

1995-97 Extended Learning and Year-Round Programs:

An Overview

February 1998

## Overview

Beginning in 1995 the Minnesota Legislature allocated funding to promote year-round and extended day, week, and year programs. This report describes the nature of these programs and related outcomes. Profiles for each program are in the appendices.

## Goals

To increase student achievement, skills, and self-confidence through 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.

## Funding

The 1995 Omnibus Education Bill 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. It was anticipated that the grant funds would be used in the first year for planning and in the second for implementation; however, implementation could occur earlier. The 1997 Omnibus Education Bill appropriated another \$1.8 million for a second round of pilot programs.

## Participation

The year-round and extended learning programs funded during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years served just over 4800 students. Of these, 4750 were in or entering grades K-12. The rest were preschool age. These programs also served close to 500 parents in adult-only and parent-student learning activities.

## Outcomes

### *Increased Time for Learning*

The extended learning programs provided students from 8 to 96 hours of additional instruction outside the regular school day and parents from 8 to 48 hours of adult education.

- On average, students could accumulate 56 hours of additional instruction through an extended day, week, and/or year program.
- Parents could log an average of 22 hours in programs offering classes for adults or joint student-parent classes.

Reliable estimates of the additional learning hours afforded to students in year-round programs were not readily available.

### *Improved School-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Skills*

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

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

### *Improved Social Functioning and Emotional Development*

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

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

### *Improved Academic Performance*

Many of the programs cited noticeable improvements in students' academic performance. The following results came from available achievement data:

- In the North End Elementary A.M. Computer Class, 3rd and 4th grade students increased an average of one grade level in reading and half a grade level in math through additional computer-aided instruction during the 14-week Saint Paul program.
- At the Maxfield Magnet School, students in grades K-3 increased their scores on tests of language skills by 10 to 20% through enrichment activities offered during the 7-week Saint Paul program, Literacy Enhancement through Art and Science.

- In *Beyond the Classroom*, 56% of the 2nd through 8th grade students scored above the 50th percentile nationally in the spring of 1996 with this percentage increasing to 59% one year later. In both instances, the percentage of students scoring above the national median was higher in the program than in the McGregor district (53% and 51%).
- At the Minnesota New Country Charter School, all 8th graders passed the Minnesota Basic Skills Test in reading and math.
- Seventh grade students at the Minnesota Center for Year-Round Education consistently scored above their counterparts in the district on the reading, math and language portions of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

Two of the programs, Project Extend and TRIO, are tracking student progress using standardized achievement tests with the final post-program data becoming available in the spring of 1998.

#### *Increased Parent and Community Involvement*

All of the programs provided opportunities for parents and members of the community to participate in learning activities. Some examples include: adult education classes, student-parent classes, special family nights and field trips, and classes taught by parents, local artists and musicians, theatre companies, and business professionals.

#### *Increased Use of Existing Facilities and Resources*

- **Facilities**  
The typical school-based extended learning program had access to and used classrooms, computer labs, libraries, gymnasiums or multipurpose rooms, lunchrooms, playgrounds or parks, and the main office. Many programs, however, including the year-round ones, had access to all school facilities.

The two programs whose primary learning activities did not take place at a school included a technology-based home schooling program and a school-to-work program that relied on area colleges, universities and training centers.

- **Scheduling**  
The extended learning and year-round programs made use of school facilities before and after school, on weekends, and during the summer.
- **Staff Resources**  
Teachers from the regular school day were the core instructional staff for the 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 learning opportunities.

### **Program Characteristics**

Three rural and three metropolitan area districts implemented 24 different extended learning programs during the 1995-96 and 1996-1997 school years. Some programs adopted more than one scheduling option with 22 extending the school day, week and/or year and three offering year-round learning opportunities.

### *Structure*

While extended learning programs scheduled activities before and after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer the three year-round school programs followed three different calendars:

- The Minnesota New Country Charter School adopted a 5-1, 5-1, 5-3 calendar.
- The Minnesota Center for Year-Round Education followed a 45-15 alternative calendar.
- The Technological Regional Integrated Organization Year-Round Project (TRIO) was a self-paced, home-based academic program.

In all but two 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, flexible student grouping, tutoring and mentoring, service learning, ESL instruction, and field trips.

### *Other Services*

All of the extended learning programs provided transportation and a snack, breakfast, lunch or dinner. In programs serving adults and families, childcare was also available.

### *Staffing*

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

## **Effective Program Features**

Several program features contributed to the positive academic and social outcomes. These included:

- small class sizes
- teaching staff from the regular school day or year
- integrated and enrichment-based curricula
- multiple instructional strategies
- community involvement
- parent and family participation

## **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 use of learning time these programs raise two key policy issues:

- providing transportation at "off" times
- reporting the amount of "learning time"
- reporting student achievement for programs with non-traditional or extended schedules

Further research can support decision-making on these issues and more accurately determine the links between these programs and their outcomes.

