

## SESSION 4: USING AND EXTENDING LEARNING TIME

**Moderator:** *Don Hovey, Director, Education Resource Strategies*

**Panelists:**

- *Andrew Bott, Principal, Orchard Gardens K-8, Boston Public Schools*
- *Ben Lummis, National Center on Time and Learning*
- *Eric Schwarz, CEO, Citizen Schools*

### Time is the essential element to dramatic school turnaround

Panelists at the “Using and Extending Learning Time” discussion agreed that time is the essential ingredient to being able to provide students – especially those very behind – with a rigorous, well-rounded education that will prepare them for college and career success. Ben Lummis, from the National Center on Time and Learning, added that while a school may have key components of a turnaround strategy in place (people, data, and culture), these components will not work effectively without enough time. He explained how time is needed to develop teachers and continuously strengthen instruction; for teachers and students to assess student understanding and analyze and respond to data; and, to build a culture of high expectations for achievement and behavior.

Lummis expanded on what using time means by describing the eight powerful practices of high performing schools using extended learning time:

*Optimize Time for student learning:*

1. Make every minute count
2. Prioritize time to focus on a small set of school-wide goals
3. Individualize learning time and instruction based on student needs

*Use time to help students thrive in school and beyond:*

4. Build a school culture of high expectations and mutual accountability

5. Provide a well-rounded education
6. Prepare students for college and career

*Dedicate time to improving teacher effectiveness:*

7. Continuously strengthen instruction
8. Relentlessly analyze and respond to data

How much time also matters. Lummis explained that at least 300 hours of additional learning for all students are required. While ‘300’ is not *the* magic number, NCLT has found that at a minimum of 300 additional hours is what successful Extended Learning Time (ELT) schools do and do effectively. This number of hours forces schools to rethink what they are doing from the ground up, rather than falling back into non-transformative strategies – like simply adding five minutes to each period.

Orchard Gardens, a K-8 school in Boston Public Schools, has taken these strategies to heart. Orchard Gardens extended the school day for classroom teachers by one hour and they worked with partners to extend the school day for students for three additional hours. As Principal Andrew Bott explains “You have to have the most effective, highly qualified people for the job, with the right kind of the data, with enough time [to do the work].”

### Why extend learning time?

In many ways it is an easy case to make for why teachers, students, the school should have more learning time than they have had in the past. Lummis explains that there isn’t enough time in the day or in the year to raise achievement and minimize the achievement and opportunity gaps. There isn’t enough time for instruction, for hands-on learning, for enrichment programs, for targeted interventions, STEM, enrichment – all the things valued and needed in education, but that are hard to accomplish in a six-hour school day. The NCLT helps policymakers, the education field, schools and districts understand the rationale for ELT, and also how to create the policies and

actions that support schools using ELT. NCLT helps its partners learn from examples and how to apply key components that will work for their specific context.

### Success Sells

Chicago is currently facing the challenge of getting 650 school leaders and schools to rethink how to use an additional 60-90 minutes a day. The panelists and participants had some words of advice based on their experiences.

Bott explained that initially, there was little support for ELT in Boston. ELT felt more like a leadership initiative and the Orchard Gardens community protested the changes. Once the legislation was passed and eleven schools had an extended day, Bott found that partnerships were key to moving the work forward. Specifically, his partnership with NCTL held him accountable to creating a vision for ELT at Orchard Gardens. He later had to prove his choices to a number of stakeholders including the district and the state. It was a high level of accountability that helped him to focus his vision and ultimately garner support.

An audience member from Boston agreed that a vision for redesigning the learning experience was important and added two additional things needed to successfully implement ELT: supports and skills. Finally, know that success sells. A small number of champions who have the vision for ELT, and have the support to execute their vision can serve as a jumping off point for the next cadre of champions. Partnerships, again, are key. Boston worked with their partners for months designing and then executing and refining their vision. Now people are excited about ELT and request it. Success is part of the vision to inspire hope that a district school could do ELT successfully and that it was therefore possible.

Orchard Gardens is one of Boston's success stories. The school is no longer in the bottom five performing schools in the state for math. They had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest 7<sup>th</sup> grade growth percentile in math in the state last year. Their median growth number was 92 on a scale of 100 in math for those 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Bott summarized that their growth and success happened during the school day, during

ELT, and it happened because of the joint work between the school and its partners.

### Integrated Partnerships

Eric Schwarz, CEO of Citizen Schools, reflected on the success of Orchard Gardens saying, "for a school to move from being one of the bottom five schools in the state the year before last to being in the top three in growth in the whole state in math and English is extraordinary." He added that using time, a key ELT strategy, is not transformative if not done well. Partnerships help schools use time in a transformative way. Citizen Schools for example has helped create a new integrated role for community partners in schools with an extended schedule. Citizen Schools' strategy is to partner with schools to bring in a whole second shift of professionals. ELT simply will not work at scale if the same teachers are teaching the extra hours. The formula for success and sustainability is to find a way to bring in fresh energy and highly qualified individuals that will work with schools to meet their goals and needs. Bott adds that it is not about partners coming in to deliver a product, but rather that it is about two partners investing in their partnership, negotiating and continuously strengthening their work.

Making sure that partners are part of the school team is critical to ensuring the continuity of the school's efforts and to making sure that all are working together. Bott worked to bring Orchard Gardens' partners into every day operations. For example, partners attend math and English department meetings, grade level meetings, leadership team meetings and are integrated into Professional Development. Bott added that it is important to think through systems and structures to support providers in their success because ultimately "if we fail, we fail together and if we succeed, we succeed together."

### Now and Then: Cost and Sustainability

Two questions underlying the work with ELT is how much does it cost to provide services associated with ELT and what happens when current SIG funds eventually go away? Schwarz cites that it costs approximately \$2000 per student

to provide an additional 400-500 hours of time. Using Citizen Schools' work last year as an example, 80% of funding for ELT efforts came from Federal funds through the district. These funds included SIG, Title I, supplemental services and 21<sup>st</sup> century funds. AmeriCorps covered around \$300 of the cost and the remaining funds came in through philanthropic donations. If ELT is to be sustained long term, Schwarz says that we need to be better about leveraging federal funds designated for ELT, like 21<sup>st</sup> century funds, more strategically.

There are also ways to increase efficiency. One way is to provide quality programming to build demand and create economies of scale. Consolidating under enrolled schools and increasing adult-to-student ratios are other ways of creating a more efficient system. Lummis made the point that there isn't always a direct increase between time and cost. There are examples of ELT where 25% more time has been added for a tenth of the cost. Generation Schools is a great example of how to implement ELT at no additional cost by looking at who is hired, what roles they play and implementing staggered schedules. Strategic thinking sets the bar differently and changes the conversation. It is not simply about more money but rather having teams of people working together – partners – looking at and understanding how to use existing resources to create and sustain change.

### **Final Thoughts**

“Start with a vision for a great education, and think outside the box,” especially when it comes to the roles adults play, said Schwarz. Lummis added that fundamentally, ELT is about equity and simply put, our kids need more time to be where we want them to be.