better.

We've written *Time to Learn* because this transformation isn't happening nearly fast enough. In this country, too many of

us—even those deeply involved in education—settle for a stagnant, often mediocre educational status quo, mostly because we believe that large-scale change in a huge, bureaucratic system is all but impossible, and that the public schools are the best anyone can hope for. We are, as Thomas Jefferson saw so well, more "disposed to suffer" than to embrace change, even in the face of mounting tangible evidence that an expanded school schedule helps teachers and schools make smarter kids, happier parents, and safer neighborhoods. In this book we aren't seeking to abolish all the forms you're used to; we're asking you to consider the evidence that expanding and redesigning the public school day can dramatically improve what schools are providing to children, to families, and to American society.

Already, more than a thousand schools in the country have broken loose from the forms of the past and adopted the new school day—by which we mean they've added significant learning time—at least one or two hours—to the school day. Some are experimental public schools whose founders began with the premise that they needed more time to teach children what they needed to learn. Some are "turnaround schools" in urban districts, using more time to help to reverse years of low performance. The newest wave consists of standard public schools choosing to expand and redesign the school day to both strengthen core academics and ensure a well-rounded education.

In *Time to Learn,* we argue not from educational theory or abstract logic but from a combination of common sense, our own experience, hard data, and personal observation of existing school practice that the new school day works. That's why this book is about a change that's already happened, is in the process of happening, and needs to happen on a large scale for the American dream to continue to be a reality in the twenty-first century.

Since we believe the school schedule needs a thoroughgoing overhaul, we must be prepared to show why there's something wrong with the education it's providing at present. We want to be very clear here. This book is not about assigning personal or institutional blame for the problems of our public school system. We know too many deeply committed, talented, creative, and hard-working teachers, principals, and leaders in education—which is why we've dedicated this book to them. *Time to Learn*

describes a huge step we can take toward fixing these problems. Before we discuss solutions, however, we need to give you a look at what's wrong.

Public Education Is in a Rut

In fact, public school education is spinning its wheels in three distinct ruts. First, it has been stagnant for at least a generation, showing no real progress. Second, it cannot seem to abolish or even significantly narrow the "achievement gap," the painfully well-documented disparity in academic performance between poor students, especially those of color, and more affluent students. And finally, we, parents and citizens alike, are mired in a mix of complacency and resignation regarding the expectations we hold for our public school system. Why, in other words, do so many of us believe it's enough for our children to graduate from high school with minimum passing skills? Have we really considered whether schools are fully preparing our children for higher education or for the work world of the twenty-first century? Why does it seem utopian or unrealistic to expect schools to help children reach their full academic potential and have a truly well-rounded education?

Stagnation

First, what do we mean by *stagnant?* Just this: after decades of extraordinary educational progress in the last century, advances that fueled American prosperity and distributed its benefits more widely than ever before in our history, we are, educationally speaking, dead in the water. The high school graduation rate doubled between 1920, when only four in ten Americans graduated from high school, and 1976, when about eight in ten did so. Since then, we've made no progress. Once the acknowledged world leader, the United States now ranks behind the Czech Republic, Norway, Canada, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, Japan, and South Korea. Likewise, the college graduation rate grew from about 10 percent in 1950 to about 27 percent in 1996, and then stalled.

Few Americans realize that, in a highly competitive job market increasingly demanding postsecondary education, only a quarter of students entering an American high school will earn a bachelor's degree within the next fifteen years. In other words, almost three-fourths of *every* group of ninth graders still won't have any kind of college degree at age thirty. While the United States is tied (with Canada) for the lead among developed countries in the percentage of older adults (aged thirty-five to sixty-four) with an associate's degree or higher, we are tied for seventh in the percentage of younger adults (aged twenty-five to thirty-four) who've gained the same degrees—behind Canada, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, Belgium, and Ireland.

Since 1983, when the blue-ribbon report *A Nation at Risk* warned that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity," we have witnessed a huge increase in public spending and a steady parade of educational reform ideas—including state academic standards, smaller class sizes, phonics versus whole language, computers in the classroom, charter schools, school-based management, "small learning communities," and high-stakes testing. And yet, doubling real educational spending from 1975 to 2002 has yielded paltry results. For example, on the long-term National Assessment of Educational Progress, known both as the NAEP and more widely as "the nation's report card," seventeen-year-olds' reading scores remained completely flat from 1971 to 2004, while their math scores only increased 2.6 percent between 1978 and 1992, and then stayed flat until 2004.

