




EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Report from the Time, Learning, and Afterschool Task Force

JANUARY 2007

Funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation





New Day FOR Learning

In January 2007, the Time, Learning, and Afterschool Task Force funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation released a bold new report asking for a fundamental rethinking of how children and youth use their time for learning.

The nation's steady progress as an economy and as a society will end unless we profoundly change our thinking and policies about when, where and how children learn and develop, contends "*A New Day for Learning*," an urgent report from the Time, Learning, and Afterschool Task Force funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

The Task Force calls for immediate action to design a comprehensive learning system throughout the day, early to late, and year round so that young people have a seamless learning experience with optimum opportunities to learn and develop. It should provide students with multiple ways of learning, anchored to high standards and aligned to educational resources throughout a community. We need a new day for learning where there is no final bell.

The Task Force acknowledges the intense efforts made for several decades to improve schooling outcomes. In response to higher expectations, many schools and communities have made progress and are providing a fine education. At the same time, enormous investments in a variety of interventions to improve achievement for all children seem only minimally effective. We are not getting very far, very fast because we persist in placing all the responsibility for teaching on the schools and on a short school day.

The aspirations of every community—affluent to low income, homogeneous to widely diverse—are limited by these habits. Without a broader view of learning, all American school-age children will be denied access to experiences that will help them be successful lifelong learners.

The C.S. Mott Foundation funded the Time, Learning, and Afterschool Task Force to develop recommendations aimed at accelerating the opportunity to utilize afterschool as a resource for rethinking time and learning, and restructuring the school day and year.

Download the report at www.NewDayforLearning.org

The Elements of a New Learning System

The Task Force acknowledges that there is no complete model of this new day for learning. There are efforts across the country, however, that point the way toward restructuring and redesigning the education of children so that they have access to the best communities offer and can develop fully as learners and future citizens. Our review of research and emerging strategies has led to a concept of a new learning system that needs each of the following elements:

Expands the definition of student success

Reading, math and science are critical to a solid educational foundation but must be bolstered by applied skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork. Beyond merely teaching students these skills, we must thoughtfully assess them to ensure that today's young people are fully prepared to succeed in school, work and life.

Uses research-based knowledge about how students learn best

Students can't learn if they are not engaged. Educators and community stakeholders must utilize research-based knowledge about how students learn best to effectively frame their programs and instruction.

Fosters collaboration across all sectors

To focus all resources on supporting academic and developmental goals for students, new collaborative structures must be built across sectors in communities and up and down government hierarchies. The vital involvement of community, business, civic and municipal leaders, parents and social service providers is critical to student success and pays economic, civic and social dividends to all stakeholders.

Integrates various learning approaches and places

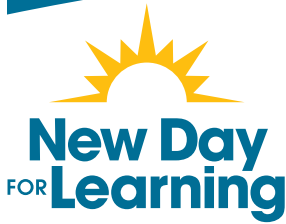
Engaging strategies that incorporate the arts, technology, service learning and apprenticeships can amplify core academic learning and provide students with opportunities for enriching their education and connecting it with the adult world that they will enter. Schools are just one of the many places in the community where learning and student success can happen.

Provides new opportunities for leadership and professional development

While most current leadership development and certification programs are school-based, the importance of community-building skills is growing. Teachers and youth development staff can forge partnerships that result in heightened professionalism for both — and in better outcomes for students.

This report comes amidst many others that discuss expanded learning opportunities, extended day or expanded learning time, a workforce that can compete in the global economy, and physical wellness and nutrition. This is not about simply extending the traditional school day. It represents a larger vision about when, where and how today's students can learn throughout the day, early to late — and year round.

Afterschool is one resource to create a new day for learning. The afterschool field is well positioned to provide rich learning experiences that can lead to the positive student outcomes sought in education reform, workforce development, and physical wellness initiatives. The pervasive afterschool research cited in the report is evidence of why high-quality, engaging activities are invaluable to children succeeding in life. These activities help students learn persistence and concentrate on tasks; develop better work habits and attendance in school; increase their physical activity; improve their grades; build self-confidence through service learning, team sports and performances; develop skills such as critical thinking and creativity; and explore careers.



Creating a New Learning Day

What Needs to Happen

The report is intended as the first step towards catalyzing conversations and initiating the development of actions among key decision makers across the country. It is a challenge to leadership throughout the country to bring the issues of this student generation to the fore, mobilize all stakeholders for action, and implement a new day for learning that meets the needs of particular communities or states.

Steps for Collaborative Leadership

Like any bold public endeavor, creating a new day for learning needs leaders at all levels to work together. The conversations must focus on specific actions to be taken. Local, state and national leaders must begin by:

- Establishing a working group that includes every decision-making source, including those who make policy and those who implement it (education, youth development, child care, juvenile justice, health services, business, foundations, cultural and recreational institutions, parents and students, etc.)
- Going to the public with the facts—about student outcomes and the impact on local, state and national economic and social prospects, as well as what globalization means to every citizen
- Redefining student success as the ability to thrive in a global economy and to function as citizens of a progressive nation
- Seeking different perspectives, identifying common goals, and insisting on shared support for the goals
- Developing an action plan that leverages links among local, state and national efforts and resources
- Developing a strong and flexible infrastructure with shared responsibility for carrying out the action plan
- Assessing the resources available to change the learning environment for children
- Identifying and breaking through obstacles—whether they are policies, lack of resources or old habits—to making the necessary changes
- Inspiring public engagement by providing examples of programs that show students can thrive in environments that offer different ways of learning
- Regularly monitoring and reporting progress on the action plan to the public; looking for ways to expand partnerships and collaborations
- Making sure the infrastructure stays in place through changes in leadership by embedding a new day for learning in the culture of communities and institutions at every level

For more information, visit www.NewDayforLearning.org