

BEFORE WE “TURNAROUND” ANYMORE SCHOOLS, LET’S GET EXTENDED LEARNING TIME RIGHT IN NEWARK

We, the parents of children who are currently enrolled in Newark “Renew Schools” with an extended school day, have been learning about Extended Learning Time (ELT), with the Abbott Leadership Institute. We have been trained in national best practices, indicators to measure ELT, visited schools in Newark, talked with administrators and staff, and surveyed parents about their feelings and knowledge of how their child’s time is being spent. *As a result of this work, we have all come to one conclusion – Extended Learning Time in Newark has not been implemented by the district in a manner that is truly beneficial for all children, properly resourced, equitable or sustainable.* The district has not measured its impact or properly empowered its principals, best practices across schools have not been shared, and standardized test scores as the only communicated measure are not telling the story of improvement in most schools. **We, the parents, have come together and developed our own vision for Extended Learning Time**, based on our research, school visits, and the aspects that are working well within our Newark Renew schools. So....

EXTENDED LEARNING TIME CAN BE IMPACTFUL, IF DONE RIGHT.

1. EXTENDED LEARNING TIME MUST BE EQUITABLE.

Extended Learning Time is not being delivered in an equitable way across our schools. Budget cuts have made it almost impossible to offer a quality ELT program at all schools, especially in schools where principals receive an influx of students after their budgets are finalized. Some schools have used their creativity, skills of teachers, and community partnerships to offer a good range of arts, leadership, civic engagement and other enrichment programs for students - while others are offering very few enrichment programs to focus mainly on longer periods of math and reading, and academic intervention for the lowest performing students. A great ELT program must provide both enrichment and intervention for those who need it. The report “**Leveraging Time for School Equity: Indicators to Measure More and Better Learning Time (MBLT)**” states: “The MBLT initiative is designed around the assumption that while each state, district, and school is unique, MBLT (ELT) programs should be guided by a set of clear principles that ensure EQUITY is central to the effort:

- *School days are redesigned to provide students with significantly more and better learning time;*
- *Schools provide students with well-rounded learning and development opportunities;*
- *Educators’ time is reinvented in and out of schools.*



Parents as Partners in ELT Leadership Team

Carolota Tagoe,
Quitman St. School
Lead Parent Organizer

Yolanda Stokes,
Peshine Ave. School

Christina Cornier
Luis Munoz Marin

DeNiqua Matias
Quitman St. School

Viva White
George Washington
Carver

Jenise Reedus
13th Ave. School

Audrey Allen-Davis
Quitman St. School

Wilhelmina Holder
13th Ave. School

Loucious Jones
Ivy Hill Elementary

Daryn Martin
Ivy Hill Elementary

Roxanne White
Community Member

Kaleena Berryman
Michael James
, Abbott Leadership
Institute

Junius W. Williams
Director, Abbott
Leadership Institute

There are no clear “principles” that can be found in the district’s approach that resonates within all schools. In addition, as a result of One Newark, student lateness is a huge issue. Part of the extra hour added to the day is being lost for many students traveling distances to get to school. Lastly, many special education students are unable to attend the after school programs due to their bus schedule. All of these are issues of inequity. *Resources must be allocated so that all students have the same quality of opportunities.* No matter what school they attend. The resources must go beyond Title I ELT dollars. ELT has to become a priority of the district.

2. EXTENDED LEARNING TIME MUST BE DRIVEN BY BEST PRACTICE

The district has not taken the time to truly train principals, teachers and staff in the REAL GOALS of ELT or the national best practices, and from there, developed a model that can be used as a basis for all schools. *ELT was designed to address the opportunity gap between low income and wealthy students, which will naturally address the achievement gap.* There are best practices from across the nation, and in Newark, that achieve this. ELT is not supposed to just be longer periods of math and reading added to an already long “block schedule”. Overall, ELT in Newark is rushed and left primarily to principal interpretation with little support. **There has been no process to change this with the new influx of Turnaround schools.**

3. EXTENDED LEARNING TIME MUST MEET THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

Art. Dance. Drama. Cooking. Web Design. Writing. Academic Support. Cultural Empowerment. Leadership Development. Tutoring. ELT gives schools the opportunity to provide programs within the school day that engage and inspire students. Teachers can use the extra time to instruct students in their areas of interest, outside of their content. Community partners can be brought in, to provide these programs. *Only a few schools have restructured the school day in a way that provides well-rounded enrichment for students within the school day. Most have left the enrichment for afterschool, which excludes the majority of students who cannot participate due to transportation, number of slots and grades.*

4. EXTENDED LEARNING TIME MUST INCLUDE PARENTS, EDUCATORS, STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY AS PARTNERS.

The best kinds of extended learning programs are happening in schools that involve EVERYONE in the process. Parents, students, and the entire school community are considered valuable partners. *In our survey, 70 percent of parents reported that they did not have a clear understanding of ELT in their child’s school.* ELT cannot work without parents. Engaging community partners allows schools to bring in a wider range of programs and services for students and their families, without affecting the school budget. Teachers are being forced to adopt longer schedules vs. presented with an opportunity to reimagine the school day, and to play a role in the planning. We saw this approach in a few schools, and it was clearly beneficial.

5. EXTENDED LEARNING TIME MUST BE MONITORED AND AN ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE PUT IN PLACE.

There is currently no system in place to assess the impact of extended learning time on student opportunity or achievement in Newark. No reports. No true indicators. Therefore, no learning is taking place from what has already occurred. The More and Better Learning Time Report offers an outstanding set of indicators to measure ELT. Furthermore, the after school vendors are not held to any true standard for delivery outside of attendance. Before any more schools are added to the list, a committee that includes knowledgeable parents, educators, administrators and students must be assembled to create accountability and impact measures, as well as standards for all schools to adhere to.

IMPLEMENT ELT THE RIGHT WAY. THE WORST THING TO WASTE IS TIME.