That's one reason the accountability movement of the past decade has attracted so much support from policymakers. And it's why we now live in an educational universe governed by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In this new world, schools are responsible for "adequate yearly progress" in which their students are expected to increase their scores on state-administered standardized tests to the point that 100 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 become "proficient" in mathematics and reading by the year 2014. Schools that consistently fail to show steady improvement may be taken over by states and reorganized. As Superintendent Joan Connolly of Malden, Massachusetts put it at a school board meeting devoted to consideration of the new

school day, "I have a lot of worries . . . that keep me up in the night." The 2014 deadline, "is not that far away," she continued, while "the amount of movement we need to make each year is getting steeper, as the trajectory by which we're measured gets steeper." She went on: "I'm also worried because teachers constantly tell me that they don't have enough time to do all that they're required to do. . . . I worry about not enough of us in the Malden school community feeling the urgency with which we must change. . . . I worry that everyone doesn't fully understand the intense scrutiny we're under in the era of high-stakes testing and accountability."

Whatever one thinks of NCLB, and a good deal of ink has been spilled about its pros and cons, it is undeniably a response to the universally acknowledged, often shocking failure of public schools to fully educate our children. Increasingly, education professionals believe that it's time to rethink the entire system. As Massachusetts' outgoing commissioner of education wrote early in 2007, in a *Boston Globe* op-ed,

> After more than four decades as an educator, there is one question I just cannot answer: Why has so little changed in public education? We've made schools handicapped accessible, wired them for the Internet, lowered class sizes, and made school lunches more nutritious. Some communities have full-day kindergarten, many students are reading and writing earlier and better than ever, high schools offer advanced placement courses by the dozen, and vocational-technical schools have expanded to include everything from biotechnology to robotics.
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> On the surface there have been plenty of improvements, but when you dig deeper it's clear that little of substance has changed in public education since the days of Horace Mann. . . . The average class day is still just six hours long, leaving children on the street midafternoon . . . in a nation that is lagging far behind internationally. We have entered what can only be described as a crisis in American public education, and we seem to be sleeping through it.

Since the end of World War II, most American children have attended school for approximately six and a half hours per day. Most dismissal bells ring around 2:30 PM, some as early as 1:30.

That's why, despite the widespread impression that children spend much of their time in school, the truth is they go to school for only about 20 percent of their waking hours. That's right—about one-fifth of their waking hours. Basically unquestioned for decades, these numbers help explain why American families are so poorly served by their own public schools.

While schools haven't changed fundamentally since World War II, the world has, often in stunning ways. Computers, the Internet, the end of the Soviet bloc, the rise of China and India, and the massive migrations of people and jobs have transformed the global networks of trade, communications, and manufacturing—with profound consequences for American society. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that 60 percent of jobs now being created require at least some postsecondary education and training, and researchers project that a bachelor's degree confers a $1 million lifetime earnings advantage over a high school degree. Our K–12 schools met our needs better when access to the middle class was broadly available through blue-collar jobs that didn't demand higher education.

Society has also undergone profound transformations. Consider that in 1960, for example, 30 percent of women participated in the workforce; now 70 percent do. The old school day depended on mothers or grandmothers or neighbors being home for children when school got out. In most working families they aren't, and haven't been for decades, while the number of single-parent families has skyrocketed—an estimated 60 percent of today's children will spend at least some of their childhood in a single-parent home. Record numbers of children spend record amounts of time unsupervised. Parents themselves admit that at least a third of children in grades 6 through 8 are in "self-care"—they look after themselves.

The Achievement Gap

Most disturbingly, urban public schools (accounting for 30 percent of the total number of students) simply do not manage to educate their prime constituency of low-income students, who are falling further and further behind their more affluent suburban counterparts, reinforcing a stubborn fact of educational life.

Nationally, according to Columbia University Teachers College, "by the end of fourth grade, African-American, Latino, and poor students of all races are two years behind their wealthier, predominantly white peers in reading and math. By eighth grade, they have slipped three years behind, and by twelfth grade, four years behind. By the end of high school, black and Hispanic students' reading and mathematics skills are roughly the same as those of white students in the eighth grade." This is happening at a time when American demographics are changing extremely rapidly: the percentage of minority children has surged, nearly doubling from 1972 to 2005, chiefly driven by growth in our Latino population. Nationally, children of color make up 42 percent of the school-age population and the percentage continues to grow. In fact, in the western states, they are now the majority. The immigration boom has led to a doubling over the last twenty-five years of students who speak a language other than English at home. All these changes considerably increase the need for us to grapple with, reduce, and ultimately eliminate the achievement gap.

