

1997-98 Extended Learning and Year-Round Programs in Six Districts: An Overview

Overview

In 1995, the Minnesota Legislature began allocating funding to promote year-round and extended day, week, and year programs. This report describes the nature of the programs offered during 1997-98 school year and their related outcomes. Profiles for each program are located in the appendices.

Goals

To increase student achievement, skills, and self-confidence through more flexible use of learning time.

Objectives

Increase time for student learning:

Provide additional time for instruction and other learning activities outside of the regular school day.

Expand variety of instructional strategies:

Provide a wider variety of resources to address students' learning styles and offer learning opportunities not available during the regular school day.

Increase parent and community involvement:

Provide opportunities for members of the community, parents, and families to participate in or assist with learning activities.

Improve efficiency of facility and resource utilization:

Expand the use of existing buildings and resources including staff knowledge and expertise.

Key Definitions

Extended learning program:

Any program that extends instructional time by adding time to the school day, week, or year.

Year-round program:

Programs with a school calendar in which blocks of instruction and vacation are spread throughout the year to make learning more continuous. Such programs do not necessarily add to the number of instructional days required of students, but simply reallocate the typical 175-180 days so that no single vacation break exceeds 8 weeks.

Intersession:

A break in instruction for students on year-round calendars, typically 2-3 weeks in length. Other programming may be offered at this time including enrichment, remediation, and recreational activities.

Funding

The 1995 and 1996 Omnibus Education Bills provided \$1.8 million for grants to school districts and charter schools piloting year-round and extended learning programs. Funding was provided under 1995 Special Session Law, Chapter 3, Article 7, Sections 4 and 5.

The 1997 and 1998 Omnibus Education Bills appropriated another \$2.25 million for a second round of pilot programs.¹

Participation

The school-based year-round and extended learning programs funded during the 1997-98 school year served over 3800 students who were in or entering grades K-12. These programs also served 300 parents in adult-only and student-parent activities.

Outcomes

Increased Time for Learning

The extended learning programs provided students anywhere from 5 to 222 hours of additional instruction outside the regular school day. The three programs with parent components provided between 5 and 10 hours of activities.

Two programs offered students additional time for instruction during the school day. At the Edison Kenwood Charter School, the school day is 8 hours long and the school year adds 15 days to the typical 175, giving students at this school 490 additional hours of instruction. In White Bear Lake's Project Extend, students who had mastered the curriculum were given additional learning opportunities during the day.

On average, students could accumulate 77 hours of additional instruction outside the regular school day, week, and/or year through extended learning programs.

Improved School-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Skills²

Additional time for learning often translates into improved student achievement through the enhancement of school-related attitudes, behaviors, and skills. In the past, related program outcomes included:

¹ Of the \$2.25 million available, \$200,000 was allocated to one site that was implementing four-period day. This project is not discussed in this report.

² Sites were required to report on outcomes related to time, satisfaction, and achievement. Reporting on other outcomes was optional.

- increased interest in school and learning,
- increased time on task,
- improved attendance,
- improved study habits, and
- improved school-related skills and behaviors (e.g., listening quietly, counting, teamwork, research skills)

Improved Social Functioning and Emotional Development³

Supporting the emotional development and social functioning of students and entire families also contributes to improved student achievement. Programs in the past have noted several related outcomes for both student and adult participants:

- increased self-esteem and self-worth,
- increased self-confidence,
- improved behavior,
- increased social integration, and
- increased sense of community among parents, students, school staff and the community

Improved Academic Performance

Only two programs collected data on the academic performance of students. At the Edison Kenwood Charter School students in grade 2-5 were given the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in the fall of 1997 and again in the spring of 1998. Their gains over time were compared to those of their peers in the national norm group.

The percentage of Edison Kenwood students showing greater average gains in reading than their peers nationally:

- 84% of 2nd graders
- 63% of 5th graders
- 56% of 3rd and 4th graders

Students in White Bear Lake's Project Extend were given the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in 3rd grade and again in 5th, or after 18 months of being in the program. Their results were compared to those of non-participating students.

The percentage of students participating in Project Extend from 1996-98 who showed greater average gains than non-participants:

- 66% on Core Battery

³ Sites were required to report on outcomes related to time, satisfaction, and achievement. Reporting on other outcomes was optional.

- 73% on Math Computation
- 51% on Reading Vocabulary

In addition to these two programs, which are continuing to collect and examine student performance data, two additional programs, Osseo and Montrose, are currently tracking student progress using standardized achievement tests. The final post-program data will be available in the fall of 1999.