### **For more information on extended learning programs contact:**

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## **Appendix A: Profiles of Extended Learning Programs**

### **Beyond The Classroom**

McGregor School District #4

Contacts: Lon Baumgardt or Karen McKenna

218-768-2121

*Format:* Extended day, week, year

*Purpose:* Enrichment

*Target Population:* Pre K-adult, rural, low socioeconomic status

*Goals:*

- Provide enrichment opportunities not normally available to rural students and during a time when students are frequently unsupervised
- Increase student achievement and school attendance
- Build a community of life-long learners

*Key Instructional Features:*

- Low student-teacher ratio (10:1 or less)
- Classes were more informal, activity-based, kinesthetic, and student-driven with offerings based on students' Learning Styles Inventory

*Parent and Community Involvement:*

- Joint classes for parents and students
- Activities coordinated with Community Education and local groups (e.g., local churches, clubs, and camps)

### **Project Extend**

White Bear Lake #624

Contact: Madelyne Benson

612-773-6069

*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 School wide Enrichment Model. Uses high-end learning strategies to improve the performance of all students.
- Classes based on student interest

- Interdisciplinary and high technology focus

*Parent and Community Involvement:*

- Joint classes for parents and students
- Instructional activities led by parent volunteers
- Community organizations and businesses trained instructional staff (e.g., professionals in the arts, sciences, and business)

**The Saint Paul Programs**

Saint Paul Public Schools #625

Contact: Elisabeth Palmer

# 612-624-6359

*Format:* Extended day, week, year

*Purpose:* Academic, enrichment, remedial, vocational

*Target Population:* Pre K-adult, at-risk

*Goals:*

- Plan for year-round operation of up to five Saint Paul schools
- Expand Saint Paul Connections, an extended day/week school-to-work program for high school students
- Expand the Galtier African American Mentor 8th Hour After School Program at two elementary schools
- Create an after school program pairing Como Elementary students with Como Senior High students for tutoring in reading
- Other extended day and extended year programming for targeted students and their families at five elementary schools (Dayton's Bluff, East Consolidated, Maxfield, North End, and Phalen Lake)

*Key Instructional Features:*

- Low student-teacher ratio (10:1)
- Integrated and thematic curricula
- Hands-on and interactive activities
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Multi-age classrooms
- ESL instruction
- Peer tutoring and mentoring
- Service learning

*Parent and Community Involvement:*

- Adult education classes and parent discussion groups



- Joint classes for parents and students
- Activities coordinated with Community Education and local groups (e.g., artists and musicians, health and business professionals)

## **Appendix B: Profiles of Year-Round Programs**

### **Minnesota New Country School Charter School #4007**

Contact: John Scholtz

507-665-4033

*Format:* Year-round school (5-1, 5-1, 5-3)

*Purpose:* Academic

*Target Population:* Students in grades 7-12 in the area surrounding LeSueur, MN.

*Goals:*

- To improve academic achievement in the existing year-round program through the adoption of a new calendar

*Key Instructional Features:*

- Low student-teacher ratios (12:1)
- Outcomes-based charter school with curriculum entirely based on MN Graduation Standards
- Individual learning plans
- Field experiences, youth entrepreneur activities, community service, and work-study activities
- Regular remediation and cross-age tutoring
- High infusion of technology

*Parent and Community Involvement:*

- Public presentation nights and open house forums
- Parents and community experts served as teaching resources
- Joint classes for parents and students
- Parent-only classes in technology

### **Minnesota Center for Year-Round Education (MCYRE)**

Cambridge-Isanti #911

Contacts: Kathy Belsheim, Gary Hawkins, or N.J. Denault

612-689-2985

*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 grouping 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)

**Technological Regional Integrated Organization (TRIO) Year-Round School Project**

North Branch #138, Rush City ISD #139, and Chisago Lakes #2144

Contact: Joe Hopson

# 320-358-3616

*Format:* Year-round home schooling program via technology (grades 4-8)

*Purpose:* Academic

*Target Population:* Students in grades 4-8 within each school district

*Goals:*

- To provide technology-based, year-round instruction that meets the needs of the district and of parents and students

*Key Instructional Features:*

- Individual learning plans guide students in a self-paced, home-schooling program based on technology
- Student learning is monitored by parents and a Learning Manager from the district
- Instruction is delivered via the Internet, commercially produced computer-based curriculum (e.g., NovaNet, Plato, CD-ROMs), and traditional resources
- Field-trips
- Students may voluntarily participate in classes at the school (e.g., art, music, band, physical education) and school-sponsored extracurricular activities
- Other regular school services are also available to students (e.g., speech therapy, health screenings)

*Parent and Community Involvement:*

- Parents were expected to be actively involved in monitoring their child's progress and assist as necessary