To see how severe the issue is today, take Newark, New Jersey, which spends more than $20,000 per student per year, among the very highest allocation in the nation. In 2004–05, just 37 percent of Newark graduates—a total of 752 students from thirteen high schools—passed the High School Proficiency Exam, which New Jersey's own Commissioner of Education described as a "middle-school-level test."

After decades of urban revitalization, no city in the country is even close to drawing middle-class suburbanites back into its public schools. When is the last time you heard a parent say, "You know, we're thinking about moving back into the city to get better schools for our kids"? For the last quarter century urban districts have been losing parents who dream about having the money to get into suburban school districts—not vice versa.

Complacency

Given this stagnant and mediocre system, the question we need to ask—all of us: parents, teachers, principals, school board members, public officials—is, Why do we *continue* to pledge allegiance to a six-and-a-half-hour day that is short-changing millions

of our children? Polling data offers some clues to this puzzle. More than 60 percent of Americans (as measured by a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll) give the entire school system grades of C, D, or F. On the other hand, when it comes to their own community schools, or the schools their children attend, the grades improve markedly. Roughly half the respondents give their community schools an A or B, and 70 percent give the school their oldest child attends an A or B. We seem, in other words, to be convinced that the system as a whole is mediocre, while at the very same time we believe that the schools closest to us are just fine. Both cannot be true. We appear to have taken up residence in a town like Garrison Keillor's fictional Lake Woebegone, but one where all the *schools* are above average.

Are parents in suburban middle- and upper-middle-income communities wrong to be satisfied with their schools? The problem is that being on the winning side of the achievement gap doesn't necessarily mean that middle-income students are getting all they need in school. In fact, their parents have every reason to fear that their neighborhood schools don't give their children the skills needed to succeed in our rapidly changing, technologically advanced, postindustrial global economy. They also have good reason to worry that the national emphasis on high-stakes testing in core academic subjects has squeezed music and the arts, experiential and creative learning, even recess, out of the middle-class school day as well. Their children may be passing English, math, and science courses, but few achieve what most employers or college admissions officers consider genuine proficiency in these subjects.

While higher education has increasingly become a necessity for employment success, admission to college has become more competitive and federal scholarship aid buys less than it used to. Once students arrive at college, their struggle is far from over. College teachers have been charting the decline of freshman reading and writing skills for decades. If you doubt this, ask any professor you know, and be prepared for a long lecture! Less anecdotally, many public colleges and universities find themselves forced to provide academic remediation to nearly one-third of first-year students—because too many high school graduates, even in such apparently high-performing states as Massachusetts, are seriously underprepared for college-level work.

Today's schoolchildren will work as adults in a truly globalized economy and society. And yet, most first-year college students find themselves terrified by their required basic math course. More and more jobs require technological competence, but in math achievement, American students rank twenty-fifth among advanced countries; not only behind their counterparts from India, China, and Japan but also behind Finland, Canada, Australia, the Slovak and Czech Republics, Ireland, Poland, and Hungary.

Out of a visceral sense of this inadequacy, combined with resignation about the possibility of change in the schools, many middle-class and upper-middle-class families use enormous amounts of time, emotional energy, tuition money, and gasoline shuttling their children among a dizzying array of activities, from math and SAT tutoring to lessons in art, music, drama, and dance, or to traveling competitive sports programs. While some parents argue that the current school schedule, at least in affluent suburban districts, is working, the truth is that it only works because millions of parents are now providing their own version of a new school day, sometimes burning out their own children—and themselves—in the process. Otherwise, newspapers and magazines wouldn't be featuring so many articles on "overbooked children" and their frazzled families.

We know that risks and temptations for children have never been greater, ranging from such traditional threats as smoking, alcohol, drugs, fast cars, and petty crime to more modern ones: violent video games, HIV/AIDS, and Internet predators. We also know that half of all high school students are sexually active, but we pay less attention to the fact that many teen pregnancies get started between 3 and 6 PM. Why, then, don't we pay more attention to the reality that by locking school doors all afternoon, most communities shut down their largest public buildings, pushing students into cars, the street, their homes, and whatever public places will have them? The current school schedule provides recruits for teen gangs, whose activity has reached epidemic proportions in suburban as well as urban school districts, from Los Angeles to Long Island. Less dramatically but no less tellingly, how many adults, especially seniors, enjoy walking into a business when the entrance is surrounded by a large group of loitering teenagers?