Increased Parent and Community Involvement

Some of the programs also provided opportunities for parents and community members to participate in learning activities. Examples included: adult education classes; student-parent classes; special family nights; and classes taught by parents, local artists and performers, and business professionals.

Increased Use of Existing Facilities and Resources

Facilities: While many school-based extended learning programs had access to all school facilities, the typical program had access to and utilized the main school office, lunchroom, classrooms, computer labs, library, gymnasium or multipurpose room, and a park or playground.

Scheduling: These extended learning and year-round programs made use of school facilities before, during, and after school, on weekends, and during the summer and intersession breaks.

Staff Resources: Teachers from the regular school day were the core instructional staff for these school-based programs. This important link between the programs and the school offered continuity to students and fostered the exchange of information on student progress.

Satisfaction

Across the programs, over 90% of students, parents, and staff noted satisfaction with the extended and year-round opportunities.

Program Characteristics

Three of the seven participating districts lie within the seven-county metropolitan area. These seven districts implemented 26 different extended learning programs during the 1997-98 school year. These may have included extending the school day, week and/or year and/or offering year-round learning opportunities.

Structure

The extended learning programs included activities scheduled before, during, and after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer or intersession breaks. One school extended learning by lengthening its regular school day and year. The one year-round school operated on a 45-15 calendar.

In all of the programs, the primary learning activities took place at the school. Field trips and activities at community facilities (e.g., parks and recreation centers) took learning out of the classroom and exposed students to educational resources in the area.

Activities

Learning activities incorporated a variety of instructional strategies to address students' learning styles. These included: hands-on and computer-assisted instruction, individualized and/or self-paced learning, one-on-one and small group instruction, drama and other creative arts, service learning, and field trips.

Staffing

Extended learning programs were typically staffed by a program coordinator, teachers from the regular school day, and classroom aides. In some of the programs, the instructional staff included parents, other students, local artists, performers, and other community members.

Other Services

Some of the extended learning programs provided transportation and/or a snack, breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Effective Program Features

Several program features contributed to the positive academic and social outcomes noted earlier. These include:

- small class sizes for more individualized instruction;
- employing teaching staff from the regular school day or year;
- integrated and enrichment-based curricula;
- use of multiple instructional strategies;
- increased access to computers; and
- parent and community involvement.

Future Directions

The very nature of extended learning and year-round programs provides novel ways of fostering students' academic, physical, social and emotional growth. However, in their flexible uses of learning time these programs raise key policy issues:

- What are the effects of adding instructional time versus simply reallocating the existing time for learning?
- How are the quality and quantity of instruction related?

Further research can support decision-making related to this issue and more accurately determine the relationship between specific program features and

program outcomes for different populations of students.

For more information on extended learning programs contact:

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Appendix A: Profiles of Extended Learning Programs Funded During the 1997-98 School Year

K-1 Extended Learning Program

Albert Lea Area Schools #241

Contact: David Paschka

#507-379-5020

Format: Extended year

Purpose: Remediation

Target Population: At-risk kindergarten and 1st grade students who were not eligible for special education services

Goals:

Students will acquire the vocabulary and skills needed to allow them to achieve at a standard level in reading, math, and writing.

Key Instructional Features:

- Concentrated on reading and math instruction
- Increased access to computers and state-of-the-art software
- Low student-teacher ratio (12:1 or less)

Parent Involvement:

Parents attended meetings and conferences

Project Extend

White Bear Lake Area Public Schools #624

Contact: Madelyne Benson

#651-407-7573

Format: Extended day and week

Purpose: Academic enrichment

Target Population: Students in grades K-5

Goals:

Increase student achievement, skills, and self-confidence through the flexible use of learning time.

Key Instructional Features:

Based on the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM). Uses high-end learning strategies to improve the performance of all students

Classes based on student interest

Interdisciplinary and technology-rich

Low student-teacher ratio (12:1)

Parent and Community Involvement:

Joint classes for parents and students
Instructional activities led by parent volunteers
Community organizations and businesses provided financial support and volunteers

Extended Day Learning Program

Montrose Elementary School
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Public Schools #877
Contact: Camryn Shaw
#612-682-8359

Format: Extended year

Purpose: Academic enrichment

Target Population: Students in grades K-5; at-risk students

Goals:

- Spend more time with students in meaningful instruction designed to meet various student learning styles
- Challenge and enrich each student, regardless of ability
- Strengthen the support between the home, school and community

Key Instructional Features:

- Low student-teacher ratio (10:1 or less)
- Remedial reading and math classes tailored to students' learning styles
- Wide variety of classes utilizing individualized, hands-on curriculum

Parent and Community Involvement:

- Opportunities for parents to volunteer
- Activities coordinated with Community Education (e.g., swimming lessons)

Extended School Day Program:

Osseo Public Schools #279
Contact: Ron Luehmann
#612-561-9768

Format: Extended day, year

Purpose: Academic

Target Population: Students in grades 2-6; at-risk students

Goals:

- Improve academic skills of all children
- Provide remedial help to children having difficulty in school
- Offer cultural and/or enrichment opportunities

Key Instructional Features:

- Low student-teacher ratio (12:1)
- Units based on regular curriculum, and yet extend "far beyond" that content
- Program developed by school staff to increase "ownership"

Parent and Community Involvement:

- Parents served on program's advisory board or board of directors
- Activities coordinated with local park and recreation programs offered by city

Edison Kenwood Charter School

Duluth Public Schools Academy #4020

Contact: Mary Stafford

#218-728-9556 X2103

Format: Extended day, year

Purpose: Academic

Target Population: Students in grades K-5

Goals:

- Build a caring learning environment linked to a rigorous academic program
- Provide all students, regardless of economic or social circumstances, with an education that is rooted in democratic values, academically excellent, and prepares them for productive lives

Key Instructional Features:

- Longer school day (8 hours) and year (190 days) allows more time for fundamentals (i.e., reading and math); hands-on experiences (e.g., science experiments); and "specials" (e.g., arts and world language)
- Curriculum based on "best practices" research
- Reading tutoring program for students in grades 1 and 2
- Technology as a second language
- Students (grade 3 and above) provided with a home computer

Parent and Community Involvement:

- Quarterly learning conferences with parents
- Extensive use of parents as volunteers in the building

South Washington County Extended Learning Programs⁴:

South Washington County Public Schools #833
Contact: Gary Seibert
#651-437-4837

Format: Extended day, week, year

Purpose: Academic, enrichment, remediation

Target Population: K-12; at-risk; gifted and talented

Goals:

- Improve academic skills of all children
- Provide remedial help to children having difficulty in school
- Offer cultural and/or enrichment opportunities

Key Instructional Features:

- Low student-teacher ratio
- Varied instructional strategies
- Individualized instruction
- Hands-on and interactive activities
- Integration of technology
- Cooperative and small group work
- Tutoring by peers and staff members
- Use of current staff members familiar with curriculum

Parent and Community Involvement:

- Parent education classes
- Parent participation in planning and/or evaluating programs
- Activities coordinated with Community Education

⁴ South Washington County received their funding in Round 1; however, their programs began in the summer of 1997.

Appendix B: Profiles of Year-Round Programs Funded During the 1997-98 School Year

Minnesota Center for Year-Round Education (MCYRE)

Cambridge-Isanti #911

Contacts: Kathy Belsheim, Gary Hawkins, or Norma Denault
612-689-3030

Format: Year-round school (45-15)

Purpose: Academic

Target Population: Students in grades 5-8 from Cambridge and Isanti Middle Schools

Goals:

To plan and implement an optional year-round educational program

Key Instructional Features:

- Interdisciplinary and thematic curriculum
- Hands-on activities and regular multi-age student groupings for some subjects
- Intersession focus on enrichment, remediation, community service, field trips, and "catching-up"
- High infusion of technology

Parent and Community Involvement:

- Parents and community experts served as teaching resources
- Community service activities and intersession activities coordinated with Community Education and outside organizations (e.g., festival committee, historical society, women's shelter, city government, and local businesses)

Appendix C: List of Extended Learning and Year-Round Programs to be Funded During the 1998-99 School Year⁵

Hastings

Hastings Public Schools #200
Contact: Laura Bolstad
651-438-0651

Format: Extended day

Hopkins

Hopkins Public Schools #270
Contact: Bob Muller
612-988-4037

Format: Extended day for kindergarten

Minnesota Center for Year-Round Education (MCYRE)⁶

Cambridge-Isanti Schools #911
Contacts: Kathy Belsheim, Gary Hawkins, or Norma Denault
#612-689-3030

Format: Year-round (45-15) with intersessions; extended day

Montrose Elementary School⁶

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Public Schools #877
Contact: Camryn Shaw
#612-682-8359

Format: Extended day and year

St. Paul Family Learning Center Charter School #4019

Contact: Wayne Jennings
#651-645-0200

Format: Extended day; year-round (individualized)

⁵ These programs will be reported on for the 2000 Legislative session.

⁶ Program has been reported on here and is continuing in the 1998-99 school year.

Rutherford Elementary School

Stillwater Public Schools #834

Contact: Bernie Anderson

#651-351-6400

Format: Year-round (45-15) with intersessions; longer school day (7 hours)