Families and the nonprofit sector have struggled to fill the gap between school dismissal and the evening, by and large without success. Despite media reports suggesting that most children are fully occupied, even overscheduled, after school, the reality is that fewer than half of all students report any after-school activities at all. Perhaps even more striking, nine in ten children participate in no formal daily after-school program, a number that includes *94 percent of middle-schoolers*. Especially in low-income communities, television stands in for adults. Four in ten African American fourth graders watch six or more hours of television a day. Day in and day out, working parents know and juggle the painful challenges posed by the current school schedule.

Here's the secret about our current school schedule, which seems to be a largely unquestioned fact of life: it has *no* positive supporters, only negative ones: those who worry that change is difficult, expensive, or inconvenient. *No one* defends the six-and-a-half-hour day on teaching or learning or social grounds. People do argue that the current schedule costs less than any change would bring, but we must point out that the current system also incurs (but does not recognize) the short-term cost of after-school and day care programs, extra tuition for enrichment and lessons, and the immense burden of the juvenile justice system. In the long term, of course, workers who don't leave school with adequate skills will themselves pay in lost income and benefits, while the entire economy, tax base, and society pay in lost growth, dynamism, and creativity. We start, therefore, from the premise—based on overwhelming and depressing evidence—that the current school schedule, which we call the "old school day," has proved itself an enormously expensive, astonishingly inconvenient, outdated educational policy that came into being almost by accident, the mediocre results of which we see every day. It's run its course.

Time to Learn: Core Ideas of the New School Day

In this book we tell the story of a new school day, a new schedule already in place in more than a thousand public schools that offers a genuine solution to our educational crisis. A powerful, realistic, attainable transformation of American public education,

the new school day reinvigorates children's lives, dramatically improving academic success while narrowing the achievement gap, broadening and deepening what children learn, helping teachers become more effective, bringing greatly needed relief to parents, and making kids and neighborhoods safer by reducing juvenile crime, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, car accidents, and mindless television watching and video-game playing. These are large claims. If we didn't have the evidence, we wouldn't be making them.

Results

Instead of narrowing the school curriculum to focus on reading and math, the new school day opens up the range of subjects students study and get exposure to. In new day schools, students explore music and the arts, a remarkable variety of enrichment activities, as well as a range of programs in social and emotional learning. All these activities contribute mightily to helping children receive a truly well-rounded education. There's good evidence that the new school day improves the overall school learning climate by raising attendance and by reducing disciplinary referrals and what are blandly called "serious incidents."

The new school day also produces that most elusive of academic results: striking improvements in test scores. We have lots more examples in the rest of *Time to Learn,* but for the moment, here's a brief taste.

In Massachusetts, after just one year of the Expanded Learning Time Initiative, which added 30 percent (about two hours) to a redesigned school day in ten urban elementary and middle schools, the ELT schools not only improved their own performance; they improved faster than the rest of the state. The average *proficiency rate*—that is, the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the statewide test known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System—compared to the schools' performance for the four previous years, jumped 44 percent in math, 19 percent in science, and 39 percent in English language arts.

Measured against statewide averages, the ten ELT schools began to make progress in the single most difficult task in public education these days: closing the achievement gap. In math they

narrowed the gap modestly, by just 2.4 percent. In science they shaved it by nearly 15 percent. In English language arts, they took a huge bite out of the gap, narrowing it by more than 35 percent!

Another group of schools we talk about in this book are public charter schools belonging to the well-known Knowledge Is Power Program, or KIPP network: fifty-seven elementary, middle, and high schools serving fourteen thousand overwhelmingly low-income (80 percent) African American and Latino (90 percent) students in seventeen states (and the District of Columbia), with concentrations in Houston, Texas, Newark, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. KIPP schools all use 60 percent more time than the standard school schedule, going from 7:30 AM to 5 PM and involving some Saturday classes and several weeks during the summer. By every measure—national, statewide, and local—KIPP students not only improve themselves, they also outperform the great majority of their peers. Take KIPP D.C. Key Academy, in which 88 percent of eighth-grade students tested Proficient or above in math in 2006, more than three times the rate of D.C. eighth-graders as a whole (which was 27 percent); and 81 percent scored at least Proficient in reading, two and a half times the district total (32 percent). That same year 90 percent of KIPP Houston High School tenth graders passed the Texas statewide math exam, as compared to 49 percent of other Houston tenth graders. KIPP Ujima Village Academy in Baltimore was the highest-performing public school serving middle grades in the city in 2006; its seventh and eighth graders achieved the highest math scores in the state of Maryland.

These extraordinary results could be repeated for city after city, but let's leave KIPP for the moment with this astonishing statistic. Nearly four-fifths of students who complete KIPP's eighth grade (the network consists mostly of middle schools) have entered college; nationally, the proportion for low-income students is less than one in five.

The Core Idea

Our core idea is so simple and obvious we made it the title of this book: children need enough *time to learn*—to build the skills and

develop the knowledge and well-roundedness required to work and thrive in the twenty-first century.

Of course time alone isn't enough.

Nothing considered by itself is enough to turn schools around—not the most gifted teachers, most inspiring principals, newest buildings, or most up-to-date equipment. Time, however, is an indispensable foundation for new levels of student achievement and educational success. And, like any precious resource, it can be wasted. Simply tacking extra time poorly spent onto the current school schedule, for example, doesn't get the job done.

How the New School Day Is Different

In effective new day schools, teachers and principals talk constantly about how to make best use of time. They wrestle with finding the best ways to apply more time in core academic subjects, to help teachers incorporate more individualized instruction and project-based learning into their classes, and to balance added core academic time with more time for engaging enrichment in arts, music, drama, sports, and other essential aspects of a well-rounded education. They discuss and debate how to use data to inform their initial redesign plan for expanded time and then how to modify their approaches based on subsequent data. They work to balance added time for students with added time for teachers to work and plan together and to benefit from professional development. They blend more time for current teachers with the addition of time and services from outside individuals and community-based organizations. They use time as a tool to support other innovations and reforms.

When well used, added time bestows many blessings. Principals don't have to choose between math and social studies, between reading practice and science, or between core academics and arts, music, drama, or sports. Because the school day isn't so rushed, they're having fewer disciplinary problems and seeing fewer special education referrals. Kids are getting more opportunities and more choices for enrichment than ever before. And the kids' test scores are going up.

We think the evidence is clear—from teachers themselves as well as from test scores—that the new school day allows teachers to become far more effective in the classroom. A genuinely new

school schedule uses significantly more time—ideally about two hours a day—to redesign the entire school schedule. Principals and teachers spend a good bit of up-front time planning how to use these new hours to deepen, enrich, and customize their program so students can

- Master core academic subjects
- Practice new skills
- Receive individualized instruction and tutoring
- Get exposure to a broad array of topics
- Experience the arts, music, drama, and sports

In this book we take you inside new day classrooms to show how children are using the new schedule to ask questions and to learn actively through projects, experiments, and hands-on use of newly gained skills. Children occasionally grumble about the new schedule at first, but the evidence is that they soon come to accept it. Some, surprisingly enough, downright love it. "The teachers answer my questions," kids of all ages say over and over. How poignant! What else should school be about, if not answering kids' questions? In one school that had begun the expanded schedule, the district had a funding crunch and reverted to the old schedule. Kids demonstrated in favor of keeping the new school day at the School Board meeting! One said he had friends who dropped out because they couldn't keep up any more—they didn't get their questions answered. How can anyone be satisfied with a school schedule that prevents teachers from answering their students' questions?

We listen to teachers in new day schools who love the extra time, which means they can allow classroom discussions to flow more freely and still provide small group and individual teaching for students based on skill level. An expanded school schedule engages students more fully, and children learn better in a more stimulating environment. By reducing the pressure on the system to cram math and reading and science into too few hours, the new school day opens up the schedule for subjects that students enjoy and teachers like to teach. Asked about the impact of Massachusetts' new school day on student academic performance, fully 70 percent of the teachers in new day schools said

it was better (23 percent saw "no impact" and a tiny minority, 7 percent, thought it was worse).

Why It Works

Teachers and principals have found that the new school day makes possible a series of fundamental changes.

First, students and teachers get more time on task. Students who fall behind get the time to catch up. Instead of experiencing the classroom as a place for failure and boredom, kids have success. Students who are already keeping up have a chance to explore more. In science, longer classes allow students to carry out experiments from beginning to end in a single session. No instructional technique benefits from a rushed school day.

"More time on task really makes a difference for our students," says Dr. Jean Teal, principal of Miami Edison High School. "Kids can really get that intensive instruction they need, where their weaknesses lie. It gives more opportunity to work with students. Teachers can develop their lessons and have kids engage for longer periods of time, using all these best practices we've put into place with our students." As one social studies teacher mourned after her school canceled the new school day for budget reasons, "The amount of material I could get through was amazing. You could introduce a concept, introduce primary sources to study it, have kids explore it in a group, and then come back and discuss the subject more in detail."

Students get more opportunities for experiential learning and enrichment activities. Arts, music, drama, and recess—most of which have been reduced or eliminated in recent years on behalf of so-called core academic subjects—return to the classroom. At the Timilty Middle School in Boston, for instance, all students submit a project to the citywide science fair. At the Matthew J. Kuss School in Fall River, Massachusetts, according to the *Boston Globe,*"The once hit-or-miss drama program now regularly puts on major productions. . . . The troupe last fall staged a production of *Macbeth,* with the performers in professionally made costumes."

Teachers gain a greater ability to work with diverse skill levels at the same time. Longer periods enable teachers to divide the class into groups, and to make room for individual and small-group

tutoring—and more students stay more engaged, rather than drifting off into inattention and eventual disciplinary problems and failure. Students and adults get to interact more and develop stronger relationships—one of the crucial foundations of student achievement.

Schools restore academic subjects that had been scaled back or even dropped due to the emphasis on core instruction and high-stakes testing in reading, writing, and math. Students are able to study crucial academic subjects such as science, history, social studies, and foreign languages. Finally, teachers have time to work with each other in planning how they teach their students, time that almost never exists in the current school schedule. From Miami to Boston, Houston to Newport News, principals and teachers talked to us about the importance of teachers' getting more (and more targeted) professional development—training to be more effective—as well as much more grade-level and subject-area planning time. These crucial new hours allow teachers to assess their students' progress and their own techniques, and to zero in on kids who need extra help.

Making Kids Smarter

The real test of the new school day is that it's already working, and in some cases working wonders, for hundreds of thousands of students in schools that have already adopted it:

- In public charter schools
- In elite private schools
- In affluent suburbs where parents create a new day by purchasing after-school activities
- In the thirty-nine-school School Improvement Zone in the poorest big city in the country—Miami
- In Massachusetts, where the Expanded Learning Time Initiative is rapidly growing

Still, even successful experiments only rarely sweep through the nation's school districts on their own. We've written this book to give the new school schedule an additional boost.

Charter Schools

Charter schools, new public schools across the country that have been granted the autonomy to act independently of many district and union rules and regulations, have widely adopted an expanded schedule. Eager to conquer the achievement gap, crusading educational pioneers founded many of these charter schools. By their own reckoning, they simply cannot get the job done without considerably more time.

Take, for example, the well-known KIPP schools—fifty-seven nonprofit public charter elementary, middle, and high schools across the country. Founded by two young Teach for America teachers in Houston in a legendary all-night session, KIPP schools all depend on a regular school day of 7:30–5:00, regular Saturday school, and three weeks during the summer: 60 percent more learning time than most public schools. They have had extraordinary academic success with a population almost universally consisting of poor urban students of color, almost all of whom enter KIPP schools with skills well below their grade level.

KIPP co-founder Mike Feinberg puts it this way. "We are painfully aware that after the first day with our kids in fifth grade, we have less than eight years on the clock to get them ready for college, which is why we have a sense of urgency, why we need them to come early and stay late." Living in Texas, he uses football analogies. "When we start in fifth grade, we're starting in the fourth quarter, down by a touchdown, and the two-minute warning has been given. Every second counts, and there's no margin for error." Even starting in pre-K a school is "still down by a touchdown," he says. We look at him quizzically. "Look," he says, "there's a gap between our kids and the kids from the affluent suburbs who've been exposed to four million more words by the age of four. The uneven playing field is prenatal too." So KIPP Academies use the new school day to close the achievement gap. All—100 percent—of Houston KIPP's ninth graders passed the statewide reading test, as opposed to 82 percent of the district; 96 percent passed in math, compared to 43 percent of district ninth graders. KIPP's pre-K children enter before they've learned to read. Two years later, at the end of kindergarten, they are reading at the second-grade level in both English and Spanish.

Perhaps not surprisingly with these results, KIPP Houston is embarked on a city-endorsed, decade-long expansion that will take it from its current nine schools to forty-two, serving 21,000 students, 10 percent of Houston's school-age population.

Private Schools

The new school day is the norm for many children of the most affluent and highly educated families in the country. When these kids attend private schools, their parents have opted for academic, enrichment, and athletic time going well beyond the conventional school schedule. The oldest, most storied private schools in the nation, which have educated generations of political, business, and professional leaders, have always used a version of the new school day, in which students are engaged in structured, supervised academics, sports, clubs, drama, or homework from morning until dinner-time—or beyond for those who board.

Affluent Suburban Families

Many of the most affluent American parents, as well as those who sacrifice to live in more affluent school districts, send their children to suburban schools whose curricular and extracurricular offerings rival those of private schools. Even these schools, however, dismiss children between 2:00 and 2:30 in the afternoon, so many of these families have custom-built their own new school days by seeking out and purchasing a wide range of activities for their children. The result has been a boom in after-school programs, tutoring, summer camps, traveling sports teams, music lessons, and other expensive enrichment industries. Their children receive a far more extensive and well-rounded education than if they were simply depending on the standard school schedule.

Turnaround: Miami-Dade's School Improvement Zone

In Miami, students in the School Improvement Zone, in which the school day has been extended by an hour and partially redesigned, showed steady improvements in math and reading scores, both absolutely and by comparison to the entire district. They have begun, in other words, to close the achievement gap. But "Zone schools," as they are known in Miami, demonstrated

something else as well, too often overlooked in the question of what helps children learn. Almost across the board, schools showed increased attendance rates and stunning reductions in suspensions and "serious targeted incidents." The new school day has improved the learning climate in the school, so children come to school more—and spend less time in disruptive behavior while there. Miami's experience helps answer a question also addressed by the Massachusetts experiment: can schools convert from a standard schedule to the new school day? Or do they have to start from scratch, as charter schools do?

Conversion: Expanded Learning Time in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Initiative engages schools in extensive expansion and redesign of their schedule, adding 25–30 percent more time (an hour and a half to two hours) to the school day. And in just one year, the first ten ELT schools outpaced statewide gains modestly in math, noticeably in science, and dramatically in English language arts. What that means, in lay language, is that these schools actually *narrowed the achievement gap* in just one year—in the case of reading and writing, by more than a third. The Osborn Street School in long-depressed Fall River showed phenomenal results, entirely eliminating failures in some categories, such as fifth-grade math, when nearly four in ten had failed the previous year. In fifth-grade English language arts, 22 percent of fifth graders had scored at or above proficiency on the statewide test the year before conversion. After a year of the new school day, *69 percent of fifth graders scored at or above proficiency, an increase of 214 percent.* Yes, it can be done: standard public schools can switch to the new school day, and they can achieve results little short of astonishing in very little time.

So it's already plain that the new school schedule is making kids smarter—they learn more, they know more, they perform better. What about parents? How are they happier?

Making Parents Happier

Parents of students at new day schools think they've hit the jackpot. They see their children making academic gains ranging from

modest to extraordinary. They see their children's newfound engagement with school through enrichment activities ranging from forensics to music production, robotics to martial arts. And they see their children completing the bulk of their homework in school, with teachers who can really help them.

They also know what happens all too often to children between school dismissal and the end of the workday. They know that the myth of children playing pickup baseball games after school has little relation to reality. Parents who work outside the home feel tremendous relief due to the new school schedule, because their kids aren't spending long afternoon hours in front of a television or computer screen or playing video games, or getting into trouble with other unsupervised adolescents. Parents who have been through this juggling act recall the complexity of managing drop-offs and pickups, baby-sitters, friends, and neighbors, all while trying to do their own jobs. Parents in the middle of it now probably don't have time to read this book. By matching children's daily rhythms to those of their parents, the new school day makes families happier, and it offers a simple, powerful, and far-reaching solution to a multifaceted problem.

Making Neighborhoods Safer

You don't have to be the parent of a school-age child to appreciate the difference on your local streets and sidewalks—and in malls and supermarkets and convenience stores—when teenagers are learning or playing in school rather than loitering in your neighborhood or driving their cars through town recklessly. All you have to do is read the local police reports in the newspaper, or see the results of juvenile crime on TV news, or notice your neighbor's teenage daughter and her boyfriend hanging out all afternoon while their parents are working, to appreciate why kids *and* neighborhoods become safer when schools adopt the new school day.

Out of the Rut: Making Change

But despite the overwhelming evidence that the new school day is needed to give poor kids a fighting chance of academic

success, and to provide all kids with an education adequate to the demands of today's world—while offering huge benefits to teachers, families, and communities—mainstream public schools, responsible for more than 90 percent of all American children, remain stuck in the old school day. Only children lucky enough to land in a new day school or whose parents are resourceful enough to build or purchase the equivalent receive the benefit of an education that really meets their needs.

We intend *Time to Learn* to help change the terms of debate about public education in America, to help the country let go of a relic from the past that no longer works, and to provide a comprehensive guide to the new school day; to show what we know about it and what works, and to help parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, members of school boards, and public officials find the will and the ways to transform the conventional schedule into the exciting, reshaped, reinvigorated new school day.

We don't think it makes any sense to impose the new school day on teachers or parents. Let's say this again. *We do not advocate imposing the new school day on anyone.* A change of this order absolutely demands the willing participation of parents and teachers, as well as the active leadership of committed principals and superintendents.

Even so, we believe American society has reached the political and cultural moment for this transformation, and therefore this book. Why?

Parents, elected officials, and education professionals are hungry for ways to address the obvious and persistent inadequacies and inequities in public education—while American schoolchildren are falling behind their global counterparts. Political candidates know that voters consider education a critical issue, and the new school day is reaching the threshold of national debate. The new school day is a tangible, concrete proposal—already proven to work—that offers parents, politicians, educators, and policymakers something substantial to latch on to, and it is the prisoner of no political party.

You've probably figured out that we're idealists. We plead guilty: we do have ideals about how our children ought to learn, what an education ought to be, and what our country ought to

look like. We believe that adopting the new school day is the most practical, realistic step schools and districts can take toward revolutionizing children's educational experience, raising academic achievement across the board, making it possible for teachers to both fulfill the mandates of high-stakes testing *and* enhance their feelings of professional accomplishment, supporting parents struggling to help their children succeed in school, and reducing juvenile crime. The new school day is not just another educational reform fad. Bringing about *time to learn* is, and will be, a fundamental structural transformation of American public education.

A Guide to What Follows

Much as we'd like it if you start reading this book and can't put it down, we know what modern life is really like—multiple, overlapping demands on your attention from many different quarters. As a result, you may well want to dip into different chapters as they strike your interest. That's why we've given you this guide to the rest of the book, and why we've tried to make many of the chapters stand more or less on their own. If you do decide to read straight through, you may find some key arguments restated, if in slightly different form. That's not an accident, merely an attempt to meet the needs of different groups of readers.

In Part One of this book, Chapter Two through Chapter Four, we focus on how this new schedule makes it possible for more children not only to learn but to master reading, writing, and math. At the same time, new day schools bring back such academic subjects as science, social studies, and languages, which have been pushed to the edges of the daily schedule in recent years. We take you into classrooms to give you some of the flavor of teaching and learning in these new day schools.

In Part Two, Chapter Five through Chapter Eight, we look at different kinds of subjects and activities, those that have more to do with the whole child. Here we describe how enrichment, the arts, and extracurricular activities play a part in the new school day. And since children come to school in the morning from very different backgrounds, home lives, and neighborhoods, we look at programs in social and emotional learning, sometimes called

"character education," made possible by the expanded schedule. We show how the new school day encourages recess and physical education, both of which have declined in recent years as core academic subjects have taken center stage. Finally, we see how the new schedule offers some different ways of addressing the complicated question of homework. So these first eight chapters are mostly about kids and their world: what and how kids are learning as a result of an expanded school schedule.

Part Three, Chapter Nine through Chapter Eleven, is mostly about the adult world, and how adults' lives change for the better in the new school day, though it also shows how kids accept and often embrace the new day, much to the surprise of many people, including themselves. Also contrary to what most people think (and predict, for that matter), teachers tend to be thoroughly on board with the idea. They don't like it imposed on them (who would?), and they want to get paid for extra work, but why should that be a surprise or an insurmountable obstacle? It turns out that what's good for teachers and children is good for parents, because their kids spend more time learning and less time unsupervised. Most parents love the new schedule, again as long as they have the opportunity to buy in first. And what's good for parents turns out to be good for all taxpayers and residents of American neighborhoods, towns, and cities. This linchpin educational reform also proves to be an extremely effective crime-fighting measure.

In Part Four, Chapter Twelve through Chapter Sixteen, we get really practical. If we manage to persuade you, after all, we're not going to leave you high and dry. In Chapter Twelve we look at a number of alternatives people have suggested both for making better use of the time we have in the current school day and for expanding learning time by increasing the number of days kids go to school. In Chapter Thirteen we ask who would benefit most from the new school day, and show, step by step, how different groups of students and parents would benefit from transforming the schedule. Then you'll really want to read Chapter Fourteen, where we tackle the nitty-gritty of creating the new school day: what it costs, and what's involved in terms of research, planning, and public relations. We talk about interacting with teachers, parents, and school boards, and about predicting obstacles and

how to overcome them. In Chapter Fifteen we lay out a dozen design principles to guide you in developing the new school day, and also raise some questions—such as summer terms and special high school issues—that need further thought and research. Chapter Sixteen ties together many of the themes of the book in a forward-looking conclusion and call to action.

This transformation may seem daunting at times, but it's completely do-able—and getting easier all the time! After all, our children's present education as well as their future lies in our hands.